

SALT University College

Policy on Support for Differently-abled Students

1.0 Introduction

SALT University College is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and accessible educational environment for all students, including those who are differently-abled. This policy ensures that students who are differently-abled have equal access to educational opportunities, programs, services, and activities without discrimination. It aligns with international standards, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which recognizes the right to inclusive education at all levels, including higher education. The policy promotes the full participation and development of students who are differently-abled, emphasizing reasonable accommodations, accessibility, and support to enable them to achieve their academic potential on an equal basis with others.

This policy complies with relevant national laws and international obligations, aiming to eliminate barriers—physical, attitudinal, informational, and communicative—that may hinder students with disabilities. It applies to all aspects of university life, including admissions, academic programs, extracurricular activities, housing, and employment opportunities within the institution.

2.0 Scope

This policy applies to all current and prospective students who are differently-abled at SALT University College, across all campuses, programs, and online platforms. It covers faculty, staff, administrators, and any third-party service providers engaged by the university. The policy extends to all university facilities, services, and activities, ensuring a holistic approach to inclusion.

3.0 Definitions

- ***Differently-abled persons:*** A physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder a person's full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. This includes long-term or temporary conditions, visible or invisible disabilities, such as mobility impairments, visual or hearing impairments, learning disabilities, chronic health conditions, mental health disorders, and neurodiverse conditions.
- ***Reasonable Accommodation:*** Necessary and appropriate modifications or adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden, ensuring that students who are differently-abled enjoy equal opportunities. Examples include extended exam time, assistive technologies, or alternative formats for materials. Accommodations must not fundamentally alter the essential nature of a program or course.
- ***Inclusive Education:*** An education system that accommodates all learners, regardless of how one is differently-abled, through flexible curricula, teaching methods, and assessments that respect diversity and promote participation.
- ***Universal Design for Learning (UDL):*** A framework for designing educational environments, curricula, and materials that are accessible to all students from the outset, minimizing the need for retroactive accommodations.

- **Differently-abled Support Office (DSO):** The designated university office responsible for coordinating support services, accommodations, and advocacy for students who are differently-abled.

4. Principles

SALT University College adheres to the following principles:

- **Non-Discrimination:** No student shall be excluded from or discriminated against in any university program or activity on the basis of being differently-abled.
- **Equality of Opportunity:** Students who are differently-abled have the right to access quality education on an equal basis with others, including higher education, vocational training, and lifelong learning.
- **Accessibility:** All university facilities, digital platforms, communications, and services must be accessible, incorporating universal design principles.
- **Individualized Support:** Accommodations and supports are determined through an interactive process, tailored to the student's needs and based on documented evidence.
- **Confidentiality:** Differently-abled related information is handled with strict confidentiality, shared only on a need-to-know basis with the student's consent.
- **Participation and Consultation:** Students who are differently-abled are actively involved in decisions affecting them, and the university consults with differently-abled organizations where appropriate.

5. Rights and Responsibilities

The following table outlines the key rights and responsibilities of stakeholders:

Stakeholder	Rights	Responsibilities
Students who are differently-abled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equal access to education, accommodations, and support. - Confidentiality of disability information. - Appeal decisions on accommodations. - Participation in university activities without discrimination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-identify and register with the DSO. - Provide timely documentation of disability. - Engage in the interactive process for accommodations. - Notify the DSO of changes in needs or issues with implementation. - Meet academic standards with or without accommodations.
Faculty and Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Receive training on disability inclusion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implement approved accommodations.

	- Consult with DSO on accommodation implementation.	- Maintain confidentiality. - Include accessibility statements in syllabi. - Report barriers to accessibility. - - Participate in training programs.
Differently-abled Support Office (DSO)	Access resources for policy implementation.	- Evaluate documentation and determine accommodations. - Coordinate services and supports. - Advocate for students. - Monitor policy compliance. - Conduct accessibility audits.
University Administration	oversight role	- Allocate budget for accessibility and accommodations. - Ensure policy integration into university strategies. - Promote a culture of inclusion through awareness initiatives.

6. Procedures for Requesting Accommodations

- **Registration:** Students must self-identify by contacting the DSO and submitting an application form, available on the university website.
- **Documentation:** Provide current documentation from a qualified professional (e.g., physician, psychologist) detailing the disability, its impact on learning, and recommended accommodations. Documentation must be recent (typically within 3-5 years) and comprehensive.
- **Interactive Process:** The DSO conducts an intake meeting to discuss needs, review documentation, and develop an Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP). The IAP outlines approved accommodations and is shared with relevant faculty/staff with the student's consent.
- **Implementation:** Students present the IAP to instructors each semester. Accommodations are not retroactive.
- **Review:** IAPs are reviewed annually or as needs change.

- **Temporary Accommodations:** Available for short-term conditions (e.g., injuries) with appropriate documentation.

7. Types of Accommodations

Accommodations are individualized but may include:

- **Academic:** Extended time on exams, alternative testing formats, note-taking assistance, priority seating.
- **Technological:** Screen readers, captioning, adaptive software.
- **Physical:** Accessible classrooms, ramps, elevators.
- **Housing and Dining:** Modified housing, dietary adjustments.
- **Other:** Sign language interpreters, Braille materials, reduced course load (if approved), service.

The university promotes UDL to reduce reliance on individual accommodations.

8. Accessibility Standards

- **Physical Accessibility:** All buildings, pathways, and facilities must comply with international accessibility guidelines (e.g., ramps, automatic doors, accessible restrooms).
- **Digital Accessibility:** Websites, learning management systems, and materials must meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG).
- **Curriculum and Assessment:** Flexible designs incorporating UDL principles.
- **Audits:** Annual accessibility audits conducted by the DSO, with remedial actions budgeted.

9. Confidentiality

All differently-abled related information is confidential and stored securely by the DSO. Disclosure requires student consent, except in cases of health/safety risks or legal requirements.

10. Grievance and Appeals Procedures

- **Informal Resolution:** Discuss concerns with the DSO within 15 days of the issue.
- **Formal Grievance:** Submit a written complaint to the university's ADA/CRPD Coordinator. An investigation occurs within 30 days, with a decision issued.
- **Appeal:** Appeals to the respective Head of Department, then to the Deans, then finally the President or equivalent within 10 days, with a final decision within 45 days.
- External options include national human rights bodies or UN CRPD mechanisms.

11. Training and Awareness

Mandatory training for faculty, staff, and administrators on disability inclusion, accommodations, and CRPD principles. Annual awareness campaigns, workshops, and partnerships with disability organizations to promote a culture of inclusion.

12. Policy Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed every three years or as needed, incorporating feedback from students, staff, and international developments. The DSO will collect disaggregated data on enrollment, retention, and satisfaction to measure effectiveness and inform improvements.