DISABILITY HANDBOOK

2021

Centre for Disability Research, Education and Practice
Faculty of Arts
University of Colombo

Disability Handbook

Faculty of Arts
University of Colombo

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- Mr Madushan Lankathilake, Assistant librarian for students with disabilities
- Dr Rajitha De Silva, Senior Student Counsellor and Nirosha Kulasekara, Assistant Student Counsellor
- Ms Gayani De Silva, Assistant Registrar, Student and Staff Affairs

I also value the input given by participants of the academic participants of the Disability Sensitization and Awareness course on the first draft of this handbook. Your insights and suggestions greatly aided me to fine tune the content and focus of this handbook.

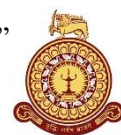May this handbook be of benefit to many!

Niluka Gunawardena

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List of Diagrams

"CEDREP, Faculty of Arts – Disability Handbook 2021"

Glossary

CEDREP	Centre for Disability Research, Education and Practice
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
DAISY	Digital Talking Book Player
DO	Disability Officer
DR	Deputy Registrar
IDC	Information and Documentation Centre
PPT	PowerPoint
SCSD	Support Centre for Students with Disabilities
SDC	Staff Development Centre
SSA	Student and Staff Affairs
SWD	Students with Disabilities
UDI	Universal Design for Teaching and Learning
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UMO	University Medical Officer

GENERAL

1.1.   INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization estimates that 15% of the global population has some form of disability, making persons with disabilities the world's largest minority[1]. According to the Department of Census Statistics (2012), 8.7% of Sri Lanka's population or nearly 1.2 million people have some form of disability. The lower than global incidence of disability reported in Sri Lanka may reflect the under-reporting of disability in households due to the shame and stigma often culturally associated with disability. Factors such as the high incidence of impairments related to a prolonged war, natural disasters and an ageing population may place the actual figure at a higher rate.

According to UNICEF (2020), Disability is the single most serious barrier to education across the globe[2]. Nearly 50% of children with disabilities are not in school, compared to only 13% of their peers without disabilities. This rate may be as high as 90% for children with disabilities living in developing countries.

Children and young adults with disabilities face multiple barriers to education including the lack of accessible and inclusive schools and vocational training facilities, the lack of duly trained and sensitized teachers and staff, and the broader inaccessibility of transportation and infrastructure in Sri Lanka. Attitudinal barriers are also a significant impediment to the full and effective participation of children and youth with disabilities at all levels of education.

Persons with disabilities are further marginalized due to notions of charity, pity, sympathy and karmic culpability prevalent in Sri Lankan society. Such disempowering beliefs, notions and practices lead to the exclusion of persons with disabilities from all aspects of life. Persons with disabilities often internalize prevailing narratives of "badness" or "worthlessness" resulting in internalized oppression.

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[1] United Nations Factsheet on Persons with Disabilities -
https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/resources/factsheet-on-persons-with-disabilities.html
[2] UNICEF, Inclusive Education - https://www.unicef.org/education/inclusive-education

This structural and attitudinal barrier to accessing education necessitates equitable and affirmative measures to promote the participation of persons with disabilities in tertiary Education.

In the absence of robust state and social supports, the families of students with disabilities often play a significant and proactive role in promoting and ensuring their access to education.

It is often assumed that family members would meet the care needs of children with disabilities in Sri Lanka. This may prove to be an onerous task for families, especially if they are from a low socio-economic background. The onus of family-based care and related costs often results in the isolation, marginalization and institutionalization of children with disabilities. The educational opportunities for children and youth with disabilities living in institutions and care homes are minimal. This leads to the continued long-term dependency and disempowerment of persons with disabilities in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka has signed and ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). However, as of 1st September 2021, there is still no corresponding legislation to reflect the state's obligations under the CRPD. The existing Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act No. 26 of 1998 of Sri Lanka does not cover the full rights and obligations afforded by the CRPD. The Right to Inclusive Education is enshrined in Article 24 of the CRPD. This includes opportunities for persons with disabilities to realize their full potential and have access to education at all levels on an equal basis with others. It also recognizes the need for Reasonable Accommodations to ensure the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities at all stages of education.

1.2. UNIVERSITY CONTEXT

It is important to take the aforementioned background related factors into consideration when admitting students with disabilities to universities. The prevailing socio-cultural conditions underscore the need for a positive, enabling, and affirmative university environment that facilitate the capacity and self-expression of students with disabilities.

When addressing disability inclusion at the University of Colombo, it is important to focus on all aspects of university life including academics, extracurricular activities, university culture and social life.

Disability stigma and discrimination remain a reality in the wider socio-cultural context of Sri Lanka. The experience of such marginalization may make students reluctant to identify or disclose their disabilities, especially in socially demanding environments with heightened peer scrutiny such as universities. Non-discrimination based on disability and an affirmative commitment to disability inclusion becomes especially important given such circumstances.

Currently, only the Faculty of Arts at the University of Colombo has a special intake for students with disabilities. The special intake provision recognizes the inequity that is created due to these background factors which create structural barriers to education for children and youth with disabilities. It is an affirmative action measure to ensure that persons with disabilities are not systematically excluded from tertiary education. As of 1st September 2021, there are 90 students with disabilities in the Faculty of Arts who have gained entry through the special intake.

Whilst Sri Lanka's National Policy on Disability recognizes and promotes the right to education for persons with disabilities, it has no legal authority. This handbook is based on the rights framework provided by the CRPD with a particular focus on Article 24 on the Right to Education. It is premised on the underlying principle of Inclusive Education. Inclusive education is about ensuring access to quality education for all students by effectively meeting their diverse needs in a way that is responsive, accepting, respectful and supportive.

Students participate in the education program in a common learning environment with support to diminish and remove barriers and obstacles that may lead to exclusion[3]

As of 1st September 2021, the University of Colombo has made significant strides to ensure accessibility and participation for students with disabilities.

The Centre for Disability Education Research and Practice (CEDREP) secured funding from the World Bank Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) initiative in 2018. These funds have been utilized for developing accessible infrastructure, expanding the availability of assistive technologies and disability awareness and sensitization. Two in-person disability awareness courses for academic and non-academic staff have been conducted thus far. In light of the COVID pandemic one disability inclusive education online course was conducted in May 2021 for academic staff.

The Support Centre for Students with Disabilities (SCSD) was refurbished, upgraded, and brought under the Centre for Disability Research, Education, and Practice (CEDREP) in 2020. The SCSD has a wide repertoire of assistive technology devices and services and offers training programmes for students and staff. Initiatives are in place to ensure that all new or redeveloped spaces at the University of Colombo are accessible and inclusive.

The information provided in this handbook is true and valid as of 1st September 2021. Efforts are underway to incorporate principles of Universal Design to both the teaching and learning ethos of the university as well as the built environment. Such long-term change is subject to progressive realization.

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[3] Inclusive Education Canada, What is Inclusive Education - https://inclusiveeducation.ca/about/what-is-ie/

1.3. PRINCIPLES AND PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

The University of Colombo Disability Handbook is premised on the principles of Inclusion and Universal Design. It acknowledges the need for physical structures, socio-cultural practices and procedures to be as accessible and available to as wide a range of people as possible, including persons with disabilities. It recognizes the impact of long-term discrimination, exclusion and marginalization faced by persons with disabilities and the need for purposeful, affirmative, inclusive practices including Reasonable Accommodation to ensure the full and equitable participation of students with disabilities in all aspects of university life. The institutional commitment to inclusion made by the University of Colombo affirms disability as a vital aspect of student diversity. It recognizes measures that need to be taken to ensure that all students have the opportunity to realize their gifts and fulfil their personal potential in a safe, respectful and compassionate teaching and learning environment for all.

The University of Colombo Disability Handbook is a dynamic document. It reflects the commitment of the university to continually improve the status of students with disabilities.

1.4. STRUCTURE OF HANDBOOK

The University of Colombo Disability Handbook is designed to be the core reference for information, resources and services relating to disability for students and staff. Part one of the handbooks will provide an overview of the key policies, procedures, services and protocols relating to disability at the University of Colombo with a particular focus on the Faculty of Arts. Part Two will highlight how disability pertains to Teaching, Learning and Assessment within the university.

Who is this handbook for?

The contents of this handbook are relevant to all members of the university community, regardless of whether one personally experiences or encounters disability or not. Here are the ways in which this handbook may relate to you:

For Academic Staff

This handbook will enable you to understand the university procedures and protocols in place to ensure the full inclusion of students with disabilities in your classroom and the wider university community. It will enable you to direct students to appropriate services and to understand the resources and supports available to you. It will give you the background and knowledge required to create inclusive and respectful learning environments as per the Universal Design of Learning (UDL) and the Universal Design of Teaching and Learning (UDI) frameworks.

Academic staff members are highly encouraged to enrol in the Certificate Course on Disability Awareness and Sensitization for Academic staff offered by CEDREP in collaboration with the SDC.

For Students with Disabilities

This handbook will enable you to understand the different university procedures, protocols, resources and services in place for you to fully participate in university learning and social life on an equal basis with others. Such information includes:

1. Registering with the Centre for Disability Research, Education and Practice (CEDREP)

2. Requesting for Reasonable Accommodations – specific measures to modify teaching and learning to suit your disability specific needs

3. Information about key services and personnel at the university:
    -   CEDREP (P.25)
    -   Department Disability Officers (P.54)
    -   Student and Staff Welfare (P.61)
    -   Accessible hostel accommodation and transportation (P.62)
    -   Assistive Technology (P.30)
    -   Library Services (P.56)
    -   Student Counselling (P.58)
    -   Examination related procedures (P.44)

For Non-Academic Staff

Non-academic staff members are often the first point of contact for students with disabilities. The quality of that interaction has a significant impact on the university experience for students with disabilities.

This handbook will introduce you to the main procedures, protocols and services in place to enable students with disabilities to participate in university academic and social life on an equal basis with others. It will give you details regarding the administrative processes pertaining to students with disabilities from the point of admission onwards (P.40). It will also provide information about the different services and accommodations available for students with disabilities (P.24).

This handbook is a guide for you to support students with disabilities and staff members to create an inclusive and accessible teaching and learning environment.

Non-Academic Staff members are highly encouraged to enrol in the Certificate Course for on Disability Awareness and Sensitization for Non-Academic staff offered by CEDREP in collaboration with the SDC.

For Students without Disabilities

This handbook provides a roadmap of services, technologies and protocols available to facilitate the full inclusion of students with disabilities in the university community. It will give you the knowledge and awareness to be an effective friend and ally to students with disabilities including through formal programmes like the Buddy System . It will provide you with guidelines for respectful interaction with peers with disabilities. The University of Colombo is committed to the full inclusion of students with disabilities in all aspects of university life in a spirit of mutual- respect and dignity.

1.5. WHAT IS DISABILITY

The term 'Disability' refers to both a life experience and an identity. Different frameworks define disability in different ways based on their underlying assumptions.

The Charity Model

The Charity Model captures a traditional way of viewing disability as a personal misfortune or tragedy. Persons with disabilities are perceived as helpless and in need of care. In countries like Sri Lanka, karmic and moralistic narratives of disability are often used to justify a charitable approach to disability. This is often accompanied by the institutionalization of persons with disabilities in charitable homes and the establishment of a donor-recipient/ benefactor-victim dynamic between persons without disabilities and persons with disabilities.

The Medical Model

A purely medical approach locates disability in the individual impairment which is to be cured or rectified through medical intervention or rehabilitation. Disability is still perceived as an individual problem but without any moralistic undertones. The focus is on the scientific and medical genesis of impairment and the imperative is rectification through medical intervention. Whilst this model provides a framework to address the impairment impacts of disability, it fails to recognize the external, socio-cultural aspects of disability.

The Social Model

This model makes a distinction between impairment and disability. Individuals with impairments experience disability in relation to external social barriers.

For example, a wheelchair user may experience a restriction if the only access to a building was through a staircase. The same person would not experience such a limitation if ramp access was available. This indicates the situational nature of the experience of disability.

The Social Model of disability is attributing to the disability movement that identified disability as a form of oppression and discrimination. Campaigning to create universal access and eliminating structural and attitudinal barriers has become a rallying call of persons with disabilities and their allies. This model enables persons with disabilities to step out of personal narratives of tragedy, pity and pathology to one of collective action and social change. The Social Model of disability has been critiqued for overlooking the impairment-based effects of disability.

