



# Accessibility Policy

## Purpose

In accordance with the Sindh Empowerment of ‘Persons with Disabilities’ Act 2018 and Higher Education Commission Policy for Students with Disabilities at Higher Education Institutions in Pakistan 2021 (Amended) - Iqra University is committed to promoting an inclusive and diverse work environment that values and respects the contributions of all individuals, including persons with disabilities. We firmly believe in providing equal employment opportunities to all qualified candidates and employees, irrespective of their disability status. This policy aims to ensure that persons with disabilities are treated fairly, with dignity, and without discrimination during all stages of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training, promotions, benefits, and career advancement.

## Scope

This policy extends to all students, staff & faculty members with disabilities, seeking support and guidance, no matter the nature of their disability as well as faculty, staff, students and institution as whole to ensure the supportive, equal and non-discriminatory treatment towards the person with disabilities at campuses.

## Definitions

A **disability** is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions)

According to the **World Health Organization**, disability has **three dimensions**:

**Impairment** in a person’s body structure or function, or mental functioning; examples of impairments include loss of a limb, loss of vision or memory loss.

**Activity limitation**, such as difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, or problem solving.

**Participation restrictions** in normal daily activities, such as working, engaging in social and recreational activities, and obtaining health care and preventive services.”

According to Sindh Empowerment of **Persons with Disabilities Act 2018**

**A person with disabilities** defined as; a person with long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment which, in interaction with barriers, hinders his/her full and effective participation in society equally with others;

**A reasonable accommodation** defined as; necessary and appropriate modification where needed in a particular case, to ensure that the ‘Persons with Disabilities’ enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms at home, workplace and in social life;

**A access or accessibility** defined as; meaningful and effective access to various physical and intangible means made suitable to fulfill the special needs of the ‘Persons with Disabilities’

## Introduction

Iqra University values diverse identities and experiences, and honors disability as an important aspect of human diversity. We affirmed our commitment to ensure that each member of the University’s community shall be permitted to work and/or study in an environment free from any kind of illegal discrimination - including race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, disability, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and veteran status.

The main objectives of formulating a dedicated support & service for Disability is to:

- To facilitate accessibility and minimize barriers on campus to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities at every level be it infrastructure advancement or academic support.
- Partner with the university’s departments to identify the need and introduction of meaningful functional and technological accommodation in all curricular & extracurricular activities including sports, clubs and societies.
- Providing dedicated support & counseling interventions for persons with disabilities in order to enable them in achieving excellence in their academics, co-curricular activities and career choices.

## Policy Principles

We ensure an equal & just learning & employment environment for all of our students, staff & faculty members with disabilities by taking following measures:

### Diversity, Equity Accessibility & Inclusion (DEIA) Committee

The DEIA Committee is established to directly work with individuals with documented disabilities to facilitate access on an individualized, case-by-case basis. The committee will dedicatedly work towards:

- Determining the existing and potential accommodations needed within the campus and ensuring the provisions are in place and accordance with the policy.
- Providing counseling and guidance to students & parents regarding the support & accommodations available in the institution for students with disabilities.
- Liaisoning with university's departments to build accessibility into systems, processes and learning environments so that fewer individual accommodations may be required.
- Assisting university's department in terms of training, guidance and developing individualized accommodation as and when needed.
- Creating awareness and advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities within institutions.

## Admissions

The university will ensure that all prospective students declaring a disability in admission form are separately consulted, fully guided about the programmes and available accommodations in the university. The prospective students will also be dedicatedly facilitated at the time of application submission, entrance test and interviews.

The university will provide age relaxation for up to 10 years to the student with disabilities, however each student will be individually assessed and evaluated on their respective medical history (provided by registered medical practitioner).

Upon securing admission in the university, the student is required to submit a “Disability Certificate” by National/Provincial Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons and/or CNIC with a disability logo/proof of registration in NADRA’s database as a “special person”. The documents will go along the disability assessment form (Annexure A) by a registered medical health professional to assess students’ needs and accommodations for the university to best support them.

