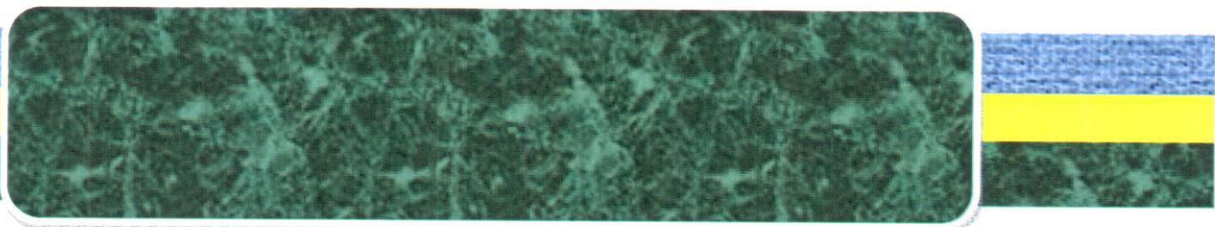




***Policy & Guidelines on Inclusive Learning & Teaching Services***

**July, 2015**



## Foreword

Through all its policy strategic planning, Rwanda government has continued to demonstrate the commitment to the principle of equalization of opportunities for all its citizens, including those that are disadvantaged, as a means of empowering all citizens irrespective of their differences to achieve economic development based on people (National Constitution of 2003; EDPR 2 EDPRS2 2013 to 2018; Seven Year Government plan, 2010-2017). In the same respect, it is also the missions of the University of Rwanda (UR) to avail provisions for its disadvantaged students and staff (with Special Needs) to enable their ultimate inclusion and effective participation in all aspects and sectors of the Rwandan society. These values form the foundation of the Higher Education sector policy strategic objectives, envisioning a barrier-free and supportive academic environment, where all students and staff interact freely and considerations based on merits, capabilities and potentials, override differences based on ethnicity, religion, socio-economic backgrounds; gender, disability, health status, or any other marginalizing distinctions.

The missions commits the University of Rwanda to putting in place the necessary provisions and support services for inclusion of the educationally disadvantaged students and staff, referred to here as Students and Staff with Special Needs (SSSN)<sup>1</sup>. It is in this regard that in its seating of 17<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the University of Rwanda senate approved a task force to implement the terms of reference for the development of the present documents on policy and guidelines on inclusive teaching and learning services. It responds directly to the National Equality and Diversity Policy for Higher Education of 2007, which promotes a culture of equality and diversity among staff and students, and seeks to enable their full participation in respective Higher Learning Institutions in Rwanda and the wider society in general.

Therefore, these policy guidelines should not be viewed as a 'stand alone' tool that shall be operationalized through any single section of the University, rather, as one that has a cross-cutting role in shaping and informing all activities of the University. It is in essence developed to guide a range of service delivery channels, both academic and administrative, with regards to the needs of students who may require alternative provisions in order to participate equally in learning and teaching or any other support because of their functional difficulties or any other disadvantage.

Hence, It is in reflection of this background and through consultations with key stakeholders and actors in the field, that the present documents has been developed to address a range of needs and provisions for SSSN, to guide enhanced *access, quality and equity* in all UR services. Key considerations include: 1. Creating and inclusive and barrier-free academic environments and approaches on which staff and students have equal opportunities in all services; 2. Improving quality provisions of alternative assistive devices (aids) and services through resource centers in all UR colleges and campuses; 3. Capacity and awareness development on inclusive service development beyond the UR compasses. The underlying principle being, to avail an leveled academic space on which students and staff with Special Needs are assured of equal benefits in all UR Services, and ultimate meaningful participation in the Rwandan society.

The University of Rwanda expresses its gratitude to the taskforce team that has led to the realization of the present policy guidelines, to all stakeholders who have contributed to its development, and commends the document as reference in all key services related to its staff and students with Special Needs. The University thus endorses the policy guidelines as a key input to academic service developments in Rwanda, and urges all stakeholders and partners to use it while considering their contribution to the Rwandan Higher Education sector.

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<sup>1</sup>The term, "Special Needs" is preferred in the present document to denote a range of intrinsically or extrinsically motivated disadvantages in UR services. Functional difficulties (disabilities) are considered as part of special needs only when they are also associated with the requirement of reasonable accommodation or alternative support provisions.

## Executive Summary

In collaboration with the Ministry of Education, University of Rwanda has, since 2008, been admitting and steadily putting in place structures and services to support staff and staff with special needs. It is currently, the only higher learning institution in the country that offers graduate and undergraduate academic programs in fields related to Special Needs since 2014-2015. The University takes pride in building the capacity of educators, community health workers and other professional cadres of the country's special needs service sector. To this end, it is committed to promoting services and studies related to inclusion, Special Needs, community-Based Rehabilitation and other studies.

### Situational analysis

The University of Rwanda community comprises about 21 staff and 246 students with various special needs (functional difficulties) who are expected to interact and achieve in different activities that take place in its colleges and campuses at the same level as those without. The University also involves a number of stakeholders involved in various activities both on and off campus, some of whom have functional difficulties and other special needs. In its conduct of business, the University faces environmental, social and attitudinal challenges which ought to be addressed, and it is imperative that the University develops a policy to guide the effective implementation of programs and support services for its community with special Needs. The University community requirement for an enabling environment to enhance inclusion and effective participation of persons with special needs in all activities is obvious and needs to be addressed.

The present document therefore, analyses the prevailing situation and takes heed of developments internationally, to suggest policy guidelines on Inclusive Teaching & Learning in a supportive, friendly and barrier-free academic environment of the University of Rwanda.

### Principles

As a matter of principle and strategy the University of Rwanda policy shall emphasize:

- A Rights-Based Approach in service delivery, seeking to minimize marginalisation, discrimination and other distinct differences against Students and Staff with Special Needs in all services they are entitled to at the University;
- Universal Design by mainstreaming Special Needs provisions in all university programmes and activities;
- Proactive promotion of Inclusion and participation of SSSN in University academic, co-curricular and recreation activities of their choice;
- Affirmative action for SSSN where deemed necessary while considering admission of students with special needs and/or recruitment of person(s) with Special Needs;
- Provision of reasonable modifications and adjustments to physical facilities, instructional methods and materials, examinations, work requirements and procedures etc, to ensure effective inclusion and participation of SSSN;
- Awareness within the University community on the rights and entitlements of students and staff with varying other special needs;
- Observation of Security and safety regulations with regards to SSSN within the University campuses;
- The University shall ensure that all physical infrastructure e.g. buildings and walkways are Barrier-free & special Needs friendly;

### Enabling Services

The University of Rwanda policy provides for enabling services through Resource Centres for Special Needs services(RCSNS) in close proximity to students and staff that need them. It will play pivotal roles in all UR composes, providing specialized support services and resources for all students and staff with special needs. The Centre shall be manned by purposively recruited personnel with skills in service areas related to special needs.

The RCSNS shall be entrusted among other responsibilities, to facilitate and assess the learning and work needs of the staff and students with special needs in the University of Rwanda campuses, through purposively established committees.

### **Implementation Framework**

The University of Rwanda shall be guided by the Universal Design approach in implementing the Policy on special needs to ensure reasonable accommodation and appropriate mainstreaming of special needs issues in all its programs and activities (Table 2). The process shall entail among others things adapting the physical and built-up environments to enable accessibility, and acquiring assistive devices and specialized equipment to enhance effective participation in learning and work activities.

### **Implementation Strategy**

The policy and guidelines on Inclusive teaching and learning services shall entail an implementation strategy that includes:

- Developing Enabling Services & Resources,
- Mainstreaming of Inclusive Services & activities in all the UR strategic planning,
- Knowledge sharing & dissemination on issues related to special needs,
- Developing Coordination, networking & partnerships with stakeholders within and outside the University of Rwanda.

The implementation strategies shall be carried out through an Action plans which will be monitored and reviewed regularly by the Staffing Committee in consultation with relevant parties.

### **Publishing and Monitoring Arrangements**

- The present policy and guidelines shall be accessible via the institution's website, the induction packs, and it shall be made available in alternative formats (Braille) wherever reasonable and practicable.
- The present policy and guidelines shall be monitored via the UR mainstream annual and quarterly monitoring systems and the feedbacks on the outcomes of the evaluation processes shall include the views of UR students and staff with SN.
- Recommendations for amendments shall consider the monitoring and review reports, as well as the recommendations the Special Needs assessment committees.

### **Review and interpretation of the Policy**

The University of Rwanda shall review the present Special Needs Policy and guidelines in the first two (2) years following its approval, and subsequently every five (5) years, ensuring its relevance to emerging institutional, national and international contexts.

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## Acronyms

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 9YBE      | Nine Year Basic Education  |
| 12YBE     | Twelve Year Basic Education  |
| SNCAB     | Special Needs Coordination & Advisory Board                        |
| ADRA:     | Adventist Development and Relief Agency                            |
| CBO       | Community Based Organization                                       |
| CAVM      | College of Agriculture & Veterinary Medicine                       |
| CBR       | Community-Based Rehabilitation                                     |
| CE        | College of Education   |
| CEARS     | Centers for Educational Assessment and Rehabilitation Services     |
| CFAPEK    | Centre de Formation Agricole et Petit Elevage de Kamonyi           |
| CFS       | Child-Friendly Services  |
| CMHS      | College of Medicine & Health Sciences                              |
| CST       | College of Science & technology                                    |
| DPO       | Disabled People' Organizations                                     |
| DCPMD     | Department for Curriculum and Pedagogical Material Development     |
| DTEMP     | Department of Teacher Education Management and Professionalization |
| DVC (AAR) | Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs & Research)               |
| DVC (FA)  | Deputy Vice Chancellor (Finance & Administration)                  |
| EAC       | East African Community   |
| EAILISNER | East African Institutional   |
| EDPRS     | Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy                |
| EEP       | Emergency Evacuation Procedure                                     |
| EFA       | Education for All  |
| ESSP      | Education Sector Strategic Plan                                    |
| FBO       | Faith Based Organizations  |
| HD        | Hearing Difficulties   |
| HEC       | High Education Council   |
| HI        | Handicap International   |
| HLI       | Higher Learning Institution  |
| HVP       | Home de la Vierge des Pauvre                                       |
| GS        | Group Scolaire   |
| GER       | Gross Enrollment Rate  |
| PC        | Psychosocial Challenges  |
| ICF       | International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health |
| MDG       | Millennium Development Goals                                       |
| MINEDUC   | Ministry of Education  |
| NCPD      | National Council for People with Disabilities                      |
| NER       | Net Enrollment Rate  |
| NGOs      | Non Governmental Organizations                                     |
| NUDOR     | National Union of Disability Organizations in Rwanda               |
| PD        | Physical Disabilities  |
| PEP       | Personal Emergency Plan  |
| PRSP      | Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan                                   |
| PwD       | People with Disabilities   |
| RCSNS     | Resource Centre for Special Needs Services                         |
| REB       | Rwanda Education Board   |
| RENCP     | Rwanda Education NGO Coordination Platform                         |
| RHA       | Rwanda Housing Authority   |

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| RSL    | Rwanda Sign Language  |
| SISNE  | School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education                     |
| SBR    | School-Based Rehabilitation   |
| SN     | Special Needs   |
| SEN    | Special Educational Needs.  |
| SNECO  | Special Needs Education Coordinator                                 |
| SSSN   | Students and Staff with Special Needs                               |
| SWA    | Safe Wait Areas   |
| TFDIER | Task Force for Development of Inclusive Education in Rwanda         |
| TTC    | Teacher Training College  |
| TVET   | Technical and Vocational Training                                   |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education Science and Cultural Organization          |
| UR     | University of Rwanda  |
| VC     | Vice Chancellor   |
| VD     | Visual Difficulties   |
| VGPIEK | Voluntary Group for the Promotion of Inclusive Education in Kamonyi |
| WAI    | Web Accessibility Initiative  |
| WDA    | Work Force Development Authority                                    |
| WHO    | World Health Organization   |



## Concepts and terms used

**Accessible Communication:** All conventional and/or alternative means used in instructional communications, including texts, Braille or tactile communications, Sign languages, large print, accessible multimedia through written, audio, plain-language, human-reader and augmentative and alternative modes, means and formats of communication such as accessible ICT.

**Accommodation**(often used as 'Reasonable accommodation): necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments (not imposed or disproportionate or undue burden), where needed to assure persons with functional difficulties or other forms of special needs the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others. At UR this will entail adjustments and modifications of instructional methods and/or materials, assessment approaches, work requirements and procedures, etc, to ensure equal participation and access opportunities for staff and students with functional difficulties (disabilities) and other special needs.

**Affirmative action:** Preferential treatment accorded to beneficiary of services due to their functional difficulties or other disadvantages that deter them equal achievement as their peers of the same age or/and educational setting. In 2008, the Rwandan Ministry of Education initiated affirmative action by supporting inclusion of students with functional difficulties (disabilities) in both public & private Universities on a relatively lower cut mark than their peers (also see 'Concessionary admissions' below, and by paying both their registration and full tuition fees.

**Assistive devices/aids:** These are equipment and materials used to facilitate the functionality of a person with a disability. Example; hearing devices, lenses, Perkins Braille, talking calculators, audio and video systems, white cane, wheel chairs, tricycles and special seats, adopted software, among others.

**Concessionary admissions:** Compromising admission, exclusively reserved for students with significant Visual, hearing, extreme motor limitations, or any other functional difficulties, following assessment of the extent to which these impact negatively on school achievements (also see 'Affirmative action' above).

**Disability<sup>2</sup>:** This is the partial or complete loss of use (or ability) of a certain body part or organ. This leads to a reduction or loss of function of that body part or organ. This is also a social issue, because different societies interpret abilities or disabilities in accordance to their social norms and standards. ICF (2001) has changed this concept to 'Activity limitations, or difficulties an individual may have in executing activities'. It classifies the difficulties in 10 categories ranging from 0 to 9 (0% to 100%): 0. No difficulty (none, absent, negligible difficulties) 0% -4 %; 1. Mild difficulty (slight, low difficulty 5-24 %; 2. Moderate difficulty (medium, fair difficulties) 25-49 %; 3. Severe difficulty (high, extreme limitations) 50-95 %; 4. Complete difficulty (total limitations) 96-100 %; 8 not specified; 9 not applicable.

**Discrimination on the basis of functional difficulties (disabilities) or other Special Needs:** Any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of functional difficulties (disability) or any other Special needs, intended to nullify the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field. It includes all forms of discrimination, including denial of reasonable accommodation.

<sup>2</sup>International classification of functioning, disability and health: (ICF) classifies 'Impairment, Disability, Handicap in terms of challenges in Body structures, functions, activities and participation. In the Rwandan socio-cultural contexts, the concept 'Ubumuga' often used to denote 'dysfunctions of a body, is also used to generally imply all the three concepts interchangeably.

