



**KAMUZU UNIVERSITY**  
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

# **DISABILITY POLICY**

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**NOVEMBER 2023**



<b>Policy Name</b>	Disability Policy
<b>Policy No.</b>	PL/C.3C.5
<b>Effective Date</b>	
<b>Last Review</b>	
<b>Next Review</b>	Every five years
<b>Council Approval Date</b>	17 April 2024
<b>Stakeholders Subjected to this Policy</b>	Staff, students, consultants, vendors, contractors and/or any other parties with a business interest with the University.
<b>Responsible Officer(s)</b>	Registrar, Executive Deans, Quality Assurance Office, Teaching and Learning Development Centre, Director of Student Affairs.
<b>Responsible Office(s):</b>	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Director of Student Affairs, Executive Deans

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## 5. FOREWORD

In our pursuit of academic excellence, we firmly believe that access to education should be equitable, regardless of one's physical or cognitive abilities. It is our moral and legal obligation to ensure that students and employees with disabilities are provided with the necessary accommodations and support to enable them thrive. This commitment is at the core of our values as an institution.

This Disability Policy serves as our guiding document, outlining our commitment to providing reasonable accommodations and ensuring a barrier-free environment. It is rooted in the principles of inclusivity, respect, and social responsibility.

In line with this Policy, we actively encourage individuals to self-disclose their disabilities to the appropriate offices, so we can work together to create an environment that promotes access and success for all. We understand that each person's needs are unique, and our dedicated staff are here to collaboratively identify and implement accommodations that will best support the individual's goals.

We also emphasise the importance of universal design principles, which aim to make our physical and digital spaces as accessible as possible from the outset, reducing the need for retroactive accommodations.

This Policy is considered an important undertaking and it will be given the seriousness it deserves. Our goal is to create an academic community where diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility are more than words; they are lived experiences. We invite all members of the University community to join us in upholding these values and ensuring a campus that truly welcomes and supports everyone.



Professor Francis Moto  
**Chairman of Council**

## 6. PREFACE

This policy is a testament to our dedication to fostering a University community that recognises and values the diverse talents, perspectives, and unique qualities that each member brings to the table. In recognizing that persons with disabilities are an integral part of this diverse mosaic, we acknowledge our duty to provide equitable access to all aspects of our academic and communal life.

This Policy did not emerge in isolation but was born from our conversations, experiences, and the tireless advocacy of individuals and groups who have worked to bring the issues of disability, accessibility, and inclusion to the forefront. It is a result of the collective effort of staff, students, and the broader community who have opened our eyes to the importance of accommodating different needs and promoting universal access.

We believe in the power of education to transform lives, and we acknowledge that this transformation is only possible when our campus and curricula are designed to be as inclusive as they are rigorous. By embracing universal design principles and actively listening to the voices of those with disabilities, we take an important step towards creating a more inclusive learning environment.

We are grateful for the opportunity to be part of an academic institution that values diversity and the contributions of all its members. Together, let us continue to build an inclusive and accessible university where every individual can pursue their dreams, unburdened by barriers, and where the true richness of our community is celebrated.



Professor MacPherson Mallewa

**Vice Chancellor**

## **7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This Policy is an outcome of the hard work and dedication of the drafting team comprising Mr. Reuben Kalavina, Ms. Cynthia Maluwa, Dr. John Mponda, Ms. Martha Mitengo, Mrs. Emma Chimphamba Phiri, Mr. Nesto Tarimo, Mr. Andrew Nyasulu, Mr. Collins Chiliwawa, Mr. Sunshine Kandiero, Mr. Peter Kamzimbi, Mr. Humphrey Kumwembe and Mrs. Joyce Gondwe. The University is also indebted to members of staff, students, key stakeholders from Association of People with Physical Disabilities in Malawi represented by Mr. Charles Khaula and the University of Malawi unit of Special Needs represented by Mr. Davie Mandé and the various committees that provided input during consultations and drafting of the Policy. Finally, the University would like to acknowledge the valuable input of Management, Human resource committee of the Council and the Council itself for their contribution to the Policy.

