

INTER-UNIVERSITY COUNCIL FOR EAST AFRICA



QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDELINES ON DISABILITY AND OTHER SPECIAL NEEDS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN EAST AFRICA

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It is my wish that these guidelines will help Higher learning institutions and National Commissions/Councils for Higher Education and other stakeholders in the EAC to use these Guidelines, which are based on the harmonised good practices from the EAC Partner States as a yardstick in mainstreaming inclusive education in all their endeavors and to ensure that the necessary institutional policy and hardware infrastructure, human and financial resources are place for this purpose.

Prof. Alexandre Lyambabaje,
IUCEA, Executive Secretary

Kampala, June 2017

FOREWORD

The rapid expansion of the sector of education in the last decade raised concern over the quality of Higher Education in East Africa. Evidently, efforts to expand enrolment have not been matched with commensurate investment in education to maintain or enhance quality delivery of education by universities in the current dynamic socio-economic environment. Consequently, the decline of standards of quality education in higher education institutions have also a greater bearing impact on students with special needs and especially those with disabilities given that they require special attention if they are to enroll, progress, complete and achieve through the higher education system. Hence the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) which is a strategic institution of the East African Community (EAC) responsible for the development and coordination of higher education and research in the region, was prompted to develop and operationalise a harmonised regional quality assurance framework, as one of her mandate. The framework entails among others, harmonised guidelines, minimum standards, procedures, good practices and Programme benchmarks that are progressively being developed, in line with the East African Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (EAQFHE). Consequently, these developments contributed significantly in the ultimate transformation of the EAC into a Common Higher Education Area with effect from 20th May 2017.

Thus, the development of quality assurance guidelines on Disability and other Special Needs in higher education as part of the Regional Quality Assurance System was a response to the growing need to provide adapted teaching and learning environments for Persons With Disabilities (PWD) in higher education institutions in East Africa which were not adequately covered by the Regional Quality Assurance System that is being operationalised in the EAC region.

On behalf of the IUCEA secretariat, I wish to inspire the higher education fraternity in the region to adopt and operationalise these Guidelines on Disability and other Special Needs in order to ensure that the global agenda on quality education for all is fulfilled.

Prof. Alexandre Lyambabaje

Kampala, June 2017

IUCEA, Executive Secretary

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Affirmative action

Preferential treatment accorded to people with functional difficulties (disabilities), Special Needs or other disadvantages that deter their equal achievements as peers of the same age or/and educational setting. EAC Partner States have affirmative action legislations and policies that are expected to guide concessionary admissions or may support inclusion of students with functional difficulties (disabilities) in both public and private HLLs (e.g. Relatively lower cut mark than their peers and/or reduced costs on registration and/or full tuition fees).

Accessible Communication

All conventional and/or alternative means used in instructional communications, including assistive technology (such as captioning); conventional Sign Languages; Braille or tactile communications; accessible multimedia through written, audio or human-readers; large prints and augmentative modes and other related alternative formats.

Disability

Disability¹ is a partial or complete loss of use (or ability) of a certain body part or organ (caused by physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment), which in interaction with various barriers may hinder individuals' full and effective participation in any activities (United Nations, 2006). Disability is recognised as a socio-cultural issue that is conceptualised differently by communities according to their cultural norms and standards. According to ICF (2001) it is also 'Activity limitations', or difficulties an individual may have in executing activities". It classifies the difficulties in 10 categories ranging from 0 to 9 (0% to 100%): **0**. No difficulty (none, absent, negligible difficulties) 0%-4 %; **1**. Mild difficulty (slight, low difficulty 5-24 %; **2** Moderate difficulty (medium, fair difficulties) 25-49 %; **3** Severe difficulty (high, extreme limitations) 50-95 %; **4** Complete difficulty (total limitations) 96-100 %; **8** not specified; **9** not applicable.

Inclusive education

The process of addressing the instructional needs for all students and staff with disabilities and other special needs in the mainstream education setting. It is based on the principle that individuals are different and may present special needs based on intrinsic or extrinsic limitations/barriers, and therefore the education system and practice are expected to be flexibly adapted to suit everyone's needs.

¹ International classification of functioning, disability and health: (ICF) classifies 'Impairment, Disability, Handicap in terms of challenges in body structures, functions, activities and participation. However, local concepts, e.g. 'Kalema, Kipofu, Kiziwi, etc' are still used to imply all the three concepts interchangeably in dominant East African communities. Experiences have indicated that this kind of cultural interpretations also influence service provisions for people with disabilities in communities.

Accommodation or ‘Reasonable accommodation’

It is a necessary and appropriate modifications (not imposed, or disproportionate), to assure persons with functional difficulties or other forms of special needs the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others. At institutional and Programmes levels, it entails making necessary and appropriate modification in instructional methods/approaches, materials, assessments, work requirements and procedures and policies to enable staff and students with disabilities and other special needs (PWD and SN) to equally and effectively participate in the teaching/learning process.