**Impairment:** This is the damage to a part of the body (organic system) caused by genetic factors, disease, accident or other causes, which may also be the source of disabilities. In this document, reference is made to Visual Disability, Hearing Disability, Physical Disability, Intellectual Challenges, and Multiple Disability. ICF (2001) classifies impairment according to its magnitudes, ranging from 0% to 100%: **0.** No impairment (none, absent, negligible,... ) 0-4 %; **1.** Mild Impairment (slight, low,) 5-24 %; **2.** Moderate impairment (medium, fair,...) 25-49 %; **3.** Severe impairment (high, extreme, ...) 50-95 %; **4.** Complete impairment (total,...) 96-100 %.; **8** not specified; **9** not applicable.

**Inclusive Education:** This is the process of addressing all learners' educational needs in a mainstream education setting. It is based on the principle that all learners are different, and can learn and develop differently, and therefore, the education system is expected to flexibly be adapted to fit every learner's (child's) needs. In the Rwandan socio-cultural context, the concept is often interpreted as '*UbureziBudaheza*' or '*non-exclusionary education*'.

**Individualized Teaching Strategies:** These are the personalized instructional approaches or methodologies that cater for the learners with disabilities and related Special Educational Needs. They involve among others: support services using specialized teaching resources, structured teaching approaches using adjusted or/and functional curricular, etc.

**Handicap:** This concept has been changed to '**Participation Restriction**' by ICF(2001). It refers to the problems a person with a disability or other limitation faces when interacting with the *environment*. Thus, a handicapping condition in one's environment may not necessarily be handicapping in another's.

**Multidisciplinary team:** This is a team of experts that is involved in the education service delivery or/and programming for an individual (or group of) learner with Special Educational Needs.

**Habilitation/Rehabilitation services:** Experiences of practice in Rwanda indicate that the two terms are often used interchangeably, though they are actually defined differently. **Rehabilitation** refers to services given to newly disabled persons with the purpose of restoring some of the functionality they lost as a result of their disability. This is done mainly to help them acquire skills for independent living. **Habilitation** is like rehabilitation except that it is a service accorded to persons who had no functional skills in the first place at the time of acquiring the disability. It is about teaching new skills to people who never had them.

**Resource Center for Special Needs Services (RCSNS):** This is a place (often a purposely selected room in a school) specially equipped with specialised resources designed for instruction and support for students with Special Needs. At times it is also used by teachers and other resource personnel, for other activities related to special needs education services.

**Director Resource Center for Special Needs Services (DRCSNS):** Often qualified and/or specialized staff who coordinates special needs education services and activities within and outside a specified University community. S/he heads a team of staff entrusted with a range of responsibilities, from welfare, assistive services and all other related support to the University community with Special Needs, ensuring equalization of access and opportunities.

**Special Needs (SN):** These are non-ordinary needs an individual may present in given circumstances or when required to accomplish certain tasks in the same way as other people, often due to intrinsic or extrinsic limitations/barriers. A student with significant functional difficulties (disabilities) may present *Special Educational Needs (SEN)*, or may need extra attention / assistance from the teacher and/or the use of alternative educational approaches or/and tools.

**Special Needs Education:** This is an education that aims at providing education services to all children who may, for any reasons, have temporary or permanent needs for adjusted education, different from the ordinary education.

Experiences in the Rwandan context continue to indicate that the concept is largely interpreted as 'Uburezibw'abafiteubumuga' or education for those with disabilities.

**Special School:** A school that is set and organized to provide educational services to learners with one specific type of disability or Special Educational Needs. In Rwanda, there are schools for the Deaf, for the Blind, and other specifically defined groups of learners with SEN.

**Support services:** These are special services offered by professionals in support of ordinary teachers to learners with functional difficulties (disabilities) and related educational needs; such as speech therapy; occupational therapists; sign language interpretation; counseling, etc.

**Universal Design (UD):** The design of products, environments, programs and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. "Universal design" shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed.

## Part 1

# Policy Background & Statements

## 1.0 Policy Background

The University of Rwanda (UR) was established by the Government of Rwanda through law No 71/2013 of 10/09/2013, and it merged seven public Higher Learning Institutions into a consolidated entity headed by the Vice Chancellor (VC) who is the University's chief executive officer, and governed by the Board of Governors and an Academic Senate composed of staff and student representations.

The main purpose of creating this national institution is to enhance the quality of Rwanda's higher education provision, while achieving economies of scale and efficiencies in operation. It is expected to become a leading African university, offering a wide range of academic programs of studies delivered at its campuses and through available distance learning opportunities.

The laws governing the establishment and functions of the University of Rwanda (UR) also lay an appropriate foundation for achieving its regional leadership goals in all academic engagements, including training of the most capable and skilled manpower, in research and community support, and all other related services. In this regard therefore, creating an enabling and effective academic environment in which both staff or/and students feel motivated and supported irrespective of their differences or special needs is one of the guiding principles to pursue the objectives, that also acknowledge the university's background of unlevelled ground for equal and inclusive participation of the latter.

The University of Rwanda is a singular multi-campus institution operating from departments and schools that make up Colleges, intended to achieve innovative approaches in teaching, learning, research and connections with the community and with the nation's vision for development. UR's educational programs will feature student-centered learning, and its research mission will be central to the country's and the region's economic development.

The UR management recognizes that its constituent colleges and campuses still operate in a framework that is not adequately supportive of students and staff with varying special needs. Besides, the Ministry of Education's affirmative action policy of 2008, had also continued to oblige all current UR colleges to admit students with special needs on affirmative action policy, because they were inadequately supported in their secondary education (with relatively low A' level performances), yet the mechanisms that were to be put in place to alleviate the situation are not yet realized. Therefore, the demands for UR leadership to bridge the gap by putting in place enabling systems that ensure equal opportunities in accessing and delivering the University services, deserve attention.

In the next subsections therefore, the present document takes heed of the existing initiatives used to address the challenges in some of the UR colleges, to note key background context in policy and practices that shall continue to influence the University of Rwanda in its course of planning the most appropriate inclusive teaching and learning services.

## 1.1 Policy statements

### 1.1.1 Vision

The University of Rwanda envisions that by 2020, it shall have educated the next generation of Rwandan leaders who are prepared and dedicated to building a more inclusive, just and sustainable world.

### 1.1.2 Mission

The University of Rwanda shall support the development of Rwanda by discovering and advancing knowledge, commitment to the highest standards of academic excellence, where all students irrespective of their special educational needs and diversities are prepared for lives of service, leadership and solutions.

All UR academic services and facilities shall be designed to meet all the needs of all its students and staff, facilitate the elimination of all physical, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers, and fostering equal and integrated access to all academic, social, cultural and recreational programs.

### 1.1.3 Core Values

In striving to realize its Vision and Mission, University Rwanda shall uphold the following core values:

1. Honesty and integrity,
2. Freedoms of expression, communication, and of choice,
3. Humanitarian and non-discrimination perspectives,
4. Social justice, respect and recognition of individual differences,
5. Academic excellence and quality services
6. Student-centeredness
7. Innovation & Creativity,

### 1.1.4 Policy objectives

In recognition of the above, the purpose of the present policy is to guide, promote and ensure full and equal access to, and participation in all UR services by students and staff with special needs, geared towards enabling the realization of their potential contributions to national development.

The University of Rwanda intends to provide quality education to all its Students and facilitate its entire community that may, for any reason, have temporary or permanent Special Needs that require reasonable accommodation or adjusted provisions. It will be achieved through mitigation of all factors that constitute barriers to equal participation in learning, teaching and all other academic services, arising from either functional difficulty (disabilities) of an individual or from the University environment. In recognition of the benefits of diversity, the present policy guidelines shall aim to ensuring that:

- Standardised assessment is conducted (prior to admission) to ascertain students or staff with significant special needs, or who may deploy significant efforts while accessing and / or using services and facilities of the University of Rwanda.
- All staff and students with special needs are treated fairly, and are not discriminated against on any ground or distinction.
- An inclusive and accessible environment is developed for all staff and students, irrespective of their functional difficulties (disabilities) or any other special needs.
- Universal Design qualities that promote effective mainstreaming of equality and diversity values into the core functions and programs of the University of Rwanda are adhered to.
- The University of Rwanda fosters a shared awareness, understanding and commitment to equality and diversity to enable its entire community act in accordance with the present policy guidelines.
- The number of University students with special needs is increased and retained through enhanced quality and effective support services and resource provisions, and ultimately preparing them for professional life
- All University of Rwanda academic undertakings, including curriculum developments and reviews; research, partnerships, community engagements, etc, are geared towards inclusion, development and equal participation of persons with Special needs in the Rwandan community.

### 1.1.5 Definition of Policy Targets

The UR Policy envisages enabling and facilitating its entire staff and student community with significant Special Needs who qualify for reasonable accommodation and/or adjusted educational provisions, or who may deploy significant (unnecessary) efforts while accessing and / or using services and facilities of the University of Rwanda. The target groups shall be comprised of and not limited to:

#### 1. Staff and students with significant functional difficulties (disabilities)

- a. Physical or/and Motor Challenges
- b. Visual Difficulties
- c. Hearing Difficulties
- d. Speech or/and Communication Difficulties
- e. Multiple functional difficulties e.g. albinisms with both visual and skin-related challenges

#### 2. Staff and students with Psychosocial challenges

- a. Emotional challenges (externalized or/and internalized)
- b. Behavioural difficulties including drug addiction, prostitution, etc.

#### 3. Staff and students with Curricula-related Challenges

- a. Challenged dexterity, stamina or functions in using instructional resource.
- b. Difficulty in handling/ manipulating instructional resources (Including Left-handed).
- c. Gifted & talented, Slow learners, and specific learning difficulties,

#### 4. Students & staff with Health Challenges

- a. Infected or/and affected by terminal illnesses including HIV/AIDS
- b. Infected or/and affected by chronic illnesses,
- c. Psychiatric or/and persistent mental illnesses
- d. Any other diagnosed health or medical condition that may significantly inhibit academic (or related) functions, or necessitates reasonable accommodation, support provision, including among others, epileptic disorders, asthma, cardiovascular problems, neurological conditions, cycle cell anaemia, diabetes.

The present policy deliberately takes a relatively widely encompassing definition of Special needs groupings, because the specific group shall be established through expert assessment strategies while also determining tailored accommodation and provisions, as proposed in the next sections. The apparent overlaps across categories therefore may inevitably arise since the special needs also cut across more than one grouping. Students with Albinisms for example, may largely constitute a category to which educational challenges and needs are equally shared by those with significant visual difficulties and those with health challenges, and sometimes with even other groups. Hence, though due consideration is made of the shared difficulties and/or accommodation requirements of any one given group above, more specific categories of Special Needs shall be established as part of the UR admission and registration procedures, conducted through planned resource center – based assessment services, or any other credible and/or standardized categorization strategies.

### 1.1.6 Policy commitments

The University of Rwanda (UR) acknowledges that education is a basic human right and the commitment to supporting students and staff with special needs is also enshrined in national constitution of 2003 (Article 40), as well as law No 1/2007 (Articles 11 – 13). Through the present document therefore, UR upholds that Students and Staff with Special Needs (SSSN) shall be enabled to participate fully in all its programs and activities, with a voice in all

University reforms and developments. Hence the University pledges adherence to related national and international commitments that entail:

1. Recognizing that all UR students and staff are equal before and under the national law and University regulations, are entitled without any form of discrimination to equal treatments and benefit in all service provisions.
2. Engaging mechanisms that prohibit all forms of discrimination on the basis of special needs, and guaranteeing equal and effective protection against discrimination to all registered staff and students with special needs.
3. Taking all appropriate steps to ensure that reasonable accommodation is provided, and the Universal Design is adhered to wherever possible, in order to promote equality and eliminate discrimination
4. Recognizing that women and girls with special needs are subject to multiple discriminations, and in this regard takes measures to ensure their full equal rights and freedom of access to all UR service provisions.

The commitments shall lay the foundation through which the University Rwanda shall be guided in its active steps to ensure equal opportunity procedures, provisions, mechanisms and initiatives in all services and facilities related to:

- Mainstreaming the Universal Design (UD) principles<sup>3</sup>
- Students' admissions, registrations and access to all academic programs,
- Students' academic achievements and progress assessments,
- Provisions of guidance and other support services,
- Teaching and learning procedures and processes,
- Curriculum development, reviews and implementation,
- Research and consultancy programs,
- Staff recruitment, development and support programs,
- Partnerships and community engagements,
- Procurement planning, procedures and processes,
- Grievance and disciplinary procedures,
- Facilities and estates processes and procedures,
- Planning, Marketing, Public Relations and information sharing procedures,
- Communications, language and terminology uses.

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<sup>3</sup> McGuire, J.M. (2011) Inclusive College Teaching: Universal Design for Instruction and Diverse Learners –*Journal of Access and Design for All* 1(1): 38-54. ISSN: 2013-7087



## Part 2

# Inclusive and Special Needs Context Analysis

## 2.0 Situation Analysis

Policy and social contexts that have continued to influence the development of special needs education programmes in Rwanda, also appear to influence the situation in the University of Rwanda and impact on its strategies in providing for its students and staff with special needs. As explained in the next sections, the prevailing policy frameworks and developments in schools and Rwandan community, have given rise to a situation where the University of Rwanda has to prepare for a challengingly rising number of students with varying special needs. Besides, the University is subjected into a situation whereby it is obliged by the national and international policy frameworks to uphold non-discriminatory and inclusive standards.

### 2.1 Existing policy & legal frameworks

The University of Rwanda program designs and principals also draw from international and national policy frameworks that guide plans and orientation of educational services for people with special needs. They include a range of international conventions to which Rwanda is signatory, most particularly the UNESCO Salamanca Statement on Inclusive Education and its framework of action of 1994, the UN Convention on the Right of persons with disabilities of 13 December 2006 (ratified by Rwanda on 15/12/2008). Like Most of UN state parties, Rwanda has committed itself to ensuring that persons with functional difficulties (disabilities) and related special needs shall be guaranteed the right to inclusive education at all levels, regardless of age, sex or/and background, without discrimination on the basis of equal opportunity intended to protect their rights and dignity.

In the same regards, it is noted that the international commitments appear to have had fundamental influences on the national policy strategies with bearings on education for youths with special needs since 1998. These range from the National Constitution of 2003 (Art. 28, 40, 76); legislations (Law N° 01/2007 of 20/01/ 2007- Art. 11-13); Ministerial Decrees and policies since 2009 regarding services for people with disabilities and related disadvantages; and most importantly, the Government's 7 year plan (2010-2017). The University of Rwanda is obliged to adhere to these and other related key national policy instruments.

The current 5 year Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP, 2013 - 2018) for one, places the educational needs of young people with special needs across all educational services (Teacher training & management; curriculum development; school management, Higher Education, and others), a strategy which is reflected in the reviewed MINEDUC Policy on Inclusive Education (2013-2018). The latter commits the University of Rwanda to key services that includes training of personnel urgently required in schools and the general education sector; provision of support services to the education sector and the general community, as well as research and consultancy, all geared towards contributing to the country's socio-economic developments by empowering citizens in their diversities and potentials.

