

CHUKA



UNIVERSITY

**CHUKA UNIVERSITY
DISABILITY POLICY**

1st March, 2013

CHUKA UNIVERSITY

DISABILITY POLICY

FOREWORD

Chuka University (CU) started as Egerton University Eastern Campus, Chuka, on 27th September, 2004 to give people in the eastern region and Kenya at large access to high quality and affordable university education. On 23rd August, 2007, Eastern Campus was upgraded to a constituent of Egerton University and gazetted through a legal notice Number 161. After the elevation, the name changed to Chuka University. On 10th December, 2007, His Excellency President Mwai Kibaki visited and officially inaugurated the University.

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) are a distinct group whose needs, capacities and aspirations require special attention (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Disability means a physical, sensory, mental or other impairment, including visual, hearing, learning or physical incapability, impacting adversely on social, economic, or environmental participation (GoK, 2004).

Chuka University (CU) warmly welcomes students and staff with disabilities and would like to state its commitment to the provision of equitable opportunities to all persons, and ensure that their life on campus is pleasurable and rewarding. Procedures to be followed in realisation of these commitments are spelt out in this Disability Policy.

The Policy provides a framework for creation of an environment that is free from attitudinal and physical barriers to persons with disabilities (PWDs) and seeks to ensure that disabled persons have equitable access to jobs, promotion and facilities at the University.

The Policy was prepared in line with the PWDs Act (2003) and The Constitution of Kenya (2010). It seeks to ensure development of an all-inclusive environment that addresses the needs of staff and students with disabilities. The inclusive process will involve creation of awareness through sensitization and training on the individual and communal needs of disabled persons.

A standing Committee on disability will oversee implementation of the commitments stipulated in this Policy document. The commitments cover broad areas of: Human Resources Management (HRM), Physical Facilities Development, Students' Rights, Sporting and Recreation Rights, Civic Rights and Funds Allocation. This Policy and its implementation will be subjected to monitoring and evaluation to gauge the degree of satisfaction. This Policy, services and facilities for PWDS will be continually reviewed to be in line with changing times.

The Management will strive to ensure that CU promotes equal opportunities and full participation of all disabled students and staff in the activities of the University.

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OVERVIEW OF CHUKA UNIVERSITY

BRIEF HISTORY

In 1956, the Chuka community built a Craft Centre to train school leavers to acquire skills that could be useful in nation building. The Centre was upgraded to a Youth Polytechnic in 1969. In 2003, the community felt that they needed an institution that could provide higher education and training access to the people of eastern Kenya and Kenya at large. At that time no institution in the eastern part of Kenya had the capability of educating and training students at diploma and degree levels and as a result education and training opportunities were limited. During the same time, Egerton University was planning to open a Campus in eastern Kenya. The community then approached Egerton University who found Chuka to be centrally placed and, therefore, suitable for the establishment of a university campus.

In an effort to get land for the Campus, the Chuka community donated the Ndagani Youth Polytechnic and Sports Stadium. In addition, the Presbyterian Church donated more land on institutions forming the Ndagani Education Complex, which included the Secondary and Primary Schools. The Chuka community also added a further 500 acres at Kairini in Meru South District to make the total land area 550 acres.

On 21st August, 2004, when H. E. President Mwai Kibaki visited Chuka and held a meeting at Ndagani (the present location of Chuka University), the community through their leaders informed him of their desire to establish a university in the area. Among the dignitaries who attended the meeting were members of parliament from the Greater Meru and senior Government officials. The President supported the aspirations of the people of Meru and pledged Government's support to establish a university at the site. Due to the goodwill of the Government, Egerton University Council approved the establishment of a Campus, named Egerton University Eastern Campus. The Campus was then launched on 27th September, 2004. The Youth Polytechnic was then relocated to another site.

On 23rd August, 2007, H.E. President Mwai Kibaki elevated the Egerton University Eastern Campus to Chuka University through Legal Notice Number 161 of 2007. On 10th October, 2007, H.E. President Mwai Kibaki visited and inaugurated the Chuka University. After about five years, H.E. President Mwai Kibaki visited again and inaugurated the Chuka University on 8th January, 2013, making it the 2nd public university to be chartered and the 9th full-fledged public university in Kenya.

The University is located within the Chuka Municipality in Meru South District, Tharaka-Nithi County. It is situated approximately 186 km from Nairobi along the Nairobi-Meru Highway on the slopes of the snow-capped Mt. Kenya at an altitude of approximately 2,000 m above sea level. The area provides a cool climatic environment, with 16°C to 24°C temperatures and an annual average rainfall of about 1,000 mm, excellent for learning and working.