Assistive Technology

Refers to any item, piece of equipment or product system whether acquired commercially, modified or customised that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. These include among others, wheel chairs, hearing devices, reading lenses, Perkins Braille, talking devices, audio and visual systems, screen readers, white canes, adjustable furniture, and adapted ICT software.

Concessionary Admission

This is a compromising admission reserved exclusively for students with significant functional limitations, which is arrived at following an assessment of the extent to which this impact negatively on the students’ learning achievement. Concessionary admission processes and procedures are ought to be administered with due respect to the prevailing affirmative action laws and/or policies, where they exist.

Discrimination on the basis of functional difficulties (disabilities) or other Special Needs

Any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of functional difficulties (disability) or any other special needs, intended to nullify 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 reasonable accommodation.

Handicap or ‘Participation Restriction’

According to ICF, handicap implies a challenge or restrictions that a person with a disability or other limitation faces when interacting with the *environment*.

Impairment

This is the damage to a part of the body (organic system) caused by genetic factors, disease, accident or other causes, which may also be the source of

disabilities. ICF (2001) classifies impairment according to its magnitudes, ranging from 0% to 100%: **0.** No impairment (none, absent, negligible, etc.) 0-4 %; **1.** Mild Impairment (slight, low,) 5-24 %; **2.** Moderate impairment (medium, fair, etc.) 25-49 %; **3.** Severe impairment (high, extreme, etc.) 50-95 %; **4** Complete impairment 96-100 %.; **8** not specified; **9** not applicable.

Universal Design for Instructions (UDI) principles²

A Universal Design (UD) products, environments, Programmes and services designed to accommodate all people, irrespective of their limitations and differences in needs, without recourse to unplanned adaptations, alterations or specialised design. It does not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where these are needed.

The Universal Design of Instructions (UDI) is the design of instructional products and environments to be usable by all students and staff, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.

Employing UD principles is expected to render the education environment more accessible, and to minimise the need any form of alterations or modification for anyone.

Resource Centre

This is a place (often a purposively selected space in a school) specially equipped with specialised resources (Human and materials) designed for instruction and support for students with Special Needs.

Support Services

These are special services offered by professionals in support of ordinary staff to students with functional difficulties (disabilities) and related educational needs; including therapeutic and rehabilitation services; sign language interpretation; Braille transcriptions; counseling; etc.

Special Needs (SN)

These are non-ordinary needs an individual may present in given circumstances or when required to accomplish certain tasks in the same way as other people, often due to intrinsic or extrinsic limitations/barriers. e.g. a student with significant functional difficulties (disabilities) may present *Special Needs Education (SNE)*, or may need extra attention/assistance from the teacher and/or the use of alternative educational approaches or/and tools.

2 For a complete UDI checklist, consult Equal Access: Universal Design of Instruction at www.uw.edu/doit/equal-access-universal-design-instruction.

ACRONYMS

DPO	:	Disabled People’s Organisations
UN CRPD	:	United Nations Convention for Rights of People with Disabilities
EAC	:	East African Community
EALISNER	:	East African Institutional Linkage in Inclusive, Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation
ICF	:	International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health
NUDOR	:	National Union of Disability Organisations in Rwanda
PWD	:	Persons with Disabilities
PWD and SN	:	Persons with Disability and other Special Needs
QA	:	Quality Assurance
RC	:	Resource Centre
SDG	:	Sustainable Development Goals
SL	:	Rwanda Sign Language
SN	:	Special Needs
SWD	:	Students With Disabilities
UDI	:	Universal Design for Instruction

CHAPTER ONE: CONTEXT

This chapter presents the background, rationale, scope of the guidelines for PWD and SN in Higher Education Institutions in the East African Community.

1.1 Background

The development of these Quality Assurance Guidelines for Persons with Disability and Other Special Needs (PWD and SN) in higher education was a response to the growing regional need to provide equal learning opportunities to all Students With Disabilities (SWD) in higher education. All the EAC Partner States are signatories to the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) of 2006, in which Article 24 obliges all UN member states to support education of children and youths with disabilities at all levels of schooling. Hence, it has been a requirement stipulated in Article 120 (C) of the *Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community (EAC)*, that all Partner States co-operate in the field of social welfare with respect to the development and adoption of a common approach towards the disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including persons with disabilities through rehabilitation and provision of education and training.

Concerns over quality in Higher education in the East African region is also prompted by the rapid development of the sector of inclusive education in the last decade. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of institutions accommodating SWD; in the growing diversity of categories of students with disabilities and special needs, that increasingly exert pressure on the quality of higher education offered.

Evidently, efforts to expand enrolment have not been matched with those that enhance educational quality (Materu, 2007). However, declining standards of education quality in higher education institutions have a greater impact on students with special needs and especially those with disabilities, who are increasingly claiming their legitimate rights to be enrolled, to be accommodated, progress, complete and achieve through higher education.

