

DISABILITY INCLUSIVENESS POLICY

MARCH 2026

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Approving Authority	Council
Review After	Three (3) Years
Related Policies	
Responsible University Offices	Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Directorate of Student Affairs
Responsible Officer(s)	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Librarian, Executive Deans, Director of Student Affairs

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS iii

DEFINITIONS iv

1.0 Purpose 1

2.0 Policy statement 1

3.0 Scope 1

4.0 Authority 1

5.0 Policy Priority Areas 1

5.1 Access and Equity 1

5.2 Reasonable adjustment 2

5.3 Disclosure of Disability 3

6.0 Implementation Guidelines 5

6.1 Students 5

6.1.3 Assessment 6

6.1.4 Accessible Curriculum 7

6.1.5 Students Attaining a Disability During the Semester 7

6.2.6 Reasonable Accommodations 7

6.1.7 Reviewing Reasonable Adjustments 8

6.2 Staff 8

6.2.1 Applications for Employment at the University 8

6.2.2 Applicants and Existing Employees at The University 8

6.3 Students and Staff 8

6.3.1 Support for Students and Staff with Disabilities 8

6.3.2 Advocacy and Awareness 9

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

MUBAS	Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences
OER	Open Educational Resources
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDHR	United Nations Declaration on Human Rights

DEFINITIONS

Access	The design of products, devices, services, or environments to maximise the ability of all people to access and use them. The concept of accessible design ensures both "direct access" (i.e. unassisted) and "indirect access", meaning compatibility with a person's assistive technology
Disability	a social construct resulting from the interaction between a person's impairment and attitudinal, and environmental barriers
Persons with disabilities	persons who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments and chronic conditions which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others
Reasonable adjustments	specific types of additional support that are mandated for individual disabled students
Students with disabilities	any person with an impairment who is suitably qualified and who experiences restricted access to or progression in the learning experience due to their impairment and/or contextual barriers. Disability, as a consequence of an impairment as well as environmental and attitudinal barriers, substantially limits a student from equal participation in the learning environment.
Universal design	'design that's usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design.'

1.0 Purpose

This policy affirms the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences' commitment to providing an environment where students and staff with a disability are valued, supported and encouraged, and can, as far as practicably possible, participate fully and independently in the life of the University.

2.0 Policy statement

Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences recognises the value of people of diverse abilities and is committed to the inclusion of people with disabilities in employment and education. The University also aims to ensure inclusion of persons who are associates of people with a disability, such as partners, relatives or carers.

MUBAS will proactively work towards creating an environment that is welcoming and accessible to students and staff of all abilities.

3.0 Scope

This policy applies to all members of the University community, as well as applicants for admission and applicants for employment. It also applies to all University locations, including University-owned or operated residential accommodation.

4.0 Authority

This policy takes its authority from the Malawi Disability Act, Malawi Education Act, Malawi Inclusive Education Strategy, the Constitution of the Republic of Malawi, the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (UNDHR), and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

5.0 Policy Priority Areas

5.1 Access and Equity

a) No one shall treat a person with a disability less favourably because of their perceived disability status.

b) Persons with disabilities shall have full access to participate in the life of the University is a mutual and iterative process between the University and the person with the disability. Both parties shall engage in good faith and focus on finding reasonable and workable solutions.

c) Students and staff with disabilities will have equal access to support services, such as, libraries, security, health and counselling services.

d) MUBAS recognises the necessity of proactively removing barriers to students with disabilities and will aim to establish a universal-access-design environment that benefits employees, students and visitors alike.

e) MUBAS shall ensure that a student with a disability can participate in an academic programme through the provision of reasonable accommodation measures, unless it causes the University undue hardship.

f) The University shall evaluate/audit the environment and where necessary, provide appropriate interventions to create an enabling environment.

The University shall:

i) comply with all relevant legislation regarding access and equity for persons with disabilities.

ii) provide services and support for students with disabilities to enable them to participate fully and independently in the academic, cultural and social life of the University.

iii) provide access for staff with disabilities to enable them to participate fully and independently in all aspects of their work and career development

iv) foster and encourage, among staff, students and the community, positive, informed and unprejudiced attitudes towards people with disabilities.