The University is designated as a centre of excellence in Environmental and Renewable Energy Studies and offers university education, training and research at certificate, diploma, bachelors, masters and doctorate degree levels in Education and Resources Development, Business Studies, Agriculture and Environmental Studies, Arts and Humanities, and Science and Technology.

Mandate

The Mandates of Chuka University are enshrined in its **objects** and **functions**.

The **objects** of the University are to –

- (a) Provide directly, or in collaboration with other institutions of higher learning, facilities for quality university education, including technological, scientific and professional education, and the integration of teaching, research, outreach and effective application of knowledge and skills to the life, work and welfare of the citizens of Kenya;
- (b) Provide and advance university education and training to appropriately qualified candidates, leading to the conferment of degrees and award of diplomas and certificates and such other qualifications as the Council and the Senate shall from time-to-time determine and in so doing, contribute to realisation of sustainable national economic and social development;
- (c) Provide programmes, products, and services in ways that reflect the principles of equity and social justice.

The **functions** of the University are to –

- (a) Participate in technological innovation as well as discovery, transmission, preservation and enhancement of knowledge, and stimulate the intellectual participation of students in the economic, social, cultural, scientific and technological development of Kenya;
- (b) Inculcate a culture of lifelong learning, responsible citizenry and innovation in technology, engineering and mathematics within the institution and society;
- (c) Engage in teaching, training, scholarship, entrepreneurship, research, consultancy, community service, among other educational services and products, with emphasis on technology and its development, impact and application to society;
- (d) Conduct examinations for and grant such academic awards as may be provided for in the Statutes, and syndicate examinations for award at other institutions as may be approved by Senate; and
- (e) Facilitate the development and provision of appropriate academic programmes, and community services.

Philosophy

Chuka University believes that sustainable national and global development can be achieved through nurturing an intellectual culture that integrates theory with practice to produce graduates with relevant knowledge, skills and responsible citizenry. The Institution also believes that education and training leads to social cohesion, human and economic development. This can be realized through passion for excellence, devotion to duty, accountability, prudent utilisation of resources, corporate citizenship, and teamwork. To actualise these beliefs, the University is committed to generation, preservation and sharing of knowledge for effective leadership in education, training, research and extension. The ultimate goal of Chuka University is to be a Premier University for the provision of quality education, training, research and extension in both basic and applied environmental and related studies.

Vision

The Vision of Chuka University is: “Quality education, training and research for national and global development”.

Mission

The Mission of Chuka University is: “To work with other stakeholders to provide, promote and co-ordinate life-long education, training and research for sustainable development and responsible citizenry”. Consequently, Chuka University will be able to generate, preserve and disseminate knowledge and offer exemplary education to contribute to and innovatively influence national and global development.

Core Values

The management and operations of Chuka University are guided by the following Core Values–

- (1) Passion for excellence and devotion to duty
- (2) Integrity, transparency and accountability
- (3) Social fairness
- (4) Professionalism
- (5) Timeliness
- (6) Prudent use of resources
- (7) Corporate citizenship
- (8) Customer focus
- (9) Teamwork
- (10) Confidentiality

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Assistive Devices and Services: Implements, tools and specialized services, including services of qualified interpreters for the deaf and qualified teachers for the blind, provided to PWDs to assist them participate in educational, employment or other activities by reducing disabilities resulting from impairments. Examples are special software, text phones for the deaf, hearing devices, magnified glasses, and wheelchairs, among others.

Braille: Embossed maps and touch sign for the blind.

Co-curricular: These are activities that take place outside the classroom and manner within the range considered normal within the cultural context of the human being.

Curriculum: This is all the organized experiences that educational institutions provide to help students learn and develop. It includes the subjects taught, the content, the learning and training environment and co-curricular activities.

Disability: A physical or other impairment, including visual, hearing, learning or physical incapability which impacts adversely on social, economic or environmental participation.

Disability Mainstreaming: Monitoring and evaluating to ensure that there is non-discrimination of persons with disabilities and that there is compliance with CU disability policies.

Discriminate: To accord different treatment to different persons solely or mainly as a result of their disabilities and includes words, gestures or caricatures that demean, scandalize or embarrass a person with disability.

Equity: Refers to the practice of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, access to and control of resources, responsibilities, power, opportunities and services.

Equity in Opportunities: Degree of fairness in the distribution of human and material resources across the board so that each person regardless of sex or his or her socio-economic background gets a fair share.

Inclusion: This is a philosophy which focuses on the process of adjusting the learning and training institutions and the society so that all the individuals regardless of their differences can have the opportunity to interact, play, learn, work and experience the feeling of belonging and develop in accordance with their potentials and difficulties.