It is in response to the regional concerns that IUCEA initiated the process of developing quality assurance guidelines for students with disabilities and other special educational needs in Higher education in four successive workshop sessions. The first three workshops involved technical experts and high education regulatory bodies of the EAC Partner States (Dar es Salaam in 2014, Kigali in 2015 and Kampala in 2016), while the last workshop drew regional representatives from organisations of People with disabilities who ably represented beneficiary groups

on 20th – 21st April, 2017, This final regional stakeholders' validation workshop immensely enriched the draft document that was developed by experts in the preceding three workshops.

The present document is thus an outcome of the IUCEA deliberate efforts to achieve harmonised quality services for all students with disabilities and other special needs in higher learning institutions in East Africa. Besides, the process of developing this document was informed by a number of harmonised related initiatives and guidelines of higher learning institutions of the region.

1.2 Rationale

There has been an evident omission of the disability question in the on-going regional quality assurance framework that is being operationalised as part of the EAC Common Higher Education Area (EACHEA) discourse and related activities. There is not only limited research on QA aspects for PWD and SN in higher education in East Africa but also, this group is not often captured in the universities data systems with implications on strategic planning, specifically on budgetary and related provisions.

Further, preliminary research on the disability subject found limited policy provisions for PWD and SN in the regional, national and institutional quality assurance guidelines. This prompted IUCEA initiate the process of developing this regional policy in order to mainstream the disability question in the ongoing processes of operationalisation of quality assurance guidelines development at the regional level (IUCEA, 2015; Materu, 2007). Moreover, the need for the guidelines was further informed by the study that established the status of services and educational processes for PWD and SN in East African countries (IUCEA, 2015). The study further indicated that there were limited policies and support services to ensure quality academic provision for PWD and SN (IUCEA, 2015). In the study, it was noted that PWD were marginalised by the limited Programmes available, thus confining them to specific Programmes because of their functional limitations. For example, while the visual impaired are limited to arts and social sciences, the hearing-impaired are limited to practical based Programmes.

Therefore, these guidelines are aimed at enhancing provision_of quality educational services for Persons With Disability (PWD) and Other Special Needs as part of the East African Quality Assurance Framework. The guidelines are also aimed at sharing of good practices in HEIs of the region and the national commissions and councils for higher education to benchmark and mainstream these regional guidelines into their national regulatory frameworks. Furthermore, HEIs are expected to have in place strategies for information management system for collecting all data related to PWDs and SN (difficulties and special needs) and follow-up mechanisms right from the time of entry to the exit from the institutions.

1.3 Legal Framework

It is within the framework of the UN Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) of 2008 (Article 24) duly recognised by the EAC policy for persons with disabilities of March 2012 (EAC 2012), that IUCEA acknowledges the EAC Partner States' policies and legislations related to empowerment and equalisation of opportunities through education for citizens with disabilities and other special needs (Section 2.3).

1.4 Scope

The Guidelines for Quality Assurance for PWD and SN envisages facilitating (enabling) the entire higher education community (staff and students) with significant Special Needs who may find themselves in a situation where they deploy significantly more (unnecessary) efforts, resources, time while attempting to access services, participating in activities and / or using facilities they are entitled to as a right in HLLs in the EAC.

The Guidelines for QA for PWD and SN concerns all categories of staff and students who shall qualify for reasonable accommodation and/or adjusted provisions through standardised Special Needs assessment. It will include and not limited to those with significant functional difficulties (disabilities); Psychosocial challenges; Curricula-related Challenges; and/or Health Challenges.

These Guidelines shall be applied in line with other related regional policies and guidelines that include among others, A Road Map to Quality: Handbook for Quality Assurance in Higher Education;, and Principles and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education in East Africa (2014).

The Guidelines shall be regarded as a common point of reference for quality enhancement in higher education of the region. They shall apply to HLLs and to this respect, they are expected to mainstream these guidelines into their institutional policies. Furthermore, the guidelines shall also apply to national commissions and councils for higher education in their overall higher education management oversight and regulatory function. The Guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive, *supra* national nor *supra*-institution, but are rather intended to guide and promote inclusive education, institutional and national diversities, while ensuring regional harmony in quality assurance practices for Persons with Disabilities and other Special Needs.

CHAPTER 2: GUIDELINES AT THE INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

This chapter entails Quality Assurance Guidelines for Persons with Disabilities and Other Special Needs at institutional level. The aspects covered include: policy statements, governance, human resource, funding and financial management, educational activities, research and community outreach/engagement, benchmarking, facilities and infrastructure, and quality assurance strategies.

2.1. Stakeholders' involvement

Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) shall engage with PWD and a range of related stakeholders in all policy and academic Programmes design, implementation and evaluation at all levels, geared towards improving service delivery of the institution (See Chapter 4 of the Guidelines).