### 2.2 Emerging inclusive education initiatives

Because the inherited systems and attitudes that are inconsiderate of needs and inclusion had already been established, the development of an inclusive academic environment that is fully accessible to the UR community with special needs is still at the basic levels. Deliberately planned reasonable accommodation or appropriate adjustments and modifications to facilitate academic services and procedures for equal access and participation for staff and students with special needs, are not yet an apparent mainstream feature in all UR plans and activities.

It is recorded that some provisions and services for students with special needs are available in only three UR campuses (Huye, Nyarugenge & Remera), and are a relatively recent establishments. Besides, the available resources and provisions cater predominantly for students with visual difficulties, while a range of other categories of students with special needs in various UR Campuses still remain an enormously challenging feature marred with unnecessary drop-outs and grievances. According to the TFDIER reports since 2007 for example, out of the 35 students with hearing difficulties that were admitted in UR colleges (under the MINEDUC affirmative action policy), only 5 have been able to graduate, while the rest remain victims of the persistent communication barriers; only a limited number of wheel chair users still find it difficult to access all levels of Education in Rwanda, and the only 5 that have been able to access UR, still complain of extreme limitations in accessing essential services, and to freely

interact, mainly due to the enormous physical and attitudinal barriers raised by unaware service providers within and outside UR.

Given such persistently non-inclusionary context in UR services thus, it cannot be ruled out that the influence of the established culture and historical background of Rwandan education has had its influence too. Although there are hardly any notable Rwandan cultural practices that marginalize people with special needs, the cultural attitudes that are still apparent in popular expressions and idioms have also influenced decisions at various levels including Higher Education policies and practices. In some of the UR colleges (UR CE & UR CMHS) for instance, it has taken the efforts and interventions of individual college leaders (principals/rectors/Deans) to initiate simple but necessary modifications and adjustments to ensure equal access for staff or student with special needs (often involving undue expenses and administrative measures), because the responsible staff do not necessarily consider it as part of their responsibilities to the University.

The inherited non-inclusionary background context, as well as the dominant attitudes and perceptions that still ignore special needs services for a large Rwandan community, mandates considerable efforts in developing and providing appropriate accommodations and support services for all staff and students with special needs in the University of Rwanda. Planning and establishing strategies of UR services and/or program implementations will have to continuously be aware of the inherited systems and practices that had been inconsiderate of functional difficulties (disabilities) or/and all other Special Needs. It is on such a foundation that the University of Rwanda will pave a way forward for sustained development of quality services that are inclusive and provides for its growing community with special needs.

### 2.2.1 Students with Special Needs

In resonance with the Government of Rwanda development strategies, seeking to transform Rwandan citizens into skilled human capital for the socio-economic development (EDPRS 2, 2013-2018), the Ministry of Education pledges through its Education Sector Strategic Plans (2013 - 2018) to ensure equitable access to quality education, focused on combating illiteracy, promotion of science and technology, critical thinking, and positive values. It is in this regard that increasing equitable access to education for students with special educational needs within the mainstream and special schools emerges as one of the key priority strategy of the sector. The development programs also privilege among other strategies, making all levels of education (including Higher Education) more accessible and more relevant to the national needs, equitable access to free 12 years of schooling for all, including those with special educational needs, thereby increasing their opportunities to access Higher Education training, and subsequent equal participation on the national development agenda. .

It is acknowledged that the increasing Enrolment Rate (NER) closer to 96% at basic education levels in rural and urban disadvantaged communities of Rwanda, is largely owed to the national policy background, or the deliberate national effort in facilitating access and retention of boys and girls for whom access and progress in schooling had been more challenging (Special Educational Needs). The development of Child-Friendly and inclusive education approaches for example in some Rwandan disadvantaged communities in the last five years, are among initiatives responsible for the improvement in awareness of children's special educational needs in many school communities, and hence, a stronger synergy across multiple sectors and agencies that has led to increased number of learners with special needs in the schools in the last 10 years. According to Handicap International (program Rwanda) reports of 2013, Kamonyi District of the Southern province had registered an increase from less than 0.1% to about 2.5% of children with special needs in local schools with 3 years, mainly because of enhanced partnerships with the community members as well as other community-based agencies. Parents and teacher's volunteer groups (VGPIEK), as well as the community-based civil group initiatives (CFAPEK) are particularly notable as the vanguards of the exemplary inclusive education innovations in Kamonyi community. The successful initiatives in Kamonyi is being reproduced in the districts of Bugesera, Kayonza, Rubavu and others.

Accordingly, the emerging situation at community levels in which the improved awareness as well as the quality of support services for youths with special needs, has not only led to the rising number of learners with functional difficulties at both basic and secondary education levels, but also the rise of potential applicants with special needs to Higher Learning Institutions. For higher education, however, to plan appropriate services for students with special needs, some crucial information which is yet to be established will include among others:

- The performances of various categories of students with special needs at various levels of schooling, in comparison to ordinary students, and the responsible factors,
- The quality of service and educational resource provisions for students with special needs at secondary school levels and expected at higher education levels,
- The needs of educators and schools in general, in terms of training and related provisions to be planned by higher education,
- Factors that account for school access, performance, progress and drop-out, and repetition at all schooling levels that higher education levels will have to cater for.

The emerging situation in any case, compels all Rwandan higher learning institutions that include UR, to consider in their strategic planning, potential applicants with various levels of special needs for whom they are not necessarily prepared, or who may not be adequately prepared for University standards. It is recalled that the first ever initiatives to admit and support students with significant special needs in Rwandan Universities since 2008, emerged out of civil rights groups and NGOs pressure on the Government of Rwanda, for numbers of the former was alarmingly growing into a socially burdening backlog of A<sup>1</sup> level dropouts with special needs. The 2013 report of the responsible Task Force (TFDIER) indicated that by the academic year 2012/2013, about 127 students with significant special needs (especially the visually impaired) were admitted and supported in seven (7) Rwandan Universities (currently 5 UR colleges & 2 Private Universities), following the affirmative action policy<sup>4</sup> established by the Ministry of Education. It has, however, been noted that the latter policy could no longer apply with the establishment of UR, and the pressure to admit the students with various special needs that has continued as well as the demands for improved support to those on UR Campuses, is also the key reasons for the development of the present instrument.

The current mission of the University of Rwanda (UR) being to contribute to national development by discovering, advancing knowledge and commitment to the highest standards of academic excellence, the present UR policy instrument will also have to envision exclusively the transformation of Rwandan young citizens with different special needs into skilled human capital. The UR mission shall have to consider the 9% to 15%<sup>5</sup> of the citizens with functional difficulties (disabilities) and related disadvantages that are enlisted on the national transformational agenda. The tasks will entail availing adequately accessible academic environment and educational resources (technologies), and all others provisions that render the UR more barrier-free, supportive and accommodative to all students and staff with Special Needs who legitimately demand the opportunity to receive quality training, the key empowering agent enabling their equal participation in national development.

### 2.2.2 The inclusive education trends

The University of Rwanda recognises the persistent wide gaps in equal participation and access opportunities by staff and students with special needs in its services and facilities, especially those with functional difficulties (disabilities). It pledges unprecedented commitment to inclusion and equalisation of opportunities for UR community members with Special Needs, by ensuring that procedures and mechanisms are actively put in place, with appropriate adjustments and modifications on the inherited gaps:

<sup>4</sup>Students with significant special needs were admitted to Universities & Colleges on comparatively low A level marks, through a task force (TFDIER) commissioned by MINEDUC. The latter also provided scholarships and related support.

<sup>5</sup> WHO report of 2011, estimated that 15% of the world population (in developing countries) have functional difficulties related to disabilities. However, UR College of Medicine & Health Sciences provided data in the same periods that ranges between 9% & 14% in various Rwandan districts.

- Procedures in the students' application, admissions and registration in UR academic programmes
- Students' academic support provisions, including assistive resources and accommodation, adaptation of the learning and teaching environment.
- Teaching and learning programmes and procedures, including students' progress assessment, staff development and support, career guidance, and others related,
- Welfare services including medical, counselling grievances, emergency evacuation services, and other related services,
- Discriminatory and non inclusionary environment, culture and attitudes, including language and terminologies used,

Though there has been no notable background of deliberately planned discriminations or any other exclusionary acts in UR communities deliberately levelled against with functional difficulties (disability) or any other Special needs, the persistent need for the above adjustments is also an indication that systems in the University of Rwanda had inherited a background that ignored key inclusive values practices. To ensure that equality and diversity are mainstreamed into everyday functions of the UR services, all services and procedures ought to entail the imperative removal of all inherited gaps that are linked to discrimination or/and denial of reasonable accommodation to student and staff with special needs, also taken as entitlement or an assurance of equal and inclusive participation to the entire University community with special needs.

## 2.3 The Situation in the University of Rwanda

Being a multi-campus Higher Learning Institution (HLI) with programmes scattered around the country, UR has inherited a complex contexts and background that need to be effectively co-ordinated. The situation involves the rising number of students with special needs, who face diverse challenges of accessing the learning and teaching environment, inadequate support services and all other accommodation provision in all campuses (See Table 1). Currently, the mechanism to mitigate these challenges are inadequate for students and staff from the period of their entrance, through their study and work up to the period of their exit from the university.

### 2.3.1 Students and staff with Special Needs

The UR Community comprises: staff and students with various special needs, as indicated in Table 1, who require reasonable accommodation and accessibility provisions. As indicated on table 1, only four campuses (Huye 1, Gokondo, Remera, and Nyarugenge CMHS), have records of students with special needs, and three of them (Huye 1, Remera, and Nyarugenge) have put in place some provisions for their support.

The biggest registered numbers are those with pd, especially in campuses which host programmes related to medicine and health sciences. This is because of their background in secondary education, where they are trained in Gatagara secondary schools, where secondary education and rehabilitation facilities are provided. Students with VD are also many, especially Huye (16) and Remera campuses (23). This is because the two campuses developed resource provisions to support them. In all the campuses and colleges, however, there are relatively few cases of students with psychosocial and health challenges.

In all campuses students and staff with special needs express disgruntlement and dissatisfaction about the services provided to them. A highly commendable peer support groups however, have been developed and seem to be responsible for the assurance of daily support to a number of students with special needs.

A relatively small number of staff with a range of special needs (21) is also registered in all campuses. It was noted that they acquired functional difficulties in the course of their education or in the course of their services in the university, and they are trying to adapt themselves to the difficult environment.

### 2.3.2 Teaching and learning context

The University of Rwanda has inherited physical structures and facilities put in place a number of decades back, with little, if any, recognition of the needs of the community with functional difficulties (disabilities) and other special needs. In all its 7 colleges and 12 campuses (See table 1), most of the infrastructure and terrain are very challenging to its students and staff with special needs, despite their significant number, especially those with profound physical difficulties.

It was noted that the majority of students with significant physical disabilities are registered in CMHS programs in all campuses where it is delivered, but accessibility all the infrastructure is the most difficult. The terrain of Nyamishaba Kampus for example is so rugged that some of the wheelchair-using students were contemplating to drop out.

However, it is been appreciably noted that most of the new infrastructure have been developed with disability-friendly features since 2012, in cognizance of the Rwanda Housing authority regulations of 2012. As indicated in Table 1, only 2 new buildings in Gikondo campus and all new infrastructure in Rukara college of Education irrelatively accessible, while most of the rest of the UR campuses are not.

Though some campuses still present more accessibility challenges than others, most of the public buildings that include lecture rooms and laboratories, dining halls, main halls, libraries and other halls of residence are still inaccessible. The greatest demand for infrastructural adjustments was registered in campuses that host CMHS programmes, while in campuses where there are relatively better provisions, the students and staff only demands improved conditions and support.

## 2.4 Academic Programs

The University of Rwanda runs postgraduate programmes at Master's Degree and Postgraduate Diploma levels, as well as a number of undergraduate programs at Bachelor's, Diploma programmes and Certificate levels in various fields. It is noted however, that among these, are programs in the College of Education which were exclusively developed for special needs and inclusive education related studies (2 Postgraduate and 2 Undergraduate programmes), and a number of programs in the College of Medicine and Health Science which are closely related and/or complementary to special needs support services.

Admissions into the different programmes is largely based on the established admission criteria i.e. through a competitive selection process, only students who meet the academic entry requirements are admitted into UR (2 principal passes and payment of tuition fees), the process that eliminates the majority of students with special needs. This is mainly because secondary schools are largely inadequately equipped to support the students appropriately, and Rwandan families and communities continue to misunderstand their educational needs. Students who are admitted in UR academic programs comprise those with mild functional difficulties, and those with significant functional difficulties who have do not competently meet the UR requirement (See statistics in Table 1), but have been admitted under the Ministry of Education affirmative action policy framework.

**Table 1- Situation in UR Colleges & Campuses**

| University of Rwanda campus | Number of staff & students with significant Special Needs (SN) |    |    |    |                 |    |    |    |    |    |          |    | Assistive provisions | Accessibility   | Related observations   |   |  |
|-----------------------------|--|----|----|----|-----------------|----|----|----|----|----|----------|----|----------------------|---|--|---|--|
|                             | VD   |    | HD |    | PD <sup>6</sup> |    | PC |    | HC |    | Other SN |    |                      |   | Service  | Adjustments   | Priority Needs   |
|                             | F  | S  | F  | S  | F               | S  | F  | S  | F  | S  | F        | S  |                      |   |  |   |  |
| 1: (CBE, S, CMHS, S)        | 01   | 16 | -  | 04 | 01              | 61 | -  | 02 | -  | -  | -        | -  | 02                   | -   | Three support staff<br>- Dependable peer support                                       | - Exam & lectures<br>- Priority in Students' hostel   | - Early placement for students with SN.<br>- More resources<br>- Permanent staff |
| 2: (CMHS)                   | 00   | 00 | 00 | 00 | 01              | 68 | -  | -  | -  | -  | -        | -  | -                    | All services are accessible and provided within the small campus                    | Improved Support services  | Improved physical accessibility   |  |
| Nyamishaba (S)              | 00   | 00 | 00 | 00 | 00              | 04 | 01 | 02 | 01 | 00 | 00       | 00 | 00                   | A commendably peer support among CMHS students' community (Nyarugenge & Nyamishaba) | Improved physical accessibility  | Improved physical accessibility   |  |
| Gitano (CBE)                | 00   | 3  | 00 | 1  | 2               | 10 | 00 | 2  | 00 | 10 | 00       | 00 | 00                   | - Supportive students' union<br>- Counseling services                               | - Priority in St. Hostels,<br>- Adjusted exam time                                     | Improved Support services   |  |
| Gitara (CE)                 | 02   | 23 | -  | 01 | 02              | -  | -  | -  | -  | -  | -        | -  | -                    | - Three staff is contracted<br>- Students Union & representation.                   | - Priority in St. Hostels,<br>- Extra exam time  | - Early placement for students with SN.<br>- More room & resources<br>- Permanent staff   |  |
| Gitara (CE)                 | -  | -  | -  | -  | 01              | 01 | -  | -  | -  | -  | -        | -  | -                    | -   | Most accessible infrastructure.  | -   | -  |
| Nyarugenge (S)              | -  | -  | -  | 01 | 01              | 23 | -  | -  | 01 | -  | -        | 00 | 00                   | - Priority in CST Hostels<br>- Active new Students' Union<br>- Counseling services  | - Very limited wheelchair accessibility<br>- Very limited accessible public lavatories | - Wheelchair accessibility<br>- Proximity to lecture rooms & lavatories<br>- Facilitation for peer groups<br>- ICT resources in the resource room |  |
| Nyarugenge (CST)            | -  | -  | -  | 01 | -               | 05 | -  | -  | -  | -  | -        | -  | -                    | A new students' union for the whole   | -  | -   | -  |

<sup>6</sup>The number of staff and students with significant physical disabilities (that deserves accommodation) is likely to be much less than the recorded number in most of the institutions.





