

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR INCLUSIVENESS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN UGANDA

FEBRUARY 2026



**National
Council for
Higher Education**

Ensuring Quality for Excellence

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR INCLUSIVENESS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN UGANDA

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PREFACE

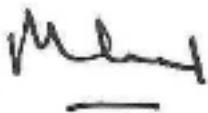
The inclusion of learners with disabilities in higher education is crucial for the achievement of the Education 2030 Agenda, and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on access and quality education. Target 4.5 emphasises the need to ensure equal access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university education, for all. Similarly, Target 4(a) focuses on building and upgrading education facilities that are learner, disability and gender-sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is mandated by the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act Chapter 262, of the Laws of Uganda, to develop minimum standards for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Uganda. In line with this mandate, NCHE appointed a team of disability experts to develop Minimum Standards for Inclusion of PWDs in HEIs. A stakeholders' consultative on the draft minimum standards was held on 16th April 2025. The Minimum Standards Inclusion of PWDs in HEIs were approved by Council of NCHE at its 83rd sitting of 13th February 2026.

The minimum standards provide a framework for addressing the challenges faced by PWDs in accessing education in HEIs. They are intended to enhance the identification of students with disabilities and improve their access to education services, serving as a foundation for strengthening the realisation of their human rights.

The minimum standards are based on eight overarching principles: inclusion and participation, human rights-based approach, comprehensive accessibility, non-discrimination, reasonable accommodation, universal design, respect and dignity, and evidence-based implementation. The standards in this document are general statements, stating the minimum to be achieved. Key proposed actions to attain the standards by HEIs are provided.

I urge all HEIs in Uganda to implement the Minimum Standards for Inclusion of PWDs in HEIs. All relevant stakeholders are encouraged to support HEIs to implement the Standards.



Professor Mary J. N. Okwakol
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NCHE

1.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

1.1 Background Information

Education is widely recognised as one of the most important and universally valued social goods. As a fundamental right, education entails the recognition of every individual's entitlement to equitable access, free from discrimination on any of the established grounds. Whereas the right is generally recognised and the responsibilities of States to ensure the right to education are also acknowledged, the education of persons with disabilities (PWDs) has not been implemented satisfactorily in most Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The right to education is widely recognised in international human rights instruments and other international initiatives including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which states that all people have basic rights and fundamental freedoms that include civil and political rights, liberty and privacy, and the right to education. It is the human right to education that drives the agenda for inclusive and accessible practices and the requirement for PWDs to have access to education at all levels and in all forms. This has been also echoed in the International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights. Most of the earlier human rights treaties did contain specific provisions on education of PWDs. However, it is possible to find a few references to the education of PWDs in some of the instruments, particularly through the application of their non-discrimination provisions.

The UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is the only legally binding international instrument that specifically provides for the right to education for PWDs. The UNCRPD requires states to develop and implement inclusive education systems at all levels of education. It obliges state parties to ensure that PWDs are not excluded from the general education system on the basis of disability; PWDs are able to access quality education in the communities they live, provision of accommodation, and personalised support to students in school with the goal of ensuring full inclusion.

Furthermore, access to information is recognised as one of the fundamental human rights. Without access to reliable information and effective means of communication, it is difficult to ensure an effective, inclusive, and open learning process. The UNCRPD emphasises access to education, among other things, as an important consideration towards making reasonable accommodation for PWDs. Article 24 of the UNCRPD must be interpreted in light of other relevant provisions of the Convention. These include the General Principles in Article 3, as well as Article 5 on equality and non-discrimination of PWDs. Article 9 on the right to access specifically calls for education institutions to be made accessible to PWDs.

The UNCRPD calls for the establishment of an inclusive education system at all levels so as to ensure the education of PWDs without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity. It is, therefore, important to understand the meaning of 'inclusive education' or 'inclusive education system' as envisaged under the UNCRPD. The analysis of the international and regional standards above also highlights some concepts which are relevant to the education of PWDs. These concepts underlie the understanding of inclusive education, and guide the implementation thereof. They include support in education, reasonable accommodation, and choice in education.