2.2. Institutional Principles and Policies

Institutions shall demonstrate their commitment to inclusion of staff and students with disabilities and other special Needs:

- i. Through a clear policy statement that recognises the principles of equity and equality, non-discrimination, inclusiveness and accessibility in relation to Persons with Disabilities and other Special Needs (PWD and SN).
- ii. By availing a sustainable budget line to implement SN activities and services
- iii. By guaranteeing adherence to Universal Design for Instruction (UDI)/ mainstreaming SN in all annual strategic planning that reflects the mechanisms of accommodating and supporting PWD and SN.
- iv. By ensuring representation of PWDs in the students/guild government/ council, entrusted with the responsibilities of advocating for the rights and needs of students with disabilities and other special needs.
- v. By ensuring provisions for equal opportunities with regard to both staff (academic and non-academic) and students.
- vi. Through regular tracer studies (annually or bi-annual) on the needs and provisions for PWDs to monitor, measure, and evaluate shortcomings, improvements, and inform new strategies.

2.3 Strategic planning

Higher Learning Institutions' (HLIs) strategic plans shall be inclusive of needs, provisions and operations of PWD and SN, with a clearly spelt out budget lines.

2.4. Leadership and management's commitments

2.4.1 Institutional Leadership and management

HLLs leadership and management at all levels shall ensure:

- i. Commitments to inclusion of PWD and SN in all institutional strategic plans, policies and codes of practice/ conducts
- ii. The development and implementation of policies and guidelines that also spell out the institutions' commitments to providing and supporting equalisation of opportunities for PWDs and other SN.
- iii. The establishment of policy guidelines and codes of conduct that explicitly prohibit discrimination, labelling, harassment, marginalisation and victimisation of PWD and SN, and put in place strategies to prevent the occurrence of these behaviours.
- iv. Involvement of PWD in all key decision making organs and levels.

2.4.2 Student's Representation

HLLs shall ensure that PWD and SN (Students and staff) are represented in all institutional governance structures.

2.5 Human Resource

2.5.1 Human Resource Policy

Higher Learning Institutions (HLL)s Human resource policies and strategies shall make provisions for recruitment and development of staff with Disabilities and other Special Needs.

2.5 .2 Capacity Building

Staff (Academic and administrative) shall be empowered through training and sensitisation to work effectively with PWD and SN, including mind-set change and appropriate use of support provisions in place.

2.6. Transition to HEIs

2.6. 1. Equalisation of opportunities in admission processes

The application and registration processes and procedures shall take into consideration the various students' special needs. This should include assisted or inclusive application procedures and formats that are user-friendly and in accessible formats.

2.6. 2 Enrollment and registration

- i. Institutions are encouraged to develop strategies to increase enrolment of students with SN through concessionary admissions criteria in concurrence with the guidance of the prevailing national and regional legal frameworks.
- ii. Institutions shall maintain up-to-date information and systematic records of students with disabilities and other special needs.
- iii. Institutions shall institute priority admission for students with disabilities, to allow time to plan their induction and subsequent special needs provisions and accommodation.

2.6. 3. Special Needs Assessment

- i. The eligibility of students for subsequent special needs services shall be based upon the special needs assessment committee report.
- ii. Institutions shall have in place a special needs assessment committees, entrusted with the responsibility of setting up credible SN assessment criteria; conduct assessment processes, and establish recommendations for subsequent redress.
- iii. The process shall precede the induction period, shall entail weighing up the students' abilities to perform in Programmes of study applied for; levels of needs for alternative provisions, and/or recommendations for concessionary admissions and/or for any other special needs service considerations.

2.6. 4. Induction

Institutions shall plan induction /orientation Programmes with the objectives of introducing students with disabilities and other SN to all available reasonable accommodation (accessible materials, package of information, resources and services), and listening to their various challenges and special needs. Equally, Institutions shall use the opportunity to sensitise the new community to the special needs of students with disabilities, and the roles of every member in accommodating them.

2.7. Information Management

Institutions shall:

- i. Establish mechanisms of identifying, assessing, documenting and managing information related to students' and staff's special needs, which would be used for provision of reasonable accommodation and necessary instructional resources/services.

- ii. Develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating students' progress, drop-out and graduation rates, as well as employability of students with disabilities and other special needs.
- iii. Establish Information Management Systems to enable the documentation and tracking of all information related to PWD and SN for strategic planning and decision making at all levels.
- iv. Avail and communicate all information in accessible formats to authorised individuals and personnel, and duly respecting confidentiality for all personal information related to disabilities and special needs.

2.8. Facilities and Infrastructure

Institutions shall:

- i. Have in place disability and Special Needs Resource Centres (SNRC), equipped with appropriate support facilities and skilled personnel (assistive devices and resources that include safety measures) for all ranges of and categories of PWD and SN.
- ii. Have in place facilities and services that are accessible, barrier-free and adequate, to enable all ranges of and categories of PWD and SN to participate fully in the academic and social life of the respective institutions.
- iii. Provide conducive physical and social learning/teaching environments, able to accommodate all ranges and categories of PWD and SN.
- iv. Plan and ensure regular awareness rising and training on safety and security needs, accommodation and accessibility requirements for all ranges and categories of PWD and SN.
- v. Ensure that specifications of accommodation and accessibility for PWD and SN are available and are in conformity with the international accessibility standards.
- vi. Ensure that accessibility takes into consideration all ranges and categories of PWD and SN, e.g. bowel control difficulties, sight difficulties, breathing, etc., and not limited only to the mainstream accessibility standards that concern very few categories and special needs.
- vii. Ensure that all infrastructure take into consideration safety and security measures for all ranges and categories of PWD and SN.