The Rights Based Model

Building upon the Social Model of disability, the Rights Based Model recognizes persons with disabilities as a distinct group that is entitled to dignity and rights on an equal basis with others. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) defines persons with disabilities (PWDs) as follows:

"Persons with disabilities include those who have 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" (Article 1, CRPD).

It recognizes disability as the restrictive experience that may arise from the interaction of impairment with socio-cultural, economic and architectural barriers which leads to a limitation in participation on an equal basis with others. It also indicates that disability could be visible or invisible with physical disabilities being more evident and recognizable than invisible disabilities including psychosocial disabilities (related to mental health), learning disabilities and certain long-term illnesses.

The UN CRPD follows other conventions on specific sub-groups of the general population including women (CEDAW), children (CRC) and indigenous persons (UNDRIP). Such conventions recognize the marginalization faced by specific groups that have been historically oppressed, including persons with disabilities.

The CRPD is premised on 8 core General Principle (Article 3)

1. Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;

2. Non-discrimination;

3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;

4. Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;

5. Equality of opportunity;

6. Accessibility;

7. Equality between men and women;

8. Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

The Right to Education for all persons with disabilities is enshrined in Article 24 of the CRPD. It is important to note that the CRPD does not create new rights; but rather highlights the application of existing, universal human rights to the specific needs and realities of persons with disabilities.

This handbook is primarily informed by the Rights Based Model of disability and the principles of the CRPD.

1.6. KEY TERMINOLOGY

As per Article 1 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

Persons with disabilities include those who have 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" (Article 1, CRPD).

As per Article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

Discrimination on the basis of disability, means any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of disability which has the purpose or effect of impairing or nullifying 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

Reasonable accommodation refers to necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Universal design means the design of products, environments, programmes 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.

1.7. DISABILITY TERMINOLOGY

The terminology associated with disability may at times be contentious and unclear. Older terms like 'handicapped' and 'special needs' have been replaced by terms like 'persons with disabilities' or 'disabled people'. Underlying such changes is a shift in conceptualizations of disability within the international disability movement.

Is 'Disability' a bad word?

The term 'Disability' refers to both a life experience and an identity. It is not a politically incorrect or derogatory word. In fact, it is the assumption that disability is in some way negative and derogatory which leads to it being considered a negative term.

Why not use the term Special Needs?

The term 'special needs' is often identified with the field of special education and has been subject to critique. It is not that people with disabilities have special needs. The need for education, dignity, healthcare, public participation is universal. Only the means by which such needs are met may vary depending on individual requirements. The term 'special' is also associated with charitable understandings of disability and an assumption of persons with disabilities being 'inspirational'. This overlooks both the complexity and the ordinariness of lives of persons with disabilities.

Are people 'differently-abled'?

The term 'differently-abled' was widely used in the 1990s based on the assumption that 'disability' in and of itself is somehow negative or 'politically incorrect'. It affirms the primacy of 'abledness' or 'normalness'. It fails to recognize disability as an aspect of human diversity and sustains the abled-disabled divide. It has become an outdated term which fails to capture the socio-political aspects of disability.

In the present-day context, there are two main terminological camps in relation to disability – Person First Language (PFL) or Identity First Language (IFL).

Person First Language is based on the premise that disability is one aspect of a person's life which does not define who they are.

E.g., Person with a disability, child with mobility impairment, woman with a hearing impairment

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopts this person first approach to disability terminology. It identifies disability as an aspect of identity and diversity and recognizes persons with disabilities as rights bearers. Person first language is preferred in international policy, legislation and development.

Impairment First Language

Proponents of the Social Model school of Disability promote the use of impairment first language, which recognizes disability as an inherent and important aspect of identity such as gender and ethnicity. Disability is politicized in terms of social oppression and the word disability is adopted as a banner for collectivization.

E.g. Disabled person, Deaf woman, Blind person

Suitable Terminology

Given this background, it is imperative that words which recognize the dignity and diversity of persons with disabilities are used in everyday interaction and conversation instead of words that perpetuate harmful stereotypes and stigma.

Commonly used terms to avoid

- The Disabled
- Special Needs
- Dumb
- Cripple
- Deformed
- Retarded
- Mongol

- Differently abled
- Handicapped
- Psycho
- Mad Person

Preferred Terms

- Persons With Disabilities
- Disabled People
- Persons With Vision Impairment
- Persons With Hearing Impairment
- Deaf And Hard of Hearing
- Persons With Speech Difficulties
- Persons With Physical Disabilities
- Wheelchair Users
- Persons With Intellectual Disabilities
- Persons With Psychosocial Disabilities

Disability Studies

Disability Studies is now a renowned interdisciplinary field of academic enquiry and research. Many prestigious universities have departments or research centres for disability studies and research. The University of Kelaniya has a well-established Centre for Disability Studies.

CEDREP is emerging as a regional leader in disability research, policy, and practice. Disability is also increasingly becoming a focal point for sports, politics, culture, and the arts.

PART 01: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

This section of the Disability Handbook provides core information regarding the procedures, policies, protocols and services pertaining to disability at the University of Colombo.

2.1. THE CENTRE FOR DISABILITY RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND PRACTICE (CEDREP)

Contact Information

Mobile/ Whatsapp	:	+94702956565
Landline	:	+94 112 580 835
E-mail	:	scsd@arts.cmb.ac.lk, cedrep@arts.cmb.ac.lk
Web	:	https://arts.cmb.ac.lk/sociology/cdrep/
Location	:	Second Floor, Faculty of Arts, Room Number 290

The Centre for Disability Research, Education and Practice (CEDREP) is the primary coordinating body for all matters relating to disability at the University of Colombo. It is located in the Faculty of Arts.

Vision

To be a focal point in providing academic leadership in the pursuit, demonstration and dissemination of studies and practices in disability for the enrichment of the lives of persons with disabilities within a culture of inclusion.

Mission

To promote an inclusive university experience for students and staff with disabilities in a vibrant academic environment by promoting disability studies at both undergraduate and post graduate levels and support through research and evaluation to develop and implement national evidence-based practice in disability work carried out by Government, the corporate sector, civil society and communities including persons with disabilities themselves with the aim of promoting a culture of inclusion.

Aims

The Centre shall strive, through the use of accumulated knowledge and expertise of the University of Colombo and other partners, to promote and provide the academic leadership in the fields of disability research, education and practice for national and international agencies and organizations concerned about people with disabilities and their families.
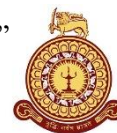
Objectives

- To enhance the status of the university as an active partner in national disability policy and strategy formulation
- To initiate research that will develop and sustain evidence-based practices in the field of disability
- To strengthen contributions to the further development of disability education
- To establish and strengthen collaborative and link programmes with other institutes of higher learning to promote resolution of disability issues
- To promote partnerships with global higher educational institutes and centres for disability
- To do anything which is incidental to or which furthers any of these objectives and the purpose of the centre.
- To ensure that teaching, learning and assessment address the multiple needs of students with disabilities

CEDREP has 4 main functions

1. Research and Publications
2. Education
3. Student Support
4. Strategic Initiatives

CEDREP STRUCTURE

Board of Management

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Management Committee
(Standing Committee of the Board of Management)

↓

The Director

↓

Coordinator SCSD

Manager of CEDREP

Disability Officers

Other Officers

Diagram 01: CEDREP Structure

The services offered by CEDREP as per these functions are as follows:

- Registration of students with disabilities and facilitation of Reasonable Accommodations in collaboration with the IDC.
- Mediating in matters related to the rights of students with disabilities at the university.
- Conducting awareness and advocacy programmes for staff and students in collaboration with the Staff Development Centre (SDC).
- Promoting disability-related interdisciplinary research, training, service delivery and policy advocacy among academics and professionals.
- Supporting students and staff conducting disability related research.
- Offering Braille printing services
- Collaborating with the Career Guidance Unit to advise on career guidance and employment opportunities for students with disabilities.
- Conducting training programmes for students including but not limited to mobility training, IT skills, using assistive devices, software and applications, Braille literacy, using Daisy books through the Support Centre for Students with Disabilities (SCSD).
- Conducting recreational and networking events for students with disabilities.
- Coordinating the Buddy system.
- Providing study equipment such as Braille machines, Daisy talking book players and voice recorders.
- Transcribing answer scripts of students with visual impairments, and modules and lecture notes for such students from Braille to print and print to Braille.
- Facility to use and borrow assistive devices through the Support Centre for Students with Disabilities (SCSD).
- Checking examination venues for access requirements.
- Providing assistive equipment and devices during examinations.
- Computer lab with assistive technologies and software.
- Maintaining the we based audio library.

CEDREP will liaise with the SAR Welfare unit to identify the particular needs and support services for students with disabilities. The information shared with the SAR Welfare office may include:

- Types of impairments of incoming students and associated needs
- Identifying students who need accessible hostel accommodation and the types of accommodation required
- Identifying students who need buddies in hostelsIdentifying students with disabilities facing financial hardships

CEDREP will liaise with the Faculty Examinations coordinators to:

- Identifying exam related reasonable accommodations for students
- Make arrangements for any mid-term or end of term examination related reasonable accommodations for registered students with disabilities.
- Coordinate personal assistance requirements prior to examinations
- Act as a point of contact for the examinations department for obtaining information about students with disabilities.

Training and Awareness Raising

CEDREP offers the following training programmes on a continual basis:

- Certificate Course on Disability Sensitization and Awareness for Academic Staff
- Certificate Course on Disability Sensitization and Awareness for Non-Academic Staff
- Online Course on Disability Inclusive Education
- Basic certificate course on basic Sign Language
- Certificate course on Braille

2.2. THE SUPPORT CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SCSD)

The Support Centre for Students with Disabilities (SCSD) falls under the direct purview of CEDREP.

The Faculty of Arts at the University of Colombo is currently the only Faculty at the University that has a special intake for students with disabilities. The Support Centre for Students with Disabilities was setup to facilitate the retention of students with disabilities to ensure that they received the necessary support to fulfil their course requirements and graduate.

The SCSD has a state-of-the-art computer lab with 13 workstations with assistive technology software and features.

Assistive Software

Assistive software refers to interfaces and features that enhance the accessibility and usability of technology for all, including persons with disabilities.

Assistive software available at SCSD includes:

Screen Reading Software:

- Jaws
- NVDA
- Narrator

Duxbury – DBT – Braille Translator – text to braille software OBR – Optical Braille Recognition – braille to text software

In addition to using assistive software and devices at the SCSD office, students are able to borrow the devices listed below from the SCSD:

Braille Slate and Stylus

The braille slate and stylus are the most traditional and forms of assistive devices used by blind or visually impaired persons to write in braille. A slate and stylus is to a Braille reader what a pen or pencil is to a print reader. Just as the pen or pencil is designed to place a visible mark on a piece of paper, the slate and stylus is designed to punch (emboss) raised, tactile bumps or dots onto a page.
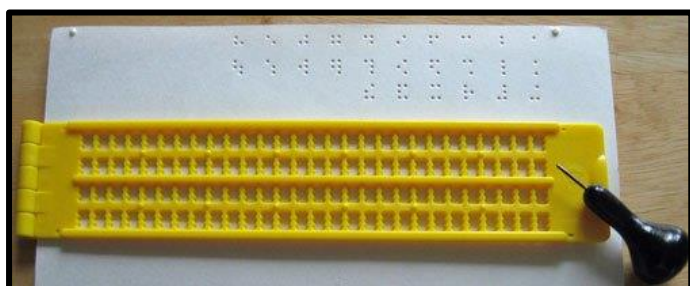
Figure 1: Braille Slate and Stylus

Image source:

Paths to Literacy, https://www.pathstoliteracy.org/resources/praise-slate-and-stylus

For further details visit https://www.nfb.org/images/nfb/publications/fr/fr25/fr07spr18.htm

Digital Refreshable Braille Displays

A refreshable braille display or braille terminal is an electro-mechanical device for displaying braille characters, usually by means of round-tipped pins raised through holes in a flat surface. Visually impaired computer users who cannot use a standard computer monitor can use it to read text output. Deaf blind computer users may also use refreshable braille displays.