## 2.5 Entry into employment

Students with severe functional difficulties (Blind, Deaf, wheelchair users, etc) and other special needs have been graduating each year with the University of Rwanda certifications in law, education, medical sciences, etc, since 2011. However, it was noted with concern that both the private and public sectors have not been favouring the recruitment of graduates with significant special needs, mainly because the Rwandan job market is not adequately prepared to understand the capacity and requirements of the latter.

The UR graduates with visual difficulties and wheelchair users have particularly been victims of unemployment. Out of the 29 students with visual difficulties who graduated in UR CE and UR CASS, only 13 have acquired an employment, 12 of whom work in institutions and organisations for people with disabilities, after several trials in other sectors. The wheelchair users complain of marginalization in the working environment and in transportation, where the cost for additional services (to wheelchair pushers, for space of the wheelchair, etc.), and the extra efforts deployed are usually far more than the actual ones.

## 2.6 Emerging challenges

The demand for a level ground on which students and staff of the University of Rwanda will interactively participate as equal beneficiaries and users of UR services, as an assurance for academic excellence is increasingly dominant. However, it is noted that the persistent challenges hinge on environmental and attitudinal factors that include the following:

1. Inexistent policy guideline on admission and support for students with special needs, as well as that for recruitment and support for staff with special needs,
2. Inadequate reasonable accommodation and provisions for special needs, that include accessibility to services, physical facilities (lecture rooms and theatres, laboratories, offices, libraries, halls, e.g. dining halls, Main halls, halls of residence, etc),
3. Inadequate awareness levels about the needs and rights of people with special needs by the University community (negative attitudes exhibited against people with special needs), and inadequacy in providing for inclusive participation in all UR programmes and activities.
4. Inadequacy in adherence to the prevailing conventions, policies and regulations adapted to meet the needs of persons with special needs, (UN Conventions, Universal Design Instruction UDI), Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA) Regulations of 2012).
5. Inadequacy in leveraging the readily available expertise potentials (skilled staff) and capacities (students' volunteer groups) to generate a synergy of services that would effectively promote inclusive education within and outside UR confines.
6. Inadequate inter campus co-ordination of existing support services and provisions for students and staff with special needs.

In the current context in special needs education developments, the University of Rwanda acknowledges its inadequacies. However, the unique potentials and initiatives already present in its colleges, avail ready ingredients to develop policy guidelines and strategies through:

- Sustainably developing effective inclusive practices and services in a supportive and friendly environment.
- Building an inclusive community that is progressively conscious of inclusive qualities: Equity, equality and inclusion;
- Creating a working and learning environment that is friendly and barrier-free for all students and staff with special needs, by availing and maintaining reasonable accommodation and assistive provisions all the time.

## Part 3

# Policy Implementation Guidelines

### 3.0 Application, Admission, Registration & Documentation

The University of Rwanda shall ensure equal treatment of all its students and staff, irrespective of their differences special needs or any other distinction at all times. All the University offices with responsibilities related to service provisions, notably applications, recruitments, admissions, registrations, documentations shall be required to offer the same services to all students, staff and the general public, and shall be expected to avail enabling provisions for those with special needs when it is legitimately necessary.

#### 3.1 Application procedures

All applications to study at the University of Rwanda shall be handled in accordance to the prevailing University regulations, by completing the application forms which are always available online in due periods, and by providing all the requirements indicated (<http://www.ur.ac.rw>).

All applications shall be received and documented by the responsible offices, and shall sort the application forms for selections and/or any other treatments in accordance to the established University procedures without any form of discrimination and/or undue preferences.

All applicants deemed to have special needs, shall be required to indicate the category of their special needs as categorized in part 1 of the present document, and shall specify the alternative or assistive provisions required and/or used (See application form appendix 1), for subsequent considerations:

- Indicate his/her special needs and required accommodation/provisions on the application form.
- Submit annexed to the application form, certified copies of documentations testifying his/ her Special Needs.
- Submit annexed to the application form any other information related to his/her Special Needs from authorized offices (Former school, REB, special needs assessment centre, counsellors, psychologists, medical expert, NCPD; etc.).

Only genuine and appropriately completed application documents shall be accepted for subsequent assessment, selection, admission and recommendation for special needs support services as indicated in the next sections.

#### 3.2 Admissions

All duly completed applications shall be subjected to evaluation and selection procedures organized by the UR Academic Registrar's offices, and only the successful candidates shall be documented and subsequently accorded admissions letters on approval of the UR senate.

The application documents of candidates with special needs shall go through the same procedures and shall receive equal treatments as ordinary ones, and only applicants with significant special needs whose application forms also indicate concessionary admissions requirements, may be recommended by the Special Needs assessment committees.

##### **Concessionary admissions**

The University of Rwanda shall offer concessionary (or compromising) admissions to recommended applicants who have passed A' level with at least 2 principle passes, and documented significant functional difficulties or special needs.

The Special needs assessment committee shall recommend applicants for concessionary admissions on the following criteria:

1. The student's justifications indicated on the application form,
2. Proof of significant Special Needs,
3. A' level performance (priority shall be accorded to the best performance),

4. Places and accommodation available in the college,
5. Any other criteria judged critical by the evaluation committee.

The applicants who satisfy the set criteria shall qualify for concessionary admission recommendations, and the assessment committees reports shall be submitted alongsidethose of the ordinary applicants to the UR senate for approval and subsequent issuance of UR admission letters.

### 3.3 Registration

Upon receipt of UR admission letters (ordinary and/or concessionary) applicants shall also qualify for registration in predetermined registration centers, and in accordance to the prevailing UR procedures.

Applicants with special needs shall be provided with accessible format and/or a registration portal on the UR website (<http://www.ur.ac.rw/?q=node/55>), or due assistance shall be availed at the time of registration, only if they prove that they are unable to use the existing registration provisions.

The applicant with special needs shall become a member of the UR community upon successful registration, and shall automatically be fully legible for all UR special needs services as a matter of right and entitlement.

#### Priority Registration

Students with documented Special Needs shall be entitled to priority registration at least ten (10) working days in advance of the general registration (if necessary), to allow ample time to plan for subsequent special needs provisions and accommodation. If timetables are available at the time of priority registration, students shall be allowed the opportunity to select premises, schedules and programs that match their special needs. If timetables are *not* available at the time of Priority Registration, special preferences and adjustments indicated on the registration form shall be submitted by the directorate of the Resource Centre for Special Needs Services (RCSNS) to the Registrar's office for subsequent special needs considerations.

### 3.4 Requesting for Special Needs Services

The College/campus RCSNS directorates shall have in his/her records the list of registered students who are eligible for special needs services, as well as the recommendations of the SN assessment committee after the closure of the registration processes. The RCSNS director shall then receive and document applications for reasonable accommodation or special needs provisions from eligible students with special needs, which may include but not limited to, needs for adjusted time tables, adjusted rooms, needs for sign language interpreters, needs for enlarged prints, needs for assistive devices, or any other occasional or permanent requirements.

The application forms for Special Needs provisions shall be available in all accessible formats (online & in hard copies), and the College directorate of RCSNS shall receive and record all the duly completed application forms, and then submit these for the special needs assessment sessions, which shall take place at least three (3) weeks prior to the beginning of the semester.

The RCSNS assessment report and recommendations shall be submitted to the college principal's office at least ten (10) working days prior to the beginning of the semester, who shall subsequently recommend the course of action through the prevailing college organizations and procedures.

### 3.5 Eligibility for Special Needs provisions

The eligibility of the student for special needs services shall be based upon the special needs assessment committee report, indicating the applicant's current level of functional difficulties or special needs, the significance of impact of the latter on school performance, and any other documented and/or proven limitations, difficulties, or special needs.

The Special Needs assessment team shall be composed of all UR registrars, at least one expert with the capacity of assessing the categories of special needs, directors of the college resource center for special needs services (RCSNS), Dean or member of the School of Inclusive & Special Needs Education (UR CE), and Dean or member of the School of Health Sciences (UR CMHS). Its role shall only entail setting up credible SN assessment criteria; conduct the assessment processes, and establish recommendations and report for subsequent redress.

The SN assessment process shall entail the evaluation of all recent and relevant documentations provided by the applicant that may include, but not limited to A' level results, medical and psychological records, functional difficulty records, and any other relevant documentations. Where deemed necessary, an interview shall be conducted with the applicant. The process shall entail weighing up the students' abilities to perform in UR programs of study applied for; levels of needs for alternative provisions, and/or recommendations for concessionary admissions and/or for special needs service considerations.

### **3.6 Documentation and confidentiality**

Once a student's eligibility for special needs provisions has been established and documented by the RCSNS directorate, the latter shall issue information letter to respective departments and other offices concerned. The letters shall specify the Special Needs provisions, modifications, and accommodations required, and shall not necessarily disclose the student's personal data such as functional difficulties or impairments.

All documentation concerning student's special needs shall reside in the Office of the Director of the Resource Center for Special Needs Services. The personal information (related to impairments, health conditions etc) shall be kept as confidential as practicable as long as the University is providing reasonable accommodation to him or her (See also RCSNS's commitment to confidentiality in the next sections). The rest of the UR community including the managers shall only be allowed access to information related to the students' needs for reasonable accommodation and related service provisions.

## **Part 4**

# **Staff Recruitment and Career Support Services**

## 4.0 Staff recruitment and support

The University of Rwanda shall apply the principles of non-discrimination, equalization of opportunities and positive attitudes for staff with special needs, during recruitment processes and initiation into active services.

### 4.1 Equality on job opportunities

The University of Rwanda shall explicitly specify its commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion in all its recruitment criteria and job advertisements. It will avail necessary reasonable accommodation and provisions (through RCSNS) for candidates with special needs who present themselves for UR job interviews.

The University of Rwanda shall comply with law No 01/2007 of 20<sup>th</sup> /Jan /2007 (Art. 18 & 19) of the Republic of Rwanda that specify rights and affirmative action for persons with disabilities and related special needs.

### 4.2 Initiation to UR services

The responsible offices in the University of Rwanda shall work in close consultations with the newly recruited person with special needs and other relevant experts, to identify and source the appropriate accommodations and provisions required to render the working conditions as conducive as possible.

The necessary modifications and adjustments in the workplace shall be geared towards equalization of opportunities and maximization of performance for the staff with special needs.

### 4.3 Career Development

The University of Rwanda shall ensure equality for staff with special needs to enable them participate and acquire skills and experience necessary to advance in their careers, by considering them for staff development and promotion opportunities without any form of discrimination, and by encouraging them to apply for training opportunities.

The UR staff development procedures shall take into consideration the unique interests of the staff with special needs, in respect to their professional development opportunities, orientation and qualifications. The University Staff Development Committees shall make necessary provisions to employ non-discriminatory policies, guidelines and procedures in all matters relating to staff with special needs.

### 4.4 Job Retention

Where existing staff acquires a permanent or temporary functional difficulties or any other special needs while working, or where an existing functional difficulty progresses or worsens, the University of Rwanda shall seek to retain the staff in their existing job(s) with suitable adjustments before considering other alternatives.

The University shall provide opportunity for the staff to obtain experiences in an alternative job if they are unable to resume or perform in the previous job because of the resulting limitations, and /or provide reasonable accommodation where necessary.

### 4.5 Termination of Service

Termination of service for UR staff with special needs, shall comply with the prevailing 'Staff Terms and Conditions' of Service and other legal provisions as a matter of right, and not on the basis of the special needs or related conditions.

### 4.6 Adaptations

The University of Rwanda shall adapt the workplace environment, resources and/or the work schedules to enable the

staff with special need to perform effectively, and in close consultation with the staff concerned and their supervisors, as well the campus resource center directorate.

The University of Rwanda shall improve the accessibility in all its work premises for all staff with special needs, by appropriately equipping and modifying the general environment including offices, lecture rooms, library, main halls, residential premises, recreation grounds, toilets and others, geared towards easing interaction and participation of staff with different categories of special needs.

The University of Rwanda shall endeavor to comply with the principals of the Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) in all its adaptations, by ensuring that all new plans and designs are considerate of the staff with special needs, while at the same time, mechanisms are put in place to adjust all the existing programs and facilities.

#### **4.7 Documentation and Confidentiality**

The UR staff with special needs shall have two files which are kept in two different offices. All documents concerning employment and/or services shall be kept in the office of the human resource directorate and shall be accessible to the University authority, while those concerning his/her special needs status shall reside in the Office of the Director of the Resource Center for Special Needs Services (DRSNS) for reasons of confidentiality and related service provisions.

All personal information (i.e. status of reduced functions, impairment or health conditions) shall be kept as confidential as practicable as longer as the University is still his/her employer. The director of the RCSNS shall only use the personal information of the staff with special needs, exclusively for services provision. Any other person, including UR managements shall access the information, strictly on provision of authentic legal permission.



## **Part 5**

# **Provisions for Inclusive Learning & Teaching Services**

## 5.0 Provisions for Inclusive Learning & Teaching services

The reasonable accommodation and support provisions for students and staff with special needs in the University of Rwanda shall entail all necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments in services and programs of study; in facilities and resources through accessibility provisions where needed (and not imposed), only to ensure that the staff or students with special needs have equal opportunity to same services as peers in the same setting. The reasonable accommodation and support provisions in all UR campuses shall entail adjustments and modifications aimed at alleviating challenges related to mobility, sensory (Visual, and hearing), emotional difficulties or any other duly assessed special needs of staff and students with special needs.

Alternative provisions in all UR campuses shall include a range of assistive devices/aids (Wheel chairs; hearing and visual aids; alternative software, alternative writing aids, etc); alternatives services (Braille transcription, sign language translation, psychosocial support, etc), all provided to address the special needs challenges of the UR staff and students who require them in order to carry out their duties.

Service provisions at the University of Rwanda and in all its campuses shall be based on Non-Discriminatory values and policies. The University shall actively discourage all forms of discriminations, distinction, exclusion or restrictions on the basis of functional difficulties (disability) or any other Special needs, intended to nullify the recognition, participation and enjoyment on equal basis.

All students and staffs registered in UR with documented special needs are expected to undergo an assessment to establish both the special Needs legibility and required alternative provision of assistive or alternative support or accommodation as mentioned above. The assessment phase is crucial because it shall also help to recognize the related accommodation specificity, category, size, adjustments required over time, background history of the special needs, and all other information that affect or warrant the provision of accommodation. The special needs assessment shall be organized at the beginning of each semester by the directorate of the Resource Centers for Special Needs Services (RCSNS), and the report shall include specific and detailed explanations of suggested reasonable accommodation(s) or any other alternative provisions.