The World first paid specific attention to special needs education in the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education adopted by the World Conference on Special Needs Education Access and Quality in 1994. The Statement recognises the fact that every learner has a unique character, interests, abilities, and learning needs, thus the education system should be designed to cater for the individual needs of every person attending school/institution. Members at the Conference also emphasised the importance of inclusive education as the best means of building inclusive societies and developing the full potential of the learner. Inclusive education is also recognised as the most cost-effective means of education model with the ability of mainstreaming disability at all levels. The statement calls upon State Parties to adopt, in law or policy, the principle of inclusive education by enrolling all learners with disabilities in education institutions unless there are compelling reasons to justify an alternative.

The essence of the inclusive education approach is that the framework within which education is delivered is broad enough to accommodate the needs and circumstances of every learner in the society, including learners with disabilities equally. The Dakar Framework on Education states that, as a matter of principle, education must neither exclude nor discriminate. For purposes of learning, governments are called upon to develop exchange programmes among education institutions that have experience in inclusive education. Governments are encouraged to involve parents, communities, and organisations of PWDs in the planning and decision making on the provision of special needs education.

The inclusion of learners with disabilities in higher education is crucial for the achievement of the Education 2030 Agenda, and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on access and quality education. Target 4.5 emphasises the need to ensure equal access to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university education, for all. Similarly, Target 4(a) focuses on building and upgrading education facilities that are child, disability and gender-sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all. Thus, the inclusion of learners with disabilities in HEIs is crucial for realising the targets. The targets also highlight the importance of tracking the progress made in providing inclusive education to PWDs. Therefore, in line with the "leave no one

behind” principle of the 2030 Agenda, it is essential to ensure that learners with disabilities are not excluded from higher education opportunities and that, appropriate support is provided to facilitate their full and meaningful participation in such learning opportunities.

At the National level, the right to education stems from the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995. The right to education is further provided for in the Bill of rights enshrined in Chapter four of the Constitution (Article 30). However, it provides a blanket statement that all persons have a right to education. The Constitution also seeks to correct the imbalance created by history towards certain groups and thus provides for affirmative action (Article 32). Affirmative action calls upon the Government to take positive steps or provide preferential treatment to a certain population to bring them up, to speed with the general population in a specific field. It is under this provision that the affirmative action policy for admission of students with disabilities in HEIs was developed. Rights of PWDs are specifically provided for in the Constitution, Article 35. The Article provides for the human dignity of PWDs and obliges the state and society to ensure that PWDs realize their full mental and physical potential.

1.2 The Context of the Minimum Standards

The UNCRPD definition of PWDs, includes persons with long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Approximately 15 per cent of the global population, representing one billion people, live with a disability.

At the national level, the National Population and Housing Census 2024 reports that the overall disability prevalence rate among persons aged 2 years and above is 13.2%. This group continues to face glaring accessibility challenges. With such a large number of PWDs, it is vital to overcome any possible barriers that could hinder their access to quality, inclusive, and equitable educational opportunities. In this regard, minimum standards provide a framework for addressing the challenges faced by PWDs in accessing education within HEIs.

There are various challenges in implementation of the right to education for students with disabilities due to insufficient budget allocations for disability inclusion. While government has taken tremendous steps in promoting access to education at HEIs in favour of PWDs such as providing for affirmative action for those joining HEIs, this has had a little trickledown effect on the effective realization of the said right.

Most of the PWDs (80%) live in rural areas and participation in all aspects of life is often limited by a lack of accessible physical environments, transportation, and ICTs. Uganda's legal framework includes provisions for accessibility, such as

Building Control Act, and Persons with Disabilities Act, which call for accessibility of buildings, information, public transport and roads and, assistive devices. The UNCRPD committee report on Uganda noted that, the standards on physical accessibility were not yet well disseminated and, where they have been, they were not always implemented. Other areas of accessibility that have been noted include lack of assistive devices and technologies; limited use of sign language in social and public service provision; and limited use of accessible formats in printing reports, plans, policies, and guidelines in (braille and tactile versions) to benefit students and staff with disabilities.

National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) is mandated by the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (UOTIA) Chapter 262, Laws of Uganda to regulate the quality of higher education in Uganda. NCHE is also mandated to set and monitor minimum standards for all programmes offered in HEIs in the country. The standards are minimum, which implies that they are the basic requirements for programmes to meet the threshold for quality training and to assure effective and efficient training for specific qualifying levels and disciplines. HEIs have the leverage to set their standards way above these minimum standards. It is against the minimum standards that programmes are assessed, accredited, and monitored. In setting the standards, NCHE works hand and in hand with experts from the specific disciplines and through their professional associations and/or councils and societies in order to ensure relevant, appropriate and well-articulated guidelines grounded within the particular ethos and principles of the discipline. In the area of education and disability in HEIs, NCHE engaged a team of disability experts to provide technical support in developing the Minimum Standards for inclusion of PWDs in HEIs.