Image 2: Digital Refreshable Braille Displays

Daisy Digital Talking Book Players and Recorders

DAISY players are used to play DAISY audio books and are designed to be used by people with print impairments. They are suitable for people with reading difficulties resulting from dyslexia, but primarily they are designed for people with visual impairments. DAISY multimedia uses a combination of MP3 audio and XML to create an accessible book, newspaper, article, magazine or another text format. The books are compatible with synthesised speech, recorded speech, refreshable braille and large print. The features available depend on the hardware or software used to read the DAISY multimedia file, and the type of DAISY file that was made.

Image 3: Daisy Digital Talking Book Players and Recorders

Portable Digital Video Magnifier

Video magnifiers are electronic devices that use a camera and a display screen to perform digital magnification of printed materials. The display screen is usually LCD or a similar flat-screen technology (although older video magnifiers have used CRT displays), and the device usually includes a lamp to illuminate the source material. Video magnifiers are designed to be mostly used by people with low vision that cannot be helped using a conventional magnifying glass.
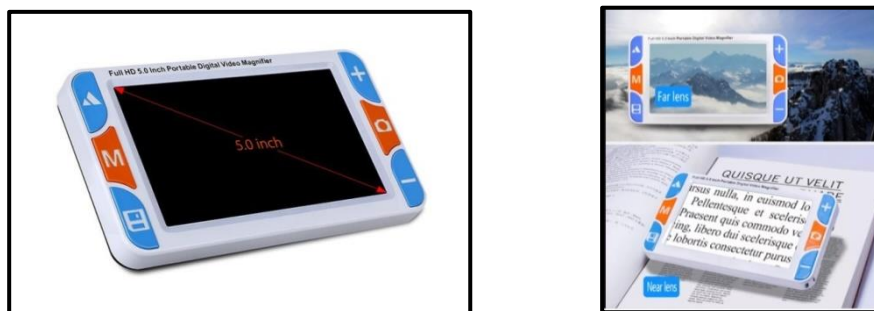
Image 4: Portable Digital Video Magnifier

OrCam Reader

For people with mild low vision, reading fatigue, reading difficulties including dyslexia, and for anyone who consumes large amounts of text. OrCam Reader with a smart camera that seamlessly reads text from any printed surface or digital screen.

Image 5: OrCam Reader

Halogen lamp

The halogen lamp helps low vision persons to see details clearer and the right lighting can make a big difference in their ability to read.

Image 6: Halogen Lamp

White Cane

A white cane is a device used by many people who are blind or visually impaired. A white cane primarily allows its user to scan their surroundings for obstacles or orientation marks, but is also helpful for onlookers in identifying the user as blind or visually impaired and taking appropriate care.

Image 7: White Cane

Ultrasonic White Cane

The white cane that uses smart technology aimed to help visually-impaired people navigate their surroundings. The device is equipped with built-in sensors that send vibrations to warn users of obstacles up ahead.

Image 8: Ultrasonic White Cane

Braille Embossers/ Braille Typewriters

Braille Embossers, also known as Braille Typewriters is an impact device that creates tactile dots on sturdy paper, making written documents accessible to blind and visually impaired people. Using braille translation software, a document can be embossed with relative ease. This makes braille production efficient and cost-effective.

Image 9: Braille Embossers/ Braille Typewriters

Braille Translation Software

A braille translator is a software program that translates a script into braille and sends it to a braille embosser, which produces a hard copy of the original print text.
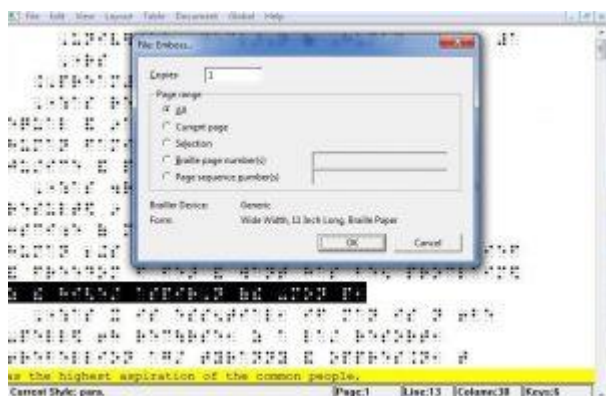
Image 10: Braille Translation Software

Dragon Naturally Speaking Software

Dragon NaturallySpeaking software is a speech recognition program that allows the user to speak into a microphone on a computer with the software translating the spoken words into text in a text program.
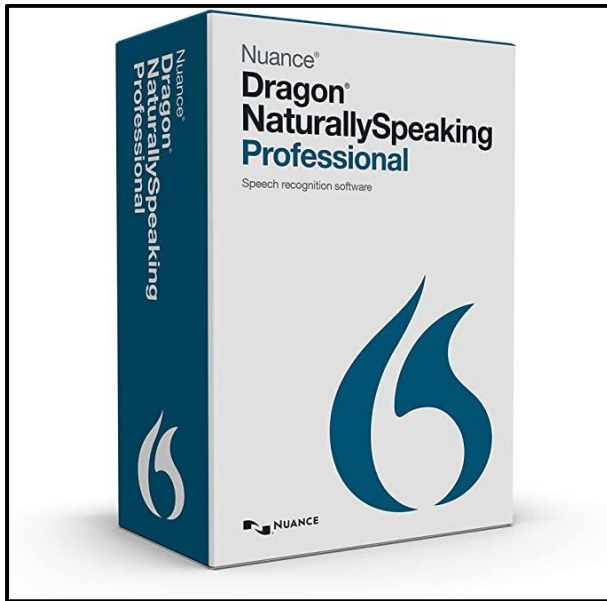
Image 11: Dragon Naturally Speaking Software

SuperNova Magnifier

SuperNova Magnifier software is a screen reader, text to speech and magnifier for the use of visually impaired users to enable their computer usage.

Image 12: SuperNova Magnifier

Screen Reading Software

A screen reader is a software program that enables a blind or visually impaired user to read the text that is displayed on the computer screen with a speech synthesizer or braille display. A Screen reader, developed for computer users whose vision loss prevents them from seeing screen content or navigating with a mouse. Read documents. emails, websites and apps, easily navigate with a mouse, scan and read all documents including PDFs, and fill out web forms with ease
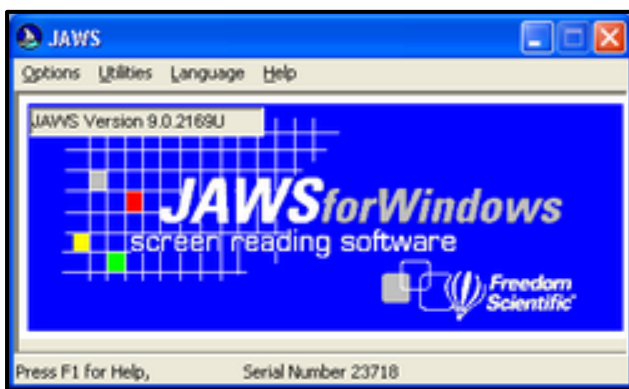
Image 13: Screen Reading Software

Chess Board

These chess sets are designed specially with easily differentiable squares and pieces. The chess boards have raised and recessed squares. The pieces have points or pegs atop one colour of chessmen.

Image 14: Chess Board

SCSD Support Services

The SCSD is mandated to provide the following services to the broader university community:

- Support the University in translating exam related material
- Provide technical support for undergraduate and graduate students with disabilities
- Coordinate with the University Library to adequately resource with accessible reference and lending material
- Advise University on accessibility requirements of students with disabilities
- Promote a social environment inclusive of students with disabilities

SCSD Training Programmes

The following training programmes are offered free of charge SCSD for students with disabilities:

- Braille training – Using braille slates and writers
- Using Digital braille displays
- Basic IT Training – MS Office
- Using assistive apps, screen readers and assistive software
- Mobility and orientation using assistive devices like white canes
- Maximizing smart phone features for accessibility
- Disability Etiquette for Buddies and Volunteers

Students are encouraged to follow these courses and develop their ability to use assistive technology to augment their learning and academic participation.

Students may make appointments with Assistive Technology Instructors to receive training and guidance on using specific assistive technologies.

Academic staff may approach the Support Centre for Students with Disabilities to receive specific guidance and assistance on creating accessible teaching and assessment material and for translation of braille answer scripts to Sinhala and English.
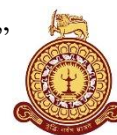
2.3. CEDREP & SCSD STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION
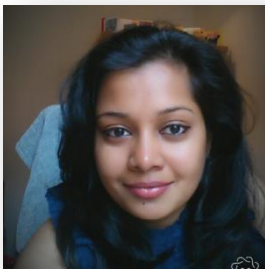
Dr Tharindi Udalagama

Director, CEDREP
Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology
directorcedrep@arts.cmb.ac.lk

Mr Ashoka Bandula Weerawardene

Computer Instructor (Special Needs) Gr II

 asokabandula@gmail.com

Mr. Buddhika A. Dissanayake

Staff Management Assistant

buddhika@arts.cmb.ac.lk
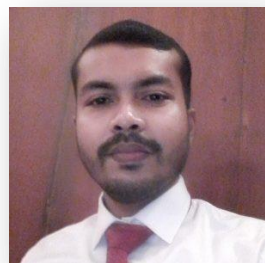
Mr. T. Nuwan Suranga Perera

Alternative Communication Officer

 nuwansperera@yahoo.com

2.4. SPECIAL INTAKE REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR SUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

The special intake for students with disabilities at the Faculty of Arts takes place one month after the general intake.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) provides details of incoming students with disabilities to the examinations branch of the University of Colombo.

The examinations branch of the University of Colombo registers new students with disabilities.

The examinations branch of the University of Colombo provides a list of names of registered students with disabilities to the Information and Documentation Centre (IDC), Deputy Registrar of the Faculty of Arts and Director of Undergraduate Studies.

The Deputy Registrar on the advice of the Dean, Faculty of Arts assigns a date for students with disabilities to enter the Faculty.

IDC facilitates online course registration for students with disabilities, IDC or the Director of Undergraduate Studies informs CEDREP of incoming students with Disabilities.

CEDREP sends database updates regarding students with disabilities to the IDC and Exam branch with specific disability and related reasonable accommodation details based on information revealed by students in their disability student registration applications.

IDC inform lecturers of any students with disabilities taking their courses along with any reasonable accommodations required.

Lecturers provide any teaching and learning related reasonable accommodations required by students with disabilities on their class list.