### 5.1 Resource Centers for Special Needs Services

All support services destined for students and staff with special needs shall be developed and coordinated through the RCSNS directorates at each UR campus. The University of Rwanda shall upgrade the established resource rooms where they are in the three UR constituent colleges (CE, CASS & CMHS) into RCSNS, and shall foster the development of more centers where they are required.

#### 5.1.1 Functions of the Resource Centers for Special Needs Services

The RCSNSs in every UR campus shall actively play a pivotal role in mainstreaming all services, provisions and accommodation meant for staff and students with special needs, aiming at enabling their equal participation in all UR academic life and related activities. Besides, the ministry of education policy on inclusive education (2013), suggests that the University of Rwanda supports CEARS in schools communities, in reinforcing SEN assessments, rehabilitation and other specialized support services. The following are some of the RCSNS key functions:

##### 1. Special Needs assessment

The main function of the RCSNS is planning and conduct of the Special Needs Assessment committee activities to determine students' and/or staff's eligibility for special needs accommodation and provisions. The directorate shall also prepare an accommodation approval letter to be signed by the college principal, indicating the necessary accommodations and/or academic adjustments, and related provisions. The approval letter shall serve as certification for the student or staff whenever requested for proof of need for accommodation, due services or assistive devices at the University of Rwanda.

The RCSNS shall organize and conduct the Special Needs (SN) assessment sessions for students and staff who request (or referred) for accommodation, or any other special needs support services. The RCSNS directorate shall plan in advance and schedule appointments (also on request) for the students or staff with special needs. The SN assessment sessions is expected to accord full attention to each student or staff with special needs, after which a report shall be made for the college principal who will subsequently issue a letter of accommodation.

## **2. *Fostering the organization of volunteer group services***

The RCSNS shall be able to foster the planning, development and programming of organized volunteers' services from the college community, especially students. It is from these organizations that free support services shall be offered to students and staff with special needs, including reading, writing, transportation, sighted guides, personal hygiene, sign language interpretation, and others.

In collaboration with other college organs or offices (Principal, Deans and directors) the RCSNS shall recommend necessary facilitation for the volunteers groups, which may include and not limited to provisions in accommodation, timetables, transport, access to the college facilities, payments of some of the services, etc.

## **3. *Assistive resource provisions***

The RCSNS shall ensure adequate and appropriate provision of assistive resources, which may include and not limited to soft and/or hardware materials, ICT technologies for speech translation; text enlargement, voice recognition; scanning and reading; Braille and Text transcription, and others; as well as all related services for the staff and students with special needs requiring alternative methods of participating in the UR activities.

## **4. *Support Services***

The RCSNS shall be responsible for the management and appropriate provision of essential support services which will include and not limited to sign language and oral interpretations, note taking, reading, transportation, guidance and counseling, mobility and orientation trainings, peer and volunteer support services, and all others required by students or staff with special needs.

## **5. *Mainstreaming of accommodation***

The RCSNS shall be responsible for mainstreaming reasonable accommodation in all UR services to foster equitable and active participation of students and staff with special needs. The mainstreaming functions shall entail and not limited to availing special need provisions in all services such as registration and recruitment processes; assessment and evaluation of special needs; orientation to all UR services and academic programs; supporting welfare and recreational services; and all others services that are duly planned, ensuring timely and sustained support to the students or staff with special needs.

## **6. *Income generation and community outreach***

The RCSNS shall have as part of its key responsibilities to extend its services to the wider community, including in CEARS planned by MINEDUC at each sector levels. The services shall include, Braille transcriptions; sign language interpretation; availing expertise in SEN rehabilitation and therapeutic services; mobility & orientation trainings, etc. Each campus/college management shall work out a system through which the RCSNS shall avail its resources and services to the general community outside UR, to serve and generate income for UR.

## **7. *Advisory roles***

Through the campus RCSNSs, the University of Rwanda shall be actively committed to providing appropriate support and ensuring equal participation opportunities to its students and staff with Special Needs, in all its academic and non-academic services, programs, and activities wherever necessary. The directorates of the RCSNSs shall advise the college and campus leadership on the appropriate course of action in all matters that concern accommodation for the staff and students with special needs. In this way, the RCSNSs shall also contribute in guiding the University of Rwanda, including avoiding special needs services that may result in undue financial or administrative burdens.

### **5.1.2 The RCSNS design**

The infrastructural and administrative design of the RCSNS shall be structured in units or sections according to the activities and services provided.

The units can include sections for material production and repairs (Braille, tactile and print material production, repair of assistive devices, etc); sections for support services (sign language translation, Special Needs assessment, rehabilitation and therapeutic services, motor and multiple impairment support services, etc); sections for RCSNS administrative and community outreach functions; and sections for storing and supply of equipments and materials.

Depending on the specialisation and available capacities, each colleges or campus, may tailor the RCSNS design on the services that it is able to offer to its community within and outside UR. The CMHS design could privilege a RCSNS design that offers rehabilitation and therapeutic services to UR staff and community around, while UR CE could find it more advantageous to tailor its RCSNS design to teaching and learning-related services.

### **5.1.3 The Resource Centres Staffing**

The RCSNS shall be managed by personnel with knowledge and skills relevant in the services areas mandated to the centre. They shall be comprised of:

#### **1. The RCSNS Director**

Shall be qualified in Special Needs Education and/or related studies, with an academic rank of at least or equivalent to "Lecturer".

Shall be responsible for the day to day management of the RCSNS, including planning, supervising RCSNS activities and personnel, linking services of in the center with other UR activities and programs, and/or carry out all other duties and responsibilities relevant to the mandate of the RCSNS.

Shall be the answerable to the college principle for all activities in the RCSNS, custody of records, resources and services management.

#### **2. Officer in charge of welfare and recreation services**

Shall be qualified in Special Needs Education and/or good experiences/trainings related to the welfare of people with special needs in academic institutions, and shall have an academic rank equivalent to at least "Assistant lecturer".

Shall be responsible for all services and provisions in the RCSNS related to the welfare and recreational activities for students and staff with special needs. These shall including liaising and ensuring support to the Dean of students in activities related to health services; students' accommodations; games and sports; relevant national and international annual events (Disability week, white cane or sign language days, etc); and all other relevant welfare functions and programs that foster equitable access to academic achievements in the University of Rwanda.

Shall be answerable to the RCSNS director for all resources and services related to welfare and recreation of staff and students with special needs

#### **3. Two Officers in charge of access, accommodation and assistive technologies**

Shall be qualified in Special Needs Education or good experiences or trainings related to accommodation and assistive technology, with an academic rank of at least "Assistant lecturer".

Shall be responsible for all accommodation services and provisions in the RCSNS, including ensuring that students and staff with special needs have adequate and appropriate support and access to assistive technologies, support services, and are effectively participating in all the programs of the University.

Shall be responsible for the maintenance, security and appropriate use of all the facilities in the RCSNS.

Shall be the answerable to the RCSNS director for all resources and services related to accommodation and assistive technologies.

#### **4. The administrative staff**

Shall be a holder of Bachelor Degree in education and/or management, and trainings or experiences related to special needs shall be an added advantage, and shall be at the level of an academic assistant.

Shall be in charge of daily running and administration of the RCSNS office; ensuring safe records and custody of all the RCSNS resources; organizing and coordinating RCSNS – based events, services and activities; prompting the RCSNS director for any upcoming activities and/or events.

Shall be answerable to the RCSNS director for all activities related to the daily running and administration of the center.

#### **5. Non permanent professionals**

Shall be exceptionally skilled professionals or crucially needed personnel who carry out key services required in the RCSNS on irregular basis. These shall include and not limited to sign language interpreters; sighted guides and readers; counselors, wheelchair repairers; assistive technology technicians; Special needs assessment experts; and any others deemed relevant.

Shall be in contracted on temporary terms as needs arises and on recommendation of the RCSNS directorate, to carry out specified assignments (above) and in specified periods.

Shall be answerable to the RCSNS director through the line offices responsible for the assigned duties.

### **5.2 Advisory role of the RCSNSs**

Through the campus RCSNSs, the University of Rwanda shall be actively committed to providing appropriate support and ensuring equal participation opportunities to students and staff with Special Needs, in all its academic and non-academic services, programs, and activities wherever necessary.

The directorates of the RCSNSs shall advise the college and campus leadership on the appropriate course of action in all matters that concern accommodation for the staff and students with special needs. In this way, the RCSNSs shall also contribute in guiding the University of Rwanda, including avoiding special needs services that may result in undue financial or administrative burdens.

### **5.3 Special Needs Assessment Committee**

The assessment committee shall be comprised of experts and officials who meet regularly in accordance to the college RCSNS directorate's assessment programs, to assess and recommend on issues related to special needs. They assessment team shall have the capacity to diagnose and describe the students or staff's special needs, as well as the specific and major impact of the results on the students or staff's performance.

The special Needs Assessment Committee shall consist of the following members who shall be appointed by the college principals on approval of the VC's offices:

1. The director of the RCSNS who shall be the committee secretary
2. The college medical doctor
3. The college Academic Registrar

4. The college Dean of Students
5. The representative of school deans
6. The Student Guild Minister for Disability Affairs
7. The college Academic Quality directorate
8. The Committee may co-opt any technical person within or outside the college (preferably from any UR Campus) when need arises for a specific task or purpose.
9. Ex-officio members on the Committee for advisory roles: University Legal Officer, the member of the school of Inclusive & special needs Education (UR CE), and the School of Public Health Science (UR CMHS).

The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Special Needs Assessment Committee shall be appointed by the college principal, and both shall serve for at a period of three (3) years, which shall be renewable for one more term.

### **5.3.1 The Special Needs Assessment Committee Terms of Reference**

The Terms of Reference for the UR Special Needs Assessment Committees shall be the following:

1. To design and conduct assessments of the learning and work needs of individual students and staff with special needs and make recommendations to the college Management for appropriate interventions.
2. To assess and recommend the design, adaptation and review of the special needs assessment tools and guidelines.
3. To receive through the RCSNS directorate, consider and assess complaints relating to discrimination and marginalization of student and staff with special needs, and make appropriate recommendations to the college management for appropriate action.
4. To provide advisory support to the RCSNS directorate, explore and tap any other avenues available for the purpose of enhancing the quality of inclusive education services in the University of Rwanda.
5. To perform any other duties deemed appropriate to its mandate.

### **5.3.2 Special Needs Assessment reporting**

The special needs assessment report and recommendations shall be compiled by the directorate of the RCSNS, and be submitted to the college management within at least five (5) working days after the assessment meeting.

The special needs assessment committee reports and recommendations shall be substantiated wherever possible, with technical justifications of special needs that warrant reasonable accommodation or any other appropriate provisions.

The special needs assessment committee reports and recommendations shall focus on the reasonable accommodation needs and any other appropriate provision needs, and not on the personal difficulties, and shall include detailed explanations on reasons why appropriate accommodations are warranted.

### **5.3.3 Facilitation of SN Assessment Committee**

The committee shall be facilitated in accordance to the prevailing UR related terms and regulations, and shall be an integral part of the College/University annual procurement and strategic planning and budgeting.

## **5.4 Inter-campus services provisions**

The University of Rwanda being a multi-campus academic institution, it will be inevitable that the staff and students with special needs moving from one campus to another require RCSNS provisions to accompany them. It shall be important thus that students and staff with special needs, as well as the general Rwanda community are enabled to

access services of the RCSNS from any locations of the colleges or campuses around the country, with minimum recourse to other bureaucratic measures.

This shall entail ensuring inter-campus exchanges of relevant data on staff and students with special needs, so that in case any of the RCSNS beneficiaries in UR-panned functions is enabled to receive the same treatment and support from any other campus.

## 5.5 Coordination and Advisory Board

The University of Rwanda shall ensure the coordination and supervision of the functions of RCSNS through the Special Needs Advisory Board (SNCAB) whose membership coordinates and brings together inputs from three key stakeholders: The UR or college leaderships, RCSNS directorates, and the relevant Rwandan civil community.

The Special Needs Coordination and Advisory Board (SNCAB) shall be based under the office of the UR DVC (AAR) who shall also be the chairperson, and the following shall be the composition of its membership:

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. UR DVC (AAR)  | Chair     |
| 2. UR Academic quality director's office               | Secretary |
| 3. UR DVC (FA)   | Member    |
| 4. Representative of Deans of students                 | Member    |
| 5. Dean, school of Health sciences                     | Member    |
| 6. Dean, School of Inclusive & Special Needs Education | Member    |
| 7. Directors (RCSNS)                                   | Member    |
| 8. Representative of UR Students with Special Needs    | Member    |
| 9. Representative of UR staff with Special Needs       | Member    |
| 10. UR Academic Registrar's office                     | Member    |
| 11. MINEDUC representative                             | Member    |
| 12. REB Representative                                 | Member    |
| 13. NCPD representative                                | Member    |
| 14. NUDOR representative                               | Member    |

### N.B.:

1. To the extent possible, SNCAB composition shall be disability (Special Needs) and gender-balanced to certify its goals of inclusiveness.
2. The membership to the SNCAB shall be determined by virtue of office held by members as indicated above.

### Functions of SNCAB

RCSNS shall provide services to students and staff with special needs, as well as the general Rwanda community from various locations of its colleges and campuses around the country. The primary function of SNCAB as the coordinating and advisory organ shall entail ensuring a networked exchange of key RCSNS data on needs of all UR students and staff with special needs, and shall achieve the functions through the following responsibilities:

1. Scheduling and conducting bi-annual meetings (ordinary and/or extra-ordinary at least each semester) in consultation with college principals,
2. Assessing and approving strategic plans, projects and/or reports from respective UR colleges regarding inclusive education, and advise the University management on the appropriate course of action,
3. Monitoring the progress, challenges and opportunities regarding the implementation of the UR policy and guidelines on inclusive education services, and ensuring that the outcomes feature on the UR management meeting agenda for subsequent recommendations and action.
4. Designing the mechanisms of monitoring the coordinated interaction of all RCSNS functions, as well as the quality of inclusive education services, with respect to the UR vision and obligations.

## 5.6 Partnership Liaison office

The University of Rwanda shall put in place a liaison officer, charged with the responsibility of developing, promoting and coordinating all partnerships related to the implementation of inclusive and special needs activities. Through the office, the University shall design and adapt clear, effective and friendly guidelines (including memoranda) of developing and conducting partnerships.

The officers in charge shall be responsible for promoting the University image and relaying the University activities with relevant organizations and institutions externally. The officer in charge shall be an academic staff and shall work in close relationship with college public relations officers.

## 5.7 Accommodation in Academic Programs

The University of Rwanda and the constituent college managements shall be responsible for ensuring that all students and staff with special needs are appropriately provided with reasonable accommodation in all academic programs, from the time of registration to the time of completion (students) or from the time of recruitment to the time of termination of services (staff). Reasonable accommodation of academic programs and/or related services shall entail among other adjustments, but not limited to:

- Adjustments in the length of time permitted for the completion of academic programs, if required by students and staff with special needs;
- Substitution of requirements or resources for accomplishments of specific academic programs to suit the specific needs of students and staff,
- Adaptation of the manner in which required academic accomplishments are conducted,
- All other reforms that would enable students or staff with special needs to meet the specific requirements of academic programs.

