



ACADEMIC ACCESSIBILITY

Policy number:
AP-OPS 1

Policy group:
Academic Operations

Effective:
01/11/2024

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PURPOSE

The University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and accessible environment for all individuals, regardless of physical, sensory, cognitive, or mental health disabilities. UGHE believes in the strength of diversity and the value of incorporating a wide range of experiences and perspectives into every facet of university life. This policy outlines the framework and responsibilities for ensuring equal access and opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and visitors with disabilities.

DEFINITIONS (IF ANY)

Academic accessibility: Ensuring that all students have equitable access to all academic services, including but not limited to: course resources; coursework; information; classes; office hours; and supervision.

Academic services: Instructional methods or resources, educational services or school resources available to the student to allow the student to complete courses for which they are qualified.

Accommodations: modifications or adaptations of academic services to ensure equitable access for students with disabilities.

PRINCIPLES

1. **Non-Discrimination:** UGHE prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in admission, recruitment, academics, research, hiring, employment, and general activities.
2. **Accessibility:** The University commits to providing and maintaining accessible physical, digital, and programmatic environments as far as reasonably possible.
3. **Reasonable Accommodations:** UGHE will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals to ensure equal access to educational programs, employment, and activities.
4. **Confidentiality:** All information about an individual's disability will be handled confidentially, in accordance with applicable laws and university policies.
5. **Community Awareness and Training:** UGHE will provide ongoing training and resources to the university community to foster an inclusive and supportive environment.

SCOPE

This applies to all students and trainees enrolled on academic programs or courses at UGHE, staff, faculty and visitors.

1. ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with any disability are welcome in UGHE classrooms. UGHE operates on an equitable basis whereby all students have fair and comprehensive access to all programs and services for which they are qualified. To this end, UGHE is committed to ensuring all students have the chance to achieve their academic potential. This policy details the process by which students are afforded accommodations in their academic courses and the implementation of such accommodations.

PROCEDURE

If students have a disability and wish to request accommodation or support to ensure they can access academic services for which they are qualified, the following process must take place:

- The student registers their disability with the Registrar's Office as soon as possible on arrival at the campus. Upon registering their disability with the Registrar's Office, they may be required to complete an intake form and submit documentation detailing their disability. Required documentation may include medical records, which will be kept confidential. Students who refuse to submit the requested supporting documentation may not be eligible for disability services.
- The Registrar's Office notifies the Educational Development and Quality Centre and the relevant academic unit under which the student is enrolled.
- The student meets with the EDQC and their relevant academic unit to discuss any limitations and barriers, and any accommodations in academic activities that might overcome these.
- The academic unit then develops possible accommodation or support for the student to access in the classroom or any academic activity relevant to the students' academic program.

Depending on the nature of the academic program (ie if the student must undertake clinical rotations in hospitals, or complete other fieldwork requirements) and the students' disability, accommodation may not always be possible. UGHE will work with the student, hospital or other fieldwork site (if necessary) and relevant departments detailed above to support a student as far as reasonably possible.

In addition to the above, support may not always be feasible or accessible at UGHE or Rwanda more widely, such as specific technologies. In such cases, UGHE will always strive to find reasonable solutions but may sometimes be unable to provide it. This will be



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discussed on a case-by-case basis with the students and UGHE will aim to support them as far as is feasible.

RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the students to communicate their disabilities to the Registrar's Office and to provide current documentation and test results which are no less than 5 years old and from a qualified professional. The Registrar's Office must notify the academic unit and the Educational Development and Quality Center, who work together to discuss and develop reasonable accommodation or support.

Students who register their disability and are offered academic accommodation in class or any other academic activity such as clinical rotations, assignments or examinations, are required to uphold high standards of academic integrity and abide by UGHE's Honor Code and Plagiarism Policy, as detailed in the 'Student Honor Code, Academic Honesty and Integrity' policy.

UGHE's Registrar, the Educational Development and Quality Center and academic departments are responsible for working with course faculty and the teaching and learning team to determine suitable, reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. The academic department, course faculty and teaching and learning team is then responsible for providing those accommodations to ensure the student can have equitable access to the course for which they are qualified.

2. CAMPUS ACCOMMODATION (HOUSING) AND ACCESSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The UGHE campus, housing and services offered on campus should be accessible to all students, staff, faculty and visitors, regardless of disability.

The UGHE Disability Support (UDS) services serve as the primary resource for coordinating housing and services for individuals with disabilities. The UDS services resides under the Director of Campus Operations.

PROCEDURE

Students, faculty and staff, and those hosting visitors, must notify the UDS of their need for specific housing or services in a timely manner and provide appropriate documentation of their disability, which are no less than 5 years old and from a qualified professional.



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The UDS will collaborate with Human Resources and Campus Operations to assess the documentation provided and meet with the individual to discuss needs and solutions.

The UDS, alongside the Campus Operations team, will ensure appropriate and accessible housing is provided to meet the needs of the individual, and amended campus services as appropriate, such as dining support or accessible office space. This will be handled on a case-by-case basis depending on the specific needs of the individual making the request.

The UDS will notify relevant departments with which the individual is affiliated, such as academic units, to ensure all needs are met both in the classroom and outside. Refer to the above procedure 'Academic Support and Accessibility for Students with Disabilities' for academic accommodations and support in academic activities for students.

RESPONSIBILITY

UGHE Disability Support (UDS) serves as the primary resource for coordinating housing and services for individuals with disabilities on the UGHE campus. They are responsible for reviewing cases where individuals need support with campus housing and/or services, meeting with the individual, and determining outcomes together with relevant departments.

Students, faculty, and staff must notify the UDS of their need for accommodation in a timely manner and provide appropriate documentation of their disability as outlined above.

Human Resources and the Campus Operations department will assist in the process for staff and faculty and ensure equitable employment practices at UGHE for individuals with disabilities.

REVISION/REPLACING

This policy shall be subject to review in **five** years (01/11/2029). This policy is a foundational document meant to ensure equity, accessibility, and support for individuals with disabilities within the UGHE community, classrooms and academic activities. If necessary, it will be reviewed and adjusted as needed prior to the review indicated above, to align with national laws, international standards, and best practices in higher education and disability rights.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

This policy shall come into effect on the date of its approval by the Academic Commission of the University of Global Health Equity.



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Approved by:

Date: 07/11/2024

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