



**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE,  
ABEOKUTA**

## **INSTITUTIONAL POLICY**

**FOR  
PERSONS  
WITH  
SPECIAL  
NEEDS**



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## CONTENT

Title	Page
1.0 Preamble.....	1
2.0 Current Situation.....	1
3.0 Purpose of the Policy.....	3
4.0 Scope of the Policy.....	4
5.0 Institutional Policy.....	4
5.1 Rights of Students with Special Needs.....	4
5.2 Responsibilities of the University to Students with Special Needs.....	5
6.0 Implementation.....	7
7.0 Criteria for Eligibility.....	8
8.0 Recommendations.....	8
9.0 Conclusion.....	10
Acknowledgements.....	11
Appendixes	
Appendix A - Definition of Terms	
Appendix B - A Survey Report of the Perception and Attitudes of Students and Staff of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, on Persons with Special Needs	
Appendix C - Proposed Students with Special Needs Registration Form	

### 1.0 PREAMBLE

The issue of persons with special needs is a global phenomenon. The number of people with special needs is also increasing due to various reasons. Thus, leaders at various levels have recognised and are putting various policies in place to ameliorate the barriers and discriminations that various challenges have placed upon the individuals. This is with a view to making them achieve their full potentials. One of such governmental interventions is the promulgation of the Nigerians with Disability Decree, 1993 (now Disability Act, 1993).

There is a growing awareness on the need to make life more interesting (pleasant) for people with special needs regardless of their social, economic, cultural and religious backgrounds in the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB). This is to be attained through the formulation of a policy that will reduce some of the challenges they face while pursuing their career in the University.

### 2.0 CURRENT SITUATION AT THE FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, ABEOKUTA

To enable the University have a policy statement on how to assist/improve/redress the conditions of the students with special needs, it is important to know the current situation. Consequently, the Committee assessed the existing situations and observed as follows:

#### a) Accessibility

Accessibility to most of the University buildings is not conducive for students with special needs

except for the Health Services Building. The 'Nimbe Adedipe Library and the Senate buildings are partially accessible to these group of students. The classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories and hostel accommodation that the students constantly use (for their academic pursuit), are not accessible to students with physical challenges.

**b) Hostel Accommodation**

All categories of students with special needs are accommodated in the University hostels.

**c) Transportation**

A customised bus is in use to convey resident students that have special needs for their daily activities on campus.

**d) Examinations**

All known cases of students with cerebral palsy were given attention according to their needs.

**e) Registration / Payment**

Students with special needs compete with other students to pay school fees, collect examination passes, etc.

**f) Financial assistance**

No form of financial assistance is available from the University. Some individuals give private financial support where necessary to students with special needs. Even at that, this private support is grossly inadequate.

In addition to the collating of information on the current way(s) the University attends to the needs of students with special needs; a study instituted to investigate the prevalence and types of needs, the perception and attitude of members of the University community (other students and staff) and the perception of the special students to themselves.

Result indicated that 0.2% (32) of the total student population in the University have physical disabilities and that the attitude of the other students and staff towards the students with physical challenges is favourable. However, there is a negative perception by students with special needs about themselves and the environment. The challenges posed by the environment were significant especially when their age and their academic programmes were considered. These findings are used to formulate policies that would support the welfare and successful stay of students with disabilities in the University.

### 3.0 PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The purpose of the policy is to state the roles of the University regarding special needs viz:

- a) Outline the obligations of FUNAAB to improve the welfare of its students with special needs;
- b) Create an enabling and barrier-free academic environment, devoid of hindrances to students with special needs so as to enable them achieve their aspirations in line with their talents and abilities;
- c) Encourage and support the representation and participation of students with special needs in the University;



#### **4.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY**

This policy, when operational, would apply to all undergraduates, postgraduate and part-time registered students of the University.

Students with special needs can be identified by their characteristics of observed symptoms. The survey conducted by the committee categorised the students with special needs in the University into these categories through the characteristics and the observed symptoms as follows: Speech impairment, visual impairment/blindness, physical/orthopedic impairment and others (sickle cell disease, asthma, congenital heart disease, chronic kidney disease, etc). However, this policy would only be limited to students with physical impairment for now.

#### **5.0 INSTITUTIONAL POLICY**

##### **5.1 Right and Responsibilities of Students with Special Needs**

Students with special needs shall have the following responsibilities:

- i) Voluntary disclosure of needs to the University through appropriate organs that are duly assigned with such duties. In case of non-disclosure by a student with special needs, or where the need is not evident, the University would not be held liable for any claim of denial or damage suffered by such student, consequent upon non-disclosure of the needs.
- ii) Where there are grievances by a student on the basis of need, it shall be the duty of such a person to seek redress through the appropriate

means prescribed by the University.

- iii) While the disclosure of needs is expected to be to the advantage of the student, no punitive steps shall be taken against non-disclosure of such needs.
- iv) Having special need(s) should not be a criterion for disqualifying an eligible applicant for admission into the University.
- v) Special needs will not be a criterion for expelling a student.
- vi) Where there are facilities provided by the University to assist these categories of students, it shall be the responsibility of the students who use such facilities. To ensure preservation and longevity through proper usage. If such facilities are willfully destroyed through negligence, the student shall be punished according to University rules and regulations.
- vii) Students with special needs must comply with University rules and regulations while the violation of any of these rules and regulations shall attract appropriate disciplinary action(s).

##### **5.2 Responsibilities of the University to Students with Special Needs**

###### **i) Admission**

Applicants for the University admission shall be encouraged to declare their special needs or status at the point of registering for the Post-Unified Tertiary

## Matriculation Examination (Post-UTME)

### **ii) Learning Resources**

Seats with easy access should be reserved for students with special needs in all classrooms, lecture theatres, laboratories and libraries.

