

KING CEASOR UNIVERSITY



DISABILITIES POLICY

JUNE 2024

Approval

This policy has been approved on the 28th day of JUNE the year 2024

Signed:



Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi
CHAIRPERSON, KCU COUNCIL



Dr. Charity Basaza Mulenga
VICE-CHANCELLOR

DISABILITY POLICY

FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce King Ceasor University's Disabilities Policy, a cornerstone document that underscores our commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment for all members of our community. This policy reflects our core values of equity, diversity, and respect, affirming our dedication to ensuring that individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to thrive academically, professionally, and personally within our institution.

At King Ceasor University, we believe in the inherent dignity and worth of every individual. This policy is a testament to our commitment to removing barriers and promoting accessibility across all aspects of university life. It outlines our responsibilities in providing reasonable accommodations, support services, and resources to students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities, thereby enabling full participation and engagement in educational and campus activities.

Our aim is to cultivate a supportive and inclusive community where diversity is celebrated and everyone can contribute their unique talents and perspectives. By embracing this Disabilities Policy, we affirm our pledge to uphold the rights of individuals with disabilities and to foster a culture of empathy, understanding, and empowerment.

I commend the collaborative efforts of our university community, including students, faculty, staff, and stakeholders, whose contributions have shaped this policy. Together, let us continue to advance inclusivity and accessibility at King Ceasor University, ensuring that every member feels valued, respected, and supported in their pursuit of academic and personal success.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Available data indicates that 15% of the world population which translates to about one billion people experience some form of disability. The prevalence is higher in developing countries. This predisposes Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to adverse socio-economic outcomes such as poor health, lower education and employment than persons without disabilities. (World Bank report on Disability inclusion, Updated on April 1, 2020). Putting in place policies to respond to their plight is critical for institutions and societies.

In continuing to deliver excellence, King Ceasor University is committed to ensuring the inclusion of all cadres of society. It recognizes that PWDs require special attention to ensure that their needs are considered and catered for in all processes. This is both a constitutional imperative and a directive in the University and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 2006 which requires the University to ensure equality of opportunity among students and staff and to explicitly require equalization for PWDs. The University is committed to this ideal and has over the years, endeavored to ensure quality service delivery to PWDs.

In harmony with the commitment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of leaving no one behind and in furtherance of the Constitutional provisions captured in Article 54. King Ceasor University is committed to mainstreaming disability issues in its operations by ensuring a conducive learning and working environment for students and staff with disabilities. While some progress has been realized thus far, the University still faces challenges in its quest to ensure that disability issues are at the center of all its operations and that the challenges facing PWDs are addressed.

This Policy mitigates the challenges through a commitment to provide disability support services. Further, the policy undertakes to ensure alignment of all University policies to be disability inclusive.

It adopts as the definition of Disability, the national definition contained in the Persons with Disabilities Act, which also aligns with the international definition as provided in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. **The Act defines disability as “a physical, sensory, mental or other impairment, including any visual, hearing, learning or physical incapability, which impacts adversely on social, economic or environmental participation.”**

The definition focuses on the limitation of full and equal participation because of the condition. This Policy also recognizes that disability is an evolving concept and will take that evolving nature into account in the implementation process.

2.0 RATIONALE, SCOPE, OBJECTIVES & CORE PRINCIPLES

2.1 Rationale

Persons with Disabilities form part of the University's students, staff, and stakeholders. However, often they experience obstacles that hinder the realization of their full potential. King Ceasor University has, therefore, made deliberate strategic efforts to bridge this gap by having a policy on disability issues. This document outlines our Policy for supporting students, staff and stakeholders with disabilities in line with our legal obligations and our duty of care. The Policy promotes, protects and ensures full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all PWDs. It provides the institutional commitment and measures for mainstreaming disability issues in all University processes and operations.

