



# CAPE COAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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## DISABILITY POLICY

2016

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

The Cape Coast Technical University strongly respects the inherent dignity and worth of all persons with disabilities, and is committed to promoting their human rights by responsibly and responsively supporting equal access to all areas of campus life – academic, social, and professional. We do not pursue this course in order to be charitable. We do so because anything less would be an unequivocal denial of human rights and a rejection of development and growth.

The University acknowledges that persons with Disabilities (PWDs) have the full potential to achieve equal success to able-bodied persons when appropriate support services and structures are in place to meet their disability-related needs.

The management of CCTU recognizes these realities and is committed to:

- address barriers faced by persons with disabilities in their participation as equal members of society.
- promote equality and eliminate discrimination by taking the appropriate steps to ensure that appropriate accommodations are provided.
- view disability from the gender perspective, working toward the empowerment of women with disabilities.

## 2.0 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

Cape Coast Technical University (CCTU) recognizes the definition of a Person with a Disability (PWD) based on the Persons with Disability Act 2006, Act 715. Therefore, a PWD is an individual with physical, mental or sensory impairment, including visual, hearing or speech functional disability, which gives rise to physical, cultural or social barriers that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of that individual.

A person with a disability at CCTU shall refer to:

1. any person who has record of such impairment, or
2. any person who has record of a psychological or psychiatric disability, or
3. any person who is regarded as having either of the above.

A qualified individual with a disability shall mean an individual with a disability who:

- a). meets the academic and technical standards to be required for admission or participation in the education programmes of CCTU. This includes students with disabilities participating in distance learning or field placements that are offered as part of a programme's field of study.
- b). meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programmes or activities provided by a public entity regardless of:
  - a. reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices
  - b. the provision of auxiliary aids and services

c. the removal of architectural, communication, or transportation barriers

“Discrimination on the basis of disability” means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of appropriate accommodation.

“Appropriate accommodation” means necessary and justified modifications and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

### 3.0 CATEGORIES OF DISABILITIES

CCTU has established eight broad disability categories to be used for reporting purposes:

- A. **Visual limitation:** Blindness or partial sight to the degree that it impedes the educational process and may necessitate accommodations, support services, or programs.
- B. **Deaf and Hard of Hearing:** Limitation in the hearing process that impedes the educational process and necessitates accommodations, support services, or programs. Students in this category may require communication accommodation such as oral or sign language interpreters, note taking services, or assistive technology.

- C. **Mobility limitation:** Limitation in locomotion or motor functions that indicates a need for accommodations, support services, or programs.
- D. **Communication disability:** Limitations in the speech and/or hearing processes that impede the educational process and may necessitate accommodations, support services, or programs.
- E. **Learning disability:** A generic term that refers to the heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction. Even though a learning disability may exist concomitantly with other disabling conditions (e.g., sensory impairment) or environmental influences (e.g., cultural/language differences or psychiatric conditions), the learning disability is not the direct result of those conditions or influences.
- F. **Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD):** A neuro-cognitive disorder characterized by inattention, restlessness, impulsivity, and behavioral dysregulation, or a combination of these. Problems with focus and attention manifest as chronic problems with concentration, organizing work, planning,
- G. sustaining effort, and utilizing short-term memory. AD/HD is not the result of a psychological or psychiatric disorder.
- H. **Psychiatric Disability:** Chronic and persistent mental illnesses as categorized by the current Ministry of Health, that impede the educational process and may necessitate accommodations, support services or programs.
- I. **Medical Limitation/Other Functional Limitations:** Any other disability, due to either a medical condition (such as epilepsy or seizure disorder, asthma, cardiovascular problems) or a dysfunction of a body part or process (such as a neurological

condition) that necessitates accommodations, support services, or programs.

#### **4.0 PROVISION OF SERVICES**

An individual in need of auxiliary aids and services and appropriate accommodations or modifications should make their requests to the Office of Disability Services immediately upon arrival on campus for the academic year in order to facilitate scheduling or the acquisition of personnel, equipment, and/or other materials. Requests for support services should be made a minimum of 5 working days in advance of the program for which the service is required. The Director of the Office of Disability Services shall establish campus guidelines to implement the provision of services.

