

# POLICY ON INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY AT UPES

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## I. Introduction

UPES is dedicated to fostering an inclusive and equitable learning environment where all students, including those with disabilities, can fully participate in academic, social, and extracurricular activities. This policy establishes the rights, responsibilities, and accommodations available to students with disabilities, ensuring equal access to university resources and opportunities.

As an institution committed to diversity, inclusion, and social justice, UPES actively promotes an accessible campus culture that enables every student to pursue academic excellence, personal development, and meaningful engagement in campus life. Recognising the diverse range of disabilities—including physical, sensory, mental health, and learning disabilities—this policy underscores the university's commitment to upholding principles of equity and non-discrimination across all aspects of student life.

## II. Definition of Disability

The *Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016* defines a person with a disability as:

*"A person with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment, which, in interaction with barriers, hinders their full and effective participation in society equally with others."*

The Act also emphasises *inclusive education*, describing it as:

*"A system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together, and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the needs of different types of students with disabilities."*

At UPES, we align with this definition and remain committed to ensuring that students with disabilities have equal opportunities to access education, facilities, and support services.

## III. Policy Summary

This policy is designed to eliminate structural and systemic barriers that may prevent students with disabilities from fully participating in university programs and activities.

It serves as a guide for students, faculty, and administrative personnel to ensure that students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations and support in their academic, social, and daily lives.

For students seeking accommodations, the **Office of Student Experience and Engagement** oversees the entire process, ensuring a smooth and confidential procedure for providing necessary support.

#### IV. Policy Principles

UPES upholds the following principles to ensure students with disabilities have equitable access to university life:

- **Equal Participation:** Students with disabilities will have the same opportunities to engage in academic and non-academic programs.
- **Accessible Infrastructure:** All buildings, facilities, and common spaces will be designed or modified to be inclusive.
- **Support Services:** Campus services, events, and activities will be inclusive and accessible.
- **Career Opportunities:** Students with disabilities will have equal opportunities for placements, internships, and career development within and outside the university.

#### V. Scope

This policy applies to all UPES students with diagnosed disabilities who are enrolled in any academic program offered by the university.

#### VI. Confidentiality

UPES respects each student's right to self-identify as having a disability. Any student seeking accommodations must register with the **Office of Student Experience and Engagement**. The university recognises the sensitive nature of disability disclosure and prioritises student privacy. All records and accommodation requests will be handled with the highest level of confidentiality, ensuring that personal information is shared only on a need-to-know basis with relevant authorities.

#### VII. Provisions for Students with Disability

##### *A.1 Provisions for Prospective Students*

1. UPES encourages students with disabilities to discuss their accommodation needs during the admissions process. Prospective students may contact the **Office of Student Experience and Engagement** via email for a detailed description of available support services.
2. The admissions process at UPES is designed to be inclusive, ensuring that all applicants have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities.
3. All admission-related activities—including interviews, application submissions, and assessments—are structured to be accessible to all students.
4. Reasonable accommodations are provided during the admissions process. These accommodations do not alter academic or admission-related requirements but ensure that students with disabilities can participate equitably.
5. Prospective students are encouraged to consult the **Office of Admissions** at any stage of their application process to discuss available support services.

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## A.2 Provisions for Enrolled Students

1. UPES offers semester-wise support to students diagnosed with disabilities to help them navigate academic and campus life effectively.
2. Students seeking mental health support have access to university counsellors for confidential counselling services.
3. The **Head of Office of Student Experience and Engagement** works in collaboration with school heads and the **Department of Examinations** to ensure that students with disabilities receive the necessary accommodations for assessments and academic requirements.

## VIII. Student Responsibilities

Students receiving accommodations are responsible for the following:

- **Providing Documentation:** Students must submit relevant disability documentation to the **Head of Office of Student Experience and Engagement** within the deadlines specified by the department.
- **Timely Requests:** Accommodation requests must be submitted in advance to ensure timely arrangements. Any issues related to accommodations must be reported immediately to the **Office of Student Experience and Engagement**.
- **Engagement with Support Services:** Students should proactively communicate with faculty and the support office regarding their accommodation needs.
- **Compliance with Academic Requirements:** Students are expected to meet attendance and coursework completion standards as per university policies while availing accommodations.