2.2 Scope

This Policy applies to all students, staff and relevant stakeholders as a guideline to ensuring that disability concerns are mainstreamed in all processes and the environment in the entire University, Campuses, Schools, Institutes, Centers and Departments. It is intended to influence ethics, attitudes, policies, procedures, regulations and practices related to students, staff and other stakeholders to ensure that they are disability inclusive.

Staff and students with disabilities will be required to register with the National Council for Persons with Disabilities and obtain the necessary documentation and submit this to the University to enable the University to offer them support services under this Policy.

2.3 Policy Objectives

- a) To create awareness on disability issues among the University Community to foster a positive attitude towards PWDs.
- b) To ensure accessibility to the institution's facilities, built environment, information and services for PWDs.
- c) To provide equal opportunities of learning and employment for PWDs.
- d) To ensure a conducive work environment for staff with disabilities.
- e) To ensure that staff and students who become incapacitated while at the University are supported and enabled.
- f) To promote the participation of PWDs in decision-making at all levels.

- g) To ensure the safety of PWDs in the event of an emergency.

2.4 Core Principles

The principles that guide the implementation of this Policy are:

- i. **Inclusion** – The University shall ensure the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in all processes and all levels of decision making.
- ii. **Accessibility** – The University shall endeavor to ensure accessibility of built environment, facilities and provision of information in accessible formats.
- iii. **Reasonable Accommodation** – The University shall ensure that necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments are provided where needed in a particular case to Persons with Disabilities.
- iv. **Dignity** - The Policy is anchored on respect for inherent dignity and individual autonomy which includes freedom of choice and independence of all persons.
- v. **Non-Discrimination** -The Policy prohibits discrimination based on disability.
- vi. **Equity** - The University shall ensure equality of opportunities and equity in all its operations and services regardless of disability status.

3.0 LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Policy is guided by the provisions of the following laws, policies, national and international instruments.

- i. The Constitution of Uganda
- ii. The Persons with Disabilities Act
- iii. The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2006
- iv. The Employment Act
- v. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2008
- vi. African Charter on the Human and Peoples' Rights of 1981.

The Constitution of Uganda directs that disability issues be mainstreamed in all spheres of governance and public affairs, setting the basis for the development of this Policy. It provides for equal treatment, inclusivity, and non-discrimination as national values and principles of governance. In addition, it requires that Persons with Disabilities get equal opportunities for appointment, training, and advancement in the public service. At the center of the Article is the requirement for inclusivity for PWDs. In addition to directing that PWDs be treated humanely, with dignity and respect, the article specifically deals with access to educational institutions and facilities. This Policy consequently seeks to give a framework for the realization of this right within King Ceasor University.

The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act recognizes the place of University education in supporting inclusion and equality for Persons with Disabilities and thus provides that one of the objectives of University education is to promote equalization of PWDs, amongst other marginalized groups. The Act also requires that affirmative action for PWDs guide admission to Universities.

At the international level, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008 has elaborate provisions geared towards ensuring that PWDs are respected, treated equally to other members of society and with dignity and their participation promoted. Some key areas that the Convention addresses include access to education, language, communication, discrimination, reasonable accommodation, universal design, and awareness raising.

At the continental level, Uganda is a signatory to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, Article 18 which guarantees PWDs special measures of protection in keeping with their physical or moral needs. This right has subsequently been elaborated in a Protocol to the Charter 9 on the Rights of PWDs in Africa.

4.0 POLICY STATEMENTS

4.1 Aligning All University Policies And Strategic Plans To Be Disability Inclusive

The University has developed a myriad of policies to guide its processes and discharge of its mandate. All the policies affect PWDs just as they affect other members of the university community. Some policies are, however, more critical for disability mainstreaming than others. Notable ones in this regard, include the Gender Policy. Despite this, the extent to which the policies adopted by the University address disability issues within their sphere of focus varies with some totally silent, others mentioning in passing while others are comprehensive.

