



# Student Disability Policy

CEDAR INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY NPC

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## Purpose

- 1) In keeping with the spirit of democracy and values of equity, dignity, freedom, and social justice, the purpose of this policy is to provide guiding principles and basic strategies for an inclusive learning experience for all students, whilst eliminating and prohibiting unfair discrimination.

## Scope

- 2) The Student Disability Policy applies to all students and staff involved in supporting students at Cedar. Inclusiveness is everyone's business.
- 3) Staff disability does not fall within the scope of this policy (see Cedar's Staff Recruitment and Appointment Policy).
- 4) Difficulties with learning a new language is not considered a disability and does not fall within the scope of this policy (see Cedar's Language Policy).

## Principles

- 5) The following principles apply:
  - a. Cedar recognises that students with disabilities have the right to education and the right to be treated with respect and equity.
  - b. Cedar seeks to include students with disabilities in learning activities as much as is reasonably possible to provide for the inclusion of all students.
  - c. Cedar seeks to apply the reasonable accommodation rule fairly and to the extent that resources allow.
  - d. Cedar recognises that people with disabilities are best placed to understand their abilities. Therefore, students seeking reasonable services or support for their studies share the responsibility for identifying appropriate solutions to difficulties they experience in the learning environment.

## Implementation Strategies and Procedures

### Admissions

- 6) Cedar welcomes suitably qualified students with disabilities and will admit them using the same academic criteria as other students to ensure that students with disabilities are not unfairly discriminated against.
- 7) Cedar endeavours to evaluate students on their abilities rather than their disabilities. All applications are considered for academic merit without reference to disability or existing learning barriers in the first place. Cedar then endeavours to make such practicable and reasonable adjustments to each applicant with a disability or requiring any kind of additional support.
- 8) Cedar will be careful not to setup students for failure. Where it is obvious that a student cannot reasonably achieve learning outcomes, it would be unfair to allow a student admission and in doing so, compromise the student's dignity.

## Teaching and Learning Support

- 9) For students with disabilities, reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that appropriate support is available throughout their years of study, subject to funding and resource availability. In some cases, adjustments may include modifying methods of teaching, substituting or supplementing curricula and course work requirements or including alternative but equivalent assessment modes, ensuring that academic standards are not compromised and that graduating students achieve requisite skills and competencies. The Assessment and Moderation Policy provides more information about assessment adjustments. Modification of course requirements or assessment methods will be considered in discussion with relevant lecturing staff, the Administrator and the student.
- 10) If it becomes obvious that a certain discipline or course teaching methods and specific learning environments pose insurmountable obstacles relating to a student's level of impairment, and a genuine attempt has been made by all role players to seek solutions, the Administrator in consultation with the relevant lecturers may advise the student to register for a course with fewer access impediments or advise an alternative learning route or direction.
- 11) Where relevant staff development opportunities arise that involve inclusive practice and intervention training, Management will seek to make such training available to staff in accord with Cedar's Staff Development Policy.

## Learning Materials

- 12) Where possible, staff will undertake to overcome barriers arising because of impairments. Consideration shall be given to material delivery with due regard to contrast, print size, and alternative electronic media or audio delivery.

## Built Environment

- 13) Cedar will identify and address barriers to facilities and services on campus where possible. Accessibility improvements to buildings and facilities for students with special learning needs/disabilities will be considered in the planning of new buildings and facilities, whilst bearing the availability of funds in mind.
- 14) Routine internal inspections shall evaluate the need to address deficiencies such as balustrades, handrails, stair markers and effective signage as the need arises.

## Awareness and Education

- 15) The Student Disability Policy will be made available on Cedar's website as required by the Department of Higher Education and Training (2016).
- 16) Cedar shall undertake to make resources available and to find initiatives to raise awareness from time to time throughout the Cedar community to:
  - a. foster respect for the rights and dignity of people with disabilities;
  - b. promote positive perceptions and greater social awareness; and
  - c. promote recognition of skills and abilities of people with disabilities.