In all cases, for academic programs to be considered for adjustments, the RCSNS recommendations shall be mandatory to prove that the student or staff cannot either successfully accomplish the ordinary academic program with available support provisions, or has extreme difficulties doing so.

As mentioned above in the functions of the RCSNS, the University of Rwanda students and staff in need of reasonable accommodations in academic programs shall submit the formal requests to the RCSNS directorates as early as possible, and the latter shall promptly recommend the reasonable accommodation required to the college management, allowing timely adjustments, procurement, organization, scheduling of personnel, equipment, and/or any other provisions.

The schools/departments offering UR sandwich and distance education programs shall arrange accommodation and assistive provisions including costs involved for their students and staff with special needs, in close collaboration with the nearest directorate of RCSNSs.

During all orientation reprograms, the directorates of the RCSNSs shall establish and disseminate a package of reasonable accommodation guidelines and provisions available, and in all appropriately accessible formats (e.g. Braille, large prints, etc) for the new staff and students with special needs.

### **Adaptation of assessments and tests**

On the recommendation of the RCSNC directorates, UR formative and/or summative assessments, tests and exams shall be appropriately modified to suit the specific needs of staff and students (e.g. using adapted ICT Software or Hardware or; taped examination questions, extend time to accomplish exams/tests, use of Braille, CCTV, Large prints, use of approved Readers or approved Scribes; use of approved professional Sign Language Interpreters; adjustment of the marking scheme, adjustment of seating placements, etc.). Appropriate reasonable accommodation and provisions requirements shall be established through assessment procedures as explained above.



Depending on the specificity of the needs, students or staff with special needs shall undergo the assessment (exams) alongside their ordinary peers with appropriate support provisions arranged through the RCSNSs, or in a separate location arranged through the recommendations of the RCSNSs.

In all cases however, the students or staff with special needs shall be expected to observe the prevailing guidelines that are specific to the reasonable accommodation, as well as the University of Rwanda general rules and guidelines regarding conducts during examinations and tests.

## **5.8 Accessibility and Proximity**

The University of Rwanda shall promote free and safe movements, functions and access for all on its campuses, regardless of age, sex or condition; and it shall avail a level space or set of services that can be accessible to all without obstacles, with dignity and with as much autonomy as possible. The University shall continue to pursue its policy of ensuring non-exclusionary accessibility to information, to physical and geographical environments, with particular respect to equal participation in academic programs and related activities. The University Libraries, laboratories, lecture rooms, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources and services, and all other facilities shall be accessible and facilitating for all students and staff regardless of their special needs.

The University shall continue to develop accessibility in all its programs and facilities, and shall update the media and web accessibility to international standards set by the 'Web Accessibility Initiative' (WAI), shall plan intensive trainings on accessibility and use assistive technologies.

Facilities (libraries, laboratories, main halls, etc) in all UR colleges and campuses, shall be equipped with accessibility provisions and related requisite assistive resources for the staff and students with special needs. The RCSNS shall avail its assistive resources and trained personnel to organize regular and customized trainings on accessibility, accommodation, use of assistive technologies, and other accommodation provisions at least once every semester.

### **5.8.1 Transportation and proximity to services**

The University of Rwanda shall ensure full accessibility to all its facilities by developing and maintaining a barrier-free geographical environment and infrastructure with due respect of the wide range of special needs (sensory, motor, health and all other temporally or permanent functional difficulties. This shall entail availing and/or maintaining accessible common transport means, wheelchairs, standard walkways, ramps, rails, white canes, accessible lifts, etc) and related regulations.

Students and staff with special needs shall be required to register their own assistive devices related to accessibility, notably wheelchairs, crutches, white canes, and any other related devices. The UR estate office in collaboration with RCSNSs managements shall put in place mechanisms for timely maintenance and/or related trainings, and/or avail wheel chairs and crutches to those needing them on temporary basis where possible.

Students and staff who have registered mobility challenges that may lead to difficulties in accessing University facilities (due to distance or physical barriers), shall submit a formal request to the RCSNS directorate for prompt alternative adjustments required.

### **5.8.2 Alternative Media**

The University of Rwanda through the RCSNSs shall ensure full access to information through provision of alternative media of communication for both staff and students with special needs who require them, including free printing or embossing of learning and teaching materials, use of sign languages, and related assistive technologies. All facilities shall be indicated by clear information signs in large, high-contrast prints, and in other accessible formats.

Upon receipt of formal requests of a staff and/or students with special needs, the RCSNS directorate shall schedule and conduct assessments to establish the reasonable accommodation needs including alternative media of communication, assistive technologies, or other specialized resources required.

The range of UR expertise in skills related to alternative media and reasonable accommodations shall readily avail consultative and /or support services in related areas, including alternative Communication (Sign language interpretation; Braille transcription and translations; note-taking, scribes or readers, etc.), assistive Technology use, and others.

## 5.9 Safety and Security

For all its infrastructural and physical space developments and renovations, the University of Rwanda shall adhere to the established Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA) standards and regulations, as well as the Universal Design (UD) principles related to accessibility and security, ensuring that all its facilities and environments are welcoming, comfortable, accessible, aesthetic, and fully functional for all the users with varying categories of special needs.

Particular attentions shall be paid to public spaces, entrances and passage ways, mobile and fixed furniture, information resources, safety notices, and accommodation. Specifically, lecture halls, libraries, computer rooms, etc shall foster the use of accessible and adjustable furniture in height and spacing, and for different academic/learning/teaching activities and groupings.

All UR facilities shall have clear safety information signs (directional or/and instructional) in large, high-contrast prints, and in all other accessible formats.

UR estates offices shall ensure that staff and students with and without special needs use the same public spaces including (lecture halls, entrances, passage ways, etc.), and shall continue to develop a friendly and welcoming environment, able to accommodate and facilitate a diversity of the University community. Particular attention shall be paid to the following:

### 5.9.1 Safety in Residential facilities

The University of Rwanda shall provide safe, accessible and barrier-free residential accommodations to students and staff with related special needs wherever possible. Its entire infrastructural designs shall ensure full safe accessibility and accommodation to all users including those with special needs.

Students and staff with registered special needs shall be reserved priority considerations in distributions of residential accommodations, including (but not limited to):

- A students and/or staff with a mobility difficulties and wheelchair users, shall have easy access in and out of private and public places (including lavatories and main halls), and gender-related privacy shall be respected.
- Students and/or staff with visual or hearing difficulties shall be accorded rooms with minimum noise or optimum lighting levels to allow best use of listening or visual devices.
- Students and/or staff with health problems (asthma and other allergic conditions) shall be accorded working environments with prescribed aeration levels.

In any one of the cases, whether permanent or temporary, the University of Rwanda through its RCSNSs, shall do its best to avail alternative facilitations to cater for the specified needs. However, the final decision on the choice of accommodation will be made by the student or staff with the special needs.

### 5.9.2 Emergency Evacuation

The University of Rwanda shall ensure safety and security in its facilities, including availing necessary measures to effectively alert, evacuate and/or shelter all its community members during emergency, irrespective of their special needs.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure (EEP) notifications shall be provided in all formats including installation of appropriate assistive devices for alerting those with hearing difficulties, tactile and/or voiced notifications for those with visual difficulties, and evacuation facilitations for those with mobility challenges. In the event of emergency evacuation, the UR community members shall be required to take note of the following:

- UR community members with special needs may require assistance in the event of emergency evacuation.
- Checking on the colleagues with mobility, hearing, emotional, or visual disabilities during the emergency evacuation.
- In case you have undergone '*rescue training sessions*' or the person with special needs is in immediate danger and cannot wait for professional assistance, attempt to assist in the evacuation processes.
- Not to use elevators, unless authorized to do so by police or fire personnel, because these could fail during a fire or other events.
- The student or staff with special needs is the best expert in his or her capacities and functions, so ask him/her for advice before lifting or moving the person.
- Taking extra time when communicating with the student or staff with hearing and/or speech impairments, for they may require getting the full picture of the emerging situations.
- Never to separate the person with special needs from his or her assistive device (wheelchairs, white canes, hearing aids, medications, special diet food, urinary supplies, etc).
- Some staff and/or students with emotional or psychiatric challenges may be too unsettled to respond appropriately to emergency instructions and directions, such as public address announcement to evacuate a building, or might not be in position to interpret "Keep Out" signs and barricade tapes.
- Some Students or staff with SN may need to be in a quiet place for a while to regain their composure after evacuation.

The evacuation guidelines shall feature as part of the UR orientation package, and shall be accessible to all UR community members. During all UR public events (cultural celebrations, disability weeks, public talks, etc.) the 'housekeeping announcement' preceding each occasion shall include identification of emergency exits, areas of rescue available in case of emergency, as well as available accessibility measures, guidelines and facilities for people with special needs.

Since the emergency situation requires the cooperation of every concerned University community member, the RCSNSs shall be entrusted among others, the responsibility of identifying, scheduling and communicating training sessions on the use of assistive devices related to emergency issues, for all community members including those with special needs.

Any staff or student with special needs shall be encouraged to develop a Personal Emergency Plan (PEP) and schedule updates of his/her self-identification information each semester, or whenever circumstances warrant an update (e.g., changes in his/her condition or office that would require a change in assistance), then share the updates with his/her College RCSNS directorate or/and during the emergency training sessions.

During the first week of each semester, the UR College RCSNS directorates in collaboration with college estate managements, shall plan orientation and training sessions in which the locations of fire exits, Safe Wait Areas (SWA), accessibility facilities and others emergency resources shall be indicated. The students and staff will be informed of locations of UR community members who cannot leave the building independently, and contacts of Public Safety personnel. It is in the same periods that emergency evacuation and instructions notices will be reviewed and/or updated.

The orientation program shall include among others key issues, a package on introduction to the University's Emergency Evacuation Procedures (EEP), initiation to Personal Emergency Plan (PEP), the needs of UR community members with special needs, and any other related information. As part of new students' orientation programs, the University's EEP, emergency needs of Persons with special needs including their PEP, the residential hall evacuation plan, and other related key issues shall be presented.

## **5.10 Grievances, Concerns and Appeals**

In the event where a student or staff has a grievance related to their special needs, he/she shall seek redress through the RCSNS by completing an appeal form, and shall receive a formal response within ten(10)working days. S/he shall seek the intervention of other UR authorities only in events where there are clear evidences that his/her appeal has been neglected or not attended to appropriately.

All other grievances that are general or are not related to special needs, shall take the ordinary channels established by the University or its constituent college.

### **5.10.1 Resolving Grievances and Concerns**

The offices of the RCSNS director shall establish formal mechanisms of receiving, sorting, scheduling and resolving students' concerns related to special needs, through discussions or any other appropriate methods. In some instances, the Director of RCSNS shall convene a consultative meeting that involves purposively selected UR community members in order to reach a satisfactory resolution. The student(s) or staff concerned shall be notified by the RCSNS office of the progress, findings or resolutions within ten(10)working days. However, depending on the urgency of many issues, it is more encouraged that all issues are resolved much sooner.

If either the aggrieved or the RCSNS office feels that a satisfactory resolution has not been reached, the ordinary established University procedures and mechanisms to resolve grievances shall be employed, and the RCSNS will only offer technical support services where required.

If the concern is not appropriately resolved to the satisfaction of the aggrieved at the University level, the student(s) or staff may choose to file the grievance with any other legalized judicial organ of his/her choice, then apply formally for the required technical support from RCSNSs where necessary. Where necessary however, the student or staff with special needs shall be encouraged to seek counsel of NCPD legal office first or from any other relevant public organ.

In event where a student has a complaint related to his/her special needs against any one UR staff member, the aggrieved student shall first discuss the complaint with the RCSNS counselor or any other UR official with related competence, through scheduled formal appointments.

In events where the complaint is not resolved, or for specific reasons cannot be discussed with the counselor, the Director of RCSNS shall investigate the case, and shall duly inform the student and involved parties of progress, findings or resolution within ten (10)working days.

### **5.10.2 Concerns Related to Discrimination**

In events where student(s) or staff alleges discrimination on the basis of his/her special needs, leveled against him/her by another UR community member, the complainant shall have the option of filing formal charges under the prevailing UR Students' Code of Conduct in the University Policy and Procedures. The student(s) or staff with special needs shall formerly apply for technical support and/or advice from RCSNSs if required, and/or shall seek counsel of the NCPD legal office or any other relevant public organ of his/her choice where it is necessary.

## **5.11 Career Guidance**

Given that the Rwandan private and public sectors are not yet adequately prepared to accommodate UR graduates with special needs, the University of Rwanda shall have to develop exceptional measures within its career guidance offices, through which students with special needs shall be prepared for a smooth entry into their career.

The exceptional measures shall include developing partnerships with potential employers with whom trainings and awareness raising programs shall be organised for both the employers and the potential employees (UR students) with special needs. In this case, the role of the RCSNS shall particularly be of crucial importance as the facilitating agent, by availing its resources (expertise and special materials) in all the programs.

## Part 6

# Inclusive Policy Implementation Plan

## 6.0 Inclusive Policy Implementation plan

The inclusive teaching and learning services and activities identified in the previous sections for the University of Rwanda, has prompted five implementation avenues, through which activity outputs for the next five years are projectable as indicated in table 2 below. These outputs shall include key enabling provisions through the development of the resource centre services; mainstreaming of a range of special needs services and activities; knowledge sharing and dissemination of appropriate special needs and Inclusive education issues and practices; and coordination, networking and partnering with other key stakeholders.

### 6.1 Enabling Services & Resources

As explained in the previous sections, the resource centre (RCSNS) provisions shall play the pivotal role in all UR of services and activities regarding students and staff with special needs. In this respect, the creation of resource centers in all UR campuses shall entail bringing together all enabling facilities and personnel in a central place, entrusted with the responsibility of bridging all gaps that students and staff with special needs meet in UR programs to which they are entitled.

Identifying or building suitable premises for the resource centre services (RCSNS); recruitment of qualified professionals and procuring appropriate resources for it, shall be the key and imperative accomplishments in the initial phases. However, the appointment of the advisory board is equally crucial in the same phase, to ensure a coordinated and effective functioning of the resource centers.

The UR and college leaderships are expected with effect from the academic year 2015/16, to adjust a range of UR programs to the new inputs, from student admissions to delivery of academic and non-academic service. These shall be adapted in a way that the RCSNS staff, resources and their functions act as enabling agents for equalization of opportunities and accommodation of staff and students with special needs (See table 2 below).

### 6.2 Mainstreaming of Inclusive Services

The success in the implementation of the present UR policy on Special Needs services shall also be determined by the extent on which all the cited services and other requirements are perennially mainstreamed within the University of Rwanda strategic plans, with the vision of gradually achieving equal opportunities for students and staff with special needs. This shall entail ensuring with effect from the fiscal year 2015/16, that all long and short term plans of the University integrate all key components of inclusive education requirements, notably in annual budget, procurement and recruitment plans; for all academic programs including teaching, learning and examination needs; in registration of students and staff recruitment procedures, safety and security provisions, and others as highlighted in Table 2.