Effective inclusion requires that disability issues are not just addressed in and by a Disability policy of an institution, but in all policies. Consequently, the University will align all its policies and procedures to this policy to enable effective attention to and mainstreaming of disability matters in all policy interventions. In addition, subsequent strategic plans of the University will comprehensively address disability mainstreaming.

4.2 Training And Sensitization On Disability

The University has a Human Resource Manual which outlines training and development as a key instrument for promoting institutional performance. The University will offer in-house

training(s) and sensitization on disability mainstreaming and external training on a needs basis. Most of the training and sensitization on disability will focus on identifying the types of disabilities to create awareness and build a culture of inclusion through de-stigmatization.

The University is committed to and will undertake continuous training and sensitization for all staff and students on disability issues. Training will also focus on ensuring that there is knowledge of providing disability friendly services, including sign language. The training shall be participatory and involve PWDs as trainers together with other resource persons. They shall be conducted across the entire University using a cascade model.

4.3 Accessibility To Facilities And Built Environment

Some of the University facilities and premises are accessible to PWDs whereas others are not. The University will install elevators in all new buildings, provide ramps, accessible parking lots, signage, accessible washrooms, customer service points, furniture and fittings and accessible surroundings. Parking lots for Persons with Disabilities shall be well marked, and reserved for the exclusive use of disabled motorists. In the event of an emergent evacuation procedure, the University will ensure that some staff and students have such information as relates to how PWDs may be assisted in emergencies.

The University shall identify and address barriers to facilities and buildings by:

- i. Allocating in the annual University budget adequate funds for retrofitting of access solutions in existing buildings and installation.
- ii. Adhering to the standards and guidelines on Universal Design Principles in the design, construction and maintenance of all buildings, facilities and all other infrastructures for which the University is responsible.
- iii. Allocating designated parking areas for PWDs and ensuring that they are not used by non-disabled motorists.
- iv. Sensitizing staff and students and putting in place measures for safety and evacuation for PWDs during emergencies.
- v. Maintaining door closers within acceptable limits, ensuring all signage are updated and all safety devices such as a bell, fire alarm, whistle or siren, flashing lights, non-electrical elevators, safety scents and signs or symbols are in working condition.

4.4 Admission of Students

The Persons with Disabilities Act, requires all learning institutions to consider the special needs of PWDs with respect to the entry requirements, pass marks, curriculum, examinations, auxiliary services, use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements and other similar considerations. Further, the Act states that no persons or learning institutions shall deny admission to a PWD because of their disability.

In fulfillment of the above obligations, the University shall:

- i. Take affirmative action measures to increase the number of students with disabilities admitted to all its courses and programs.
- ii. Make the admission process more disability friendly.
- iii. Allow Students with Disabilities to make their own queue during registration and any other service related to admission.
- iv. Uphold the principle of non-discriminatory approach in the enrolment of students with Disabilities in various Academic programs relevant to their qualifications.

4.5 Teaching and Learning

PWDs are entitled to equal access to all teaching and learning resources, processes, and services. Students with disabilities have unique needs and may require additional support in their learning. Special consideration will be given to ensure that students with disabilities can fully access all teaching and learning services. Furthermore, with the adoption of online learning, the unique needs of persons with disabilities will be taken into account and appropriately addressed.

University examinations are important because they play a central role in the assessment and measurement of students' progress. Students with Disabilities face various challenges which are unique to their various forms of disabilities. The challenges if not mitigated affect their participation and performance in examinations.

The University shall:

- i. Integrate disability considerations into the design and implementation of all programs.
- ii. Provide students with disabilities with needed support services such as interpretation, Braille machines, assistive technologies and guides to facilitate their learning.
- iii. Address the needs of persons with disability during online teaching and learning to enable them to access and utilize the adopted platforms.
- iv. Address the needs of Students with Disabilities during the examination process.