## Disclosure of Disability, Record Keeping and Data Management

- 17) Cedar is committed to creating an institutional climate in which disclosure of disability would be both advantageous and safe. Disclosure of disability is necessary where a student requests support or accommodation provisions. Information about an individual's impairment will be made available to persons tasked with facilitating or providing specific accommodations to the extent that this information is necessary to facilitate the accommodation.
- 18) Disclosed information will be treated as private and confidential. It will be used to monitor progress, inform strategic planning, and maximise efficiency of support delivery.
- 19) Cedar may seek medical confirmation of an impairment where a request for the provision of accommodation may warrant this. Students requesting accommodation for a disability may be required to provide supporting documentation from a registered medical professional. Where such documents are not forthcoming, Cedar will have the right to request a second opinion regarding the need for an accommodation at its own cost.

## Glossary

**Accommodation** means the process of adapting or adjusting to meet someone's needs.

**Disability** refers to a person with a verifiable physical or psychological limitation/s which negatively affects his/her daily activities in a specific way. This policy therefore focuses on the environment as a potentially limiting factor in terms of participating and engaging in activities, rather than on the diagnostic manifestation of the disability itself. In terms of the above, people with long-term or recurring physical or mental impairment(s) which substantially limit ability and who satisfy all these criteria, are defined to be persons with disabilities.

**Discrimination** means any act or omission including a policy, law, rule, practice, condition or situation which directly or indirectly imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantage on, or withholds benefits, opportunities or advantages from any person on one or more of the prohibited grounds.

**Equity** is the quality of being fair and impartial.

**Long-term** conditions refer to an impairment that lasts for at least twelve months. A short-term or temporary illness or injury is in terms of this definition not an impairment that can be categorised as a disability.

**Cognitive** impairment refers to clinically recognised conditions that affect a person's thought processes, judgment or emotions.

**Physical** impairment refers to partial or total loss of a bodily function or part of the body. It includes, but is not limited to, sensory impairments such as varying degrees of hearing and visual impairments, reading and/or writing impairments and/or any other combination of physical impairments.

**Prohibited grounds** include:

- a. Race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth; or
- b. any other ground where discrimination based on that other ground –
  - i. causes or perpetuates systemic disadvantage;
  - ii. undermines human dignity; or
  - iii. adversely affects the equal enjoyment of a person's rights and freedoms in a serious manner that is comparable to discrimination on a ground in paragraph a.

**Reasonable Accommodation** refers to appropriate modifications and adjustments that will facilitate the full and equal participation in the services and facilities of Cedar, whilst not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden upon the organisation.

A **recurring** impairment is one that is likely to re-occur from time to time. It includes constant underlying conditions, even if its effect on a person fluctuates.

An impairment is **substantially limiting** if a person would be either totally unable to study or pursue a career or would be significantly limited in his/her study process or in fulfilling the career. An assessment of whether the effects of impairment are substantially limiting must be considered if medical treatment or other devices would control or correct the impairment so that its adverse effects are diminished, prevented or removed.

A **short-term disability** refers to a temporary, non-chronic, and reversible impairment that, for a limited period, substantially limits a person's ability to participate in or perform during learning and teaching opportunities, as well as in an examination or assessment.

## References

Council on Higher Education. (2013). *Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.za/documents>

*Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997: Regulations for the Registration of Private Higher Education Institutions, 2016*. (South African Government). Retrieved from <https://www.gov.za/documents>

*Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 - Chapter 2: Bill of rights*. (South African Government). Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov.za/legislation>

*Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Amendment Act 2002*. (South African Government). Retrieved from <https://www.gov.za/documents>

*Higher Education Act No 101 of 1997*. (South African Government). Retrieved from <https://www.gov.za/documents>

## Related Internal Documents

Admission and Registration Policy

Assessment and Moderation Policy

Language Policy

Staff Development Policy

Staff Recruitment and Appointment Policy

Student Support Policy