## Financial Aid

The university has aligned a dedicated financial support programme for students with disabilities, upon proper evaluation process, the students were awarded up to 100% scholarship. The decision for provisioning financial aid is reserved to the standing Accessibility Committee, on a case by case basis. The application can be made by filling the financial assistance form (Annexure B).

## Examinations

Considering the Standard Practices for the conduct of examination and the nature of disability of students, the university will place adjustment and accommodation on a case by case basis, which may includes, but not limited to:

- Extensions of time (25-100 percent extra time depending on the student's need)
- Use of assistive technology
- A separate room if needed
- Use of reader, scribe or computer where necessary
- Alternative formatting of exam papers
- Negotiation of an alternative assessment

## Services Available On-Campus for Persons with Disabilities

- In terms of the university's infrastructure the inclusivity & accessibility is already embedded in the overall building design catering to the needs of all students. The university has handrails, wheelchair ramps, kerb ramps and placement of proper signages across the corridors, as well as, dedicated lifts for students with disabilities.
- In terms of academics, the university implements Blackboard Learn; an internationally recognized learning & teaching platform which follows the international standards of accessibility, called Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Level AA.
- Within the classroom, the university has placed Digital White Board, which aids in enlarging screens, in combination with text-to-speech, contrast settings and other related accessibility features to cover a wide nature of functional limitation.
- For the medical & mental health support; the students & staff are provided with on-campus Doctor and Mental Health Counselor to reduce all kinds of barriers towards students' academic progression.
- Furthermore, based on the results of the assessment, the reasonable and appropriate learning aids will be provided best suited for the defined nature of disability, which may include but not limited to Books-Scanning, speakers, tape recorders, class printed notes, wheelchairs accessibility software, headphones, speakers, video cameras and as per requirements of the students.
- The university will also ensure that the textbooks are available in large print versions, e-books, or media with closed captioning, audio versions and/or as per the required format. Similarly, the Library will also consist of standard textbooks in alternate formats that may be more accessible for students with disabilities.
- The university will also ensure that the faculty, staff and members of the Accessibility Committee are provided with regular awareness and training sessions to best support the student with disabilities.
- In order to provide reasonable accommodations to qualified candidates and employees with disabilities to enable them to perform their job duties effectively. Reasonable accommodations are individualized and may include, but are not limited to:
  - Modified work schedules
  - Accessible workplace facilities
  - Assistive technology and devices

- Job restructuring
  - Additional training or support
- The university will engage in an interactive process with the individual seeking an accommodation to determine the appropriate and effective accommodations, taking into consideration the nature of the disability and the essential functions of the job.

## Convocation

The University will make every effort to ensure that person with disabilities are able to fully participate in convocations and enjoy their day along with all their fellow graduates.

## Complaint Lodging Procedure

Iqra University strongly condemns any kind of discriminatory practices within the university premises and is liable to take strict action against such individuals. In order to register complaints and/or any related issue pertaining to a student's disability, the university has a dedicated complaints management system defined within the **Policy for Lodging Complaint**.

## Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure its effectiveness and to make necessary updates as required.

## Approval and Amendment

This policy is approved by Iqra University's governing body. Amendments to this policy can only be made with the approval of the governing body.

## Document Control

This document is controlled by Iqra University's governing body. The latest version of the document will always be available from Iqra University's official website or upon request.

<b>Version</b>	1.1
<b>Policy Approved Date</b>	September 2021
<b>Policy Review Date</b>	September 2024
<b>Associated Policies</b>	<a href="#">Equality, Diversity &amp; Inclusion Policy</a> <a href="#">Policy for Lodging Complaint</a> ,
<b>Documents</b>	<a href="#">Annexure A: Disability Assessment Form</a>

	<a href="#"><u>Annexure B: Financial Assistance Form</u></a>
--	--