4.6 Employment, Welfare and Support To Staff With Disabilities

PWDs form part of the University Workforce spread across different job cadres. The Constitution of Uganda requires all Institutions to progressively work towards ensuring that

five percent of the workforce are PWDs. Currently, the percentage of the University workforce is below this constitutional threshold. Once in employment, PWDs require reasonable accommodation and support from the University to be able to discharge their employment obligations. In addition, those who acquire disabilities while in employment should, in compliance with international standards, be rehabilitated and supported to utilize their full potential.

The University shall:

- i. Take measures in the recruitment of staff to ensure that progressive realization of the requirement that at least 5% of the workforces are PWDs.
- ii. Not discriminate against qualified PWDs during recruitment, promotion, training & development.
- iii. Ensure that all recruitment processes including job advertisement, shortlisting, and interviews are disability inclusive.
- iv. Provide reasonable accommodation to the needs of staff with disabilities on a case-by-case basis, depending on the nature of disability.
- v. Take into consideration the specific needs of PWDs during transfers and deployment.
- vi. Put in place measures to support staff who acquire disabilities while in the University to ensure they continue being in employment.

4.7 Participation in University Processes

Public participation is an important principle of governance and is a mandatory requirement under the constitution of Uganda. However, Persons with disability are invariably excluded from certain processes due to their disability status. King Ceasor University recognizes the importance of inclusion of persons with disability in all activities and processes at the institution. The University shall therefore take measures to involve persons with disability in all undertakings in the University.

4.8 Data Management

Lack of data constrains the ability of planning and monitoring for PWDs. To ensure full and equal participation of PWDs, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UNCRPD) instructs parties to collect and disseminate data on disability. In compliance with this requirement, King Ceasor University shall continuously collect and maintain accurate data on PWDs for purposes of planning, inclusion and monitoring.

King Ceasor University relies on accurate data for informed decision making. Collection and analysis of comprehensive data on PWDs is, therefore critical for Disability Mainstreaming within the institution.

The University shall:

- i. Continuously collect, analyze, and disseminate gender-disaggregated data on staff and students with disabilities, their challenges, and needs for informed decision making.
- ii. Guarantee the confidentiality of information collected from staff and students with disabilities relating to their status as required or permitted by law. Any information collected shall be used for the benefit of the staff or the student with disabilities. No information should be shared without the consent of the staff or students with disabilities.

4.9 Resources

The effectiveness of implementing a disability policy relies heavily on allocating resources that meet identified needs. King Ceasor University is dedicated to providing sufficient human and financial resources to support this policy. The University will plan for and allocate adequate resources for disability integration in its annual plans and budgets, ensuring that the annual disability integration work plan includes financial allocations for implementation. Additionally, the University will seek resources from stakeholders and partners to bolster its disability integration efforts.

4.10 Stakeholder Engagement

The University recognizes the important role that stakeholders play and is committed to their engagement in all its operations. In implementing this Policy, the University shall identify and engage all the relevant stakeholders. Areas of stakeholder engagement include sensitization, training, and registration by the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, resource mobilization, and provision of assistive devices and bursaries.

5.0 IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Implementation Framework

The overall responsibility for implementing this policy rests with the Vice Chancellor. The policy will be implemented at various service delivery points, including all Schools, Directorates, Centers, and Departments, which must integrate disability considerations into their operations as stipulated in the policy and under their respective mandates. Each School will have a Disability Integration Committee to provide oversight of disability integration within their respective areas. The Student Support Centre will handle the daily coordination of disability support services at the University, while the Central Disability Integration Committee will provide oversight at the top management level.

5.2 Monitoring And Evaluation

School Disability Integration Committees shall collate reports from all their units and prepare quarterly reports for submission to the Student Support Centre. Departments within Central Administration shall also prepare and submit their reports to the Student Support Centre.

The Student Support Centre shall undertake continuous monitoring of disability mainstreaming activities within the University. It shall prepare quarterly, and an annual report based on its monitoring and information from School Disability Integration Committees for submission to the Vice Chancellor.

6.0 REVIEW

The policy shall be reviewed from time to time as deemed necessary.