2.9. Safety and Security

Institutions shall

- i. Adhere to the prevailing standards and regulations for all its infrastructural and physical space developments and renovations, as well as to the Universal Design (UD) principles related to accessibility and security.
- ii. Ensure that all its facilities and environments are welcoming, comfortable, accessible, aesthetic, and fully functional for all the users with varying categories of PWD and SN.
- iii. Ensure all facilities shall have clear safety information signs (directional or/and instructional) in large, high-contrast prints, and in all other accessible formats.
- iv. Pay particular attention to emergency evacuation guidelines and procedures in residential and work facilities or/and spaces.

2.10 Extracurricular Activities

Institutions shall

- i. Provide opportunities and any additional support for equitable participation of PWD and other special needs in extracurricular activities (Sports, recreation and social activities),
- ii. Ensure equal opportunities in all campus-based as well as out-door activities for all the students with disabilities and other special needs. Notably: games, sports, debates, excursions, etc.
- iii. Ensure that a disability week is organised annually, and arrangement of relevant academic and awareness raising events are organised, including paralympics, special Olympics (games and sports), white cane day, autism day, sign language day, presentation of related relate research findings and innovations, talk shows, etc.

2.11 Research, innovations and community service

Institutions shall

- i. Develop policy frameworks and guidelines that clarify their support to research, innovation and community services for persons with disabilities and other special needs.
- ii. Ensure that funds allocated for research, innovation and community services, also includes budget lines for needs of PWD and SN within and outside their respective communities.

- iii. Support community engagement initiatives related to provision of services to PWD and SN.

2.12 Internal Quality Assurance system³

Institutions shall

- i. Establish, mainstream and institutionalise an internal quality assurance system for PWD and SN in alignment with national and regional standards and guidelines, including the present one.
- ii. Have in place policies, procedures and instruments for implementation, monitoring, evaluation and follow up of processes and activities related to inclusion of PWD and SN.

2.13 Benchmarking

Institutions shall:

- i. Put in place policy framework and mechanisms for regular benchmarking with other institutions and Programmes to compare inputs, processes and outputs in order to adopt and adapt best practices on quality provision for PWD and other special needs.
- ii. Foster inter-institutional linkages nationally, regionally and internationally, to encourage partnerships and collaboration in all services and practices related to PWD and other special needs (research, social activities etc.).

³ See Appendix B for Institutional Self-Assessment Checklist

CHAPTER 3: GUIDELINES AT PROGRAMME LEVEL

This chapter entails guidelines at Programme level, that include curriculum design and review, learning and teaching environment, academic resources, provisions for course delivery, learning assessment, course evaluation, students' profiles and benchmarking.

3.1 Curriculum Design and Review

Curriculum design, review and delivery processes shall:

- i. Reflect the needs and expectations of PWD and SN, and shall inform the formulation of the expected learning outcomes.
- ii. Be inclusive and student-centered, taking into account the diverse needs of PWD and other special needs.
- iii. Recognise the needs and interests of relevant stakeholders including organisations for PWD and other special needs (Disability Services Agencies) wherever necessary.
- iv. Ensure that special attention is paid to specific subject areas that demand special accommodation, notably, numeracy and science for blind; verbal languages literacy for native SL users (Deaf) and dyslexic students; non-differentiated curriculum for students with mental health challenges, etc.

3.2. Programme (Course) Delivery

The delivery of courses shall entail:

- i. Adoption and adaptation of a variety of inclusive teaching methods, resources and techniques to facilitate effective and meaningful learning for all ranges of categories of students with disabilities and other special needs.
- ii. Use of learning support services and assistive technologies that address diverse needs for accessibility and reasonable accommodation by of PWD and other special needs.
- iii. Adoption and adaptation of practice and procedures during field work, field trips, internships, and other out of class learning activities to accommodate all ranges of students with disabilities and other special needs
- iv. Ensuring that all academic and related staff are furnished with education resources in accessible formats, and/or supported with assistive provisions.

3.3. Students' Assessment

Institutions shall ensure that:

- i. The existing examination rules, regulations and procedures include provisions that accommodate the diverse needs of all ranges of and categories of PWD and SN.
- ii. During the assessment of students' learning, appropriate adjustments are made in order to accommodate individual needs of all ranges and categories of PWD and SN that require it.