In essence, this is holistic avenue through which the University of Rwanda shall deliberately plan channels of gradual development of an equal opportunity or barrier-free learning and teaching environment for its community with special needs. Appropriate mainstreaming of special needs services in all programs and activities of the respective colleges shall entail planning accessibility in all facilities; developing, equipping and operationalizing the RCSNS in all campuses within the next two years (2015-2017) to meet the wide range of special needs of staff and students in the University.

### 6.3 Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination

The established situation (Table 1) also indicates that the continued marginalization and limited access to educational services by staff and students with special needs in the University of Rwanda, is basically owed to the widespread limitations in knowledge on the requirements of the later community with special needs. As noted earlier, the limitation in awareness seems to be generalized across a range of communities in Rwanda and in the sub-region, and the initiatives to address the marginalization levelled against people with special needs is equally widely ranging.

In this regard, creation of channels of sharing good practices in inclusive education and provisions of related services are key to successful implementation of the present policy, and a means of ensuring attitude changes and active participation of all stakeholders in all UR inclusive education Initiatives. The knowledge sharing initiatives shall entail drawing from beneficial experiences, and sharing locally and regionally generated good practices:

- The University shall ensure that sensitization activities shall be channelled through the UR mainstream activities, that shall be planned and effected every year,
- The University shall ensure that the present policy guidelines on inclusive teaching and learning services is disseminated and interpreted proactively by all key stakeholders, and a mechanism of monitoring its impact is devised.
- The University of Rwanda shall ensure participation by its staff in national and international events or activities related to inclusion and special needs, and the outcomes be put to beneficial practice.
- Planned academic activities of the University of Rwanda, including research and publications related to Inclusive education shall feature as key channels of information and knowledge dissemination.

The entire University community in their various roles and responsibilities shall have to identify their services to staff and/or students with special needs, and their engagement shall feature on the annual action and budget of the University.



**Table 2: UR Inclusive Policy implementation action plan 2015-2020**

| OUTPUT  | Indicators  | Period  |         |         |         | Stakeholders   |
|---|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|
|   |   | 2015/16 | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 |  |
| <b>Enabling Services &amp; Resources</b>                          | The SNCAB appointed   |         |         |         |         | VC, DVC FA, DVC AAR, Principals,   |
|   | The RCSNS infrastructure & resources  |         |         |         |         | DVC FA, Dir of planning, Estate office,  |
|   | Appointed RCSNS staff   |         |         |         |         | DVC FA, Principals, Dir. hum. resources,   |
|   | RCSNS activities & guidelines   |         |         |         |         | DVC FA, Principals, Dir. RCSNS   |
| <b>Mainstreamed Inclusive Education Services &amp; Activities</b> | A study visit to build awareness and assess needs in assistive technology, academic program adjustments, etc. |         |         |         |         | DVC FA, Deans, DVC AAR, ICT Director, Dir. of Academic quality, Registrar, Director RCSNS,                                   |
|   | Inclusive UR action plan (Budget & Procurement plans) on services & equipments for special needs services.    |         |         |         |         | DVC FA, Principals, Direct. of planning, Director of finance, Procurement office, Deans, Directors, Students' organisations. |
|   | Application & Registration guidelines for students with SN.   |         |         |         |         | DVC AAR, Registrar   |
|   | Recruitment guide for staff with SN   |         |         |         |         | DVC FA, Director Human resource  |
|   | Accessibility plan & guidelines   |         |         |         |         | DVC FA, Principals, Estate office,   |
|   | Students volunteer groups   |         |         |         |         | DVC FA, Deans, Students' organisations,  |
|   | Security and safety guidelines  |         |         |         |         | DVC FA, Principals, Estate office,   |
|   | Dissemination of the UR Policy on SN  |         |         |         |         | VC office  |
|   | Schedule trainings & awareness raising  |         |         |         |         | Principals, Deans, students  |
|   | Research workshops & publications   |         |         |         |         | Deans, HODs & DVC AAR  |
| <b>Knowledge Sharing &amp; dissemination</b>                      | Regional and international research and awareness raising activities  |         |         |         |         | Academic leaders, staff and students   |
|   | Appointed Liaison office staff  |         |         |         |         | DVC FA   |
|   | Scheduled SNACB activities  |         |         |         |         | VC & DVC AAR   |
| <b>Coordination, networking, &amp; partnerships</b>               | Regional partnerships (EAIL)  |         |         |         |         | Principals, Deans & students   |
|   | Community outreach programs (CEFAPEK, VGPIEK& HI initiatives)   |         |         |         |         | Academic leaders, staff and students   |
| <b>Policy review process</b>                                      | Partnership programs with civil society   |         |         |         |         | Principals & Deans   |
|   | Critical for all inclusive education services   |         |         |         |         | DVC AAR, Dir. RCSNSs, students   |
| <b>Key</b>  |   |         |         |         |         | Incidental but Critical  |
|   |   |         |         |         |         | Critical in Short term   |
|   |   |         |         |         |         | Critical in perennial plan   |

## 6.4 Strategic Partnerships

The university of Rwanda shall in all its activities (teaching, research and community engagement) be actively sensitive and involved in promoting sustainable collaboration with key stakeholders in the country, in the region and internationally. The already active partnerships related to special needs shall be enhanced, and related activities shall be mainstreamed.

The University shall particularly support the already existing partnerships in the region, notably the East African Institutional Linkage on Special Needs, Inclusive Education and rehabilitation (EAIL SNER) for which the UR CE School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education holds the secretariat since 2014. Besides, the locally active Initiatives, notably the Voluntary Groups for the Promotion of Inclusive Education in Kamonyi (VGPIEK and CFAPEK), the partnership projects through Handicap International (in CE & CMHS), and other that provide training and community outreach avenues, shall particularly avail opportunities for farther developments in inclusive education activities. The two community initiatives in Kamonyi District (VGPIEK & CFAPEK) are expected to draw particular interests of the University of Rwanda academics for the range and blend of local inputs from parents, educators and experts in various fields, designers, agriculture, health (rehabilitation and therapeutic services) etc, as a locally generated synergy that seems to bear exceptional influences on inclusion education developments in the Southern Province districts.

The University of Rwanda shall continue to explore strategies of tapping the vast opportunities available within the national and international stakeholder community, in relation to special needs and rehabilitation services, for purposes of effectively implementing specific policy strategies on Inclusive teaching and learning services, and contributing ultimately to related developments in Rwanda.

With effect from the academic year 2015/16, the University of Rwanda shall appoint a liaison officer or charge the existing offices (Public Relations), with the responsibility of developing, promoting and coordinating all partnerships related to the implementation of inclusive and special needs activities. Through this office, the University shall design and adapt clear, effective and friendly guidelines (including memoranda) on developing and conducting partnerships.

## **Part 7**

# **Policy Monitoring and Review**

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The University of Rwanda Directorate of Academic quality in collaboration with the directorate of planning shall develop mechanisms and implement regularly evaluations on the effectiveness of the established services for Students and Staff with special needs in all UR colleges and campuses.

The evaluation processes shall be conducted at least once every academic year for the first five (5) years, and every two (2) academic years thereafter. Where necessary, the evaluation of inclusive education services shall be part of the UR monitoring and evaluation processes and procedures.

The evaluation procedures shall be scheduled when students are on session, and shall be conducted in RCSNSs, involving all related services in libraries, ICT rooms, lecture halls, students' hotels, etc., and shall assess reports from Staff and Students with Special Needs and all other stakeholders deemed relevant to all services that impact on learning and teaching in the University of Rwanda

The evaluation report shall take into considerations among other key issues, enrollment, retention, transition, and progress trends of students and staff with Special Needs; accessibility, reasonable accommodation and support provisions; as well as the views and recommendations of the staff and students with special needs.

The evaluation team shall make a report containing the assessment outcomes and recommendations to the UR DVC AAR, who shall subsequently submit it to the appropriate decision making UR organs.

## The Policy Review procedures

Through its bi-annual meeting reports to the UR management, the SNCAB shall be recommending reviews and amendments of the present policy and guidelines in the first two years (2) following its approval (Sept. 2015- June 2017). It is expected that within the initial two years, all irregularities and emerging issues regarding special needs services and practices in UR, shall have been identified and incorporated into the present policy document with the first two years.

Thereafter the 2 years thus, the UR DVC AAR's office through the SNCAB recommendations, shall recommend a team for the present policy review every five (5) years, to evaluate the achievements and challenges, and then adapt the policy to the prevailing UR Context.

In case of an urgent need for review of a section or a significant part of the present policy within the 5 years, UR DVC AAR on the SNCAB recommendations, shall seek the approval of the UR academic senate to appoint an ad-hoc review committee.

All reviews shall take into account the annual reports of the director of the RCSNS; reforms and emerging issues in the University of Rwanda; new international and national policy guidelines; as well as the SNCAB suggested amendments and recommendations on challenges and opportunities in inclusive education developments, services and practices.

The review committee shall comprise of purposively selected senior and knowledgeable UR academic and administration leaders representing each college, and shall be headed by the UR Director of academic quality, or any other recommended leader of his/her level.

Upon senate recommendations, the policy review committee shall submit its report to the DVC AAR' office, within a period of not more than two (2) months, and shall be responsible for liaising with the responsible DVC FA's offices to ensure appropriate facilitations in all its activities.

## Conclusive Remarks

Meaningful accommodation and provision of services for staff and students with special needs in the University of Rwanda (UR) shall be achieved successfully through a firm and clear policy framework. In this respect thus, the development of the present document, is an effective means of clarifying the University's position and implementation strategies in achieving its mission of providing quality and ensuring equal opportunities in all its services. The policy is positioned on the understanding that it will not operate in isolation, but as yet another integral agent of key activities and services, operationalized through the University's annual strategic plans that are pegged to the overall vision, mission and core values.

The major contributions of the present policy document is centered on practical and procedural guidelines from which stakeholders within or in partnership with UR are expected to draw, in their services that regard students and/or staff with special needs. The University of Rwanda maintains that provisions of quality education services to all its students irrespective of their different limitations and challenges, and ensuring that the entire staffs is appropriately supported, are key priorities in achieving its academic excellence goals, achievable through coordinated efforts of its committed stakeholders.

University of Rwanda is adequately endowed with qualified staff, as well as the potential to mobilize the required resources to implement the present policy provisions. As earlier noted, accommodation and provision of meaningful services to persons with special needs is often challenged by social attitudes, and it is through concerted efforts, commitments and dedication of stakeholder that effective results have been recorded.

Guided by international, regional and national policy and legislative frameworks therefore, to which Rwanda is both signatory and adherent, implementation of the present policy on accommodation and provision for services to students and staff with special needs by UR, is also perceived as an important contribution to national obligations. The present policy document on inclusive education services is notably a crucial component of the national Education for All (EFA) programs that complements the Ministry of Education's vision and missions. It offers reinforcements to a range of education services, on the country's continued efforts to find far reaching solutions to a range of challenges and limitations facing Rwandan people with special needs. It considers among others, practical as well as locally generated solutions, capable of generating sustainable outcomes that can impact positively on the wider education systems of Rwanda.

The Task Team that developed the present policy document deliberately reached out in consultations to a range of purposively selected actors in Rwanda, in the region and internationally, and is for that reason deeply indebted to their beneficial contributions and their enriching ideas and guidance. It is equally expected that as the implementation of the policy and guidelines progresses in the next few years, more feedbacks will be willingly shared on how best to serve the UR community with special needs, to ensure greater impact of the policy and sustainability of the inclusive and special needs services.

The present document is designed to equalize opportunities for marginalized beneficiaries and users of UR services, and instrumental contributor to the national development vision. In essence, it positions the University of Rwanda as a precursor to national Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategic vision of transforming all Rwandans into skilled contributors to development, irrespective of their background, abilities and disabilities.

## Appendices

### A

## Undergraduate Programmes Application Form Academic Year 20.../....

Reference number (generated from UR-MIS): .....

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Students with visual difficulties or any other special needs are advised to seek the services of trusted computer literate guides, or use computers with appropriate soft ware.
2. Section D can be completed by students with significant special needs<sup>7</sup>whoexpect special provisions from the University of Rwanda.
3. Read the application form carefully before filling any information. Give detailed information.
4. This form can be completed electronically or by hand. Please write clearly and in CAPITAL/BLOCKS LETTERS.
5. **The Completed application form must be returned with Bank Slip of RWF 5000 non refundable application fees** paid in I&M Bank on account no **5044380-01-93/Rwf** UR- Internal Revenues or Bank of Kigali (BK) on Account no **0094-063783-21/Rwf** UR- Internal Revenues.
6. Attach certified copies of your Senior Six (S6) certificate and transcripts of your last year of Advanced General Certificate of Secondary Education, photocopy of your National ID card or valid passport. Applicants who did not complete their secondary education in Rwanda must present the equivalent of their results as issued by the Rwanda Education, Board (REB). The University of Rwanda (UR) reserves the right to verify the provided information as well as results from REB and WDA databases.
7. Students with significant special needs should attach certified copies of documents indicating their difficulties. (Refer to section D).
8. No application shall be considered unless the form is completed in full and all the required documents are attached.
9. The completed application can be emailed to the following address: [registrar@ur.ac.rw](mailto:registrar@ur.ac.rw) or delivered to the Office of the Registrar of the College of the candidate's first choice.
10. Closing date for receiving applications is .....May 2016
11. The list of successful applicants will be posted on the UR website by the end of May 2016.

*(Please give your name as it appears in your national ID or passport. It is essential that the University is notified of any change of contact details at the earliest opportunity)*

<sup>7</sup> **Special Needs (SN) are** non-ordinary needs an individual may present in given circumstances or when required to accomplish certain tasks in the same way as other people, often due to intrinsic or extrinsic limitations/barriers. A student with significant functional difficulties (disabilities) may present **Special Educational Needs (SEN)**, when s/he requires alternative educational provisions and/or the use of alternative educational approaches or/and tools as reasonable accommodation for the functional limitations.

1. Surname/Family name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. First name: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Forename/Other name: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Date of birth (Day/Month/Year): \_\_\_\_\_
5. Gender: Male                      Female
6. Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_
7. National ID Card/Passport number: \_\_\_\_\_
8. Marital status: Single:     Married:     Widowed:
9. Name and Address of Guardian/next of kin: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Tel.: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section B: Contact details

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Permanent (Home) address:<br>Province: _____<br>District: _____<br>Sector: _____<br>Cell: _____<br>Post code: _____<br>Tel. No: _____<br>Mobile phone: _____<br>Email: _____ | Work postal address (if applicable):<br>Province: _____<br>District: _____<br>Sector: _____<br>Cell: _____<br>Post code: _____<br>Tel. No: _____<br>Mobile phone: _____<br>Email: _____ |
|--|---|

**Section C: Academic programmes applied for:**

(Please indicate the name of College, programme and mode of attendance by which you wish to study. It is advisable to take into consideration the College minimum entry requirements. Refer to the Application Guide document available on the UR website: <http://www.ur.ac.rw>). Indicate.....