The Minimum Standards are intended to enhance the identification of students with disabilities and improve their access to education services, serving as a foundation for strengthening the realisation of their human rights. The standards emphasize both policy and the legal obligations of different stakeholders to provide inclusive education to students with disabilities in HEIs, with the understanding that reasonable accommodation should be a 'pre-existing' obligation.

The Minimum Standards consider the recent changes in legal and policy framework, such as the right to education (including the Persons with Disability Act), International frameworks (EAC Policy on PWDs, African Union Protocol on Persons with Disabilities, the UNCRPD & the Marrakesh Treaty). It also incorporates some components of the priorities reflected in National Development Plan IV (2025/26 -2029/30), SDGs as well as the key policy documents on marginalized groups like the Inter-agency Standing Committee Guidelines on Inclusion of PWDs in Humanitarian Action.

1.3 Supporting Principles or Guidelines

The Minimum Standards are based on the following overarching principles:

- i) **Inclusion and participation:** Overcoming barriers to participation require concerted efforts to include all students and staff with disabilities in education. All stakeholders should consult with PWDs and their support persons in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions. The minimum standards will, therefore, continue promoting the slogan of 'Nothing about us, without us.'
- ii) **Human Rights-Based Approach:** In implementing the minimum standards, all institutional policies and programs should enhance the rights of students and staff with disabilities.
- iii) **Comprehensive accessibility:** HEIs should provide comprehensive accessibility for PWDs to educational services, built environment, public transport, communication and information services.
- iv) **Non-Discrimination:** HEIs should provide equal opportunities to all students and staff with disabilities. The minimum standards shall ensure that affirmative action be applied where imbalances exist in access education.
- v) **Reasonable accommodation:** Institutions should provide appropriate modifications and adjustments without imposing disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure that students and staff with disabilities enjoy or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms incidental to the right to education.
- vi) **Universal design:** All HEIs should provide environments, programmes, and services that are usable by all students, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. Universal design will also include the provision and use of assistive devices and technologies for and by particular groups of students and staff with disabilities where this is needed.
- vii) **Respect and dignity:** Students and staff with disabilities should be treated with dignity and respect irrespective of their sex, age, social-cultural and economic status.
- viii) **Evidence based implementation:** Research, workable models, and other forms of evidence should be employed in the implementation of actions relating to students and staff with disabilities. Institutions should adopt evidence of implementation which is in tandem with both the principles and provisions of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 and the UNCRPD.

1.4 Structure of the Minimum Standards

The standards in this document, contain a universal statement (the standard/commitment), followed by key performance indicators and a series of key actions to be undertaken to achieve the standard. The standard is a general statement, qualitative in nature, stating the minimum to be achieved. Key actions are practical steps to be undertaken to attain the targeted standard. They are

suggestions and may not be applicable in all contexts, thus, an institution should select what is applicable.

2.0 KEY INCLUSION STANDARDS

The implementation of these Minimum Standards ensures that PWDs receive education assistance that is responsive to their gender-specific vulnerabilities, specific requirements, and capacities on an equal basis with others.

Key Inclusion Standard 1: Students with disabilities shall receive assistance that is appropriate and relevant to their specific requirements in relation to education.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Systematically include PWDs and their organisations in data collection, registration, and assessments of disabilities. Use the data to support the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of inclusive education.
- (b) Ensure participatory needs, vulnerability, capacity and all other assessments include direct and meaningful consultation with PWDs, their organisations, and their support persons, to identify and address specific risks and barriers that affect them, and their capacity to participate in education.

Key Inclusion Standard 2: Students with disabilities shall have access to education they deem relevant for their right to independent living.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Design all institutional educational responses to maximise accessibility of services and inclusion of students and staff with disabilities.
- (b) Plan and budget for accessibility services for PWDs.
- (c) Routinely identify, monitor, and address barriers affecting participation and access to services by students and staff with disabilities.
- (d) Promote and support outreach efforts and disability groups to identify students not accessing services and address barriers to inclusion.
- (e) Refer students and staff with disabilities with specific requirements to organisations with the relevant technical expertise and mandate, and advocate for those specific requirements to be addressed.