3.4. Teaching and Learning Environments

The teaching and learning environments shall:

- i. Provide opportunities for equitable participation by all PWD and other Special Needs.
- ii. Ensure fully accessible physical environment for all ranges of and categories of PWD and SN.
- iii. Ensure fully accessible and adapted facilities (including ICT and virtual learning platforms) for all ranges of and categories of PWD and SN.
- iv. Have in place mechanisms by which all ranges of and categories of PWD and SN can make the best use of assistive technology in teaching and learning.
- v. Ensure that library policies, procedures and services are all inclusive and responsive to the varying needs of all ranges and categories of PWD and SN.

3.5. Students support services

Institutions shall have in place:

- i. Career, work placement services and related support units that are responsible for supporting the various needs of students with disabilities and other special needs.
- ii. Mechanisms for coordinating support services for PWD and other special needs (e.g. resource center, voluntary students' groups that support students with disabilities and other special needs).
- iii. Units responsible for information related to the right and responsibilities of PWD and SN, as part of the students' advisory, mentoring and counseling services.

3.6. Quality of academic and support staff

Programme leadership shall:

- i. Facilitate academic and support staff to participate in a range of activities that enhance their knowledge and practice towards an inclusive institutional culture.
- ii. Ensure that there are designated and sufficient academic and support staff with appropriate skills and experiences to provide specialist advice and support to PWD and other special needs.

3.7. Students Evaluation of Programmes and service provisions

- i. Students' evaluation tools shall include accommodation of all ranges and categories of PWD and SN. They shall include aspect that focus on inclusiveness of teaching/learning processes of students with disabilities and other special needs.
- ii. Academic staff evaluation and rating shall take into consideration results of feedback from students' evaluation on accommodation of students with disabilities and other special needs.

3.8. Satisfaction surveys

Institutions shall regularly conduct annual satisfaction surveys with alumni, employers, exiting students and other stakeholders on the outcome and impact of Programmes on PWD and SN, to inform subsequent Programme reviews.

CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUIDELINES

This chapter provides information on the implementation of the guidelines at institutional, national and regional levels. The implementation of the QA Guidelines on PWD and SN is the responsibility of Higher Education Institutions, the national commissions and councils for higher education, and IUCEA. These shall monitor, and evaluate the implementation of the guidelines at their respective levels and put in place related improvement strategies.

4.1 Institutional Level

Higher Education Institutions shall:

- i. Have in place clearly defined institutional QA policy and implementation strategy for PWD and other special needs, as well as self-assessment mechanisms⁴ guided by the UDI principles⁵
- ii. Ensure that the staff and students are aware and are able to use the QA policy for PWD and other special needs.
- iii. Mainstream the implementation of the QA guidelines on PWD and other special needs within the institution strategic plans and activities.
- iv. Ensure that internal quality assurance systems include the monitoring and evaluation of provisions for students and staff with PWD and SN in relation to all aspects of academic and campus life.
- v. Develop mechanisms for receiving all stakeholders' feedback regarding the effectiveness of service provisions for staff and students with disabilities and other SN, to inform strategic planning, decision making and improvement plans.
- vi. Develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the design of Programmes, teaching and learning processes, resources and environments, in recognition of entitlements and participation of all categories of persons with disabilities and other SN.
- vii. Develop mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating students' progress, drop-out rates, graduation rates and employability of students with disabilities and other special needs.
- viii. Conduct regular stakeholders' satisfaction surveys (alumni, employer and exit) that include students and staff with SN to inform planning and decision making.
- ix. Endeavour to include disability studies in their academic Programmes.

4 See appendix B

5 See appendix A

4.2 National level

The national commissions and councils for higher education shall endeavor to:

- i. Adapt and facilitate national mechanisms for coordination of QA guidelines implementation for PWD and Special needs in collaboration with HEIs and other stakeholders, including organisations of PWD.
- ii. Disseminate the QA Guidelines on PWD and other special needs and induct their staff, institutional managers and quality assurance officers on the implementation of the Guidelines.
- iii. Include aspects of QA guidelines for PWD and other special needs during their regular trainings and sharing of experiences on quality assurance.
- iv. Partner with other relevant agencies on implementation of the QA guidelines on PWD and SN.
- v. Include QA guidelines for PWD and other special needs in the institutional audit guidelines.
- vi. Provide a roadmap and mechanisms for implementing the IUCEA quality assurance guidelines in all HEIs.
- vii. Set sanctions and penalties for none compliance to the IUCEA quality assurance guidelines for PWD and other special needs

4.3 Regional Level

IUCEA shall:

- i. Facilitate regional mechanisms for coordination of implementation and reviews of the QA guidelines for PWD and other special needs in collaboration with the national commissions/councils and HEIs for follow-up and feedback.
- ii. Mobilise resources for capacity building to ensure consistent and sustainable mainstreaming of QA matters relating to PWD and other special needs in the Partner States.
- iii. Incorporate Quality Assurance guidelines on PWD and other special needs while carrying out regional advocacy activities in Quality Assurance in various forums.
- iv. Involve and engage Special needs experts and PWDs in activities conducted regionally

