

**SARHAD UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY,  
PESHAWAR**

**POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**



**SARHAD UNIVERSITY, PESHAWAR**

**2021**

## **SUIT's POLICY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES-2021**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This Policy aims to enable an environment in Sarhad University of Science & Information Technology, Peshawar which not only motivates students with disabilities to undertake higher education, but also facilitates their participation in all academic and extra-curricular aspects of University Education.

The Policy recognizes that disability covers a wide range of impairments and different disabilities can have varying impacts on study, work and other aspects of life, warranting special considerations in the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for persons with disabilities to successfully acquire higher education.

### **DEFINITION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

### **DECLARATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

A person certified as a disabled person from the National/Provincial Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons or carrying a Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC) with the disability logo.

### **SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This policy applies to all the students of the Sarhad University, Peshawar with disabilities. Through this policy it is stipulated that persons with disabilities at SUIT including students, faculty and staff will be treated fairly with respect and will not be subjected to discrimination at any stage during their academic or professional pursuits.

This policy is equally applicable to all students with disabilities associated with SUIT; including enrolled students, prospective students and students that acquired disability during their course of study.

### **ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE**

SUIT will establish a Standing Accessibility Committee comprising of 3-5 members from faculty, administration and student body. This Committee will be responsible for ensuring

that this policy is communicated to students, faculty and staff effectively and is being implemented at their Departments/Sections in its entirety. **(Annex-I).**

The members of the Accessibility Committee will be designated by the Vice Chancellor of the University.

The responsibilities of the Accessibility Committee are detailed below:

- a. To promote awareness of different disabilities and disability related issues, and emphasizing the need to protect and promote rights of persons with disabilities, through dedicated seminars, fundraising events, discussions, workshops and community engagement activities;
- b. To provide information and advice on facilities and support for persons with disabilities to students, parents, staff and faculty;
- c. To determine access requirements of students with disabilities that enroll/are to be enrolled in SUIT;
- d. To arrange assessment of the extent of disability and access requirements of students with disabilities by a professional, whenever necessitated;
- e. To raise funds for provision or development of facilities for students with disabilities, whenever necessitated;
- f. To arrange counseling by a Psychiatrist for students with disabilities whenever needed, especially in situations beyond the expertise of the Accessibility Committee;
- g. To arrange and oversee the provision of academic support, specialized equipment and facilities for the students with disabilities;
- h. To provide advice on admissions, examinations, dissertations and other affairs of the SUIT for improving access for students with disabilities;
- i. To advise the faculty on the policies and procedures relevant to students with disabilities; and
- j. To liaise with national NGOs and philanthropic organizations working for persons with disabilities to enhance capacity, to engage persons with disabilities and to improve the facilities available for them at SUIT.

### **FOCAL PERSON FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

- (i) One member - staff or faculty from the Accessibility Committee will be designated by the Vice Chancellor as the Focal Person at SUIT for persons with disabilities. **(Annex-II).**

- (ii) The name and contact details of the Focal Person will be displayed on the website, prospectus, brochures, and student handbooks of SUIT and outside the Offices of Vice Chancellor and Registrar.
- (iii) The Focal Person for persons with disabilities will be responsible to ensure the following:
  - a. To be a point of liaison between Accessibility Committee and students with disabilities;
  - b. To advise students with disabilities interested in seeking admission at SUIT in broader choice of academic discipline;
  - c. To guide students with disabilities interested in seeking admission at the SUIT on the facilities available and arrangeable for persons with disabilities;
  - d. To seek and record information on access requirements of individual student with disability enrolled at SUIT;
  - e. To arrange regular meetings with students with disabilities and maintain records of interactions. This practice should be used to assess any emerging needs of the students and decide appropriate course of action to facilitate the students;
  - f. To advise and facilitate students with disabilities in fulfilling administrative requirements of the institution, and benefiting from other services such as accommodation, transport, library, career counselling, extra-curricular opportunities, etc. during the course of their studies;
  - g. To advise the students with disabilities before commencement of each semester/academic year on their courses selection and learning activities entailed;
  - h. To refer students with disabilities to the Accessibility Committee for determination of their access requirements;
  - i. To refer students with disabilities to the Accessibility Committee for arrangement of psychiatric counseling; if a student requests or whenever substantial need is established;
  - j. To ensure that the students' access requirements are identified and made known to relevant faculty well ahead of commencement of classes;
  - k. To arrange academic coaching for students with disabilities whenever needed; and
  - l. To widely communicate his role to students, staff and faculty at the SUIT.