**FIRST CHOICE**

1. College: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Academic Programme: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Campus: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Mode of study:  
 Day time  
 Evening time

**SECOND CHOICE**

(In case your first choice is not successful, indicate your preference for the second choice.)

1. College: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Academic Programme: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Campus: \_\_\_\_\_
4. Mode of study:  
 Day time  
 Evening time

**THIRD CHOICE**

(In case your second choice is not successful, indicate your preference for the third choice)

1. College : \_\_\_\_\_
2. Academic Programme: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Campus : \_\_\_\_\_
4. Mode of study :  
 Day time  
 Evening time



## Section D: Special Needs

This section shall be completed by students with significant special needs that affect their education

| Indicate the Special Needs Experienced (where applicable)         |   |  |   |     |
|---|---|--|---|-----|
| Category of Special Needs   | Explain your special Need in details.<br>(Background & level of significance in affecting your schooling) | Indicate the type of special needs provisions required | Are you applying for a concessionary admission? Please Tick (✓) Yes or No. If 'Yes' explain in the space below. | Yes |
|   |   |  |   | No  |
| Visual difficulties   |   |  |   |     |
| Hearing Difficulties  |   |  |   |     |
| Physical difficulties   |   |  |   |     |
| Health, chronic illnesses and/or any other significant challenges |   |  |   |     |
| Emotional, behavioral and/or psychosocial difficulties            |   |  |   |     |

**N.B.:** The University of Rwanda offers Concessionary or Compromising admissions, exclusively to students with prerequisite requirements, who have proven significant functional difficulties (disabilities).

Please, explain, in case the choice the program of study or college is also motivated by your special needs -----

In case you believe that your special needs has had an impact on your "A" level performance, please explain.....

**N.B.:** Any personal detail you provide shall be kept strictly confidential

**Section E: Previous education:**

*(Please provide details, including results of Secondary education (A-level) or professional qualifications you have obtained, starting with the most recent; and attach copies of certificates and transcripts wherever possible)*

Name and address of School/College:

---

| Period (academic year) |    | Qualification & Combination | Main subjects | Grade obtained in each subject | Examination Authority/Board |
|------------------------|----|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| From                   | To |                             |               |                                |                             |
|                        |    |                             |               |                                |                             |
|                        |    |                             |               |                                |                             |
|                        |    |                             |               |                                |                             |

**Section F: Professional experience (If any):**

| Organization | Period |    | Position | Nature of job |
|--------------|--------|----|----------|---------------|
|              | From   | To |          |               |
|              |        |    |          |               |
|              |        |    |          |               |
|              |        |    |          |               |
|              |        |    |          |               |

**Section G: Declaration**

All decisions by University of Rwanda are taken in good faith on the basis of the information the applicant provides. In case of **an applicant providing false information** and/or **presents forged** document(s), the University of Rwanda reserves the right to take appropriate action.

By signing this application form, the applicant declares that particulars furnished above are correct to the best of his/her knowledge.

Applicant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

| ACTION  | REMARKS |
|---|---------|
| Applicant admitted (specify program)                |         |
| Applicant admitted conditionally (state conditions) |         |
| Applicant rejected (state the reason)               |         |
| Name and Signature College Registrar                |         |
| Date  |         |

## B

## The Nine Principles of Universal Design for Instruction

**Principle****Principle 1:** Equitable use**Definition**

Instruction is designed to be useful to and accessible by people with diverse abilities. Provide the same means of use for all students; identical whenever possible, equivalent when not.

**Principle 2:** Flexibility in use

Instruction is designed to accommodate a wide range of individual abilities. Provide choice in methods of use.

**Principle 3:** Simple and intuitive

Instruction is designed in a straightforward and predictable manner, regardless of the student's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level. Eliminate unnecessary complexity.

**Principle 4:** Perceptible information

Instruction is designed so that necessary information is communicated effectively to the student, regardless of ambient conditions or the student's sensory abilities.

**Principle 5:** Tolerance for error

Instruction anticipates variation in individual student learning pace and prerequisite skills.

**Principle 6:** Low physical effort

Instruction is designed to minimize nonessential physical effort in order to allow maximum attention to learning. *Note: This principle does not apply when physical effort is integral to essential requirements of a course.*

**Principle 7:** Size and space for

Instruction is designed with consideration for appropriate size and space for approach, reach, manipulations, and use regardless of a student's body size, posture, mobility, and communication needs.

**Principle 8:** A community of learners

The instructional environment promotes interaction and communication among students and between students and faculty.

**Principle 9:** Instructional climate

Instruction is designed to be welcoming and inclusive. High expectations are espoused for all students.

**Source:** Sally S. Scott, Joan M. McGuire, and Stan F. Shaw. Storrs (2003): Universal Design for Instruction: The Paradigm, Its Principles, and Products for Enhancing Instructional Access. *Journal on Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 17 (1) PP. 4-5),

C

**Checklist on Inclusive Services and Programs for Students & Staff with Special Needs**

*A set of questions to colleges self assessment of accommodation of their staff and students with Special Needs*

| <b>A. Pre- entry services</b>   | <b>Yes</b> | <b>No</b> | <b>Details</b> |
|---|------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1. Are students with special needs assessed before entry to University?   |            |           |                |
| 2. Does the application & registration form/portal have a detailed section for students and staff with special needs?   |            |           |                |
| 3. Are students and staff with special needs accorded the opportunities to make choices that are adapted to their needs?  |            |           |                |
| 4. Are the staff's and students' special needs catered for in the approved University/college annual action plan and schedules?   |            |           |                |
| <b>B. Program design and delivery</b>   |            |           |                |
| 5. Are all programs accessible and barrier-free to all students and staff?  |            |           |                |
| 6. Are handbooks, modules and other learning and teaching materials available in accessible formats?  |            |           |                |
| 7. Does the assessment (Examination) process anticipate the requirements of students and staff with special needs?  |            |           |                |
| 8. Are teaching, learning & examination timetables published at the beginning of the semester and in all accessible communication formats?  |            |           |                |
| 9. Do the teaching and learning methods consider students' and staff special needs?   |            |           |                |
| 10. Are there strategies or provisions for students & staff with sensory difficulties to access fully information related to their program of study?  |            |           |                |
| 11. Are there personnel charged with reasonable accommodation for students and staff with special needs?  |            |           |                |
| 12. Are students and staff accorded the opportunity to use adapted learning and teaching tools e.g. adapted hard & software, audio recording, etc, in lectures and related functions?                         |            |           |                |
| 13. Is the college/campus endowed with a resource centre for student & staff with needs?  |            |           |                |
| <b>C. Accessibility and Proximity</b>   |            |           |                |
| 14. Does the college pay support services for students and staff with special needs, e.g. sighted guide, sign language interpreters, readers, etc?  |            |           |                |
| 15. Clearly sign-posted car park entrance?  |            |           |                |
| 16. Parking area marked out & easily identified by people with SN?  |            |           |                |
| 17. Can parking area spaces allow easy transfer from car to wheel chair users and/or use of white canes?  |            |           |                |
| 18. Are routes from parking area to University building entrances accessible, with appropriate tactile warnings, and free of any physical barriers (pot-holes, loose stones, ridges, hanging furniture, etc)? |            |           |                |
| 19. Are sidewalk areas & walking routes provided and safety marked to guard and guide slow moving persons, people with hearing impairments, white cane users, etc?  |            |           |                |
| 20. Is the university within convenient walking distance of public transport?   |            |           |                |
| 21. Are external Ramps (if any)   |            |           |                |

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| a. Wide enough with suitably gradient?                                |  |  |  |
| b. Painted with colour contrast at the surface?                       |  |  |  |
| c. Fitted with suitable handrails on each side?                       |  |  |  |
| d. Fitted with firmly fixed and slip-resistant materials?             |  |  |  |
| e. Edges fitted to prevent accidents?                                 |  |  |  |
| 22. For external access to University buildings                       |  |  |  |
| a. Are steps visual and tactile warnings at the top and bottom?       |  |  |  |
| b. Are the pathways suitable (width & gradient) for wheelchair users? |  |  |  |
| c. Are the pathways surfaces even and slip resistant?                 |  |  |  |

**D. Facilities**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| 23. Are seats provided at intervals along long internal routes or where waiting is likely?                                       |  |  |  |
| 24. Are seats stable with armrests provided in a range of heights and available within each classroom?                           |  |  |  |
| 25. Is there space for wheelchair users to pull up alongside seated companions?  |  |  |  |
| 26. Where there are IT facilities i.e. within lecture rooms and the Library are heights adjustable for computer desks available? |  |  |  |
| 27. In the Main Hall, is the stage raised? If so what is the current provision for white cane and wheel chair users?             |  |  |  |

**E. Entrances**

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 14. Are the main entrances easy to find and clearly distinguishable from others?  |  |  |  |
| 15. Are doors wide enough for all including wheel chair users to open the door while clear of the door swing?   |  |  |  |
| 16. Is the level threshold adequately accessible for all including wheel chair & white cane users?  |  |  |  |
| 17. If there are steps at the main entrance, is there signage indicating where the accessible entrance is located?  |  |  |  |
| 18. Are door handles clearly located, at a suitable height, easy to use and grip for both standing and seated users?  |  |  |  |
| 19. Is the entry phones and intercoms appropriately accessible and fitted to allow use by people with sensory (hearing & visual) and/or mobility impairments? |  |  |  |

**F. Reception s and lobbies**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| 20. Clear view in from outside? Can receptionists see visitors and provide assistance if necessary?                      |  |  |  |
| 21. Transitional lighting? Is the entrance lobby and reception area well illuminated?                                    |  |  |  |
| 22. Reception/desk/counter/ checkout suitable for approach and use from both sides by people either standing and seated? |  |  |  |

**G. Corridors and Internal Spaces**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| 23. Are corridors wide enough for wheel chair manoeuvres and for other people to pass?   |  |  |  |
| 24. Are corridors and internal spaces free from obstruction and hazards to all people including those with special needs?  |  |  |  |
| 25. Are all key facilities accessible for all users, e.g. libraries, laboratories, sports hall, Main Hall, lecture Rooms, etc, and equipped with adapted equipments? |  |  |  |
| 26. Are floor surfaces slip-resistant & suitable for passage of wheelchairs?   |  |  |  |
| 27. Are colours tones and textures varied to help people distinguish between   |  |  |  |



|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| surfaces and fixtures and fittings?   |  |  |  |
| 28. Are glass doors clearly visible when closed with suitably colour contrasted against the background? |  |  |  |

**H. Lavatories**

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 29. Are lever style taps provided within the WCs to aid people with dexterity challenges or other physical difficulties?                    |  |  |  |
| 30. If there is no accessible WC available, is there alternative facility provided for people with mobility disabilities?                   |  |  |  |
| 31. If there are shower facilities, are grab rails and level access showers provided?   |  |  |  |
| 32. Are lavatory compartment large enough to allow manoeuvring into position for frontal, lateral, angled and backward transfer unassisted? |  |  |  |
| 33. Is the space available outside toilet compartment for wheelchair manoeuvres, the entrance wide enough, and opening outwards?            |  |  |  |
| 34. Are hand washing and drier facilities within easy reach and suitably positioned for Wheel Chair and white cane users?                   |  |  |  |
| 35. Are door controls, locks and light switches easily reached and operated?  |  |  |  |
| 36. Is the door light enough to open easily and lobby of sufficient size for easy access & wheel chair manoeuvres?                          |  |  |  |
| 37. Is the Floor slip-resistant throughout?   |  |  |  |
| 38. Are all fittings, hand dryers and sanitary ware easily accessed and easily distinguishable for all?                                     |  |  |  |

**I. Lifts**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| 39. Are passenger lifts available for vertical circulation within buildings of more than one storey?                                   |  |  |  |
| 40. Do lift doors open wide enough for wheel chair users?  |  |  |  |
| 41. Do the lift doors allow slow entry or exit?  |  |  |  |
| 42. Is there a mirror within the lift car?   |  |  |  |
| 43. Are the controls, including emergency call located easily, using visual or tactile information and within easy reach of all users? |  |  |  |
| 44. Are voice indications loud enough to be heard by hearing aid users?  |  |  |  |
| 45. Are the floor level indicators inside and/or outside the lift clear enough to reassure people with hearing impairments?            |  |  |  |

**J. Way Finding**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| 46. Overall layout of the college/campus reasonably clear and logical? Is there signage available in Braille and tactile?      |  |  |  |
| 47. On entering the reception area, are signs designed and located to convey information to visitors with visual difficulties? |  |  |  |
| 48. Are standard toilet facilities suitably signed?  |  |  |  |
| 49. On approach and on the actual entrances?   |  |  |  |
| 50. Are the locations of the accessible WC facilities suitably identified and located?   |  |  |  |
| 51. Does signage have the International access Symbol?   |  |  |  |
| 52. Within staircases, is each of the levels clearly identifiable by tactile and visual information?                           |  |  |  |
| 53. Are the locations of the lifts clearly signed throughout the college/campus?   |  |  |  |
| 54. Is there lift signage near the reception area and on entry to key staircases?  |  |  |  |

**K. Lighting & Acoustics**

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| 55. Is lighting designed to meet a wide range of users' needs? |  |  |  |
| 56. Is the level of lighting sufficient for intended use?      |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|
| 57. Are Lights positioned where they do not cause glare, reflection, confusing shadows or pools of light?  |  |  |  |
| 58. Can occupiers control lighting?  |  |  |  |
| 59. Are light switch plates suitably colour contrasted and appropriately positioned for a wheelchair user? |  |  |  |
| 60. Are classrooms appropriately illuminated and are blinds available to control the natural day lighting? |  |  |  |
| 61. Is glare avoided sufficiently not to hinder lip-reading?   |  |  |  |
| 62. Quiet and noisy areas separated by a buffer zone?  |  |  |  |
| 63. Environment free from unnecessary noise?   |  |  |  |

**L. Safety & security**

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| 64. Audible alarm system supplemented by visual system?   |  |  |  |
| 65. Ground floor exit routes accessible to all, including wheel chair users, as entrance routes?  |  |  |  |
| 66. Is the tap appropriately fitted for use by a person with limited dexterity and others with grip challenges?                           |  |  |  |
| 67. Are the grab rails fitted in all positions to assist manoeuvring with colours contrasted to aid people with impaired vision?          |  |  |  |
| 68. Is there a back rest provided to the toilet pan?  |  |  |  |
| 69. Is the flush of a suitable spatula types and is it appropriately located on the transfer side of the toilet pan?                      |  |  |  |
| 70. Is the transfer side of the toilet pan kept clear of any obstacles that may deny wheelchair users all of the transferring techniques? |  |  |  |
| 71. Is the tap appropriate for use by a person with limited dexterity and other grip challenges?  |  |  |  |

Prof Philip Cotton

Vice Chancellor





## D

## UR Task Force for the Development of Inclusive Teaching &amp; Learning Services (URTFDITLS)

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