Key Inclusion Standard 3: Students and staff with disabilities shall be informed of their rights and entitlements, have access to information and participate in decisions that affect them on an equal basis with others while in education institutions.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Students and staff with disabilities should have access to all relevant information and accommodation for persons with visual, hearing, communication, mobility, and literacy limitations and/or difficulties with processing information.

- (b) Students with disabilities and their support persons, should participate directly in needs assessments, consultation, and feedback mechanisms to inform programming within the HEIs.
- (c) HEIs should include and consult 'hard-to-reach' students with disabilities and their support persons, including those who cannot leave their homes to benefit from education programmes provided by the institution, through ODeL.

Key Inclusion Standard 4: Students and staff with disabilities should have access to safe and responsive mechanisms to handle complaints on an equal basis.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Consult students and staff with disabilities on the design, implementation, and monitoring of complaints-handling processes.
- (b) The process for making complaints and seeking redress should be accessible for students and staff with disabilities within the institution.
- (c) Students and staff with disabilities shall have equitable access to information on institutional services, expectations, and complaint procedures, including their scope and limitations.
- (d) Complaints should be managed within an institutional culture that is responsive, respectful, and upholds the dignity, rights, and capacities of students and staff with disabilities.
- (e) Students with disabilities who are survivors of abuse should be sensitively and appropriately supported and/or referred for assistance or protection.

Key Inclusion Standard 5: Students and staff with disabilities shall receive coordinated and complementary assistance on an equal basis.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Include the needs of students and staff with disabilities in the agendas of institutional meetings and other coordination mechanisms as a matter of routine, at all levels.
- (b) Map services and organisations in the community, to identify stakeholders who provide targeted assistance for students and staff with disabilities, such as treatment of chronic diseases, or provision of mobility aids/assistive devices and physical rehabilitation. Include this information in service directories and referral systems and keep all relevant stakeholders updated.
- (c) Actions focused on the specific requirements of students and staff with disabilities should not be delivered in isolation, and should be accompanied by appropriate follow up. Ensure students with disabilities benefit from synergies between mainstream and targeted interventions, to increase their impact and effectiveness of the institutional education programmes.

Key Inclusion Standard 6: Students and staff with disabilities should receive improved assistance and inclusion in education as institutions learn from experience and reflection.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Continuously improve the accessibility and quality of assistance and protection for students and staff with disabilities on an equal basis.
- (b) Define and use appropriate age and disability indicators in baseline data, monitoring forms and evaluations to fast-track inclusion of students and staff with disabilities within the institution.
- (c) Include PWDs in routine monitoring and evaluation. Include their experiences in lesson-learning and actions to improve the accountability, accessibility, and safety of education programmes at the institution.
- (d) HEIs should share learning, good practice and innovation related to the inclusion of students with disabilities with other stakeholders.

Key Inclusion Standard 7: Students with disabilities should receive the assistance they require from competent staff and volunteers.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Train staff at all levels to deliver impartial assistance that recognises gender, age and disability, and to assist in recognising these factors as a source of potential vulnerability or reduced capacity. Ensure institution's staff are aware that students with disabilities are not homogeneous groups.
- (b) Staff should be aware of the rights of PWDs and the importance of including them in the institution's education programmes.
- (c) Appoint focal contact persons at all levels within the institution to support and coordinate disability inclusive education.
- (d) Make staff and partners aware of international, national, and local agencies focusing on disability as well as organisations of PWDs.

3.0 MINIMUM STANDARDS UNDER DIFFERENT DOMAINS

3.1 Planning, Management, and Governance Domain

Under the planning, management, and governance domain, the minimum standards provide fundamental guidance in the effective representation of PWDs at different levels of governance and management. In order to have meaningful participation of PWDs in HEIs programmes, their participation at all levels of governance and management is critical.