For all University lectures, functions, events, programs, and other activities, which are open to the University community and/or the public, persons with disabilities are not required to request accommodations for services before they are provided. This includes but is not limited to the following:

- Entry/exit access ramps
- Guides to assist in seating
- Sign language interpreting services
- Closed-captioning of all University-produced videos for events and classroom instruction

#### **5.0 ACCESS TO ASSISTIVE TOOLS**

The aim of the CCTU is to provide information and communication technology (ICT) resources and services be accessible to all students, faculty, staff and the general public regardless of disability. CCTU has

identified alternative media, web accessibility (per international standards set forth in the Web Accessibility Initiative), intensive computer training, assistive technology training, and ongoing procurement of assistive technology as priorities.

Assistive Technology includes:

- Reading and Writing Enhancement Software
- Screen reader software (JAWS 12.0)
- Screen enlargement software (Zoom Text)
- CCTV text magnification systems
- Printer access for note-takers
- Refreshable Braille display
- Alternative navigation programs
- Adaptive mouse available upon request
- Adaptive keyboards and assistive listening devices.

## **6.0 CENTRE FOR ALTERNATIVE MEDIA AND ASSISTIVETECHNOLOGY ((CAMAT)**

A well-equipped laboratory stocked with necessary assistive technology equipment and resources shall be established in conjunction with the Library

## **7.0 OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES (ODS)**

- A. The Department of the “Office of Disability Services” will be immediately created and be fully funded by the University to serve as the body that directly oversees all disability-related



issues and services on campus. The ODS will be centrally located on the ground floor of a fully accessible building and be of an appropriate size for personnel and student use.

- B. The Office of Disability Services will head the activities and oversee staff at the Centre for Alternative Media and Assistive Technology in conjunction with the Library. CAMAT will continue to be funded by the University as appropriate for library-related materials (i.e. braille embossing of texts, ICT labs and assistive technology to access research). Funding for non-library related materials, i.e. digital recorders, will come through ODS. Library and non-library related materials will be determined by the Librarian and Director of ODS.
  
- C. The Office of Disability Services will at all times be fully staffed by qualified personnel with the education, experience and appropriate training as relevant to their position.

## **8.0 PARTICIPATION AND ACCESSIBILITY**

All applications will be assessed on the basis of academic suitability for the course in question. Discuss about the support requirements of students will be separate from that consideration. Criteria and procedures used for selecting students will relate to the requirements of the programme, including any professional requirements, and will not disadvantage or debar applicants with disability.

The University will ensure that students with disabilities will have access to the full range of support service, appropriate to their needs,

which are available to their non-disabled peers. Where existing services cannot be made accessible, the University will make reasonable alternative services and arrangements available.

A Special Admissions Advisory Group has been established by the University Learning and Teaching Committee to advise on exceptional (disability) cases which require consideration outside current policy (i.e. where exceptional and possible unusual adjustments are required).

The University will make information available about access to buildings and support facilities to enable disabled students to make an informed choice of the University.

## **9.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING**

The University will ensure that the requirements of disabled students are considered during programme validation and review and that appropriate amendments are made. Programme specifications that raise barriers to access by disabled people will be reconsidered and reasonable adjustments made to minimize such barriers.

Academic and academic support staff must plan and employ teaching and learning strategies, which make the delivery of the programme as inclusive as possible and, where reasonable, allow adaption to accommodate disabled students' individual requirements.

The University will ensure that, whatever possible, disabled students have equal opportunity to access academic and vocational placements, including field trips and study abroad. The University may seek further guidance from an appropriate professional in case where a student requires additional support on work placements or to study abroad.

Disabled research students will receive the support and guidance necessary to secure access to research programmes.

Assessment and examination policies, practices and procedures should provide disabled students with the same opportunities as their peers to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes, which may, in some cases, include alternative assessment and examination arrangements.

Where studying is interrupted as a direct result of a disability-related cause, in consultation with student and considering the specific requirements of his or her disability, a plan will be agreed to ensure that the student's academic progress is not compromised.

Where appropriate evidence is provided, that delayed completion of assessed work, non-attendance at examinations, deferral or withdrawal has been due to a disability related cause, the University will ensure that this is recorded in non-prejudicial terms in all academic progress files and appropriate adjustments will be made. (e.g. study plans, exam extensions etc.)

## **10. STUDENT COMPLAINTS**

The University has in place policies and procedures to deal with complaints arising directly or indirectly from a student disability. In the first instance issues, should be resolved at the academic Faculty level by the personal tutor/ Faculty Disability Representative. Formal complaints should follow the same guidelines that apply for other complaints within the University. This policy should be read for other complaints within the University. It should be read in conjunction with the other policies, regulations and statutes of the University.

## **11.0 STAFF**

### **11.1 PROMOTING DISABILITY EQUALITY**

It is unlawful to discriminate, in the field of employment, against a disabled person for a reason that relates to a person's disability. This applies not only to recruitment, opportunities for promotion, transfer or training, dismissals or redundancies.