Integration: This is the process through which PWDs are educated together to the maximum extent possible in a least restrictive environment.

Rehabilitation: This is a strategy for habilitating and rehabilitating, equalization of opportunities and social inclusion of all people with disabilities.

Sign Language: This is a visual language that uses manual signs that has structure and meaning like the ordinary language. In this case, the primary or first language or deaf persons is Kenyan sign language, which is used for instruction, and communication both in educational and in general settings.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CEO	=	Chief Executive Officer
CU	=	Chuka University
DPOs	=	Disabled People Organizations
GoK	=	Government of Kenya
HELB	=	Higher Education Loans Board
HRD	=	Human Resources Development
HRM	=	Human Resources Management
ICT	=	Information and Communication Technology
MoHEST	=	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology
NCPWD	=	National Council for Persons with Disability
PWDA	=	Persons with Disabilities Act
PWDs	=	People with Disabilities
ST&I	=	Science Technology and Innovation
SWDs	=	Students with Disabilities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chuka University (CU) is committed to the promotion of equal opportunity and the full participation of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in mainstream academic and administrative activities of the University. Persons with disabilities will enjoy all rights and privileges offered by the University.

The University will accord equal opportunity for them to work, learn and receive assistance in conformity with the PWDs Act (2003). The University will also prevent all forms of discrimination, bullying or harassment and provide flexible learning and working opportunities to support students and staff with disabilities. In addition, it commits itself to the promotion of good practices in all activities including recruitment, selection, promotion and other practices that affect students and staff with disabilities. The CU Disability Policy has been developed within the legislative framework of the PWDs Act (2003).

The Vice-Chancellor/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) will ensure that the University complies with the required legislation and will be legally liable for the actions of CU as a whole and also for the actions of individual employees in the course of their actions and the actions of agents including contractors, visiting speakers and other persons invited by the University.

Senior CU managers will have the responsibility of ensuring compliance with the Policy and its implementation within the University. All staff and students will be expected to be familiar with and to understand the contents of the Policy and to treat disabled staff, students and visitors in line with the requirements of the PWDs Act (2003) and this CU Disability Policy.

The Disability Mainstreaming Committee will be responsible for advising the University on implementation of this Policy and promotion of a proactive culture that values all individuals. The Committee will be responsible for overseeing and monitoring the implementation of the Policy and guidelines on PWDs within the University.

The Committee will immediately oversee implementation of the following interventions:

- i. Sensitization of Chairmen of Departments, Deans of Faculties, and senior administrative, and academic staff of CU on disability mainstreaming in all spheres of operation.
- ii. Appointment of Faculty advisors to advise students with disabilities and discuss curricula, teaching and learning activities/expectations and how they might affect students with disabilities (SWDs).
- iii. Encouragement of students and staff with disabilities to register such disabilities. The Dean of Students and the Registrar (Administration and Planning) will create and maintain updated records of all students and staff with disabilities, respectively.
- iv. The Committee will sensitize students and staff with disabilities on exemptions, incentives and access to credit as set out in the PWDs Act (2003).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Chuka University Disability Policy has been developed within the framework of The Constitution of Kenya (2010) article 54 and the PWDs Act (2003), which defines disability as a physical, sensory, mental or other impairments including any visual, hearing, learning or other incapability that impacts negatively on the social, economic or environmental participation.

In Kenya and the world over, there is the realized need to develop policies to integrate PWDs into mainstream social-economic activities and to protect them from all forms of discrimination that have existed over the years. As CU grows, there is the realized need to cater for students and staff affected by disabilities.

Chuka University Council developed a Strategic Plan (2008-2018) with a target of developing policies to provide a framework for equal opportunity provision. In subsequent years, CU undertook to identify disability concerns, needs and priorities, and to devise ways of addressing them. Specifically, CU pledged to comply with the minimum 5% disability representation rule.

To fulfill the targets set out in the Strategic Plan (2008-2018), the Vice-Chancellor/CEO of Chuka University appointed a Committee to develop the Disability Policy. Following below is the Disability Policy developed by Committee.

1.1 General Objectives

In order to increase access and ensure friendly and conducive environment for PWDs, the University shall strive:

- 1.1.1 To enhance early identification, assessment, intervention, rehabilitation and placement of PWDs in their learning and work environment
- 1.1.2 To ensure disability friendly environment in the University
- 1.1.3 To ensure learners-centered curriculum and responsive learning systems and materials
- 1.1.4 To facilitate staff, students and service providers to deliver quality services to PWDs
- 1.1.5 To enhance access to quality research, education, training and other activities by PWDs
- 1.1.6 To promote awareness on needs and capabilities of PWDs
- 1.1.7 To promote partnerships and collaborations with other stakeholders on PWDs issues
- 1.1.8 To mobilize resources for disability activities.