However, there may be students with disabilities who enter the Faculty under the general intake too. They too are encouraged to register with CEDREP so that they can be reasonably accommodated within their Undergraduate Degree Programme.
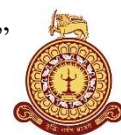
Special Intake Registration Process
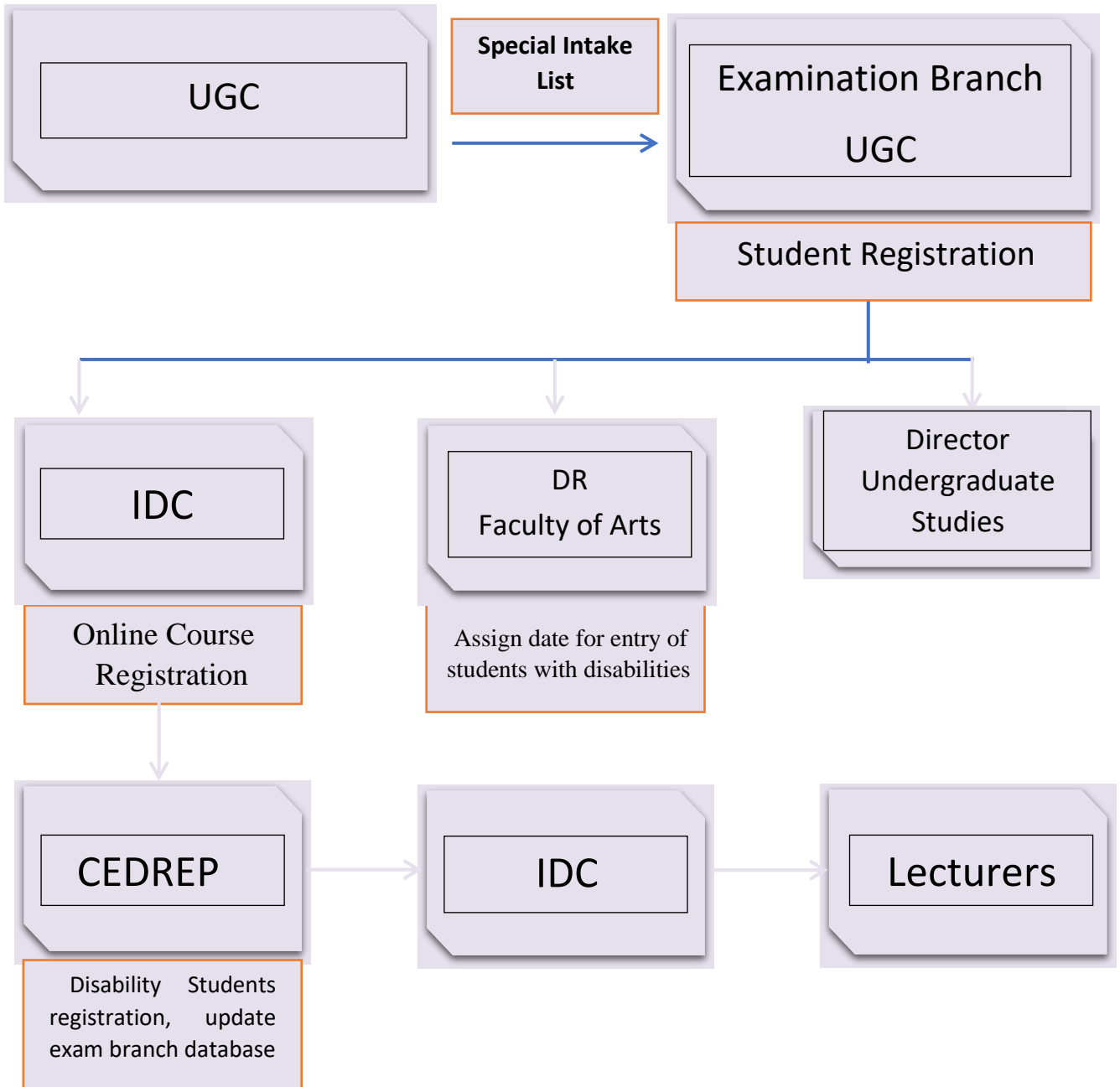
Diagram 2: Special Intake Registration Process

Disability Student Registration

1. Students with disabilities must complete the Disability Registration form (Annex 1) also available on the CEDREP website) including name, NIC, address, email, phone, type of disability and required equipment for lectures and examinations (to be filled by CEDREP and can be added later) on the day of registration.

2. Students are required to consult the University Medical Officer (UMO) to obtain a certificate of disability stating the disability within the first week of enrolment. The UMO may refer the student to a specialist if required for further verification.

3. This certificate of disability must be submitted to the IDC with a request for extra time during examinations if required. More details about extra time are available on page 44. A copy of this letter should be handed over to the CEDREP.

4. Reasonable accommodations will be assessed and determined by a committee including the examinations coordinator, IDC coordinator, CEDREP Director and Director of Undergraduate Studies and Permanent Student Counsellors on a case-by-case basis.

5. Students who acquire disability/disabilities during the course of their enrolment must register with CEDREP and submit the relevant information to the UMO or specialist certifications mentioned above. If needing extra time, they should follow the same guidance as given in page 44.

6. CEDREP will maintain all records of students with disabilities including specific reasonable accommodations.

7. Such information will be shared by CEDREP with the administrative offices such as, Students and Staff Welfare, Information and Documentation Centre (IDC), Examination Branch, Senior Student Counsellor's Office and where applicable Disability Officers in each Department.

8. The IDC will indicate which students have a disability in the list of students registered for each course unit. This information along with any related reasonable accommodations will be notified to the academic staff teaching those courses at the start of the academic semester by IDC in collaboration with CEDREP.

"CEDREP, Faculty of Arts – Disability Handbook 2021"

Steps for Disability Students Registration

All new students with disabilities and students who acquire disabilities during the candidature

CEDREP

Complete Disability Student Registration Form (On day of registration)

↓

University Medical Officer

Obtain Disability Certificate (With 1st week of enrollment)

↓

Information and Document

Centre (IDC) Submit disability certificate

↓

CEDREP Committee

Assess and determine reasonable accommodations,

update records

University Medical Centre:

Located across the road from the Faculty of Arts near the New Arts Theatre and Marshal's Office.

+94112584985

Opening Hours:

Week days 8.00a.m to 4.00 p.m.

Diagram 3: Steps for Disability Students Registration

2.5. REASONABLE ACCOMADATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES DURING EXAMINATIONS

Onsite Written Examinations

An extra time allowance of 20 minutes per hour of examination is available to students whose writing speed is compromised due to disability or injury. This could apply to a range of disabilities as determined by the University Medical Officer (UMO).

Students must obtain a certificate of disability from the UMO with a recommendation for extra time.

Students with the recommendation for extra time obtained by the UMO must make a request for extra time in writing to the Dean of the Faculty through the IDC within the first two weeks of registration.

Applications for extra time are assessed and approved by the Faculty Board.

The IDC informs students of Faculty Board decisions, a copy of the decision is provided to CEDREP.

This process of authorization needs to be followed by students with long-term and short-term disabilities. In the case of short-term disabilities, extra time would be approved for a specific examination period.

Examination related reasonable accommodations will be reviewed and reconfirmed by CEDREP on an annual basis.

CEDREP will maintain information regarding all students with disabilities who have received approval for extra time.

The proper administration of examination procedures including reasonable accommodations will be checked and monitored by the Disability Officers (Faculty of Arts) and the Faculty Examinations Coordinator.

Assistive Equipment and Services

Students may request for assistive equipment for examinations from CEDREP. Students may request for the following assistive equipment, modifications or services prior to examinations:

- Braille typewriter
- Formatted laptop/desktop with accessibility software
- Refreshable Braille Display
- Bright Light
- Large Font size question papers
- Magnifiers, Digital Video Magnifiers
- Sign Language Interpreters
- Reader
- Writer

Procedure

Students must inform the IDC in their exam registration form about their need for specific assistive equipment, modifications, or services at least two weeks prior to the commencement of exams. IDC will send the information to CEDREP a week prior to the commencement of exams.

Access to Examination Venues

The Exam Branch, liaising with Deputy Registrar, Faculty of Arts will ensure access for wheelchair users to the main exam hall. In the event that the lifts do not function, an alternative ground floor room will be made available in advance for the exam.

CEDREP and Disability Officers will ensure that students are able to be present at the exam hall in time for the exam by providing assistance when required such as making suitable transportation arrangements on student request.

Assessment Design

Online and onsite assessments (question papers, assignments, presentations etc.) will be prepared/designed taking into consideration the students with disabilities as per the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Teaching and Learning (UDI)[4].

Exam related Assistance

Supervisors and invigilators present at exams to support students and grant extra time according to the official decision made regarding each student. Braille translation for English and Sinhala question papers to be sent to CEDREP for translation 3 weeks in advance. For Tamil Braille, question papers have to be sent one month in advance to the Examination Branch.

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[4] UDL/ UDI refers to creating teaching and learning environments which are accessible to and inclusive of as wide a range of students including students with disabilities.

"CEDREP, Faculty of Arts – Disability Handbook 2021"
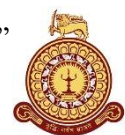
Braille paper printing will be done at CEDREP in the presence of the lecturer - paper setter, to ensure confidentiality. The paper setter is responsible for the contents and structure of the paper.

Exam Hall

CEDREP will check with the Examination Branch of that needs of students with disabilities are addressed with regards to the Examination Hall one week before the exam.

Deputy Registrar, Faculty of Arts is required to ensure preparation of the exam hall. Only students on the list of students with disabilities with approved special requirements will be placed in the special examination hall. Examination Branch to ensure that there is no duplication of index numbers of such students on other lists in other exam halls.

The exam hall will be checked by CEDREP before the exam to make sure all requested equipment is in place.

Translating braille answer scripts to Sinhala, English, and Tamil

All answer script that needs to be translated from Braille to Sinhala or English should be handed over to CEDREP office as soon as possible. Once received, CEDREP will attempt to complete and return the translations by 3 weeks from the date of submission. Please note that this time frame depends on the workload and human resources available. In addition, CEDREP will priorities translations of answer scripts according to mark submission deadlines given by the Faculty.
Answer scripts that need to be translated from Braille to Tamil should be handed over to Examinations Branch at the earliest.

Online Written Examinations

In the event that students with disabilities are unable to obtain a certificate of disability from the UMO, it is suggested that all students with disability to be given extra time for online written examinations.

An extra time allowance of 40 minutes per hour (1 hrs: 40 min ratio) is recommended when students are sitting for their examinations in a conditioned environment. However, if students are sitting for examinations in an unconditioned environment, it is pertinent to consider the students accessibility to devices, internet, and necessary support at home to complete written
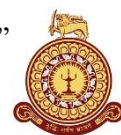
examinations. Therefore, it is recommended to give extra time to submit/register post their answer scripts by Wednesday of the following week from examinations.

The same principle may be employed for LMS based written examinations. Ex: Quizzes

Please note that exam papers should be provided in Unicode for students with complete visual impairment to comply with their screen reader software. MS Word format is preferred. Images should be described in writing. If not, clear audio recorded exam papers are also recommended.

Students with visual impairment may be allowed to type using their laptop/desktop/tab devices if they are competent with the assistive technologies as required. If not, they should be allowed to have writing and reading assistant.

The Faculty is advised to prepare separate exam guidelines for students with disabilities taking the mentioned reasonable accommodations to consideration.

Online/Onsite Presentations

For examinations that are done asynchronously or synchronously as individual or group presentations, lecturers are requested to inquire from students with disabilities in their class whether they require extra time and respond as necessary.

Online/Onsite Written Assignments

Examinations that are to be submitted as written assignments in person, or using the LMS platform, email, or Google drive, lecturers are requested to inquire from students with disabilities in their class whether they require extra time and respond as necessary. It is advised to consider a feasible word limit for assignments.

Students with visual impairment may be allowed to type using their laptop/desktop/tab devices if they are competent with the assistive technologies as required. If not, they should be allowed to have writing and reading assistant.

If students wish to submit assignments in braille, they need to be handed over to CEDREP at the earliest possibility. The document should be in suitable condition to read the braille. The time taken for an assignment translation will be determined according to the length of the assignment, which will be communicated at the time of submission.