## **8. ABBREVIATIONS**

KPI's	Key Performance Indicators	KUHeS	Kamuzu University of Health Sciences
KUHeSSU	Kamuzu University of Health Sciences Staff Union		
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities		
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund		

## **9. DEFINITIONS**

<b>Accessibility</b>	The quality of being easy to be reached or to obtain or use
<b>Assistive devices</b>	Appropriate aids, appliances, technologies or other support systems that facilitate the better functioning of persons with disabilities
<b>Autonomy</b>	The ability to make one's choices and decisions
<b>Disability</b>	A long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder the full and effective participation in society of a person on equal basis with other persons.
<b>Equity</b>	Means fairness and impartiality to providing a preferential treatment to the disadvantaged group of population, on the basis of their social, economic, geographic and demography inclination.
<b>Equality</b>	Being equal especially in status, rights or opportunities
<b>Discrimination</b>	Exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability
<b>Impairment</b>	Means any full or partial loss or limitation of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function of the human body
<b>Inclusiveness</b>	The practice of providing equitable access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized
<b>Inclusive education</b>	A process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures

and communities and reducing exclusion from and within education.

**Reasonable accommodation** Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that ensure that persons with disabilities enjoy or exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on equal basis with other persons, without imposing disproportionate or undue burden on the other persons.

## **10. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE**

Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS) is committed to creating an inclusive, accessible, and welcoming environment for all staff, students and visitors. In accordance with United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006), Malawi Education Act of 2013, Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations Children's Fund and Malawi Disability Act of 2012, we have developed the Disability Policy to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to the programmes, services, and facilities offered by the University.

The Policy's development was informed by a comprehensive review of our existing policies, input from the University community, and consultation with experts in disability services. It is also aligned with our broader commitment to diversity and inclusion, aiming to remove barriers and enhance inclusive education in the University for all individuals, including those with disabilities.

The University Disability Policy encompasses all aspects of University life, including but not limited to the following areas:

### **a. Academic Accommodations**

This Policy ensures that students with disabilities receive reasonable accommodations to participate fully in educational programmes. Accommodations may include extended testing time, accessible course materials, note-taking assistance, and accessible classroom and laboratory facilities.

### **b. Physical Accessibility**

We are committed to making our campuses physically accessible for all individuals. This includes ensuring that all buildings, pathways, and common areas are designed or modified to accommodate mobility challenges and other physical disabilities.

**c. Digital Accessibility**

Our Policy extends to the digital realm, with a commitment to providing online content, websites, and digital tools that are accessible to individuals with disabilities. This covers accessible e-learning platforms, websites, multimedia, and digital resources.

**d. Reasonable workplace Accommodations**

We ensure that faculty and staff with disabilities have access to reasonable workplace accommodations, enabling them to perform their duties effectively. This includes modifications to workspaces, assistive technology, and flexible work arrangements.

**e. Public Events and Programmes**

All University-sponsored events and programmes, whether academic, cultural, or recreational, are expected to be accessible to all attendees. This includes provisions for sign language interpreters, accessible transportation, and any necessary modifications to event venues.

**f. Student Services**

Our Policy addresses accessibility in all student services, including admissions, counselling, career services, and extracurricular activities, ensuring equitable opportunities for students with disabilities when engaging in these services.

**g. Transportation**

The university will step up its effort to ensure that transport is offered on need basis to both on and off-campus, accessible to staff and students with disabilities. This includes accessible parking, shuttle services, and transportation accommodations for field trips and off-campus programmes.

#### **h. Awareness and Education**

KUHeS shall conduct disability awareness workshops for faculty, staff, and students, and provide online resources on disability etiquette and best practices.

#### **i. Community Engagement and Outreach**

KUHeS shall collaborate with local disability advocacy organisations to host awareness events and participating in community service projects focused on disability rights.

#### **j. Employment Equity**

This Policy shall ensure that job postings and application processes are accessible, and providing career development opportunities and reasonable accommodations for faculty and staff with disabilities.

This Policy is applicable to all members of the University community, including students, staff, visitors, and contractors. It is a living document, subject to periodic review and revision to ensure it remains current, relevant, and aligned with evolving best practices and legal requirements. Our commitment is to foster an inclusive and accessible environment that allows all individuals to participate fully in the academic and communal life of KUHeS.