### **SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Accessibility Committee of SUIT will provide advice and support for improving accessibility and enhancing other services for students with disabilities. These services include:

- a. Arrangement of medical assistance (including psychiatric counseling) and non-medical assistance such as note-takers/scribes, readers, lecture recordings and enablers.
- b. Provision of Laptops, high-tech computers capable to run heavy screen reading software, special softwares, Braille, headphone, video cameras, video conferencing, computers, scanners, braille embosser, Braille Magazines, Audio Books/Tutorials, Books-Scanning, laser printers, speakers, tape recorders, class printed notes, and wheel chairs on subsidized rates at the institution as per requirements of the students.
- c. Some textbooks are also available in other formats - such as large print versions, e-books, or media with closed captioning, audio versions - that may be more accessible for students with disabilities. University's library will be equipped with standard textbooks in alternate formats, or should make them available on request.
- d. Specialized Trainings on using learning aids for students with disabilities and staff/faculty, when needed.
- e. Access and assistance in libraries, laboratories, cafeterias and sports centers.
- f. Full Tuition Fee waivers, and 50 % concessions on other fee components such as Admission Fee, Registration Fee, Library Security Fee, Examination Fee, etc.
- g. Age relaxation in admission requirements, quota as per the national and provincial legislation and alternative suitable entrance test arrangements for students with disabilities.
- h. SUIT will establish a special fund to support services for students with disabilities, and annually contribute sufficient funds therein through exclusive budgetary provision. Moreover, all funds and contributions raised through philanthropy should accrue in this fund.
- i. Whenever, SUIT or students own financial resources are deficient in meeting an accessibility requirement pertaining to his studies, i.e. teaching, learning, examination, assessment etc. SUIT will provide necessary funds or remedy in the form of scholarships or financial aid, after thorough evaluation of each case.
- j. The website of the SUIT and other web-based services such as student portals, LMS etc. shall conform to level AA of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- k. Physical infrastructure in SUIT such as footpaths, road crossings, signage etc. shall be developed by observing the recommended accessibility standards for persons with disabilities.

- l. Provision of ramp/special pathways and dedicated washrooms shall be ensured in all future constructions of SUIT.
- m. Where access is currently limited in the existing buildings, SUIT will provide reasonable alternative arrangements.
- n. Students with disabilities shall be encouraged to suggest improvements in accessibility services available at SUIT.

Accessibility Committee will submit its recommendations with regard to provision of above services for students with disabilities to the Competent Authority for consideration and approval.

## **ADMISSIONS**

- (i) SUIT will clearly provide contact details of focal person and information on facilities available for students with disabilities on their prospectus, website, and advertisement for admission.
- (ii) The website and prospectus will clearly mention the designated quota for persons with disabilities at undergraduate and post graduate level, age relaxation, variation in entry tests, details regarding application procedure, and available fee waivers and concessions.
- (iii) Accessibility Committee will be involved in admission, interview, and entrance test processes for students with disabilities.
- (iv) Applicants will be made aware that if they disclose their disability, the information provided on their respective application will be retained in SUIT's records and made available to all involved in the admissions process and those concerned with students' welfare.
- (v) The University will ensure that applicants declaring a disability have full information about the support available, so that they may make an informed choice regarding the suitable place for their studies.
- (vi) Students with disabilities will be advised to visit the University before submission of application to assess the suitability of the premises and their surroundings.
- (vii) Applicants who have declared a disability on their application form will be consulted about their needs and given advice on how the SUIT will manage their accessibility requirements.
- (viii) Upon admission, students with disabilities will be offered an opportunity to provide additional information and documentation about their accessibility needs.
- (ix) Admission application forms will include a portion through which students can convey information on their disability. They will be required to provide attested copies of the

disability certificate issued for persons with disabilities from the National/Provincial Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons or a CNIC with disability logo.

- (x) The Admission Application Form shall include a questionnaire for students with disabilities to inform their accessibility requirements for undertaking their studies and taking the entrance exam. They will be encouraged to arrange an information visit of the SUIT.
- (xi) The students with disabilities can request special arrangements for entrance test or interview as per their needs. Where applicable they may be considered for similar alternate arrangements as they had for their higher secondary examinations.
- (xii) SUIT will ensure the provision of appropriate facilities for students with disabilities during their entrance exam.

Modified exam materials including Braille papers (Grade 1/un-contracted or Grade 2/contracted), large print: either A4 size (18pt bold font) or A3 size (15.5pt font), listening materials such as special needs CD or lip-reading test, speaking materials such as Braille or large print written prompt or large print visual prompt.

Other administrative arrangements such as extra time (25-100 per cent extra time depending on student's need), supervised breaks during the examination, use of a computer, an amanuensis/note-taker (a person who will write down students answers), a reader, a scribe/copier (verbatim transcript), speaking test, separate invigilation, a private area to take tests with a note taker.