## IX. Types of Disabilities

As per the *RPWD Act, 2016*, the following 21 types of disabilities are recognised:

1. Blindness
2. Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
3. Haemophilia
4. Low Vision
5. Cerebral Palsy
6. Sickle Cell Disease
7. Leprosy Cured
8. Muscular Dystrophy
9. Multiple Disabilities (including Deaf-Blindness)
10. Hearing Impairment
11. Chronic Neurological Conditions
12. Acid Attack Victims
13. Locomotor Disability
14. Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

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15. Parkinson's Disease
16. Dwarfism
17. Mental Illness
18. Intellectual Disability
19. Multiple Sclerosis
20. Thalassemia
21. Speech and Language Disability

A "Benchmark Disability" is defined as a disability of at least **40%**, as certified by a disability certificate or a **Unique Disability ID (UDID) card**.

#### **X. Academic Accommodation Services at UPES**

##### *Attendance Flexibility*

- a. Students with disabilities must adhere to university attendance policies.
- b. In cases of extended or unexpected absences due to health conditions, students should notify the **Office of Student Experience and Engagement** for necessary adjustments.

##### *Assignment Extensions*

- Students may request assignment extensions based on their learning needs and disability-related challenges. Requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

##### *Examination Accommodations*

- **Extended Exam Time:** Additional time may be granted based on the student's needs.
- **Rest Breaks:** Students may be allowed scheduled breaks during exams.
- **Accessible Testing Rooms:** Separate examination spaces may be provided.
- **Assistive Technology:** Supportive devices or software may be provided.
- **Alternative Question Formats:** Modifications in exam formats (such as enlarged print or audio formats) may be considered.

##### *d. Note-Taking Assistance*

- Students with vision or hearing impairments may request note-taking support during lectures.

##### *e. Preferential Seating*

- Classroom seating arrangements can be modified to accommodate students with mobility challenges, vision impairments, or other disabilities.

##### *f. Assistive Technology*

- Technology-based support tools such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, and specialised hardware will be made available.

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- Students are responsible for returning university-provided assistive devices in good condition.

*g. Grading Accommodations*

- Students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) will not be penalised for spelling errors in written assignments. The **Office of Student Experience and Engagement** will determine case-specific accommodations.

*h. Priority Course Registration*

Students qualifying for priority registration include:

- Students with locomotor disabilities
- Students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Students following a strict therapy or medication schedule (e.g., ADHD, anxiety disorders)
- Students with hearing impairments requiring captioning services
- Students with vision impairments needing alternative media formats

## **XI. Needs Assessment Board (NAB)**

To ensure appropriate, need-based support for students with disabilities, UPES shall constitute a **Needs Assessment Board (NAB)** in alignment with the guidelines under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, 2016 and UGC Recommendations.

The NAB will be responsible for evaluating the accommodation requests submitted by students and recommending suitable academic and campus life accommodations on a case-by-case basis.

### **Constitution of the NAB:**

- Chairperson: Head, **Office of Student Experience and Engagement**
- Members:
  - Medical Officer (or registered healthcare professional familiar with disability certification)
  - Faculty Representative
  - Psychologist/Counsellor (for mental health and learning disability cases)
  - Hostel Administrator
  - Representative from the Equal Opportunity Cell

### **Functions of the NAB:**

- Review documentation provided by students with disabilities (including disability certificates/UDID cards)
- Conduct interviews or consultations with students, where needed
- Recommend specific accommodations across academics, exams, campus life, and housing
- Review requests for assistive technologies and infrastructure-related modifications
- Maintain records in strict confidentiality, aligned with the university's privacy norms

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The NAB shall meet at the beginning of each semester and as needed throughout the academic year to review new or ongoing accommodation requests. Recommendations made by the Board will be forwarded to relevant departments for timely implementation.

## **XII. Campus Life Accommodation Services at UPES**

Students with disabilities will be offered housing-related accommodations in the case of on-campus residences. Examples of these accommodations are a preferred room, the number of roommates, an accessible building, etc.

*For any accommodation services not covered by this policy, the **Office of Student Experience and Engagement** shall evaluate each case separately.*

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*9/15/25*

*Approved*

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