### **11. RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY**

Persons with disabilities have rights just like any other persons. They need to be accorded an opportunity to enjoy their human rights to the fullest. KUHeS as a higher learning institution which accommodates staff and students with various needs aims at ensuring that persons with disabilities have the right to equal opportunities and should not be subjected to any form of discrimination.

The University recognises that, without full inclusion of staff and students with disabilities in the University operations, the reputation of the University may be tarnished and also it may impact staff and

students with disabilities to fully participate and contribute to the growth of the university.

As higher learning institution, it is imperative for the University to devise strategies that will promote the dignity of persons with disabilities and ensure the protection of their rights for them to strive and live a meaningful life. This Policy is such one of those strategies.

The University is committed to uphold the fundamental rights of all staff and students with disabilities and it is determined to zero tolerance to all forms of stigma, discrimination and exclusion against staff and students with disabilities. In this regard, this Policy is informed by the principle of "inclusiveness".

Therefore, this Policy is essential to ensuring an equal opportunity for persons with disabilities. It will further provide guidance to the University to establish the remedial measures in cases where staff and students with disabilities encounter situations that infringe on their rights.

## **12. KUHeS VISION**

A world-class university and centre of excellence in health education, research, and innovation.

## **13. KUHeS MISSION**

To advance knowledge, professional competencies, skills, and innovations in health sciences through high-quality student-centred and innovative education and research that responds to and influences global/national policy, health, and development needs in an efficient, sustainable, and result-oriented manner.

## **14. AIM**

The aim of this Policy is to ensure inclusiveness, equitable opportunities, full participation and mitigating all forms of discrimination against persons with disabilities, including staff and students with disabilities at the University.

## **15. OBJECTIVES**

The specific objectives of the Policy are to:

- a. Provide a conducive environment in which staff, students and any other persons with disabilities are considered on equal basis.
- b. Ensure full participation of staff and students with disabilities in the University operations.
- c. Deter and address obstacles that may hinder staff and students with disabilities to enjoy their fundamental human rights to the fullest.
- d. Make provision for appropriate recourse that are requisite to facilitate/promote the meaningful living for staff and students with disabilities in the University.
- e. Promote the sense of belongingness and inclusiveness among staff and students with disabilities.
- f. Establish appropriate mechanisms of assessing and identifying the needs of staff and students with disabilities.

## **16. POLICY PRIORITY AREAS**

### **16.1 Policy Priority Area 1: Academic Accommodations**

#### **Policy Issue**

Inclusive education is a human right that should be accorded to all. The provision of disability friendly learning environment to students with disabilities enables them to be successful. The use of strategies and materials that are not disability friendly provides a challenge to students with disabilities in their quest for quality education.

#### **Policy Statement**

KUHeS shall provide a supportive learning environment to help students with disabilities reach their full potential, guided by 'best fit principle'. Where necessary and possible, the University shall provide assistance to students with disability in their effort to access services or use facilities, infrastructure and learning materials.

## Strategies

The University shall:

- a. Ensure availability of assistive software packages (e.g., text-to-speech software, closed captioning for videos, note taking software,) to assist students with specific learning difficulties.
- b. Develop teaching and learning materials that are accessible to all students including those with disabilities.
- c. Provide training on the use of assistive software packages to staff and students with disability.
- d. Have a pool of loan equipment e.g., laptops, recording equipment etc ) to be available in accordance with need.
- e. Provide flexible assignment due dates for students with disability.
- f. Provide verbal or alternative forms of testing for students with disability.
- g. Ensure provision of accessible course materials (e.g. braille/electronic formats for the blind, sign language interpretation for the deaf or hard of hearing students).
- h. Allow preferential sitting in the classroom to meet the needs of students with disability.
- i. Provide quiet and distraction free testing environments for students with attention disorders.
- j. Identify and facilitate access to other support systems relevant to students' needs.
- k. Identify students with special needs who will require special support during examination, including large prints or extra time.
- l. Take action against any person who discriminates or harasses students with disabilities.

- m. Establish mechanisms through which students with disabilities shall report any form of discrimination and harassment that hinders their success.

The students shall:

- a. Disclose their disability during the registration process for preliminary assessment with the admissions office on their special needs.
- b. Ensure possession of personal electronic devices (or from loan pool of equipment) that will be used to access any assistive software packages.
- c. Ensure that they undergo training and get acquainted with the use of the available assistive software packages.
- d. Communicate their needs with the relevant offices during or after admission.
- e. Report any form of discrimination and harassment that hinders their success.