Minimum Standard 1: Institutions shall demonstrate their commitment to promote the plight of students and staff with disabilities in all institutional structures, processes, and activities on an equal basis with others.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Ensure that PWDs are fairly represented in all institutional governance structures, considering the various forms of disability as well as age, gender and diversity. Make concerted efforts to promote underrepresented groups, such as persons with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, in formal and informal mechanisms and processes.
- (b) Putting in place an inclusive policy that promotes the rights of students and staff with disabilities including adhering to the principles of equity and equality, non-discrimination, inclusiveness and accessibility.
- (c) Guaranteeing that institutional strategic plans are inclusive of needs, provisions and operations of students and staff with disabilities with a clearly spelt out budget lines.
- (d) Establishing a disability office with adequate and qualified staff as well as a sustainable budget to implement disability inclusion activities and services.
- (e) Ensuring that specific requirements are provided to students and staff with disabilities for effective participation in all activities including research on an equal basis with others.
- (f) Planning for and coordinating the participation of students and staff with disabilities in relevant national and international disability events.

3.2 Access and Learning Environment Domain

The standards presented in this domain address the importance of creating an inclusive, equitable, and safe learning environment for all. They highlight the importance of making sure that everyone has access to education and can learn in an environment that provides protection and promotes wellbeing. This means that education facilities are safe for students and staff and other stakeholders, and that they have access to other social services that are important to their holistic development on an equal basis with others. To achieve this standard for inclusive education at HEIs, collaboration with other sub-sectors is

essential; it enables actors to identify risks and gaps more effectively, and to prevent abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence against students and staff with disabilities; and also makes it possible to design and deliver programmes that result in improved outcomes for students and staff with disabilities. The domain has four standards: equal and equitable access, disability awareness and sensitisation programmes, protection and wellbeing, and facilities and services.

Minimum Standard 2: Equal and Equitable Access: All students with disabilities shall have access to quality and relevant education opportunities.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Conduct a thorough assessment of the physical environment to identify any barriers to access for students and staff with disabilities.
- (b) Implement necessary modifications to improve accessibility, such as putting in place ramps, handrails, and restroom facilities.
- (c) Provide training for staff on how to assist students with disabilities, including communication techniques and ways to accommodate specific needs.
- (d) Make information resources available in alternative formats, such as braille, large print, or electronic versions.
- (e) Ensure that technology and digital platforms are accessible to students and staff with disabilities, such as providing screen reader compatibility.
- (f) Develop and implement a policy that promotes inclusivity and prioritises equal access for students and staff with disabilities.
- (g) Regularly review and update accessibility measures to ensure they continue to meet the needs of students and staff with disabilities.
- (h) Seek feedback from students and staff with disabilities to assess the effectiveness of accessibility measures and make improvements as needed.

Minimum Standard 3: Disability Awareness and Sensitisation Programmes: HEIs shall foster a culture of awareness and acceptance of students and staff with disabilities. By promoting disability awareness and sensitisation programmes, institutions can create a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Conduct regular disability awareness trainings for students and staff to promote a culture of inclusion and understanding.
- (b) Create opportunities for students and staff with disabilities to share their experiences and perspectives.
- (c) Organise events and workshops on disability rights, advocacy, and empowerment.
- (d) Collaborate with disability organisations and experts to enhance disability awareness and sensitisation efforts.

Minimum Standard 4: Protection and Wellbeing: Teaching and learning environments shall be secure and safe, to promote the protection and psychosocial wellbeing of students and staff in HEIs.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Implement and enforce policies and procedures to ensure the safety and security of students and staff with disabilities.
- (b) Provide regular health and safety training to staff and students to ensure they are equipped to support students and staff with disabilities in emergency situations.
- (c) Put in place a system for reporting and addressing any incidents of abuse or neglect involving students and staff with disabilities.

Minimum Standard 5: Facilities and Services: Institutions shall put in place facilities and services that promote the safety and wellbeing of students and staff with disabilities.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Conduct regular assessments of facilities to identify and address any barriers to access for students and staff with disabilities.
- (b) Provide assistive technology and equipment to support staff and students with disabilities in accessing services.
- (c) Provide accommodations to ensure that facilities and services are fully accessible to students and staff with disabilities.

3.3 Teaching And Learning Domain

The standards in this domain emphasise that equitable access to education must be accompanied by quality teaching and learning, paying attention to students' emotional, physical, and cognitive wellbeing. This means that all students require a relevant and inclusive curriculum, adopting teaching and learning approaches that promote their social and emotional development. These standards provide the opportunity to improve many aspects of education, including the curriculum, teaching methodology, access to mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), learner assessments, and staff's professional development. The domain has four standards: curricula; teaching and learning processes; assessment of holistic learning outcomes; and training, professional development and support.