Steps for obtaining extra time for examinations

Obtain a Disability Certificate recommendating extra time from University Medical Officer

↓

Submit written request for extra time to Dean of Faculty, IDC Coordinator at IDC Office
(Within 1st Week of Semester)

↓

Application for extra time approved by Faculty Board

↓

IDC informs student and CEDREP of Faculty Board decision
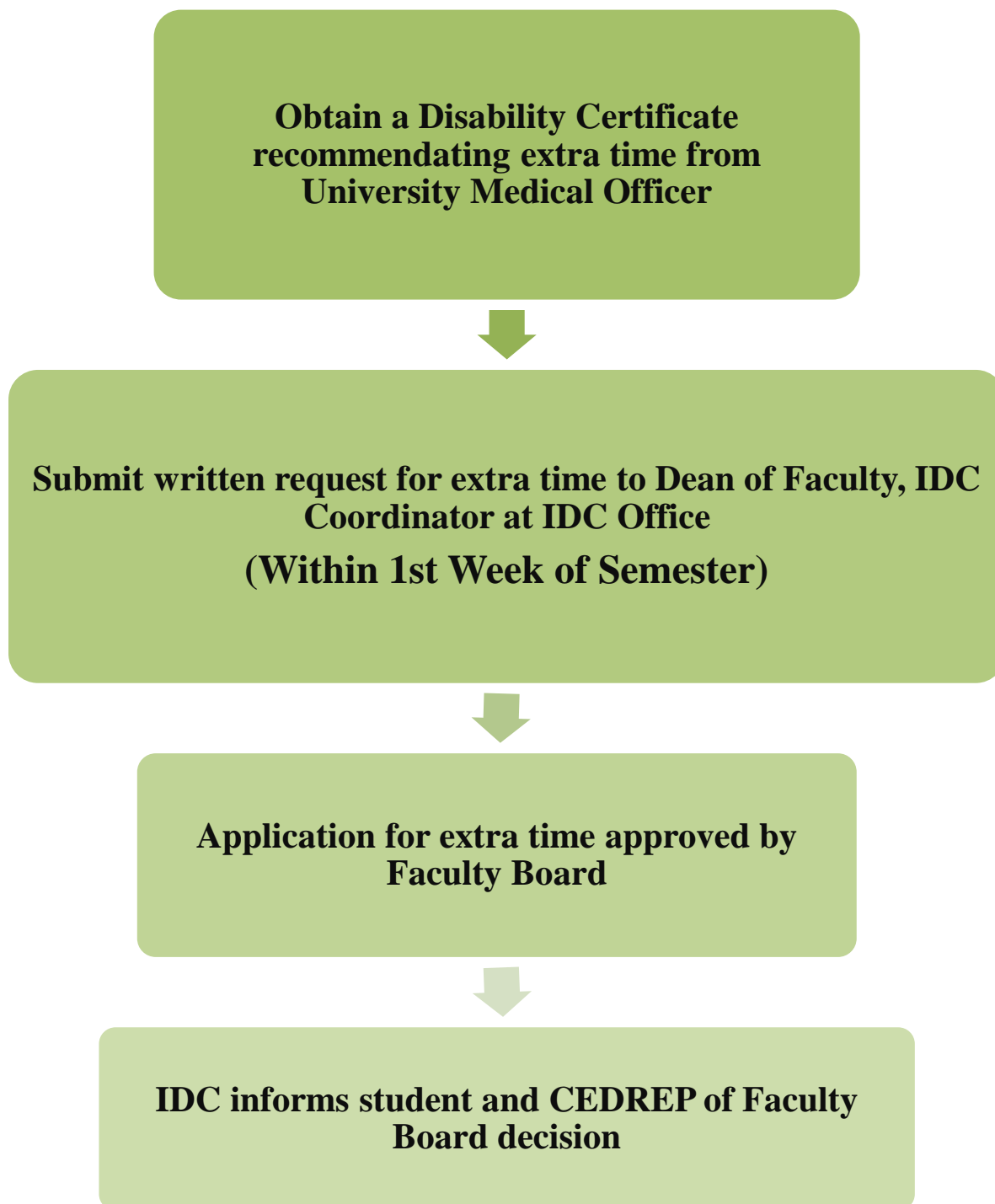
Diagram 4: Steps for obtaining extra time for examinations
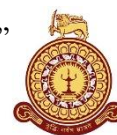
2.6. THE BUDDY SYSTEM

CEDREP coordinates a Buddy System for students at the University of Colombo. It is based on matching peer volunteers (Buddies) with students with disabilities for personal assistance. Buddies will assist students with disabilities to day-to-day learning and living activities such as:

- Using the Library to find books
- Taking notes during Lectures
- Assisting when in Hostels or other Residential facilities
- Showing around and helping during Orientation to get accustomed to the campus

When using the Library, Buddies will assist students with disabilities to

- Physically navigate the library and find accessible study spaces, if required
- Locate books, journals and other library-based resources
- Provide library-based study assistance including note taking, typing, audio recording books and browsing

During Lecture Buddies will assist students with disabilities to:

- Take notes
- Assist with communication and classroom participation if required and expressly requested by the student in concern
- Providing assistance with reading texts and other resources assigned by lecturers
- Providing assistance with web browsing, note taking and typing for assignments

When in Hostels and other Residential facilities Buddies will assist students with disabilities to:

- Physically navigate the hostel environment, if required
- Assist students with disabilities to secure accessible transportation (facilitated by the Student and Staff Welfare Office)
- Assist with accessing washrooms
- Assist with daily activities
- Periodically checking in on the assigned student and informing of any specific needs to CEDREP with the consent of the student

During Orientation, Buddies will:

- Assist new students with disabilities to physically navigate the campus environment if required
- Ensure that students with disabilities are able to attend all orientation sessions and activities without hindrance
- Actively advocate for the inclusion of students with disabilities in student socio-cultural life
- Assist students with disabilities to explore extra-curricular and sporting opportunities at the university
- Act as a focal point for students with disabilities during their first semester at the university

Plagiarism and Related Offences

Buddies are there to support students with disabilities during their learning process. At no point should buddies independently participate in lectures and discussions or speak on behalf of students with disabilities without the expressed request of the student in concern. At no point should buddies submit their research or work on behalf of students with disabilities. Their role is to assist, not to substitute during the learning process. Submission of a buddy's work in place of a student's work may lead to sanctions associated with examination offences as highlighted in the Undergraduate Prospectus.

Buddy/ Student Volunteer Registration

For Students with Disabilities requiring buddies

Students with disabilities who seek buddies for assistance need to make a request at CEDREP. CEDREP may also identify buddies as a potential reasonable accommodation during the initial CEDREP registration of students with disabilities. In either case, CEDREP will endeavour to match peer volunteers, referred to as Buddies from here onwards who match the particular individual requirements of students with disabilities.

- Students with disabilities may request for Buddies using the CEDREP registration form (Annex 1) and request form available on the CEDREP website. This will give an opportunity for students to identify what forms of support they require and at what times.
- CEDREP will match students with disabilities with Buddies depending on student requirements and availability of the Buddy.
- A buddy may be identified as a reasonable accommodation by CEDREP during the disability student registration process.

- As the special intake for students with disabilities takes place after the general intake, Buddies may be able to assist students with disabilities to catch up on any work they may have missed at the start of the year.
- Buddies and students will have the opportunity to indicate their gender preferences on the registration forms.

For Buddies

- The Buddy volunteer application form is provided in <u>Annex 3</u> – it is also available on the CEDREP website. Interested students could apply online or submit a hard copy to the CEDREP office.
- CEDREP will advertise Buddy volunteer positions at the start of every academic year.
- The Buddy programme is open to all year groups.
- Buddies can note their preferred time commitment at the time of registration.
- Buddies will provide assistance to students with disabilities on a voluntary basis.
- Students who wish to volunteer as Buddies must fill out an application form at CEDREP within the first week of the academic year.
- All volunteers must attend a 1-day training workshop before officially assuming duties as a buddy.
- Buddies need to provide details of their availability on a timetable provided by CEDREP.
- CEDREP will assign buddies to students on a rota system. They are required to maintain a sign sheet at CEDREP indicating the times and hours worked.
- Buddies are initially recruited for a period of 1 academic year with the option for extension based on the interest and availability of the buddy.
- All students with the necessary interest, commitment and training, including students with disabilities are eligible to be buddies.
- Buddies are not expected or required to provide their services beyond the number of hours agreed by CEDREP. Whether to provide assistance beyond the number of allotted hours is at the discretion of the volunteer in concern.

“CEDREP, Faculty of Arts – Disability Handbook 2021”

- Under no circumstance should being a buddy be used as an excuse to miss classes, examinations, assessments or any other academic obligations by student volunteers.
- All buddies who successfully complete 1 semester of service will be provided with certification of volunteer service.
- Buddies are expected to act with dedication, responsibility and integrity. At no point should the position of being a buddy be used to intimidate abuse or unduly influence a student/s with disabilities. Any Buddy found to be abusing their position will be immediately terminated.
- Grievances that may arise should be communicated in writing to Director, CEDREP.
- Buddies will be evaluated at the end of the academic year.
- Buddies may resign from their service by informing Director, CEDREP in writing at any time giving at least 1 month notice.

BUDDY Application Process

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   CEDREP advertises Buddy Positions      │
│        (Start of academic year)          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Submit Buddy Applications for, to      │
│             CEDREP                        │
│ (Online/ in – person 1st week of         │
│          academic year)                   │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Mandatory 1 day volunteer training     │
│             (If selected)                 │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Connect with a student with a           │
│            disability                     │
│      (1 year initial period)              │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────────┐
│      Buddy Evaluation in the             │
│          end of the year                  │
└─────────────────────────────────────────┘
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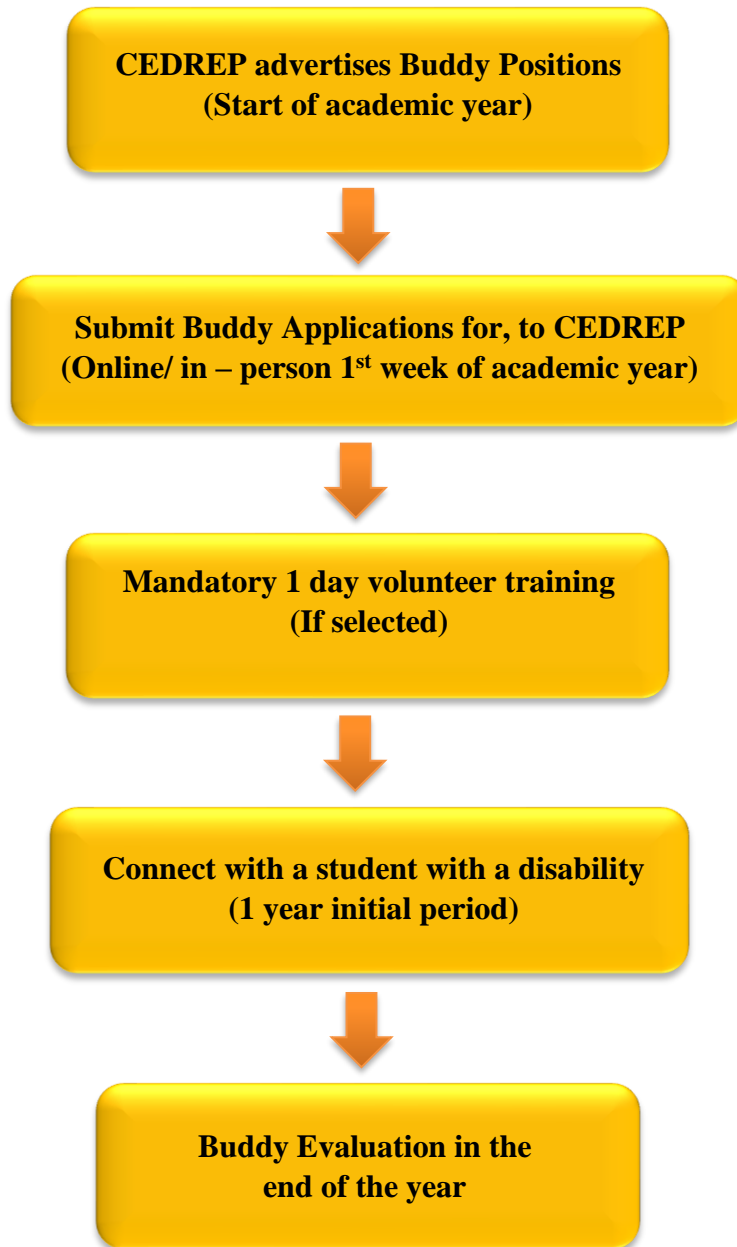
Diagram 5: Buddy Application Process

2.7. DISABILITY OFFICERS

Roles and Responsibilities

Disability Officers are the primary contact for students and staff members in matters relating to disability, including disability related reasonable accommodations.

A list of Disability Officers is provided in Annex 5.

Disability Officers report directly to The Director of CEDREP.

Disability Officers will identify themselves to incoming students with disabilities during orientation or during the first two weeks of the start of the academic year.

Disability Officers will have a record of any reasonable accommodations that students with disabilities in their departments require. These maybe modified or updated during the course of the students' candidature as required in consultation with the students in concern.

Disability officers will be informed about the required student accommodations by CEDREP at the start of the semester.

CEDREP will maintain all records relating to students with disabilities. It is the responsibility of Disability Officers to inform CEDREP of any changes that need to be made to these records in view of any changing needs or circumstances of students with disabilities in their respective departments. Students may also directly inform CEDREP of changed circumstances.

At the end of the period of course registration, the Faculty Disability Officer will identify the lecturers, teaching assistance and other teaching staff on the courses that are due to be followed by students with disabilities in his/ her department.