## **16.2 Physical Accessibility**

### **Policy Issue**

Physical accessibility is a critical element in ensuring that all students access all areas that may help them succeed in education within the University. The construction and maintenance of infrastructure that supports easy mobility and access of all areas at the University's campuses creates a conducive environment for their day-to-day endeavours at the University. The construction of infrastructure that is not disability friendly creates a huge challenge to students in accessing important areas that may help them succeed.

### **Policy Statement**

The University shall ensure that all campus areas and buildings are accessible to all students, including those with disabilities.

### **Strategies**

The University shall:

- a. Provide a mechanism through which students with disabilities can communicate their specific accessibility needs to the responsible authorities.
- b. Design office buildings, classrooms, libraries, hostels and any other social facilities and services in line with the needs of staff, students and visitors with disabilities.
- c. Ensure that all campus buildings have wheelchair ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms as well as tactile maps and signage (large-print or braille) for individuals with visual impairments.
- d. Design parking areas and service roads on campus that accommodate needs of staff, students and visitors with disabilities such as those who use wheelchairs and tricycles.
- e. Install elevators and ramps in multi-storey buildings to ensure accessibility for staff, students and visitors with disabilities.
- f. Ensure that there is back up power supply to cater for emergency situations where there is power outage.
- g. Make provision for accessible parking spaces with proper signage i.e., designated parking spaces for persons with disabilities including staff and students close to entrances.
- h. Provide wide-enough doorways and hallways to accommodate wheelchairs and assistive walking devices.
- i. Ensure that all students with disabilities are prioritised when allocating hostel space on campus.
- j. Install automatic doors or push-button door openers in main entrances for easier entry and exit.
- k. Develop clear emergency evacuation plans that consider the needs of staff, students and visitors with disabilities.
- l. Employ assistants to help staff and students with severe disabilities.

- m. Mechanise restrooms and hostels with disability friendly equipment to ease accessibility.

The students shall:

- a. Communicate their specific accessibility needs to the responsible authorities.
- b. Ensure that they possess the necessary mobility assistive devices e.g., wheelchairs, walkers, etc.
- c. Make use of the available accessibility resources e.g., ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms etc.
- d. Advocate for their own accessibility needs by communication to the relevant authorities of their needs should they encounter any barriers.

### **16.3 Policy Priority Area 3: Digital Accessibility**

#### **Policy Issue**

Digital accessibility refers to how usable technology product and environment is by all possible users, regardless of their ability or disability. Digital accessibility is essential for a disability inclusive work and learning environment and a key component of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging initiatives. Accessibility builds positive brand reputation and is good for the delivery of services and business. Digital accessibility barriers exclude students, employees and the public, and create legal and reputational risk.

#### **Policy Statement**

The University shall commit to provide a digitally inclusive environment to students, employees and its stakeholders.

#### **Strategies**

The University shall:

- a. Formulate digital accessibility guidelines for procurement and development of digital resources.

- b. Create awareness on digital accessibility and universal design.
- c. Create content in electronic format including publications, periodicals, journals, multi-media, etc. and educational material including textbooks etc. in accessible format.
- d. Ensure that internally developed/delivered or vendor-developed digital information and services for example website, employee self-service portal are accessible to individuals with disabilities, consistent with national and University policies, regulations and guidelines
- e. Ensure that a person with a disability shall be afforded the opportunity to obtain digital information and services in a manner that is equally effective to that of a person without a disability, with significantly equivalent ease of use.
- f. Ensure that staff involved in developing, procuring, modifying, or sharing digital information and services, or others with digital accessibility receive appropriate and regular accessibility training consistent with their roles.
- g. Establish a mechanism for staff and students to report digital accessibility issues or concerns and that the mechanism is accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The Student and Staff shall:

- a. Report any digital accessibility issues or concerns.
- b. Openly declare their disability condition to the University.

#### **16.4 Policy Priority Area 4: Reasonable Accommodative Work Environment for Employees**

##### **Policy Issue**

Employees living with disabilities face unique challenges in the work environment which, if not addressed, can become a serious barrier to the fulfilment of their potential and aspirations.