Minimum Standard 6: Curricula: The curricula shall be culturally, socially, and linguistically relevant, and appropriate to the context and learner's specific requirements.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Develop and implement a curricula that is inclusive with diverse perspectives.
- (a) Provide opportunities for students and staff with disabilities to participate in decision-making processes related to curriculum development.
- (b) Provide curriculum materials in accessible formats for students and staff with disabilities.

Minimum Standard 7: Teaching and Learning Processes: Teaching and learning processes shall be student centred, participatory, and inclusive.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Train teaching staff on inclusive teaching practices to support the diverse learning needs of students with disabilities.
- (b) Implement individualised learning plans for students with disabilities to address their specific learning goals and needs.
- (c) Provide resources and support for teaching staff to continuously improve their ability to effectively teach students with disabilities.

Minimum standard 8: Delivery Methods: Institutions shall employ appropriate delivery methods to allow full participation of students with disabilities.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Employ a variety of inclusive teaching methods, resources and techniques that facilitate effective and meaningful learning for all categories of students with disabilities.
- (b) Ensure that all learning activities reasonably accommodate a wide range of students with disabilities.
- (c) Utilise a variety of inclusive laboratory practices that facilitate effective and meaningful learning for all categories of students with disabilities.
- (d) Avail resources and services needed by staff to adapt inclusive teaching methods.

Minimum Standard 9: Assessment of Holistic Learning Achievements: Institutions shall employ appropriate methods to assess learning achievements holistically for all students.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Ensure that examination rules, regulations, and procedures include provisions that accommodate the specific requirements of students with disabilities.
- (b) Provide extra time where necessary to allow students with disabilities to complete an assignment.
- (c) Make appropriate adjustments to accommodate individual needs across all categories and degrees of disability during assessment.

Minimum Standard 10: Training, Professional Development, and Support: Institutions shall provide regular and structured training to staff on disability inclusion.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Conduct regular trainings and professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in supporting students and staff with disabilities.
- (b) Provide mentorship and peer support opportunities for staff to collaborate and share best practices in working with students and staff with disabilities.
- (c) Establish a system for providing individualised support and accommodations to staff with disabilities to ensure full participation in training and professional development

3.4 Human Resources Domain

The standards in this domain focus on managing, administering, and supporting human resources in HEIs, particularly staff with disabilities and other stakeholders. Recruitment of staff with disabilities, the conditions of work, professional support, and overall management of the staff are highlighted in the standards. Employing staff with disabilities is key to achieving inclusive and equitable quality education. The domain has two standards: recruitment of staff, and conditions of work.

Minimum Standard 11: Recruitment of staff. Institutions shall endeavour to recruit a sufficient number of appropriately qualified PWDs, through a transparent and fair process, based on selection criteria that reflect diversity and equity.

Actions to meet the standard:

Provide equal employment opportunities to PWDs, including continuity of employment, career advancement, and safe working conditions.

Minimum Standard 12: Conditions of Work. Institutions shall ensure that staff with disabilities have clearly defined conditions of work and receive appropriate compensation.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Protect the rights of staff with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and remuneration for work of equal value and safe working conditions, such as protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances.
- (b) Provide reasonable accommodation to staff with disabilities at workplaces.
- (c) Enable staff with disabilities to have effective access to general technical and vocational guidance programs, placement services, and vocational and continuing training.
- (d) Promote vocational and professional rehabilitation, job retention, and return to work for staff with disabilities.
- (e) Promote employment opportunities and career advancement for staff with disabilities in HEIs.
- (f) Enable staff with disabilities to exercise their labour and trade union rights on an equal basis with others.

3.5 Information and Communication Technology Domain

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is an integral part of the teaching and learning process. The domain has two standards: access to ICTs and e-learning.

Minimum Standard 13: Access to ICTs. Institutions shall ensure that students and staff with disabilities have equal access to ICTs with others.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Training of teaching staff and specialists engaged in education of PWDs, development of training materials to make them familiar with best practices to enhance digital teaching opportunities;
- (b) Establishment of the network of resource centres equipped with specialised assistive devices to provide access to information for students with disabilities.
- (c) Creation of an online platform that would collect data on best practices and case studies on implementation of digital opportunities for teaching students with disabilities.