One week before the start of the academic semester/ term, disability officers will approach relevant faculty and teaching staff as identified in the above clause via e-mail, telephone, in-person or through any other suitable medium. They will help academic staff within their department identify students with disabilities on their courses. They will also share the reasonable accommodations needed to facilitate the learning and full participation of students with disabilities.

Disability Officers will play the primary role in assisting academic staff to meet the reasonable accommodation requests of students with disabilities. They will co-ordinate any support that teaching staff may need to provide suitable accommodations from other -

- departments and units including Library Services, IT services, CEDREP, Student Counselling services, Buddies and other required services.

Disability Officers are required to provide the assistant librarian for students with disabilities with an advance list of audio chapters or articles required by his/ her department.

Disability Officers are encouraged to have office hours or periodic meetings with students with disabilities in their respective departments.

Disability Officers may inform CEDREP of any significant changes in the needs and circumstances of students with disabilities in their respective departments.

Disability Officers: Roles and Responsibilities

Introduce self to students with disabilities

(First 02 weeks of academic year)

Maintain records of Reasonable

Accommodations and other needs.

Contact Lecturers and other teaching staff with details of students with disabilities and Reasonable Accommodations

(One week before start of semester)

Coordinate support to meet Reasonable Accommodation needs (Library services, IT services, CEDREP, Student counseling, Buddies etc.)

Conduct periodic meetings with students, update CEDREP if needed

Diagram 6: Disability Officers Roles and Responsibilities.

2.8. LIBRARY SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Library Services Contact Information:

Principal Contact   : Mr. Madushan Lankathilake,

                                     Assistant librarian for students with disabilities

Mobile   : 0710762006

E-mail   : madushan@lib.cmb.ac.lk

The Main Library is the hub of the Library Network of the University of Colombo. It caters to the Faculties of Arts, Education, Graduate Studies, Law and Management and Finance. There are two branch libraries in the Faculties of Medicine and Science.

The Main Library is designed to be wheelchair accessible with ramp access and access to all floors via a lift.

There is a designated assistant librarian for students with disabilities. Students are encouraged to directly contact the assistant librarian for all library related needs and requests including when searching for specific titles at the library.

Students or staff requiring audio recordings of books and texts should contact the assistant librarian for students with disabilities directly.

The Main Library has a Resource Centre for the Visually Impaired on the first floor. The following equipment could be borrowed or used at the centre:

- Braille Display/ Reader
- Braille typewriters
- DAISY Digital Talking Book Player
- Audio books
- Portable Digital Video Magnifier.

There is a wide range of braille and Daisy and audio recorded books available at the Centre.

Disability Officers may provide the assistant librarian with an advance list of audio chapters or articles required by his/ her department.

The assistant librarian for students with disabilities, in collaboration with CEDREP and the SDC, will offer the following training to new students with disabilities:

- Library orientation for students with disabilities
- Online searching techniques – navigating the library website
- Use of e-resources
- Use of assistive devices in the library
- Training on using a screen reader to browse online catalogues
- Navigating Learning Management Systems (LMS)

2.9. THE STUDENT COUNSELOR'S OFFICE

STUDENT COUNSELORS

Principal Contacts   :

Dr Rajitha Silva

    Senior Student Counsellor

    0716809509/ 0112583108

    grpiyankara@hrm.cmb.ac.lk

Ms. Nirosha Kulasekara

    Assistant Student Counsellor

    0714402979/ 0112583108

    nirosha2959@gmail.com

SCO Emergency Hotline: 070 221 1311

The Student Counsellors' Office provides services to advice students to resolve their psychological, academic and personal problems. Trained Advisers/counsellor's (both male and female) have been appointed to provide this service during the working days. All information is kept confidential.

The following activities fall under the purview of the Student Counsellor's Office:

- Personal and confidential counselling for students
- Issuing of identity cards
- Allocation of permission of lecture halls for extra-curricular activities of students such as get-togethers, and meetings
- Issuing of permits for trips, display posters and cut-outs
- Providing temporary hostel facilities
- Assisting students facing emergencies

- Assisting with Mahapola, bursaries and other scholarships
- Holding special language classes for students
- Intervening and taking necessary action with regard to student conflicts
- Preventing ragging

Personal and Confidential Counselling for Students

Student Counsellors assist students to resolve issues regarding psychological, academic and personal problems.

Students can meet the psychiatrist, psychologist, or psychology advisers at the Student Counsellor's Office. Please contact the student counselling Centre to obtain an appointment.

Temporary Student Counsellors

Each department within the Faculty of Arts has a designated Student Counsellor. Students can also make appointments with their faculty student counsellors. Please see Annex 6 for details.

Students who are experiencing difficulties at any point of their candidature are encouraged to reach out to counsellors either in their department or through the student counsellor's office for confidential guidance and support.

2.10. CAREER GUIDENCE UNIT

Principal Contact:

> Mr. W.M.Saman Wanasinghe
>
> Director, Career Guidance Unit - FOA
>
> Mobile Number   : 0718140130
>
> Email   : saman@delt.cmb.ac.lk
>
> cgu@arts.cmb.ac.lk

The Career Guidance Unit (CGU) aims to provide training for University of Colombo undergraduates to embark on an optimal career and develop the necessary transferable skills including attitude, motivation and skills necessary to become efficient members of the workforce.

The objectives of the CGU include:

- Developing relations between University and Employment Sector in a mutually beneficial way.
- Assisting undergraduates to choose and proceed on an optimal career path, based on the student's ability, desire and available opportunities.
- Creating an environment where students identify personality development in themselves in relation to professional expectations.
- Assisting undergraduates to obtain an orientation to the employment sector and develop transferable skills such as effective communication, leadership, teamwork, and management so that a productive and an efficient member is produced for the work force.
- Introducing students to the world of work and employment

The career guidance unit library hosts informational booklets, CDs, books and other reading materials related to soft skill development of our students. The students are provided ample reading space for making use of these facilities.

The career guidance unit offers regular workshops and training sessions for students to develop employment related skills and aptitudes.

The current location of the Career Guidance Unit is not wheelchair accessible as of 1st September 2021. Please contact the Career Guidance Unit directly for alternative access arrangements.

2.11. STUDENT AND STAFF AFFAIR DIVISION

Principle contact:

Ms. Gayani De Silva

Assistant Registrar, Student and Staff Affairs

Email   : ar@ssa.cmb.ac.lk

The Student & Staff Welfare office is responsible for the welfare of all students enrolled at University of Colombo. It works closely with all administrative and academic departments to assist students to familiarize the environment and achieve their academic goals as well as assist students with the culture and the community. The mission of the division is to provide an enabling environment which aims at quality student services and a range of learning, social, cultural, health and recreational opportunities that facilitate full realization of students' potential for academic and personal growth and University life.

Services offered:

- Providing hostel accommodation to undergraduate students including accessible accommodation for students with disabilities
- Provide accessible transportation between hostels and the university for students with disabilities
- Conducting Elections for the Student's Union
- Registration of Student Societies
- Coordination of Mahapola, bursaries and other scholarships
- Provision of laptop loans for students
- Distribution of vehicle passes for staff and students
- Promoting cultural, aesthetic and related activities among university students and the staff through the Arts Council
- Providing basic services – Canteens, Milk Bars, Photocopying

2.12. ACCECEBLE RESIDENTAL & HOSTEL FACILITIES

Students need to request for accessible accommodation from the Assistant Registrar of the Student and Staff Affairs Division. CEDREP may assist with facilitating this process if required.

The following hostels are wheelchair accessible.

Women

- Siva Chinnathambi Women's Hostel
- Bullers Women's Hostel

Men

- Kithyakara Men's Hostel

The Student and Staff Affairs Division is committed to improving the accessibility of University of Colombo hostel facilities in the long run.

Student Bursaries

All students with disabilities are eligible for university bursaries.

An Application for Bursary is issued to all first-year students selected to the University of Colombo along with the registration forms. The students should furnish the information with the relevant documents related to the details requested and submit the duly perfected application to the Grama Niladhari of the Division.

After certifying the details, the application will be forwarded to get counter signed by the Divisional Secretary and forward the same to the University by Registered Post. Transferred Students are requested to instruct the earlier University to forward their bursary applications to this University. No duplicate applications are issued except for a loss of an application.

Accessible Transportation

Students with disabilities are eligible to receive free transportation between their hostels and the university campus. Students must contact the Assistant Registrar of the Student and Staff Affairs Division at the start of the academic year to arrange for such transportation. This includes wheelchair accessible transportation.

2.13. UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTRE

Principal Contact: Dr. W. Wasudeva,

University Medical Officer

Phone Number   : 0112584985

Opening Hours   : Weekdays 8.00am to 4.00pm

Disability Registration

All students who wish to register as students with disabilities must consult the University Medical Officer (UMO) to obtain a certificate of disability within the first week of enrolment. The UMO may refer the student to a specialist for further verification if required.

Extra Time

An extra time allowance of 20 minutes per hour of examination is available to students whose writing speed is compromised due to disability or injury. This could apply to a range of disabilities as determined by the UMO.

Students must obtain a medical certificate from the UMO with a recommendation for extra time.

Students with the recommendation for extra time obtained by the UMO must make a request for extra time in writing to the Dean of the Faculty through the Information and Documentation Centre (IDC) within the first two weeks of registration. Applications for extra time are assessed and approved by the Faculty Board.

Services offered by the university health Centre:

- Providing medical certificates for disability student registration and examinations extra time requests
- Conducting medical examinations for new entrants
- Recommend special medical leave for students when the need arises
- Facilitate Specialist advice and inpatient care on referral at the National Hospital of Sri Lanka
- Administering of vaccinations on a needs basis

- Laboratory testing

- Medical counselling

- Examination of all personnel handling food items

- Issue medical services for driving licenses to university staff and students

- Supply available medicines on a long-term basis for chronic illness to students and staff

- Conduct special medical examinations for scholarships for the staff

Webpage: https://cmb.ac.lk/health-centre/#1580626484179-8dd33080-93dc

For further details regarding university services, please refer to the undergraduate prospectus.

PART 02: TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESMENTS

This section of the handbook explores the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Teaching and Learning (UDI). It provides guidelines for measures that could be taken maximize participation, engagement and inclusion of students with disabilities in the teaching and learning process.

3.1. FACILITATING TEACHING AND LECTURE ACCOMOMNDATION

Reasonable Accommodation

As per article 2 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,

- Reasonable accommodation refers to necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

- Disability specific reasonable accommodations for each individual student will be identified by CEDREP at the point of registration. Common measures that could be taken to meet the needs of students with specific disabilities are provided in the Disability Fact Sheets in Annex 7.

Roles and Responsibilities Lecturers

Lecturers are to be sensitive to the needs and challenges of students with disabilities following lessons onsite and online.

Lecturers must ensure that reasonable accommodations are made to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities.

Lecturers may contact Disability Officers or CEDREP for assistance if they have any specific concerns regarding students with disabilities.

Lectures must maintain confidentiality as far as student disability details are concerned.

Lecturers need to ensure that students with disabilities are supported during the lectures. They must make sure that all material shared in class and on LMS is accessible to the students with disabilities. Recommended modifications and inclusive teaching strategies are provided in the Annex 7, Disability Fact Sheets.

Lectures need to ensure that their course content, reading material and assessments are as inclusive as possible.

Students

Students have the responsibility to inform their lecturers about any challenges and needs that they might have in relation to a given course.

Students are encouraged to use office hours to discuss concerns with their lecturers and obtain course related assistance as required.

Students have a responsibility to avail themselves of the many services and supports featured in this handbook to academically perform to their fullest potential and engage in university life in an active and meaningful way.

Students may approach the respective Head of Department if they have any grievances in relation to the conduct of a course.

Universal Design of Learning (UDL) and Universal Design for Teaching and Learning (UDI)

In the context of the University of Colombo, UDL/ UDI refers to creating teaching and learning environments which are accessible to and inclusive of as wide a range of students including students with disabilities.

UDL/ UDI aims to minimize barriers and maximize access to learning from the time of design and conception. The three core principles of UDL UDI are:

1. **Engagement (Why?)**

Choices to fuel interest and autonomy, learning from mistakes – persistence and resilience

2. **Representation (What?)**

Content and information in multiple mediums, highlight critical features, activate background knowledge, support vocabulary

3. **Action and Expression (How?)**

Multiple modes of expression, response and navigation, support for different levels of proficiency, optimize access to tools and assistive technology, information management and feedback

Universal Design of Teaching and Learning is a principle-based approach to designing university teaching and learning to meet the learning of all students. Universal Design provides a framework to ensure that all university students have the opportunity to fulfil their educational potential.