### **iii) Accommodation**

As may be desired, students with special needs shall be given preference in hostel allocation throughout the duration of their programmes in the existing hostel buildings. In the long run, future hostel designs shall accommodate purpose-built units for students with special needs.

### **iv) Physical Accessibility**

All classrooms, lecture theatres, libraries, laboratories and halls of residence shall be made accessible by the provision of relevant facilities, e.g. access ramps.

### **v) Training and Academic Assessment**

All training and academic assessments such as laboratory practicals, farm practicals, examinations and so on shall take cognisance of the special needs of the students.

### **vi) Awareness**

The University shall undertake advocacy on behalf of the students with special needs.

### **vii) Financial Support**

The University may assist students with special needs financially where necessary based on the availability of funds.

### **viii) Transportation**

Seats shall be strictly reserved on the FUNAAB Bureau of Transportation (FUNAABOT) buses. The University should make adequate provision of vehicle for students with special needs.

### **ix) Rights to Life and Protection**

In the event of emergencies, students with special needs would be given preference in terms of protection and support service.

### **x) Health Care Services**

Priority would be given to students with special needs at the Health Centre.

### **xi) Sports**

The University shall encourage students with special needs to participate in inter-collegiate sports competitions.

### **xii) Stigmatization**

University shall discourage and prevent any act of discrimination against students with special needs.

### **xiii) Deliberate Inclusion**

University shall include, where necessary, representation of students with special needs during official and social functions.

## **6.0 IMPLEMENTATION**

In pursuance of the foregoing, the University shall be committed to the establishment of a Unit to be called "University Special Needs Unit (USNU)" under the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs with the following

schedule of duties:

- i) Provision of necessary support to students with special needs.
- ii) Articulate plan of action for advocacy to raise public awareness on the plight of students with special needs.
- iii) Liaise with public-spirited individuals, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and corporate bodies for financial and material donations to support and assist students with special needs in their academic pursuits.
- iv) Call for periodic review of the policy: The review could include incorporating other categories of special needs such as speech impairment, visual impairment/blindness, and others (sickle cell disease, asthma, congenital heart disease, chronic kidney disease, etc)

## 7.0 CRITERIA FOR ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible to the rights of this policy, students with disability should have been medically certified by a medical doctor in any government-owned hospital or the University Health Centre.

## 8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations are classified under short, medium and long term.

### 8.1 Short Term

- (i) Awareness will be created in the University community such that students with special needs are given priority attention in places like the health centre, banks, students' registration centre(s) etc.

- (ii) Efforts should be made to remove any form of evidence of stigmatization against students with special needs.
- (iii) Space or utility preferences should be given to students with special needs in classrooms, libraries, hostels, FUNAABOT transport services, etc.
- (iv) All training and academic assessments such as laboratory practicals, farm practicals, examinations, etc shall take cognisance of the special needs of the students.

### 8.2 Medium Term

- (i) Existing classrooms, libraries, hostels, laboratories should be provided with facilities such as access ramps.
- (ii) The University should solicit financial and material support from public-spirited individuals, organisations, NGOs and corporate bodies, to support and assist students with special needs in their academic pursuits.

- (iii) All training and academic assessments such as laboratory practicals, farm practicals, examinations, etc shall take cognisance of the special needs of the students.

### 8.3 Long Term

- (i) The design and construction of new infrastructural facilities should be made accessible to all students with special needs.

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

The University recognises that special needs do not mean or represent inabilities. Students with special needs are to be given the opportunity to get to the peak of any career of their choice by providing the enabling environment. Therefore, the need to assist them in achieving their desired goals while pursuing their academic is recognised by the University.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The materials obtained from the following authors (Jamaica Vision 2030 (2009), Nigerian with Disabilities Decree (1993), United Nations (2007), University of Cape Town (2011), University of Ibadan, Ibadan (2010) were very helpful in the preparation of this document:

- i) Jamaica Vision 2030 (2009): Jamaica Sector Plan (2009-2030) – Persons with Disabilities
- ii) Nigerians with Disabilities Bill: Sponsored by the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) in collaboration with Joint National Association of Persons with Special Needs (Ogun State).
- iii) Nigerians with Disability Decree (1993)
- iv) United Nations (2007): United Nation Convention on the right of Persons with Disabilities
- v) University of Cape Town (2011): University of Cape Town Disability Policy, Disability Service Promoting Access and Developing Solutions (Approved by University Council)
- vi) University of Ibadan, Ibadan (2010): Institutional Policy on Disability



## APPENDIX "A"

### APPENDIXES

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

Various terminologies have been used to describe those with disabilities. Some of these terms include:

##### 1(a) Persons with Disabilities

Persons who have received preliminary or permanent certificate of disability to have condition which is expected to continue permanently or for a considerable length of time which can reasonably be expected to limit the person's functional ability substantially, but not limited to seeing, hearing, thinking, ambulating, climbing, descending, lifting, grasping, rising any related function or any limitation due to weakness or significantly decreased endurance so that he/she cannot perform his/her everyday routine living without significantly increased hardship and vulnerability to everyday obstacles and hazards.

##### (b) Person with Special Needs

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

##### 2. Impairment

Loss or abnormality of the psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function in an individual.

##### 3. Handicap

Problem or disadvantage that person with disability or impairment encountered in interacting with the environment that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal for that individual.

##### 4. Reasonable Accommodation

This refers to modification or adjustment to the environment, without any undue imposition, that will enable a student with disability to have access to or participate in academics.

##### 5. Discrimination

This refers to imposing of any distinction, exclusion or restriction of persons on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying recognition, enjoyment or exercise on equal basis with others.