



**The University of the West Indies
Cave Hill Campus
Student Disability Policy**

Overview

The University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus, is committed to the non-discriminatory treatment of all students, including those with disabilities. This relates to providing equal access to all academic and non-academic programmes offered by the campus, as well as accessibility to the various resources, services and amenities on campus.

The University aims to adopt the concept of “universal design” to its environment. This approach is to ensure that its physical structure, classroom instruction, social and sporting facilities as well as its information and communication devices are easily accessible to all students regardless of disability.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to make the campus a more inclusive environment in the implementation of the University's mandate of diversity and equity in education.

This policy also ensures that students with disabilities enjoy the same level of access to all aspects of University life, as their fellow students, without fear of disadvantage or discrimination.

Scope

This policy applies to all prospective and present students of the University and encompasses all University programmes, resources, services and amenities.

Goals

The goals of this Disability Policy are to:

- Promote an inclusive campus that enables the productive participation of all students regardless of disability
- Advocate for a learning environment where academic, physical, social and informational structures are accessible to all
- Encourage inclusivity of persons with disabilities by providing opportunities for self-reliance, dignity and respect
- Promote vision and fortitude among students with disabilities in order to encourage increased personal responsibility

FRAMEWORK

Definition of Disability

“Disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments, conditions or illnesses and the environmental and attitudinal barriers they face. Such impairments, conditions or illnesses may be permanent, temporary or intermittent or imputed, and include those that are physical, sensory, psychosocial, neurological, medical or intellectual.”

(United Nations Enable)

Mental disorder/disability

“Mental disorder means mental illness, arrested or incomplete development of mind, psychopathic disorder and any other disorder or disability of mind.”

(Barbados Mental Health Act, Chapter 45)

The Code of Principles & Responsibilities for Students

*“You have the **RIGHT** to be treated without discrimination on the basis of race, creed, nationality, sex, disability or place of origin. You have the corresponding **RESPONSIBILITY** to treat all members of the University community with respect”*

(The UWI, Cave Hill Campus)

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

“People with disabilities have a right to education without discrimination...Countries must also provide reasonable accommodation and individualized support to maximize academic and social development.”

(UN Article 24: Education)

Barbados White Paper on Disabilities

“Under the constitution of Barbados every citizen shares the same human, civil, political, social and cultural rights. Persons with Disabilities should have access to

health, education, supportive environments, income security, communication and recreational opportunities, thereby empowering them to reach their maximum potential and become valuable productive citizens in an integrated society.”

“Access to Education should be a right to all citizens. It is therefore necessary to revise the Educational Act to ensure the ‘right’ to quality education for Persons with Disabilities, in all Educational Institutions..... All new school facilities will be accessible. The provision of an equipment/resource library will be mandatory at schools and other educational institutions to allow students with disabilities to loan assistive devices/equipment in a similar way as book loans.”

Fully Accessible Barbados (FAB) Programme

“The Fully Accessible Barbados ‘FAB’ programme is an initiative of the Barbados Council for the Disabled. This program recognises the importance of accessibility in order to achieve the truly inclusive society which is part of our vision.”

Disclosure and Confidentiality

It is incumbent upon all prospective and current students to disclose the extent and nature of their disabilities to the relevant University authority.

The information regarding an applicant or student's disability is confidential. Measures will be taken to ensure that this information is stored in a safe place where it is not easily accessible to unauthorized persons either through paper or electronic means.

Information will only be disclosed to those members of faculty or staff who are involved in planning and implementing suitable accommodations. Only information pertinent to providing accessibility will be shared.

In cases of emergency, for health or safety reasons, limited information may be disclosed to relevant professionals for the individual's own security and well-being.