1.2 Scope of the Disability Policy

This Policy applies to CU staff and students with disabilities and covers the following areas: Human Resources Management (HRM), Physical Facilities Development, Students' Rights, Sports and Recreation Rights, Civic Rights and Funds Allocation. In line with global and national trends, this Policy shall address issues of access, equity, examination aspects relaxation, retention, transition, relevance and quality of service to PWDs. Application and implementation

in relation to financing, management, coordination and governance of PWDs at all levels is covered within this Policy.

1.3 Guiding Principles

This Policy is guided by the following principles:

- 1.3.1. Professional delivery of service to PWDs for their best interest.
- 1.3.2. Equal access to all educational and training opportunities by students with disabilities.
- 1.3.3. Equitable access to services that meet the environmental needs of individual PWDs.
- 1.3.4. Non-discrimination in registration, enrollment, recruitment, promotion and retention.
- 1.3.5. Barrier-free transition of staff and students through various educational and employment levels in accordance with their disability.
- 1.3.6. Holistic realization of the full potential of staff and students with disabilities.
- 1.3.7. Protection of the rights and privileges of staff and students with disabilities.

1.4 Rationale

The challenges students with disabilities face regarding their rights and responsibilities when beginning higher education can have implications on their transition if students are not fully prepared for it. These students may need to meet extra cost on documents due to their disabilities, personal services (such as personal care attendants), assistive equipment, transportation, and medical expenses related to their disability. Also, these students may take more time to finish their degree and face additional room and board costs.

There may be challenges related to lack of staff and faculty experience in supporting students with disabilities. However, to improve access to quality higher education for students with disabilities, a coordinated approach to optimize resources and knowledge in providing technical assistance is required and recommended.

Chuka University will address the following broad intervention areas through this Disability Policy: Human Resources Management, Physical Facilities Development, Sporting and Recreation Rights, Students' Rights, Civic Rights and Funds Allocation. These areas are presumed crucial to the self-actualisation of both disabled staff and students.

CHAPTER TWO: DISABILITY INTERVENTION AREAS

2.1. Human Resources Management

- 2.1.1. No person will deny a person with disability access to opportunities for suitable employment in Chuka University.
- 2.1.2. A qualified employee with disability will be subject to the same terms and conditions of employment as qualified, able-bodied employees.
- 2.1.3. The University will facilitate access to medical facilities for students and staff with disabilities.

- 2.1.4. A student with disability challenges may be given temporary, realistic employment in the University when a chance is available.
- 2.1.5. The University will endeavour to reserve five percent (5%) of all positions in employment for persons with disabilities.
- 2.1.6. Subject to the provisions of the Employment Act, PWDs shall be eligible for engagement where their disability is not such as to impede their performance in particular occupations for periods for which they are hired.
- 2.1.7. The University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that a member of staff who is or becomes disabled or whose disability increases during the course of employment is given every opportunity to remain in employment, provided the disability does not hinder performance of official duties. The University will make reasonable adjustments within available resources to help overcome the practical effects of the disability.

2.2. Physical Facilities Development

- 2.2.1. According to the PWDs Act (2003), accessibility to buildings by persons with disabilities should be made possible by all stakeholders in the construction industry.
- 2.2.2. The University will improve or modify physical facilities or avail special services in ground floors in order to provide access to resources within the to learners and employees with disabilities. The modifications shall include provision of ramps, lifts, parking spaces and floor-level toilet seats.
- 2.2.3. The University will ensure PWDs are entitled to a barrier-free and disability friendly environment to enable them have access to buildings.
- 2.2.4. The University will strive to provide assistive devices and equipment that promote mobility of PWDs within buildings, vehicles and other premises in CU.

2.3. Students' Rights

- 2.3.1. The University will ensure that SWDs are given sufficient information about academic programmes to enable them make informed selection decisions. This will include, but is not limited to clear information about programme outcomes, learning and teaching approaches, assessment, professional requirements and support services.
- 2.3.2. Chuka University will establish procedures and practices to ensure that all SWDs are treated fairly. It will make reasonable adjustments to support SWDs in their learning environment and as far as is reasonable, remove or reduce barriers which prevent SWDs from successful participation in aspects of University life.