Minimum Standard 14: E-learning. Institutions shall promote E-Learning to enhance access to higher education by students with disabilities.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Provide a broad spectrum of learning support services and assistive technologies, such as virtual learning platforms, digital libraries, and relay services, catering for students and staff with disabilities.
- (b) Provide alternative formats for textbooks and other reading materials, such as audio recordings or braille.
- (c) Ensure that videos and other multimedia content have subtitles and audio descriptions.
- (d) Use accessible learning platforms and tools that support screen readers and other assistive technologies.
- (e) Implement inclusive pedagogical practices that cater to diverse learning styles and abilities.
- (f) Foster a sense of community among students through online forums, discussion boards, and peer support networks.

3.6 Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships Domain

Partnerships and collaboration improve the effectiveness and accountability of stakeholders in provision of education services directly or indirectly. They help directly to achieve inclusion and ensure that persons with disabilities benefit from and contribute to development of interventions that reflects meaningful participation of PWDs in pursuit of nothing about us, without us.'

Minimum Standard 15: Collaborations, Networks and Partnerships. HEIs shall work with PWDs and their representative organisations rather than plan or make decisions on their behalf.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Develop partnerships with organisations for PWDs and other organisations working in education. Involve them in supporting staff and learners with disabilities, providing personal assistance, and advocating for and supporting inclusive education.
- (b) Build financial or technical partnership with government agencies, NGOs and INGOs to implement different projects, activities, joint campaigns and advocacy to promote disability rights within the institutions.
- (c) Participate in various national and international disability related forum, committee, seminars, study visits, conferences and workshops.
- (d) Organise advocacy and awareness campaign jointly with other civil society organisations.

3.7 Support Services for Students and Staff with Disabilities Domain

Support services are critical for effective realisation of the right to education for students and staff with disabilities

Minimum Standard 16: Support services. Institutions shall provide and maintain support services for students and staff with disabilities.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Ensure that students and staff with disabilities access support services of the institution without discrimination.
- (b) Provide opportunities for equitable participation of students and staff with disabilities in extracurricular activities (sports, recreation, and social activities).
- (c) Provide regular counselling and guidance services for students and staff with disabilities.
- (d) Provide students and staff with disabilities opportunities to access rehabilitation services and life skills that contribute to their overall well-being, inclusion and participation

3.8 Community Engagement Domain

Support of students with disabilities to actively engage in community activities is key for them to thrive and succeed in their academic pursuits.

Minimum Standard 17: Community Engagement. Institutions shall ensure that community engagement activities are accessible to students with disabilities by providing necessary accommodations and removing barriers to participation.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Conduct an accessibility audit of community engagement activities to identify barriers and make necessary changes to ensure accessibility.
- (b) Provide alternative formats for materials, such as large print, braille, and electronic versions.
- (c) Ensure physical locations are accessible by wheelchair, and provide sign language interpreters or captioning for events.
- (d) Ensure that students with disabilities are represented and included in decision-making processes related to community engagement.

3.9 Financing Students with Disabilities Domain

Adequate financial support for staff and students with disabilities is critical for their inclusion and success in education. This may include funding for assistive technology, accessible campus facilities, and specialised support services. The domain has two standards: Budget allocation and financial literacy.

Minimum Standard 18: Budget allocation. Institutions shall allocate sufficient funds to support inclusion of staff and students with disabilities in teaching and learning.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Allocate a special budget to support the needs of staff and students with disabilities.
- (b) Develop clear and accessible information on financial support options and their utilisation, for staff and students with disabilities, such as scholarships, grants, and loans.
- (c) Offer flexible payment options for students with disabilities.

Minimum Standard 19: Financial Literacy. Institutions shall promote financial literacy and empowerment for staff and students with disabilities to help them make informed decisions in managing their own finances.

Actions to meet the standard:

- (a) Provide financial literacy workshops tailored to the unique needs and challenges faced by staff and students with disabilities, to empower them to make informed financial decisions and effectively manage their finances.
- (b) Implement mentorship programs or peer support networks for staff and students with disabilities to share resources and strategies for navigating financial challenges in higher education.

4.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and Evaluation is key to ensure that the minimum standards for inclusiveness for persons with disabilities are effectively implemented.

- a) HEIs shall put in place systems and structures to periodically monitor and evaluate implementation of the standards.
- b) The institution's annual report submitted to NCHE shall include a section(s) on disability and inclusion aspects.



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