To this end the University will:

- a) Provide equal opportunities for individuals who are disabled in relation to recruitment, education, training, promotion, transfer and terms and conditions of employment;
- b) Ensure that disabled staff are given reasonable support, equipment and facilities necessary for them to carry out their duties successfully;
- c) Make reasonable adjustments to working arrangement needs and future training requirements specific to their disability, to ensure their skills and abilities can be fully utilized at work and to discuss any reasonable adjustments which may be identified.
- d) Ensure that it follows guidance from external advisors such as the Equality and Human Rights Commission and the Equality Challenge Unit with regards to defining what is 'reasonable' and will seek advice from its occupational health service.

## **12.0 RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION**

All university vacancies will be open to suitable qualified disabled people.

Employment criteria shown in the Job Purpose and vacancy advertisement must be significant, objective and appropriate to that particular post, e.g. it would be inappropriate to specify a high level of mobility for a sedentary post. Job advertisements must be written in an appropriate non-discriminatory manner which encourages applications from disabled persons.

All applicants who accept the offer of an interview will be asked in advance if they require any special arrangements to be made for them at the interview.

## **13.0 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

All disabled staff will have equal access to training and development opportunities including, within reasons, any which are identified in relation to their specific needs.

Staff who are involved in recruitment and the management of disabled staff will also be provided with an appropriate level of training to ensure they are equipped to assist and support disabled staff or potential staff members.

## **13.1 STAFF RETENTION**

The University will make every reasonable effort to enable a member of staff who becomes disabled or whose level of disability increase, to continue working in the post in which they were originally employees.

Where a disable staff member is unable to continue with their existing duties, every effort will be made to find suitable alternative employment within the University and appropriate training will be provided if required.

In situations where suitable alternatives work cannot be identified, or where an employee is unable to continue in the University's employment for reasons relating to their disability, the University will provide reasonable assistance to help that individual in their departure. This may include but is not limited to investigation into the possibility of recruitment on grounds of ill health; and identification of appropriate external sources of advice and assistance.

## **14. CONSULTATION**

The role and working conditions of disabled staff will be reviewed periodically, according to individual needs and especially in light of any changes in their disability. Each disabled member of staff will have an opportunity at least annually to discuss any current employment issues they may have and any future training and development needs. The Staff Disability Forum which meets three times per year plays a key role in contributing to and monitoring the work of the Equality and Diversity office in respect of disability-related matters.

This review process will be initiated by HR, who will be responsible for contacting the member of staff to see if they wish to discuss any issues but the individual can decide who they wish to conduct the review. They may choose to discuss their needs with their manager perhaps as part of the annual staff appraisal meeting, with their HR representative or with Occupational Health.

The University's Occupational Health Services have an integral role in relation to identification, assessment and ongoing monitoring of the needs of individuals who fall within the scope of this policy.

## **15. STAFF COMPLAINTS**

An employee who feels they have been unfairly treated or discriminated against on the grounds of disability may raise a complaint through the website or from the HR department.

Job applicants who consider that they have been discriminated against should be advised to write to the Director of Human Resources, giving details as to why they believe they have been discriminated against.

## **16. ESTABLISHMENT OF ADVISORY BOARD**

The primary purpose of this Advisory Board will be to ensure that the Policy is being enforced effectively. The review will take into account all new international and national policies, and changes in CCTU policies or structure.

The Advisory Board will also determine when accommodations and/or support services are creating a "fundamental alteration" in the nature of the service, program, or activity or would create undue financial or administrative burdens, in accordance with the University's Policy on Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability.

The Advisory Board for CCTU's Policy for Persons with Disabilities will consist of the following:

1. Member of Student Body (female) elected to position
2. Member of Student Body (male) elected to position
3. Dean of Students
4. Director of Development
5. Member of Administration elected to position by Student Association
6. Faculty Head (female)
7. Faculty Head (male)
8. Director of Office of Disability Services
- 9.

## **17. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The University will monitor the applications, admissions, academic progress and nature of impairment of disabled students. The University will operate systems to monitor and review the effectiveness of provision for students and staff with disabilities, evaluate progress and identify opportunities for enhancement. This includes monitoring representation of disabled staff and students in different University activities including sport, performances and recreation.

All aspects of this policy, particularly the recruitment process, will be subject to ongoing review and amendment, as appropriate in order to improve its effectiveness. This will include consideration of measures which will assist in rectifying any under-representation of disabled employees in the University.