Rights & Responsibilities of Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities have the right to equal access to the University along with the corresponding responsibilities. These include, but are not limited to:

- The RIGHT as a candidate, to have the opportunity to attend the University
- The RESPONSIBILITY to follow application procedures and deadlines
- The RIGHT of accessibility to reasonable accommodations related to academic, administrative and student support services
- The RESPONSIBILITY to indicate to the appropriate University authority their accommodation needs
- The RIGHT to have academic material, in classrooms, libraries and laboratories presented in a format which they can access
- The RESPONSIBILITY to attend classes and undertake the course work necessary for the successful completion their studies
- The RIGHT to be examined in a format that is not disadvantageous to them
- The RESPONSIBILITY to follow the examination policy and procedures outlined by the University

Responsibility of the University

It is the responsibility of the University to:

- Fully consider applications with equity
- Ensure that a non-discriminatory, quality education, with support services is offered to all students, regardless of disability
- Inform faculty, staff and students of the support systems available for persons with disabilities
- Provide appropriate training for faculty and staff to respond adequately to persons with disabilities.
- Ensure that appropriate accommodations are made for students with disabilities.
- Properly document accommodations made for students with disabilities.
- Treat with confidentiality, all issues related to a student's disability.
- Provide adaptations only for those students who have a disability which has been documented.

Eligibility Requirements

Self-identification: It is in the registered student's best interest to have identified a pre-existing disability during the application process to the University. Upon enrolment, the process of self-identification is completed by submitting documentary evidence of disability. If the disability is discovered or occurs after the individual becomes a student at the University, this information should be brought to the attention of the relevant authority at the University.

Appropriate Documentation: The documentation must be completed by a professional qualified to make a diagnosis in the particular area of disability, for example, a medical doctor, a psychologist, a psychiatrist or a disability specialist who is not related to the student. The diagnosis should be in a reasonable time frame (within the last 2 years) and it should contain the relevant medical, psychosocial, educational or developmental history. The documentation should also include current forms of treatment, assistive devices or technologies used and their effect on the student. Any limitations caused by the disability which are particular to a tertiary educational setting should also be outlined. The University reserves the right to request a second diagnostic opinion.

Request for Accommodation: Students should describe the types of accommodations needed and the benefits of such adaptations when they self-identify their disability. In addition, the accommodations needed and their rationale should also be specified in the submitted professional documentation relating to the disability. This should also include a history of previous accommodations or lack of accommodations made in previous educational institutions and their resulting benefits or challenges.

Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disability

Reasonable accommodations are provided to ensure that students with disabilities are able to operate on equal standing as their peers within the University setting. Adaptations are made to the campus environment based on the individual student's needs as outlined in official documentation and approved by University personnel. Therefore, persons with similar disabilities may **not** require the same accommodation.

Accommodations may include:

- Priority registration (*for mobility challenged students to ensure classroom is accessible*)
- Room changes (*if room is not accessible to physically challenged student*)
- Reading services
- Note-taking services (*for hearing impairments, visual impairments, manual limitations*)
- Interpreting services (*for hearing impairments*)
- Permission to tape-record class (*Students may be asked to sign a document guaranteeing that such information will not be used outside the particular course*)
- Counselling services
- Assistive technologies
- Library assistance
- Alternative testing (*extended time, reader, scribe, assistive technology*)
- Course substitution (*if this does not undermine the degree programme*)
- Alternative formats of information (Braille, audio, e-text)

Guidelines for Students

- Indicate disability on application form
- Submit documentation with accommodation request to appropriate University authority
- At the beginning of each semester, meet with appropriate University personnel to finalise accommodations for the semester
- Consult with the appropriate university personnel if there are any challenges with accommodations during the semester
- Meet with the appropriate University personnel prior to the beginning of the examination period to finalise accommodations
- Consult with the appropriate university personnel if there are any challenges with accommodations during examination period

APPENDIX I

The Policy covers the following groups of disabilities but may not be limited to:

1. *Mobility Impairments* – Disabilities of the upper or lower limbs; lack of manual dexterity; disability in coordinating different organs of the body.
2. *Spinal Cord Injuries*- Injuries which lead to mobility disability or dysfunction or reduced function of the sensory organs.
3. *Visual Impairments* – Total blindness; partial blindness e.g. being “legally blind” i.e. with less than 20/200 vision; and severe loss in distance or near vision.
4. *Hearing Impairments*– Complete or partial deafness; impairment in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification.
5. *Learning Disabilities* – Disabilities in cognitive processes involved in doing mathematical calculations or understanding or using language e.g. Dyslexia.
6. *Psychological Disorders* – Mood Disorders e.g. Depression; Personality Disorders e.g. Borderline Personality Disorder or Psychiatric Illness e.g. Schizophrenia

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