The Principles of Universal Design for Teaching and Learning (UDI) include:

1. Equitable use
2. Flexibility in use
3. Simple and intuitive
4. Perceptible information
5. Tolerance of error
6. Low physical effort
7. Size and space for approach and use
8. Community of learners
9. Instructional Climate

Equitable Use

- All students are able to access the same set of notes/materials without the need for any student to be provided with an alternate format or additional explanative materials.

- Using a variety of learning materials e.g. slides, documents, visual material, video clips, and textbooks

- Using a variety of teaching materials allows as many students as possible to engage with the content based on varying learning styles and preferences

Flexibility in Use

- Provide a variety of methods of instruction such as discussion, group work, interactive exercises, use of online resources and/or use of audio/visual material.
- Take into consideration varying learning styles – auditory, visual, kinaesthetic Different pace for different users – open book assessments, home/ in class exercises
- Vocabulary building, glossary, key terms to reinforce understanding

Simple and Intuitive

This principle outlines the need for transparency and ease of use with regard to module content and assessment. Students should be able to ascertain all necessary details regarding topics to be covered, full reading lists, and assessment methods before choosing or beginning a module

- Clear marking rubric, detailed instructions for assessments, consistency in amount and level of difficulty across modules
- Simplicity of online learning platforms
- Consistency in presentation, design and format

Perceptible Information

- Use Ariel/ Calibri/ Verdana minimum font size 24 on PowerPoint presentations
- Information in accessible digital formats – Follow Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (www.w3.org)
- Use Microsoft Office Check Accessibility feature to ascertain accessibility of course material including PowerPoint presentations (Review- Check accessibility)
- Provision of digital material that is accessible to screen readers
- Regularly review reading lists for accessibility
- Accessibility as a condition of procurement at all levels in the university

Tolerance for Error

It is problematic to assume that all students who enter tertiary education have an existing set of core skills. This leads to disadvantage and students being left behind. It may lead to discomfort with asking for help or clarification, especially among students with hidden disabilities and students from varying educational/ linguistic backgrounds. The following measures would increase tolerance for error:

- Embed and review core skills in all modules – recap, reaffirm
- Having a programmatic approach to the teaching and development of core skills is an effective and integrated strategy
- On-going assessment, self-assessment, online quizzes – track progress from the start of the module, more opportunities for guidance and feedback
- Submit plans/ drafts for continual assessment
- Peer review of plans/ drafts – continual feedback

Low Physical Effort

- Remove any unnecessary physical exertion including excessive amounts of writing in class
- Give permission to allow students to record lectures and seminars for study purposes
- Encourage the use of technology in class – reduces the stigma of 'different/ special' treatment

Size and Space for Approach and Use

- Think of how to best use the physical space available at the onset
- Use active learning rooms which facilitate group work and enquiry/problem-based learning as much as possible
- Provide opportunities for discussing material and making direct contact with the lecturer/ tutor
- Participatory strategies - flipped classroom approach, group work, think-pair- share, problem-based learning and student-led discussions.

Community of Learners

- Provide opportunities for students to interact and collaborate with each other and with the teaching staff
- Encourage students to form Book clubs/ Journal clubs – present findings, summarize and work through academic texts in a supportive environment
- Encourage peer mentoring, 'buddy system'
- Encourage study/ discussion groups for the module
- Provide group study topics and questions to structure study time
- Encourage online discussion groups including closed/ private Facebook groups

Instructional Climate

- All students should be welcomed, and an explicit affirmation of inclusivity should be provided at the outset of each module
- Check for students with disabilities in class list in advance
- Providing a statement of inclusivity in each module

Statement of Inclusivity

Academic staff members are encouraged to include a statement of inclusivity in their course outlines. A statement of inclusivity should affirm the commitment to an inclusive and diverse classroom. It should reassure those who would like to disclose information about their learning needs that this information will be treated with confidentiality and respect. Often disclosure can be very difficult for students with hidden disabilities, so this encouragement is needed. It is important for teaching staff to discuss this statement in their first class to encourage students to seek assistance when needed and respect diversity in the classroom in a positive and supportive manner.

3.2. GUIDELINES FOR ACCESSIBLE TEACHING MATERIAL

Accessibility Checker

Microsoft Office 2010 and above has a built-in standard accessibility checker. Just as the spelling checker identifies spelling errors, the accessibility checker flags and accessibility related issues on Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents and suggests possible solutions in order to make the document as accessible as possible.

Steps for using the Microsoft Accessibility Checker

On the ribbon, select the Review tab. If you're using Outlook, note that you'll only see the Review tab when writing or replying to messages.

Select Check Accessibility

Review your results. You'll see a list of errors, warnings, and tips with how-to-fix recommendations for each.

To easily address accessibility errors and warnings, select an issue to open the Recommended Actions list. You can apply a one-click fix by selecting an action, or select the arrow button next to an action for more options.

To be notified of accessibility issues in your document as you continue working on it, tick the Keep accessibility checker running while I work check box. This adds the Accessibility button to your status bar and keeps track of accessibility issues in real time. You can open the Accessibility Checker whenever you want by selecting the status bar button.

For more information on how to use the Accessibility Checker, please visit the Microsoft Office Support Website

Source:https://support.office.microsoft.com/en-ie/article/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f?ui=en-US&rs=en-IE&ad=IE

The creation of accessible content follows three core principles:

- Appropriate structure and layout e.g. heading styles
- Simple/ easy to read language
- Variety and clarity in message delivery e.g. images and video with captions/text descriptions

"CEDREP, Faculty of Arts – Disability Handbook 2021"

WebAIM

WebAIM is a website that provides simple and effective measures to make websites, documents and media as accessible to all. It also features accessibility evaluation tools, international accessibility laws and standards and accessibility training opportunities.

https://webaim.org/

Accessible Word Documents

Derived from: https://webaim.org/techniques/word/

1. **Using a uniform heading structure**

- Heading levels should represent the structure of the document.
- A Heading 1 is the document title or a main content heading. There is generally just one Heading 1 per document, although it is possible to have more than one (e.g., a journal where each article is a Heading 1).
- A Heading 2 is a major section heading.
- A Heading 3 is a sub-section of the Heading 2.
- A Heading 4 is a sub-section of the Heading 3, and so on.

2. **Alternative Text for Images**

If an image presents content or has a function, you must provide an equivalent alternative text for this image. This information will be presented to a screen reader user when they encounter the image.

There are two ways to provide alt text in Word documents:

1. Use the "Alt text" functionality in Word. You can add "Alt text" text to Pictures, Shapes, Charts, SmartArt, and (in Office 365) Icons and 3D Models.

2. Provide an alternative in the surrounding text.

For complex images like charts, you will often need to provide succinct "Alt text" plus a table or lengthier text alternative near the image.

Alternative text should be:

- Accurate and equivalent – present the content or function as the image.
- Succinct – a few words are usually enough; a short sentence or two is sometimes appropriate.
- NOT be redundant – do not provide information that is in the surrounding text.
- NOT use descriptive phrases – screen reading software identifies images, so do not use phrases such as "image of..." or "graphic of...".

3. Links

Follow these principles to create accessible links:

- Use descriptive link text that does not rely on context from the surrounding text.
- Keep the amount of text in the link to a minimum.
- Use underlined text with a colour that stands out from the surrounding text.

4. Data Tables

A data table is a grid of information organized into columns and rows. Sighted users scan a table to make associations between data in the table and their appropriate row and/or column headers. Screen reader users make these same associations if tables are structured correctly. The tools for creating accessible tables are limited—especially in older versions—but you can identify a single row of column headers and a single column of row headers.

5. Other Principles

- Use simple language.
- Ensure that font size is sufficient, usually a minimum of 11 points.
- Provide sufficient contrast between text colours and background colours.
- Do not use colour as the only way to convey information.
- Be careful with the use of watermarks. They can impact readability and create low contrast.
- Provide a table of contents for long documents.

Accessible PowerPoint Presentations

Derived from: https://webaim.org/techniques/powerpoint/

1. Templates and Themes

Some of these templates on Microsoft PowerPoint have low contrast between slide text and the slide background, and a few may also have busy backgrounds that can make text even more difficult to read. Be sure to choose a theme with good contrast and with simple backgrounds. If the presentation will be viewed on a projector, the contrast and readability may need to be even more pronounced.

2. Slide Layout

The most important part of PowerPoint accessibility is the use of slide "layouts." Used correctly, these will ensure information on the slides have the correct heading structure and reading order.

Most slide layouts include a slide "title," usually at the top of the slide. They also typically contain one or more "placeholder" areas where you add content like lists, images, and tables to each slide. The title will be presented as a heading to screen reader users, and will be the first thing read on each slide. If each slide has a descriptive title, this will make it much easier for screen reader users to read and navigate the presentation.

3. Slide Reading Order

Although it is best to use slide layouts when possible, there may be times when you need to add content to a slide when it would be impractical to create a new slide layout. By default, a screen reader will read the slide title first, followed by other content in elements defined in the slide layout. Then it will read any additional content on the side in the order it was added to the slide. If you add content with this principle in mind, it should be presented to screen reader users in a logical order.

4. Alternative Text for Images

Derived from: https://webaim.org/techniques/alttext/

Alternative text provides a textual alternative to non-text content in web pages. We will be discussing alternative text for images only, though the principles can be applied to media, applets, or other non-text web content.

Alternative text serves several functions:

- It is read by screen readers in place of images allowing the content and function of the image to be accessible to those with visual or certain cognitive disabilities.
- It is displayed in place of the image in browsers if the image file is not loaded or when the user has chosen not to view images.
- It provides a semantic meaning and description to images which can be read by search engines or be used to later determine the content of the image from page context alone.

The key principle is that computers and screen readers cannot analyse an image and determine what the image presents. Text must be provided to the user which presents the CONTENT and FUNCTION of the images within your web content.

Alternative text can be presented in two ways:

- Within the alt attribute of the image element.
- Within the context or surroundings of the image itself.

This means that the alt attribute (sometimes called the alt tag, though technically this is incorrect) is not the only mechanism for providing the content and function of the image. This information can also be provided in text adjacent to the image or within the page containing the image. In some cases where the equivalent cannot be presented succinctly, a link to a separate page that contains a longer description of the image content can be provided.

The process to add alternative text is straightforward in PowerPoint 365 and 2019:

Right-click on the image and select Edit Alt text, then enter appropriate alternative text in the field that appears in the Alt Text sidebar.

If the image is decorative, leave the field blank and check Mark as decorative.

To add alternative text to an image in PowerPoint 2016:

1. Right-click on the image and choose Format Picture.
2. In the Format Picture sidebar, Select the Size & Properties icon and choose Alt Text.
3. Enter appropriate alternative text in the Description field only (not the Title field).
4. Tables
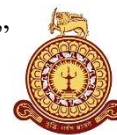
There are ways to identify row and column headers in a data table that make the contents of the table much more accessible to screen reader users. PowerPoint allows you to identify a single row of column headers and a single column of row headers. To identify the headers in a table:

1. Click inside the table. The Table Tools options should become visible, and the Design tab (called Table Design on Mac) should be open.

2. If the top row of the table contains headers for each column (most tables do), check the make sure the Header Row checkbox is checked.

3. If the first column of the table contains headers for each row, check the First Column checkbox.

Links

PowerPoint automatically creates a link when a user pastes a full URL onto a slide and presses Enter or Space. Raw URLs may not make sense to screen reader users or others, so make the link text descriptive.

To change the link text right-click the link and select Edit Hyperlink. On Mac, right-click the link and select Hyperlink > Edit Hyperlink.

A dialog will appear. Click in the Text to Display field at the top of the dialog and enter descriptive link text.