5.2 Reasonable adjustment

a) The University recognises the effect and the impact that disabilities, including chronic illnesses, might have on individuals and will attempt to support students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations

b) Wherever practicable, reasonable adjustments to a usual policy, practice, work or study environment, conditions of work, teaching methods, or mode or method of assessment will be made to meet the needs of a person with a disability.

c) Adjustments in a study context must not lead to a weakening or lowering of the academic standards being assessed. Students shall still be able to meet the inherent requirements of the assessment tasks for a topic.

d) Students with disabilities who are preparing to undertake work integrated learning placements shall meet the requirements specified in the Working Integrated Learning Policy and procedures.

e) In the event that a teaching staff member or manager does not accept a person's request for a particular adjustment, the final determination as to whether an adjustment is reasonable:

i) in a study context, will rest with the Directorate of Students Affairs

ii) in an employment context, will rest with the Deputy Registrar (Human Resource).

f) Where two or more staff or students require adjustments that may not be compatible, MUBAS shall work with both individuals to create an adjustment that meets both needs, bearing in mind that the adjustment may not be exactly as originally sought. This may include relocating the work or study site of one or both people.

5.3 Disclosure of Disability

a) Members of the University are not required or obliged to disclose a disability or health condition; however, the University cannot make individual adjustments for members of the University who do not disclose their disability or health condition.

b) In the case of non-disclosure by a person with disability, or where the disability is not self-evident, the University shall not be held liable for failure to comply with the provisions of this policy.

c) MUBAS may require an individual to disclose sufficient information to confirm the disability and/or to assist in determining appropriate accommodation needs.

d) Disclosure may occur during the application or at any time during the period of study.

e) An individual with a disability who requires adjustment is encouraged to disclose their need for the adjustment to the University, with appropriate documentation, as soon as possible. This includes:

i) applicants for work or study

ii) existing students

iii) existing staff.

c) Information regarding the disability, and any adjustments needed, may only be disclosed to other staff on a need-to-know basis. This may include disclosure to teaching staff, supervisors, facilities services, and other staff who may be required to implement the required adjustments.

d) University staff shall treat as confidential and private any disclosure of information concerning a person’s disability.

e) Evidence of a disability shall be required for appropriate adjustments to be provided.

6.0 Implementation Guidelines

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all University stakeholders. All staff and students have a personal responsibility to adhere to and apply this policy in their dealings with others.

6.1 Students

6.1.1 Admissions

a) The University shall put in place procedures and practices to ensure that all students with disabilities are treated fairly.

b) MUBAS shall ensure reasonable accommodation is done to support students with a learning environment that is accessible and barrier free including their successful participation in all aspects of University life.

c) The criteria for admission to courses shall be made very clear to all those applying to be enrolled in the University.

d) The University shall ensure that such criteria do not create unnecessary barriers to applicants who have a disability.

e) Students shall be evaluated on their abilities not their disabilities.

f) Where practicable, methods of teaching and assessment shall be modified to take account of the differences experienced by students with disabilities.

g) The University shall endeavour to make teaching methodologies and processes accessible to students with different types of disabilities.

h) Universal access and design principles shall be applied in relation to faculty instruction and curricula including the content and design of training material, facilitation and teaching style, practicals, etc. to facilitate integrated learning.

i) MUBAS shall aim to improve the skills level of its staff – both academic and administrative – through training and advocacy programmes.

j) Teaching staff shall be trained to engage appropriately and to be skilled and equipped to deal with different accommodation needs.

k) In the event that the University is unable to meet the known requirements of an individual student, the limitations of provision shall be explained to the student prior to their admission to the University.

l) The Directorate of Student Affairs and heads of academic departments shall liaise to ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to accommodate the needs of students

with disabilities, for example, the conversion of reading material into an audio format or the provision of computers for writing exams.
m) Facilities appropriate to the needs of students with disabilities shall be made available during examinations and extra time shall be allowed, upon application and evaluation.
n) Special assessment arrangements shall be available for students who, by reason of disability, would otherwise be unfairly penalised. Any special arrangement shall be aimed to minimise any detrimental impact of the disability and shall not otherwise advantage students.
o) All University information shall be made available in an accessible format on request.