### **Policy Statement**

The University shall provide an inclusive and people-centred working environment, where all employees including those with disabilities will feel valued and supported and can enjoy a fulfilling career.

### **Strategies**

The University shall:

- a. Ensure that job applicants are given opportunity to indicate whether there are reasonable adjustments that can be made for them to participate fully in the interview process.
- b. Provide reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities, including provision of waivers on existing policies or regulations, altering premises or providing assisting devices and mobility aids.
- c. Support employees who become disabled while in the service of the University by modifying their position or redeploying them prior to considerations of the options of early retirement or termination of employment on the grounds of incapacity.
- d. Make sure that employees with disabilities have access to documents and premises that are relevant to their job.
- e. Ensure that employees with disabilities have access to meetings and are given equal opportunities to contribute during such meetings.
- f. Provide ergonomic office furniture for employees with mobility issues, offering assistive software for employees with visual impairments, and allowing flexible work arrangements.

## **16.5 Policy Priority Area 5: Accessible Event and Programme Planning**

### **Policy issue**

Persons with Disabilities form part of the University students, staff and stakeholders. However, these people often experience obstacles that may hinder the realisation of their full potential, furthermore, this hindrance may be due to inadequate or lack of guidelines in addressing accessibility to programmes and events. The University, therefore, has taken deliberate strategic efforts to bridge and address this gap by having a policy priority area on accessible event and programme planning.

### **Policy statement**

The University acknowledges that staff and students with disabilities play a big role in the development of the University and the nation as a whole. Therefore, the University shall ensure that incrementally, all events are accessible to persons with disabilities and that all programmes and curricula are designed with an element of inclusion such as sign language to enable graduates deliver services to persons with disabilities.

### **Strategies**

The University shall ensure that:

- a. Events and programmes organised by the University have sign language interpreters when necessary.
- b. Transportation means for off-campus University organised events is accessible and disability friendly.
- c. Transport for students with disabilities from home to University campus and back is arranged on need basis when appropriate.
- d. Venues for University organised events are equipped with hearing loop systems for individuals with hearing impairments.

- e. There is accessibility to built environment, facilities and provide information in accessible formats.
- f. There is inclusion and representation of Persons with Disabilities in all processes and all levels of programme planning in the University.

Staff and students shall:

- a. Abide by all University policies, rules and regulations relating to persons with disabilities.
- b. Participate in programmes and events arranged by the University.

#### **16.6 Policy Priority Area 6: Student Services**

##### **Policy issue**

KUHeS is open to enrol students with disabilities who qualify to pursue various programmes offered by University and appropriate to their education needs. The University seeks to provide a conducive environment to such students through access to amenities, provision of communication with sign language interpreters, and ensuring that career services are accessible online and in person.

##### **Policy Statement**

The University acknowledges that student services need to be accommodative to those with disabilities in order for them to compete fully in all University activities. KUHeS is geared to making sure that all student services are accommodative to all students including those with disabilities.

##### **Policy Strategies**

The University shall provide:

- a. Accessibility to locations and amenities for the students with physical disabilities.
- b. Communication services in teaching, counselling and training using sign language interpreters.

- c. Accessibility of career services online and in person.

Students' responsibilities:

- a. Abide by all policies, rules and regulations developed by the University in relation to persons with disabilities.
- b. Utilise the services offered by the University.
- c. Report to the authorities anyone found abusing the services.

### **16.7 Policy Priority Area 7: Transportation Accessibility**

#### **Policy Issue**

Transportation is a means which helps individuals to move from one place to another. Inaccessible transportation hinders individuals to fully participate in socio-economic activities. For staff and students with disabilities, inaccessible transport will largely affect their participation hence making them less productive. Specifically, for students with disability, their academic life will negatively be impacted, hindering them to achieve their career goal. It is therefore imperative for the University to ensure that staff and students with disabilities realise their full potential as any other member of the University.

#### **Policy Statement**

The University shall take appropriate measures to ensure accessible transportation for both staff and students with disabilities on need basis whenever appropriate. The University shall be obliged to ensure that private entities contracted by the University shall take into account all aspects of transportation for students and staff with disabilities.

#### **Strategies**

The University shall:

- a. Ensure the passages and roads are user friendly for both staff and students with disabilities.
- b. Ensure that offices, classrooms, libraries, and washrooms have wide entrances to allow access to staff and students with disabilities.