- v. Ensure that IUCEA regularly updates the regional quality assurance guidelines for disability and other SN in line with national and international policies and guidelines.
- vi. Set a roadmap for all EAC institutions of Higher learning and respective regulatory organs to comply with the QA guidelines for PWD and other special needs
- vii. Ensure that the QA for PWD and other special needs are operationalised in accordance to the already existing framework

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The Nine principles for the Universal Design for Instruction

Principle	Definition
Principle 1: Equitable use	Instruction is designed to be useful to and accessible by people with diverse abilities. Provide the same means of use for all students; identical whenever possible, equivalent when not.
Principle 2: Flexibility in use	Instruction is designed to accommodate a wide range of individual abilities. Provide choice in methods of use.
Principle 3: Simple and intuitive	Instruction is designed in a straightforward and predictable manner, regardless of the student's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.
Principle 4: Perceptible information	Instruction is designed so that necessary information is communicated effectively to the student, regardless of ambient conditions or the student's sensory abilities.
Principle 5: Tolerance for error	Instruction anticipates variation in individual student learning pace and prerequisite skills.
Principle 6: Low physical effort	Instruction is designed to minimize nonessential physical effort in order to allow maximum attention to learning. Note: <i>This principle does not apply when physical effort is integral to essential requirements of a course.</i>
Principle 7: Size and space for	Instruction is designed with consideration for appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulations, and use regardless of a student's body size, posture, mobility, and communication needs.
Principle 8: A community of learners	The instructional environment promotes interaction and communication among students and between students and faculty.
Principle 9: Instructional climate	Instruction is designed to be welcoming and inclusive. High expectations are espoused for all students.

Source: Sally S. Scott, Joan M. McGuire, and Stan F. Shaw. Storrs (2003): Universal Design for Instruction: The Paradigm, Its Principles, and Products for Enhancing Instructional Access. *Journal on Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 17 (1) PP.4-5).

Self Assessment Checklist on Inclusive Services and Programmes

A set of questions for institution self assessment of accommodation of staff and students with disabilities other Special Needs

A.			
B.	Yes	No	Details
C. Pre- entry services			
1. Are students with special needs assessed before entry to University?			
2. Does the application and registration form/portal have a detailed section for students and staff with special needs?			
3. Are students and staff with special needs accorded the opportunities to make choices that are adapted to their needs?			
4. Are the staff's and students' special needs catered for in the approved University/college annual action plan and schedules?			
A. Programme design and delivery			
5. Are all Programmes accessible and barrier-free to all students and staff?			
6. Are handbooks, modules and other learning and teaching materials available in accessible formats?			
7. Does the assessment (Examination) process anticipate the requirements of students and staff with special needs?			
8. Are teaching, learning and examination timetables published at the beginning of the semester and in all accessible communication formats?			
9. Do the teaching and learning methods consider students' and staff' special needs?			
10. Are there strategies or provisions for students and staff with sensory difficulties to access fully information related to their Programme of study?			
11. Are there personnel charged with reasonable accommodation for students and staff with special needs?			
12. Are students and staff accorded the opportunity to use adapted learning and teaching tools e.g. adapted hard and software, audio recording, etc, in lectures and related functions?			
13. Is the college/campus endowed with a resource centre for student and staff with needs?			
B. Accessibility and Proximity			
14. Does the college pay support services for students and staff with special needs, e.g. sighted guide, sign language interpreters, readers, etc.?			
15. Clearly sign-posted car park entrance?			
16. Parking area marked out and easily identified by people with SN?			
17. Can parking area spaces allow easy transfer from car to wheel chair users and/or use of white canes?			

18. Are routes from parking area to University building entrances accessible, with appropriate tactile warnings, and free of any physical barriers (pot-holes, loose stones, ridges, hanging furniture, etc.)?			
19. Are sidewalk areas and walking routes provided and safety marked to guard and guide slow moving persons, people with hearing impairments, white cane users, etc.?			
20. Is the university within convenient walking distance of public transport?			
21. Are external Ramps (if any) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Wide enough with suitably gradient? b. Painted with colour contrast at the surface? c. Fitted with suitable handrails on each side? d. Fitted with firmly fixed and slip-resistant materials? e. Edges fitted to prevent accidents? 			
22. For external access to University buildings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Are steps visual and tactile warnings at the top and bottom? b. Are the pathways suitable (width and gradient) for wheelchair users? c. Are the pathways surfaces even and slip resistant? 			
Facilities and Infrastructure			
23. Are seats provided at intervals along long internal routes or where waiting is likely?			
24. Are seats suitable with armrests provided in a range of heights and available within each classroom?			
25. Is there space for wheelchair users to pull up alongside seated companions?			
26. Where there are IT facilities i.e. within lecture rooms and the Library are heights adjustable for computer desks available?			
27. In the Main Hall, is the stage raised? If so what is the current provision for white cane and wheel chair users?			
C. Entrances			
14. Are the main entrances easy to find and clearly distinguishable from others?			
15. Are doors wide enough for all including wheel chair users to open the door while clear of the door swing?			
16. Is the level threshold adequately accessible for all including wheel chair and white cane users?			
17. If there are steps at the main entrance, is there signage indicating where the accessible entrance is located?			
18. Are door handles clearly located, at a suitable height, easy to use and grip for both standing and seated users?			
19. Is the entry phones and intercoms appropriately accessible and fitted to allow use by people with sensory (hearing and visual) and/or mobility impairments?			