- 2.3.3. The University will not deny admission to a person with a disability to any course of study by reason only of such disability, if the person has the ability to acquire substantial learning in that course.
- 2.3.4. Chuka University will take into account the special needs of PWDs with respect to the entry requirements, pass marks, curriculum, examinations, auxiliary services, use of school facilities, class schedules, physical education requirements and other similar considerations.
- 2.3.5. Chuka University will take appropriate steps to ensure students who become disabled during their course of study have the opportunity to complete their studies.
- 2.3.6. The University will strive to provide the same level of adaptation and support comparable to that which is provided to a student who was disabled at the start of the programme and/or through flexible interpretation of degree regulations within the limits of maintaining due academic standards.

2.4. Sports and Recreation Rights

- 2.4.1. All persons with disabilities will be entitled to the use of recreation and sports facilities in the University.
- 2.4.2. Chuka University through the University Sports Department will facilitate and ensure that all PWDs are entitled to participate in recreational and competitive events by providing the necessary suitable environment including: equipment, training, medics and transport of the disabled participants to the sports' venues.

2.5. Civic Rights

- 2.5.1. All PWDs will be entitled to voting rights and privileges as set out in the PWDs Act (2003), while working or studying at the University.
- 2.5.2. Chuka University will recognize existing organizations for persons with disabilities and liaise with such organisations when making decisions affecting PWDs in the University.
- 2.5.3. The organisations include but are not limited to: Community Based Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, Disabled People Organizations, Faith Based Organizations, and Non-Governmental Organizations.
- 2.5.4. The University shall endeavour to provide commensurate services such as hire of a sign language expert and provision of shuttle/taxi services to cater for needs of PWDs.

2.6. Funds Allocation

- 2.6.1. Chuka University will allocate funds in its annual budget and may source funds from external sources e.g. HELB and the National Development Fund for Disabled Persons to assist meet some needs of students and staff with disabilities.
- 2.6.2. Chuka University will request HELB to prioritise extending loans to students with disabilities.
- 2.6.3. Chuka University will put in place precautionary and safety funding measures to ensure that disabled staff and students are not discriminated in their respective places of work and learning on the basis of lack of funding.
- 2.6.4. Without limiting the generality of section 2.6 (2.6.1), CU may, out of the funds:
 - (a) Contribute to offsetting expenses for persons with disabilities.
 - (b) Provide or contribute assistive devices and services.
 - (c) Pay usual allowances to PWDs as it would to normal persons.
 - (d) Assist pay tuition and other charges for SWDs, who have inadequate personal funds to offset costs of their study programmes.

CHAPTER THREE: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

3.1. Requirements

- 3.1.1. Implementation of the stipulated commitments will be overseen by a standing Committee on disability, appointed by CU Vice-Chancellor/CEO.
- 3.1.2. Effective implementation shall require a detailed financing strategy; management and coordination of structures; information and communication; monitoring and evaluation frameworks; contextual interpretation, review and amendment of the Policy to align with changing trends and emerging issues.
- 3.1.3. The following components will form implementation modalities of this Policy:

3.2. The Vice-Chancellor's Obligations

The Vice-Chancellor shall:

- 3.2.1. Be the custodian of this Policy
- 3.2.2. Appoint the Disability Mainstreaming Committee
- 3.2.3. Facilitate implementation of the Policy and creation of partnerships

3.3. The Disability Mainstreaming Committee's Obligations

The Committee shall:

- 3.3.1. Formulate guidelines on disability mainstreaming
- 3.3.2. Review the Policy periodically
- 3.3.3. Carry out a survey on PWDs with CU departments
- 3.3.4. Sensitize and create awareness on disability issues

- 3.3.5. Plan and budget for disability programmes
- 3.3.6. Play advisory role to the Management on disability issues
- 3.3.7. Disseminate the Disability Policy
- 3.3.8. Monitor and evaluate disability programmes and activities
- 3.3.9. Establish counseling desks and employee support programmes for PWDs

3.4. The Employees' and Students' Obligations

The employees and students:

- 3.4.1. Participate in training sessions organised on disability mainstreaming
- 3.4.2. Maintain a conducive environment for PWDs in the training areas and workplaces
- 3.4.3. Participate in disability baseline survey

CHAPTER FOUR: MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Monitoring and evaluation of disability programmes will be conducted periodically by the CU Disability Mainstreaming Committee to ensure efficient and effective implementation of the Policy. Performance monitoring and evaluation tools will be developed to include disability responsive indicators. The Committee will further ensure that data relating to persons with disabilities in the University is updated annually.

The Committee will also monitor both staff and students to evaluate the degree of satisfaction with the services provided and then strive to implement the recommendations made in the assessments. Subsequently, this Policy will be reviewed regularly in consultation with the CU Disability Mainstreaming Committee as necessary.

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