- c. Ensure that parking areas are accessible to wheelchair users and any other mobility device user with clear sign posts.
- d. Arrange accessible transportation such as wheelchair-accessible buses and shuttles for students and staff participating in off campus programmes whenever appropriate.
- e. Encourage entities that make mobility aids to take into account all aspects of mobility for staff and student with disabilities.
- f. Make sure that drivers and other staff have hands-on responsibility to provide safe and appropriate transportation to students and staff with disabilities.

Staff and students with disabilities shall:

- a. Identify and report their transport needs to the relevant authorities
- b. Ensure that they use the designated parking spaces wash rooms
- c. Report any barriers and obstacles impeding them to access the buildings

#### **16.8 Policy Priority Area 8: Awareness and Education**

##### **Policy Issue**

The University values training and development as a key instrument for promoting institutional performance. The University continues to offer in-house training and sensitisation on disability mainstreaming and external training on a needs basis. However, there has not been a guiding policy on how these needs can be identified and addressed, hence the need of developing this priority area which is aimed at guiding awareness and education.

##### **Policy Statement**

The University is committed to and will undertake continuous training and sensitization on disability issues for all staff and students. Training

will also focus on ensuring that there is knowledge on providing disability friendly services, including sign language.

### **Strategies**

The University shall:

- a. Arrange trainings and ensure participation and involvement of staff and students with disabilities as trainers together with other resource persons.
- b. Ensure that trainings conducted within the University shall use the cascaded model.

Staff and students with disabilities shall:

- a. Participate in all awareness and education activities.
- b. Abide by all University rules and regulations as well as policies on disability.
- c. Participate in identification of their own education or training needs.

## **16.9 Community Engagement and Outreach**

### **Policy Issue**

KUHeS employs staff and enrolls students with disabilities. Often persons with disabilities are denied opportunities to participate in various outreach activities which limits the realisation of their potential and goals in life.

### **Policy Statement**

KUHeS shall ensure that staff and students with disabilities take part in all community engagement and outreach activities.

### **Strategies**

The University shall:

- a. Create awareness to its community for recognition and provision of assistance to staff and students with special needs.

- b. Establish requirements for staff and students with special needs and lobby for external stakeholders' support.

The Staff/Student shall:

- a. Participate in community engagement and outreach activities.
- b. Report any challenges where they need special assistance.

#### **16.10 Policy Priority Area 10: Employment Equity**

##### **Policy issue**

Access to employment is a basic human right. However, persons with disabilities are often side-lined on the basis of disability. There is lack of recognition of qualification, knowledge and skills that has resulted in unemployment of persons with disabilities and lack of recognition by labour markets and work environments. This interferes with the right to earn a living.

##### **Policy statement**

The University shall ensure no person is discriminated against on the basis of disability with regard to all matters concerning all forms of employment. It shall create a conducive environment for persons with disabilities seeking to join it as well as those who acquire disabilities while working for it through traumatic encounters or disabling diseases.

##### **Policy Strategies**

The University shall:

- a. Ensure that job postings and application processes are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- b. Ensure non-discrimination of job seekers on the basis of disability.
- c. Promote employment of qualified persons with disabilities in its facilities and subsidiaries through appropriate policies and measures, which shall include affirmative action programmes and incentives.

- d. Ensure that persons with disabilities have access to just and favourable working conditions including equal opportunities and equal remuneration equal value for work.
- e. Ensure safe and healthy working conditions for persons with disabilities including protection from harassment.
- f. Ensure that employees who acquire disabling conditions at work are properly compensated and their grievances are properly addressed.
- g. Ensure that persons with disabilities have effective access to career advancement, continued education and training including general technical and vocational programmes.
- h. Facilitate mobility of employees with disabilities and make other necessary equipment such as electric wheelchairs accessible to them.

The staff shall:

- a. Meet the required qualification of any desired position.
- b. Openly declare their disability condition to the University.

## **17. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

These guiding principles are foundational to the implementation of this Policy. The guiding principles are aligned with the University's commitment to the protection of staff, students and all stakeholders, regardless of their abilities.

