INCLUSIVITY POLICIES

The Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) has an institutional policy framework that promotes inclusive, equitable and non-discriminatory access to university activities, services, resources and knowledge regardless of ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status or gender. While the University has several policies addressing different dimensions of inclusion, diversity and equal participation, three policies are particularly relevant to this question: the Open Access Policy, Gender Policy, and Disability Inclusiveness.

These policies support an institutional approach to promoting equal opportunity, accessibility, equity, participation, diversity and non-discrimination. These policies further institutional commitment to ensuring that students, staff and other members of the university community can access and benefit from university opportunities

1. Open Access Policy

Purpose

MUBAS Open Access Policy provides an institutional framework for making the University's scholarly knowledge and research outputs accessible to a broad range of users. The policy's purpose is to promote Open Access to research outputs generated by MUBAS staff, students, collaborators and affiliates, thereby increasing the quality, visibility and accessibility of research outputs. Its scope applies to all staff, students, collaborators and affiliates who produce scholarly materials.

Policy Statement

The policy statement is to put measures in place to provide Open Access to scholarly outputs, including creative works, produced by staff, students, collaborators and affiliates. It therefore provides an institutional mechanism through which knowledge generated by the University can be made accessible rather than being restricted solely to members of the institution.

Core Values

Openness, accessibility, knowledge sharing, equity, transparency, public access, collaboration and research visibility.

Implementation Procedures

Implementation is supported through several mechanisms. Researchers are required to deposit peer-reviewed postprints in the MUBAS Staff Publications Repository, while the University Library encourages publication in accredited Open Access journals and publishers. Researchers also grant permission for their work to be made freely available through the institutional repository under Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY)

licensing, subject to applicable legal, ethical, publisher and intellectual-property restrictions.

The policy further requires the University Library to maintain the Institutional Repository as the central archive for Open Access research outputs, ensuring their long-term preservation, discoverability and interoperability with national and international repositories. Postgraduate students are also required to submit electronic copies of approved theses and dissertations to the repository, although exceptional embargoes may apply for reasons such as patenting or publishing agreements. The University additionally provides training, capacity-building and guidance on Open Access publishing and supports Article Processing Charges for Open Access journals.

2. Gender Policy

This policy provides direct evidence that MUBAS has institutional measures designed to ensure equitable and inclusive access to university activities, particularly by addressing gender-based barriers and ensuring equal participation in curricular, extra-curricular and decision-making activities.

Purpose

The MUBAS Gender Policy (January 2024) provides a more explicit framework for ensuring that access to university activities and opportunities is equitable regardless of gender. Its purpose is to ensure an equitable academic and working environment in which all persons, regardless of gender orientation, have a voice, rights and access to services and resources.

Core Values

Gender equality, equity, inclusion, equal opportunity, participation, respect, empowerment and non-discrimination.

Guiding principles

The policy is guided by principles including the right to education, inclusive participation, gender equality, non-discrimination, affirmative action, gender mainstreaming, transparency, accountability and good governance. In particular, its non-discrimination principle condemns discrimination based on gender identity or expression, while gender mainstreaming requires gender perspectives to be incorporated across programmes and activities.

The implementation provisions are directly relevant to access to university activities. MUBAS ensures equitable representation of students in enrolment, equitable access to university facilities, and equal participation in decision-making, curricular and extra-curricular activities. The policy also provides for equitable access to opportunities such as scholarships, exchange programmes and training. For staff, it requires equitable access to facilities, services, resources and professional opportunities.

Priority Areas

The policy also contains an Inclusiveness priority area. It requires equal access to employment opportunities and enrolment for persons with disabilities, accessible infrastructure, resources and services, equal treatment, and mechanisms to eliminate negative attitudes, norms and systematic discrimination against persons with disabilities.

3. Disability Inclusiveness Policy

The **Disability Inclusiveness Policy** provides an institutional framework for promoting the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities at MUBAS. The policy recognises that persons with disabilities may experience physical, communication, educational, social and institutional barriers that can limit access to university opportunities and services. The policy supports the consideration of disability issues in institutional planning, decision-making and the delivery of university services. It promotes an environment where students and staff with disabilities can participate in education, employment, academic activities, social activities and other aspects of university life.

Purpose

The Disability Inclusiveness Policy provides the University's most explicit framework for ensuring that persons with disabilities can access and participate in university life. Its purpose is to create an environment in which students and staff with disabilities are valued, supported and encouraged, and can, as far as practicably possible, participate fully and independently in the life of the University. The policy applies to all members of the University community, applicants for admission and employment, and all University locations.

Policy Statement

MUBAS is committed to promoting the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities by addressing barriers, providing reasonable accommodation, promoting accessibility and ensuring equal opportunities in education, employment and university activities.

Core Values

Inclusion, equity, accessibility, equal participation, dignity, respect, empowerment and non-discrimination.

Policy Priority Areas

The policy's Access and Equity provisions state that persons with disabilities should not be treated less favourably because of their disability status and should have full access to participate in university life. MUBAS commits to removing barriers and establishing a universal-access environment, while ensuring equal access to support services such as libraries, security, health and counselling services.

The policy also establishes reasonable adjustment procedures. Where practicable, MUBAS may adjust policies, practices, study or work environments, teaching methods and assessment arrangements to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The University is also required to evaluate and audit its environment and, where necessary, provide appropriate interventions to create an enabling environment.

Implementation Guidelines

Implementation extends to academic, cultural and social participation. The policy requires the University to provide support enabling students with disabilities to participate fully and independently in the academic, cultural and social life of the University. It also requires accessible and barrier-free learning environments, accessible teaching and assessment methods, universal-access principles in curricula and training materials, and accessible formats for University information upon request.

Furthermore, the University provides reasonable accommodation, within available resources, to enable students with disabilities to participate in all aspects of University life on equal terms with other students and staff. The policy also provides for safe access to working, learning and living conditions and requires awareness and training on disability issues.