

Terms of Reference of the Committee of Disability Access and Inclusion (CDAI)

Faculty of Arts

1. Preamble

Higher Educational Institutions shall have mechanisms to accommodate the needs of people with disability/disabilities in line with the concept of inclusive education. The University of Jaffna adopted the Policy on Disability Access and Inclusion and as per the said policy, each faculty shall constitute a Committee on Disability Access and Inclusion.

The Faculty of Arts has adopted the said policy at the meeting of the Faculty Board and the Disability Access and Inclusion committee was established at the 286th meeting of the Faculty Board held on the 4th of August 2022. Faculty of Arts has students with disabilities of different nature and through the establishment of the committee, it aims at promoting the interests of the people with disability/disabilities in terms of accessibility, physical and mental wellbeing, academic activities, co-curricular activities etc., during the university life

2. Objectives

The main objectives of the Committee on Disability Access and Inclusion are to:

- 2.1. Assess the health, learning, accommodation and access needs, when a student or member of staff with a disability is enrolled/recruited
- 2.2 Recommend adjustments and/or accommodation to the learning and built environment
- 2.3. Recommend a student or member of staff for disability rehabilitation based on health assessment
- 2.4. Refer students requiring adjustments in teaching and/or assessment methods of evaluation by an Independent Committee of Experts on Disability

3. Key Functions

- 3.1. Conduct awareness programmes on the concept of inclusive education among the stakeholders of the Faculty of Arts
- 3.2. Ensure that the structure of the curriculum of all the degree programmes offered by the Faculty of Arts accommodates the needs of the students with (any type of) disability to follow a general or honours degree.

3.3 Receive Disclosure of disability forms from the people with disability/disabilities at the time of enrolment in case of students and at the time of appointment in case of staff.

3.4 Conduct an initial assessment of the nature of the disability, collect evidence of disability and refer the person concerned for disability rehabilitation if necessary.

3.5 Conduct case conferences to study the concerns of people with disability/disabilities

3.6 Submit reports to the Faculty Board on the learning needs of each person with disability/disabilities.

3.7 Propose recommendations for adjustment in the built environment to promote accessibility to people with disability/disabilities

3.8 Facilitate the students to utilize the opportunities available within the Faculty of Arts in terms of physical and social infrastructure such as the Support Centre for Persons with Disability.

3.9 Propose reasonable adjustments necessary for teaching, in-course assessment, and final examination for people with disability/disabilities to facilitate academic progress.

3.10 Appoint two members of the committee as mentors of the students to monitor the implementation of the approved recommendations and report to the Faculty Board.

3.11 Conduct satisfaction surveys and submit the summary to the Faculty Board.

3. Quality Assurance

The Committee shall ensure that the adjustments recommended by it for the interest of the person with disability/disabilities shall not in any way compromise on the quality of the academic programme offered.

The students with a disability/disabilities shall also meet the co requirements of the academic programme.

4. Composition

5.1. The Committee shall have seven members appointed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts as prescribed below,

5.2. Five Members of the Faculty of Arts shall be appointed based on the expression of interest

5.3. Two experts who will be in a position to assess the disability shall be appointed on the recommendation of the Faculty Board.

5.4. The Dean shall appoint one among the members as the Chairperson of the Committee.

5.5. The tenure of the committee members shall be three years renewable for two further terms.

5.6. All members of the Faculty Board shall be eligible to be a member of the Committee.

6. Meeting

6.1. The committee shall meet at least once a month.

6.2. The committee shall meet often as required to discharge the functions of the Committee.

6.3. The Coordinators of the AHEAD project and the Disability Support Centre of the Faculty of Arts shall participate in the meetings of the Committee on invitation.

6.4. The quorum of the meeting shall be 3.

6.5. The meetings of the committee shall be presided by the Chairperson, in the absence of the chairperson, the members present can nominate one among them to preside over the meeting.

6.6. The reports of the meetings of the Committee shall be placed to the Faculty Board for necessary action.

7. Appointment of Experts

7.1. The Committee shall have the power to appoint experts of specific categories in case the reference to such an expert is necessary to assess the need of people with disability/disabilities.

7.2. The two expert members of the committee shall recommend the names of the experts in such instances and with the approval of the Faculty Board, the person with a disability/disabilities can be referred to the expert for an assessment and necessary assistance.

8. Disability Disclosure

8.1. Disclosing the disability is not mandatory

8.2. People with disability are required to disclose the disability with supporting documents as early as possible if they need any adjustment and or accommodation from the Faculty of Arts.

9. Developing disability after the enrolment/appointment

In case a student or a staff develop any disability during their tenure at the Faculty of Arts, the provisions of this document shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

10. Data Security

The Committee may disclose information regarding the disability and any adjustment needed, only on a need-to-know basis and with the prior consent of the student or member of staff concerned. Disclosure may be to the Faculty administration, relevant Heads of Departments or Units, Course Coordinators, teaching staff, supervisors and invigilators of examinations, services providers, and any others who may be involved in the implementation of a recommended adjustment or provision of accommodation

11. Financial Assistance

11.1. The committee shall request the Dean for financial support if required for the discharge of the functions of the Committee

11.2. The Dean shall make the request for financial assistance if required for the implementation of the recommendations of the CDAI from the University authority.

12. Complaint Handling Mechanism

12.1. Breach of the disability policy of the University of Jaffna

Any breach of the policy on disability may be reported to the student counsellors or members of the CDAI

The Students counsellor to whom a complaint was made on the breach of the policy, he/she shall report it to the CDAI

CDAI shall inquire about the nature of the complaint and if that falls within the scope of the committee, it shall recommend appropriate actions to the Faculty Board to address the matter complained of.

If the matter complained of does not fall within the scope of the committee, the committee shall refer the matter to the Faculty Board for necessary action.

12.2. Complaint about the adjustments proposed by the CDAI

Complaints on the proposed adjustments by the CDAI shall be made to the Faculty Board through the proper channel and the decision of the Faculty Board shall be final and conclusive.

13. Interpretation

(A). Persons with disability

As defined in the Protection of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (1996), a person with a disability is any person who, as a result of any deficiency in his/her physical or mental capabilities, whether congenital or not, is unable by himself/herself to ensure for himself/herself, wholly or partly, the necessities of life.

(B). Accessibility

Accessibility is enabled by the use of products, devices or services, and the built environment, to maximise the ability of people with disabilities to participate in university life.

(C). University life

The term encompasses academic, social and cultural life as experienced by students and staff of the University of Jaffna.

(D). Reasonable adjustment

An adjustment is considered reasonable when it would not impose unjustifiable hardship on the University of Jaffna. Here, the decision on whether or not an adjustment imposes unjustifiable hardship shall be based on consideration of not only the means and resources available, but equally on the impact of the absence of the adjustment for the student or member of staff with a disability.