### **17.1 Guiding Principles for Implementation**

#### **Inclusivity and Equity**

KUHeS shall ensure that the Policy promotes inclusivity and equity for individuals with disabilities by providing them with equitable opportunities to access education, resources, services and support. The guiding principles shall be implemented in an incremental manner,

hence the following shall guide the University's efforts in creating such an environment:

### **17.2 Universal Design**

KUHeS shall apply universal design principles to create environments, curricula, and digital resources that are accessible to everyone including persons with disabilities from the outset, and encourage their accommodations.

### **17.3 Individualised Accommodations**

KUHeS shall recognise that the needs of individuals with disabilities vary. It shall therefore provide individualised and reasonable accommodations to meet their unique requirements.

### **17.4 Non-Discrimination**

KUHeS shall uphold a commitment to non-discrimination by ensuring that individuals with disabilities are not subject to unequal treatment, prejudice, or bias.

### **17.5 Legal Compliance**

KUHeS shall comply with all applicable national and international legislations for the protection of the rights of individuals with disabilities that Malawi has signed for

### **17.6 Respect for Autonomy**

KUHeS shall respect the autonomy and choices of individuals with disabilities, by involving them in the decision-making processes regarding their accommodations and needs.

### **17.7 Continuous Improvement**

KUHeS is committed to continuous improvement by regularly evaluating and enhancing disability services based on revised legislations and feedback from students, faculty, staff, and relevant stakeholders.

### **17.8 Awareness and Education**

KUHeS shall promote awareness and education on disability issues within the University community through training, workshops, and resources that foster an understanding of the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities.

### **17.9 Social Responsibility**

KUHeS shall embrace social responsibility by advocating for disability rights, both within the University and within the broader society.

### **17.10 Proactive Accessibility**

KUHeS shall champion a proactive approach to accessibility by encouraging all departments and units within the University to consider accessibility as an integral aspect of their operations.

### **17.11 Empowerment**

KUHeS shall empower individuals with disabilities to self-advocate, participate fully in academic and communal life, and pursue their academic and career goals through provision of information.

### **17.12 Student and Employee Success**

KUHeS shall support the success of students with disabilities in their academic endeavours and the success of faculty and staff with disabilities in their careers where possible.

## **18. RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Registrar**

The Registrar shall:

- a. Guide and ensure that this Policy is in line with other KUHeS guidelines and policies.
- b. Ensure that this Policy is enforced in collaboration with other established responsible offices.
- c. Facilitate the implementation of the Policy through provision of different forms of support.

- d. Ensure that this Policy is accessible to every individual within the University.

### **The Executive Deans**

The Executive Deans shall:

- a. Promote awareness of the existence of this Policy and its salient features to employees, students and third-parties within their Schools and sections.
- b. Facilitate the implementation of the Policy in collaboration with the heads of department.

### **Quality Assurance Office**

The Quality Assurance office shall:

- a. Ensure that the Policy is updated and is in alignment with the other applicable national and international legislations.
- b. Ensure that the document remains relevant to the needs of the staff and students with disabilities.

## **19. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring and evaluation are crucial aspects of the Disability Policy, as they help assess the Policy's effectiveness, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that Policy continues to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

### **19.1 Establish a Monitoring Committee**

KUHeS shall form a committee or designate an office responsible for monitoring and evaluating policy implementation. This committee shall comprise representatives from various University departments, including disability services, human resources, academic affairs, and student affairs.

### **19.2 Set Clear Objectives**

KUHeS shall define specific objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) that align with the Policy's goals. These objectives may include

improved accessibility, increased accommodation requests, higher levels of satisfaction among individuals with disabilities, and compliance with relevant laws.

### **19.3 Data Collection**

Collect data on an ongoing basis to assess the Policy's impact. This can include:

- a. Demographic data on individuals with disabilities.
- b. Accommodation requests and their types i.e. request to improve technology.
- c. Accessible resources and services provided.
- d. Student and employee satisfaction surveys.
- e. Records of accessibility audits and evaluations.

### **19.4 Regular Reports**

Produce regular reports summarising the data and findings from the monitoring process. These reports shall include an analysis of the Policy's impact, any challenges encountered, and recommendations for improvements.

### **19.5 Feedback Mechanisms**

Implement feedback mechanisms, such as surveys and focus groups, to gather input from individuals with disabilities, faculty, staff, and the broader University community. Act on this feedback to address concerns and make necessary changes.