6.1.2 Access to Courses

a) All subject areas offering courses welcome applications from students with disabilities.
b) No applicant shall be refused a place at the University on grounds of disability before an opportunity has been provided for full consideration of the specific support or facilities required, in consultation with the Directorate of Student Affairs.
c) However, the provision of appropriate support will be limited by the affordability of those support systems.
d) The University commits itself, within current and future financial constraints, to enabling as many students with disabilities as possible to study at this institution.

6.1.3 Assessment

a) Student disclosure is strongly encouraged, preferably prior to the point of admission.
b) The University shall ensure that arrangements for the academic assessment of students with disabilities are compliant with all relevant policy and legislation.
c) Appropriate modes of examination and assessment will be determined, after consultation with the student and relevant academic staff and the Directorate of Student Affairs.
d) All special arrangements done shall not compromise academic standards.

6.1.4 Accessible Curriculum

a) The University shall ensure that courses are organised and delivered in ways that offer the best possible opportunities for full participation by all students, including students with disabilities.
b) The University regards the accessibility of its curriculum for all students as a crucial aspect of academic quality.
c) Curriculum accessibility shall be considered at all times including, for example, development of programme documents, validation of new programmes, review of existing programmes and annual programme monitoring.
d) The accessibility of the curriculum for students with disabilities will be monitored by the Directorate of Student Affairs.

6.1.5 Students Attaining a Disability During the Semester

a) It is envisaged that some students may develop some form of disability during any semester.
b) As a proactive measure, MUBAS shall take all appropriate steps to ensure that these students have every opportunity to complete their course.
c) This will be achieved through MUBAS' provision of the same level of adaptations and support.

6.2.6 Reasonable Accommodations

a) A student or staff's impairment is considered, and appropriate adjustments are made to the learning and work environment to lessen the impact of their impairment, whenever it is necessary, possible and reasonable to do so.
b) Reasonable accommodation shall not compromise academic standards, the essential nature of the course or what are deemed to be essential skills or knowledge in relation to the course.
c) Reasonable accommodation should not compromise a staff's performance or service. The Directorate of Student Affairs shall document the individual reasonable adjustment and make details available within a reasonable period to the members of the University with a disability or health condition; and the relevant supervisor/course coordinator.
d) The University shall implement any reasonable adjustment in a timely manner and shall be responsible for any costs associated with the adjustments.

6.1.7 Reviewing Reasonable Adjustments

Individual reasonable adjustments are reviewed annually or as required by the member of the University (student or staff) with disability or health condition.

6.2 Staff

6.2.1 Applications for Employment at the University

a) Applications for employment from potential employees who have a disability shall be considered against the same criteria for the post as applications from those employees who are not disabled.

b) Discussions about any support requirements regarding support facilities and physical access to and within buildings on any of its campuses shall be possible at all stages of the application.

6.2.2 Applicants and Existing Employees at The University

The University shall make reasonable adjustments within available resources to help overcome the practical effects of the individual's disability regarding working arrangements or physical features or premises.

6.3 Students and Staff

6.3.1 Support for Students and Staff with Disabilities

The University shall:

a) Provide reasonable accommodation, within its available resources, to enable participation by students with disabilities in all aspects of University life on equal terms with other students and staff of the University.

b) Encourage students, the SRC, and all academic units and administrative departments to have plans for improving access, support and services for students and staff with disabilities both in the short term and in the long term.

c) Take reasonable steps in compliance with Malawi's current legislation and within available resources to ensure safe access and working, learning and living conditions within the University for all students and staff with disabilities.

6.3.2 Advocacy and Awareness

a) The University shall provide information and training to increase awareness among staff and students of this policy and of disability issues and requirements.

b) Online awareness and training modules shall be developed in a partnership between Schools and the Directorate of Student Affairs using Open Educational Resources (OERs).