- (xiii) The students with disabilities will be informed well in advance about the arrangements being provided for them to undertake the entrance exam.
- (xiv) In some cases, students with disabilities may be exempted from a part of an examination because of a disability or difficulty. The University will decide to use an alternate assessment tool to ascertain suitability of the student for the degree program. This will be decided by the Academic Council of SUIT.
- (xv) In case the entrance exam is administered by a third party (such as GAT/GRE or NAT/SAT), if the designated test administrator does not provide appropriate facilities for the students with disabilities to suitably take the test, SUIT will arrange alternate entrance exam for the students with disabilities.
- (xvi) In case, SUIT is unable to provide appropriate facilities or make reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities to study at their institution on legitimate grounds, it will refuse admission to the student only through decision of the Admission Committee of the University. This decision will be communicated to the student via Academic Section of the University.

## **ASSESSMENT OF NEED**

- (i) All students with disabilities will be offered an assessment of their study and support needs at the earliest opportunity, preferably before they enroll, or shortly after the commencement of their program.
- (ii) The views of disabled students will be taken into consideration at all times during an assessment of their needs and the content of the assessment report will be discussed with them prior to the release of the report. The report, containing detailed recommendations, will be shared with the student, the focal person and Dean/HOD of their respective Faculty/Department. The Accessibility Committee will monitor the implementation of academic support arrangements.

## **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

- (i) During the orientation session and at the commencement of each course, staff and faculty shall clearly inform the students that any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the Instructor or the Focal Person as soon as possible so that requisite arrangements can be made.
- (ii) The instructor, focal person and the student may mutually discuss and decide the alternate special requirements (including those needed for mid-term or final examination) at the start of the course, and share with the Accessibility Committee if their support is needed.
- (iii) The University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all study components are organized to offer the best possible opportunities of participation for all students including students with disabilities.
- (iv) Where a student with disability is placed at a substantial disadvantage, the University will provide reasonable facilitation to help alleviate this. This will depend upon the needs and difficulties experienced by the concerned student. Accessibility Committee will be responsible for determining the students' accessibility requirements and the extent of reasonable accommodations needed on part of SUIT.
- (v) It is important to remember that facilitations are not advantages, but are means of providing each student with full access to study programs.
- (vi) Standards for academic credit should not be modified for students with disabilities. They may need facilitations in testing, however, the content should not be changed.



- (vii) Faculty is encouraged to use textbooks that are available in alternate format. It is not necessary to rewrite a course to facilitate students with disabilities; simply modifying the presentation of materials may make it fully accessible.
- (viii) If one student with a particular type of disability had difficulty with a specific task, the faculty and the focal person may not assume that the next student with the same type of disability will experience similar problems. Students with disabilities are frequently found sensitive about their disabilities, so faculty, focal persons and staff should make every effort to treat these issues sensitively and confidentially.
- (ix) Some examples of reasonable facilitations are: Provision of copies of lecture slides or typed lecture notes Permission to tape-record lectures or seminars. Improving accessibility of lecture rooms used by students who use a wheelchair, or equipping them with an induction loop for students with a hearing impairment

Faculty to wear a lapel microphone (to carry the voice of the lecturer to the student using an assistive listening device). Stenographers to transcribe lectures etc.

- (x) The provision of all such facilitations take a great deal of time, so students should be informed of their course requirements, course components and reading materials well before the commencement of a course and advise on their accessibility requirements at the start of the course.
- (xi) SUIT will also offer academic programs or undertaking research on topics related to issues pertaining to persons with disabilities in Pakistan.

## **EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT**

- (i) At the commencement of each course appropriate arrangements for examination and assessment will be determined through mutual consultation between faculty, focal person and the student. Alternate arrangements will be made with the view that students are able to demonstrate their learning appropriately and suitably meet the criteria for progression or the conferment of an award.
- (ii) Alternative arrangements for examination (for example, extra time) must be reported in advance by the Accessibility Committee duly approved by the Competent Authority.
- (iii) Where needed, students with disabilities can choose whether or not to have their disability declared on their exam booklet so an external examiner is alerted to their disability.

## **GRIEVANCES**

- (i) Any grievances pertaining to disability services available at the SUIT or otherwise will be submitted to the Focal Person. If they are unable to resolve the concern, Accessibility Committee may be approached. The matter may be referred to the Vice Chancellor if the issue is not appropriately resolved by the Accessibility Committee.
- (ii) The Accessibility Committee may recommend removal of the designated focal person or one of its members to the Vice Chancellor, if substantial grounds are established such as harassment, discrimination, indolence, etc, are established against him/her.

### **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

- (i) SUIT shall encourage its staff, faculty and students to participate in development opportunities related to provision of education to persons with disabilities.
- (ii) SUIT shall encourage to organize special trainings for members of Accessibility Committee and other faculty through collaboration with organizations working for advancement of persons with disabilities.

### **CONVOCATION**

The University shall make every effort to ensure that students with disabilities are able to fully participate in convocations and enjoy this day along with all their fellow graduates.

### **AWARD OF DEGREE**

After successful completion of the degree program, students with disabilities will be provided fee waivers for the issuance of degree, transcripts/Detailed Mark Certificate, degree attestation or equivalence certificate.

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