### **19.6 Accessibility Audits**

Conduct regular accessibility audits of University facilities, websites, and digital resources. Identify any areas that require improvements and prioritize these updates based on their impact and feasibility.

### **19.7 Compliance Checks**

Regularly review the University's compliance with Disability Act and ensure that the Policy and practices align with legal requirements.

### **19.8 Impact Assessment**

Assess the impact of the Policy on the success of students with disabilities and the professional development of faculty and staff with disabilities. Measure academic and career outcomes, such as graduation rates and advancement within the university.

### **19.9 Continuous Improvement**

KUHeS shall use data and findings from monitoring and evaluation to drive continuous improvement. The University shall make necessary policy revisions, allocate resources strategically, and adapt practices to better meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

### **19.10 Reporting to Stakeholders**

KUHeS shall communicate the results of the monitoring and evaluation process to all stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff, and the University community at large. The University shall foster transparency, accountability and trust.

### **19.11 Annual Review**

KUHeS shall conduct an annual review of the Policy to evaluate its overall effectiveness and relevance. The review shall be used to make updates and refine the Policy to better align with emerging best practices and evolving needs.

### **19.12 Legal Compliance**

KUHeS shall ensure that the University's practices remain in compliance with all relevant disability rights, laws and regulations.

Monitoring and evaluating the Disability Policy is an ongoing process that ensures that the Policy remains effective and responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities while upholding the principles of inclusivity and accessibility.

## **20. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The financial implications of the Disability Policy are a critical aspect that requires careful consideration and planning. Implementing and maintaining an effective Disability Policy can have both direct and indirect financial consequences. The University shall ensure a disability friendly budget towards the implementation of the Policy.

### **20.1 Accommodation Costs**

Providing reasonable accommodations for students and employees with disabilities may incur costs. These accommodations could include assistive technologies, sign language interpreters, assistants, accessible course materials, or modifications to facilities.

### **20.2 Infrastructure and Facilities Upgrades**

Ensuring physical accessibility may require renovations or modifications to campus buildings, pathways, and common areas. These upgrades can be costly but are necessary to comply with accessibility standards.

### **20.3 Technology Investments**

Ensuring digital accessibility involves investments in technology to make websites, learning management systems, and other digital resources accessible to individuals with disabilities. This may require purchasing software, training staff, and maintaining accessible online content.

### **20.4 Training and Professional Development**

Providing training for faculty, staff, and students on disability awareness and best practices for creating an inclusive environment has financial implications. This includes the cost of developing training materials and the time and resources required for conducting training sessions.

### **20.5 Compliance Costs**

To ensure compliance with disability rights laws, the university may need to invest in legal consultations, audits, and reviews to assess and improve policies, practices, and facilities.

### **20.6 Support Services**

Funding is required to establish and maintain support services for students with disabilities, including academic advising, tutoring, counselling, and career services.

### **20.7 Awareness Campaigns**

Costs associated with raising awareness about disability issues and promoting the University Disability Policy to the University community and the public may include costs for conducting marketing and awareness campaigns.

### **20.8 Reporting and Evaluation**

Implementing a robust monitoring and evaluation system requires the allocation of resources for data collection, analysis, and reporting. This includes staff time, technology, and possibly external consultants.

### **20.9 Accessible Materials**

Producing accessible course materials, such as textbooks, documents, and multimedia content has cost implications. However, these materials are very important in the lives of students with disabilities.

### **20.10 Legal Expenses**

In cases of legal disputes related to disability accommodations, the university may incur legal expenses for representation and dispute resolution.

### **20.11 Scholarships and Financial Aid**

In cases of scholarships or financial aid specifically for students with disabilities, these can impact the institution's budget.

### **20.12 Emergency Preparedness**

Ensuring that emergency evacuation plans and communication systems are accessible may require investments in technology and infrastructure.

It is important to note that while there are financial implications associated with implementing and maintaining a University Disability Policy, the benefits of an inclusive and accessible campus can lead to increased enrolment, a more diverse and vibrant student body, and a positive reputation. The financial investment in accessibility and inclusion is not just a legal requirement but also an investment in the future success of the University and its students. Proper planning and budgeting are essential to balance the financial considerations while upholding the principles of inclusivity and accessibility.