D. Reception s and lobbies			
20. Clear view in from outside? Can receptionists see visitors and provide assistance if necessary?			
21. Transitional lighting? Is the entrance lobby and reception area well illuminated?			
22. Reception/desk/counter/ checkout suitable for approach and use from both sides by people either standing and seated?			
E. Corridors and Internal Spaces			
23. Are corridors wide enough for wheel chair manoeuvres and for other people to pass?			
24. Are corridors and internal spaces free from obstruction and hazards to all people including those with special needs?			
25. Are all key facilities accessible for all users, e.g. libraries, laboratories, sports hall, Main Hall, lecture Rooms, etc., and equipped with adapted equipment?			
26. Are floor surfaces slip-resistant and suitable for passage of wheelchairs?			
27. Are colours tones and textures varied to help people distinguish between surfaces and fixtures and fittings?			
28. Are glass doors clearly visible when closed with suitably colour contrasted against the background?			
F. Lavatories			
29. Are lever style taps provided within the WCs to aid people with dexterity challenges or other physical difficulties?			
30. If there is no accessible WC available, is there alternative facility provided for people with mobility disabilities?			
31. If there are shower facilities, are grab rails and level access showers provided?			
32. Are lavatory compartment large enough to allow manoeuvring into position for frontal, lateral, angled and backward transfer unassisted?			
33. Is the space available outside toilet compartment for wheelchair manoeuvres, the entrance wide enough, and opening outwards?			
34. Are hand washing and drier facilities within easy reach and suitably positioned for Wheel Chair and white cane users?			
35. Are door controls, locks and light switches easily reached and operated?			
36. Is the door light enough to open easily and lobby of sufficient size for easy access and wheel chair manoeuvres?			
37. Is the Floor slip-resistant throughout?			
38. Are all fittings, hand dryers and sanitary ware easily accessed and easily distinguishable for all?			
G. Lifts			

39. Are passenger lifts available for vertical circulation within buildings of more than one storey?			
40. Do lift doors open wide enough for wheel chair users?			
41. Do the lift doors allow slow entry or exit?			
42. Is there a mirror within the lift car?			
43. Are the controls, including emergency call located easily, using visual or tactile information and within easy reach of all users?			
44. Are voice indications loud enough to be heard by hearing aid users?			
45. Are the floor level indicators inside and/or outside the lift clear enough to reassure people with hearing impairments?			
H. Way Finding			
46. Overall layout of the college/campus reasonably clear and logical? Is there signage available in Braille and tactile?			
47. On entering the reception area, are signs designed and located to convey information to visitors with visual difficulties?			
48. Are standard toilet facilities suitably signed?			
49. On approach and on the actual entrances?			
50. Are the locations of the accessible WC facilities suitably identified and located?			
51. Does signage have the International access Symbol?			
52. Within staircases, is each of the levels clearly identifiable by tactile and visual information?			
53. Are the locations of the lifts clearly signed throughout the college/campus?			
54. Is there lift signage near the reception area and on entry to key staircases?			
I. Lighting and Acoustics			
55. Is lighting designed to meet a wide range of users' needs?			
56. Is the level of lighting sufficient for intended use?			
57. Are Lights positioned where they do not cause glare, reflection, confusing shadows or pools of light?			
58. Can occupiers control lighting?			
59. Are light switch plates suitably colour contrasted and appropriately positioned for a wheelchair user?			
60. Are classrooms appropriately illuminated and are blinds available to control the natural day lighting?			
61. Is glare avoided sufficiently not to hinder lip-reading?			
62. Quiet and noisy areas separated by a buffer zone?			
63. Environment free from unnecessary noise?			
J. Safety and security			
64. Audible alarm system supplemented by visual system?			
65. Ground floor exit routes accessible to all, including wheel chair users, as entrance routes?			

66. Is the tap appropriately fitted for use by a person with limited dexterity and others with grip challenges?			
67. Are the grab rails fitted in all positions to assist manoeuvring with colours contrasted to aid people with impaired vision?			
68. Is there a back rest provided to the toilet pan?			
69. Is the flush of a suitable spatula types and is it appropriately located on the transfer side of the toilet pan?			
70. Is the transfer side of the toilet pan kept clear of any obstacles that may deny wheelchair users all of the transferring techniques?			
71. Is the tap appropriate for use by a person with limited dexterity and other grip challenges?			

Source: *University of Rwanda Policy and Practice for Inclusive Teaching and Learning, 2015.*



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