Accessible PDF Documents

Derived from: https://www.adobe.com/accessibility/pdf/pdf-accessibility-overview.html

1. Start with an Accessible Document

The PDF format is a destination file format. PDF files are typically created in some other application. Optimally document accessibility should begin in the native document format. For example, many documents are created in a word processing or desktop publishing application, and then exported as PDF documents. There are many things that can be done in native document applications to support accessibility, such as adding alternative text for images; defining structural headings, lists, and data tables; providing document language; and setting document properties such as titles.
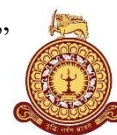
2. Characteristics of Accessible PDF Files

Searchable text

A document that consists of scanned images of text is inherently inaccessible because the content of the document is a graphic representing the letters on the page, not searchable text. Assistive technology software cannot read or extract the words in a graphical representation. Furthermore, users cannot select or edit the text or manipulate the PDF for accessibility. Scanned images of text must be converted into to searchable text using optical character recognition (OCR) before addressing accessibility in the document.

Fonts that allow Characters to be extracted to Text

The fonts in an accessible PDF must contain enough information for Acrobat to correctly extract all of the characters to text for purposes other than displaying text on the screen. Acrobat extracts characters to Unicode text when you read a PDF with a screen reader or the Read Out Loud tool, or when you save as text for a Braille embosser. This extraction fails if Acrobat cannot determine how to map the font to Unicode characters.

Other Interactive Features: Hyperlinks and Navigational Aids

Navigational aids in a PDF — such as links, bookmarks, headings, a table of contents, and a pre-set tab order for form fields — assist all users in using the document without having to read through the entire document, word by word. Bookmarks are especially useful and can be created from document headings. These features can be accessed using the keyboard without relying on the mouse and allow for multiple way for users to navigation content.

Document Language and Title Indication

Specifying the document language in a PDF enables some screen readers to switch the current speech synthesizer to the appropriate language, allowing correct pronunciation of content in different languages. Providing a document title allows the user to locate and identify the document.

Security that will not interfere with Assistive Technology

Some authors of PDFs restrict users from printing, copying, extracting, editing or adding comments to text. The text of an accessible PDF must be available to a screen reader. Acrobat's security settings can be set to protect document content while not interfering with a screen reader's ability to convert the on-screen text to speech or Braille.

Document Structure Tags and Proper Reading Order

To read a document's text and present it in a way that makes sense to the user, a screen reader or other text-to-speech tool requires that the document be structured. Document structure tags in a PDF define the reading order and identify headings, paragraphs, sections, tables and other page elements. The tags structure also allows for documents to be resized and reflowed for viewing at larger sizes and on mobile devices.

Alternative Text Descriptions for Non-Text Elements

Other Accessible Document Characteristics

- No reliance on colour or sensory characteristics alone to convey meaning
- Use of colour combinations that provides a sufficient degree of contrast
- Controls for audio
- Use of text instead of images of text
- No use of flashing or blinking elements
- No focus changes without user initiation
- Consistent navigation and identification of elements

Principles of Accessible Design for Websites

Derived from: https://webaim.org/intro/

- Provide equivalent alternative text
- Create a logical document structure
- Provide headers for data tables
- Ensure users can complete and submit all forms
- Write links that make sense out of context
- Caption and/or provide transcripts for media
- Ensure accessibility of PDF, Word, PowerPoint, and other non-HTML content.
- Allow users to skip repetitive elements on the page
- Do not rely on colour alone to convey meaning
- Make sure content is clearly written and easy to read
- Make JavaScript accessible

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) provides internationally accepted guidelines for web accessibility. Visit the W3C web site for details: https://www.w3.org/WAI/

PART 03: DISABILITY ETIQUETTE

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Individuals with disabilities wish to be treated with dignity and respect in a way that recognizes their inherent worth and agency. The impact of a traditionally charitable approach to disability means that interactions with persons with disabilities may inadvertently be marked by condescension, pity and exclusion. Sometimes well intended actions to help persons with disabilities may lead to unintended problems. Not knowing whether to assist someone may lead to uneasiness and strained or awkward interaction. This section on disability etiquette highlights a basic code of conduct to ensure respectful interaction. The university environment should provide a safe and conducive space for all students to fulfil their potential and cultivate good social networks and relationships[4].

4.2. Interacting with persons with vision impairments

There are three categories of persons with vision impairment:

B 1 - Totally Vision Impaired
B 2 - Legally Vision Impaired
B 3 - Low vision or partially sighted

Speak directly

Speak directly to the vision impaired person and not to or through any sighted companions. This applies to persons any kind of disability.

Speak softly

Persons with visual impairments do not necessarily have hearing impairments. It is not necessary to speak loudly.

Be Specific

If a Vision Impaired person asks you for directions:

- Do use words such as; '—straight ahead', '—turn left', '—on your right.'
- Don't point and say,' —go that way' or '—it's over there.'
- Do give specific directions like '—the desk is five feet to your right' as opposed to saying,'—the desk is over there'

Guiding a person with a visual impairment

- If you are guiding someone, don't grab her arm; let her take your arm
- Ensure the person you are guiding is a step behind, to anticipate curves and steps.

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[4] A special thank you to Manique Gunaratne, Manager, Specialized Training & Disability Resource Centre of the Employers' Federation of Ceylon for her substantive contributions to the Disability Etiquette section of this handbook.

Image 1:

A man leading a person with a visual impairment

When guiding someone through a narrow space, move your guiding arm behind your back when approaching a narrow space so then person you are guiding can step behind you and follow single-file.

Image 2:

Back view of a woman leading another woman who is a white cane user

When navigating doors and entrances, do not open the door for persons with visual impairments. Guide their hand to the door handle or bar so that they may open the door themselves.

Image 3:

A woman guiding the hand of another woman with a visual impairment to a door handle

Partially opened doors are hazardous to persons with visual impairments when climbing stairs, walk a step or two in front of the person. Guide the hand of the person to the inner railing so that they get an idea of the gradient of the staircase Announce beforehand when approaching a flight of stairs. Mention whether you will be climbing up or down the staircase.

Image 4:
A woman leading a white cane user up a staircase. staircase.

Image 5:
A woman leading a white cane used down a staircase.

Personal Interaction

- When a person with a visual impairment comes into a room let them know who else is in the room. Introduce them to others, including children
- Announce your entry when you come into a room so that persons with visual impairments may know that you are there
- Tell the person whether there are any cats or dogs in the room
- Always inform the vision impaired person when you are moving away from him/her
- Guide the person to a chair. When you get to the chair, guide the person's hand to the back of the chair so that they may get an idea of the size and direction of the chair.
- When guiding a person with a visual impairment to a bathroom, mention where the light switches, windows and sink are located. Let the person know if the lights are switched on or off.
- When guiding a person with a visual impairment to a vehicle, guide their hand to the door handle of the vehicle. Don't open the door or push the person into the vehicle. This would impede their sensory and kinesthetic awareness of the space that they need to navigate.

Entertaining and hosting

When hosting a person with a visual impairment to a meal,

- Place the dishes in a clock position.
- Announce which dish is at which position
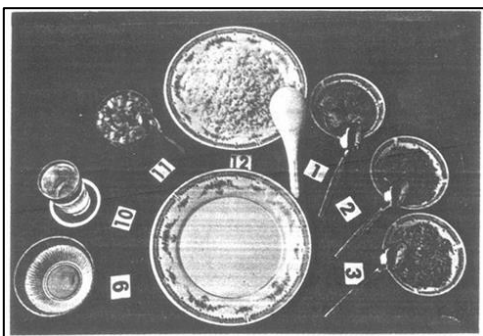
Image 6:
An image of food laid out according to the clock positions

When serving a cup of tea or a glass of water, announce that you are doing so and guide the hand of the person to the cup or they glass so that he/ she may know the exact location.

Guide Dogs

Don't pet, feed or distract a Guide Dog. They are not pets; they are working companions on whom persons with visual impairments depend.

Image 7:
An image of a person with a visual impairment led by a guide dog

4.3.   Interacting with persons with hearing impairments

Persons with hearing impairments utilize three main modes of communication:

- Sign Language
- Lip Reading
- Reading and Writing

Personal Interaction

When conversing with a person with a hearing impairment, address him directly and not through the sign Language interpreter.

Do not cover your face with your hands or anything as he may often read lips or facial expression.

Never throw paper or any other object to attract the attention of a deaf person, instead tap him/ her on the shoulder or by a wave of your hand - treat him/ her as you would treat others.

Speak slowly and clearly.

It is handy to carry a small notebook and pencil to jot down when communication is difficult.

If you do not understand what a person with a hearing impairment is saying doesn't pretend, ask him to repeat or write down. Be patient and attentive.

Appropriate facial expressions and hand gestures enhance a better facilitation of communication.

Do not use puns or idioms unless the deaf person has a good command of the language.

Remember to include him or her when telling jokes, otherwise he or she may think you are laughing at them. Be sensitive and understanding.

Make sure your face is visible to students with hearing impairments in your classroom.

When teaching online, keep your video on and encourage other students to turn their videos on when speaking.

Understand that wearing masks may make communication more difficult for persons with hearing impairments – use written or visual communication, provide closed captioning or sign language interpretation where appropriate.

Raise your hands when applauding for a person with a hearing impairment. Do not clap.

Image 8:

A picture of people raising their hands in appreciation.

When interacting with a hard of hearing person:

- ➢ Get the person's attention
- ➢ Speak at a standard pace and volume
- ➢ Face the person when speaking
- ➢ Use single/ multi syllable words
- ➢ Minimize body movements
- ➢ Use native language whenever possible
- ➢ Avoid speaking from a distance
- ➢ Take turns talking – don't speak on top of others
- ➢ Re-phrase, write or use images to consolidate understanding of what's spoken
- ➢ Avoid sudden, unrelated topics
- ➢ Do not avoid people who are hard of hearing from conversations

4.4. Interacting with persons with physical impairments

Personal Interaction

Speak directly to the person with the disability and not to their assistant or attendant.

Do not touch or push a wheelchair without the expressed permission of the wheelchair user. It is his/ her personal space. You would not like random people pushing you without your consent! Only push a wheelchair if you have been asked to do so.

Do not touch, lift or pet wheelchair users because they are at a lower level. This may lead to discomfort and indignity.

Do not carry a person with a physical disability without their consent. Carrying people is not a suitable alternative to accessible built environments!

When speaking to a wheelchair user:

• Keep eye contact at the same level.

• Sit on a chair or bend from your knees.
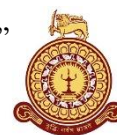
When walking with a wheelchair user, be mindful of where the wheelchair user can and cannot go (e.g., terrain, gradient, width of doors and entrances)

When transferring a wheelchair user to a seat, ask them for their preferred method of transference.

When transferring a wheelchair user to a seat, ensure that their wheelchair is close to him/ her so that he/ she may transfer back to the wheelchair whenever needed.

Do not remove mobility aids such as walkers and crutches without informing the user. They should ideally be kept within easy reach of the user so that they can access the aids whenever needed.

4.5   Things to remember

- Understand that persons with disabilities have talents and capabilities and like all other people have dreams and aspirations.
- Avoid offering personal views on the causes of a person's disability including ideas of negative karma or sin.
- People with disabilities do not need your pity or sympathy. What is needed is compassionate understanding and friendship.
- Understand that disability is one aspect of a person's life and that it is not a misfortune or tragedy.
- Disability is an inherent aspect of human diversity and persons with disabilities lead happy and productive lives.
- Treat persons with disabilities the way you would like to be treated – with dignity and respect.

ANNEXURES

ANNEX 1: CEDREP Registration Form

Centre for Disability Research, Education & Practice (CEDREP)

Registration Form

Centre for Disability Research, Education & Practice (CEDREP)

Registration Form

Name in Full :

....

Permanent Address :

....

Date of Birth : [ ][ ][ ][ ] [ ][ ] [ ][ ]

Contact Details : Mobile No.

:..

E-mail Address

:..

Contact No. of the Guardian:

....

Sex : Female [ ] Male [ ]

Nature of Disability : ....

If Visually impaired, frequency of vision : ....

Educational Qualifications :

G.C.E. (Advanced Level)

Year :

....
....

Subject	Grade

Z Score: ....

Medium of Study : ....

Student Registration No. : ....

Accommodation in the University : ....
(Name of the Hostel, Room No. etc.)

Special Requirements in the Examinations   :...
(Reading Assistants, Writing Assistants, Braille Writers, Braille Slates, Lamps etc.)

Special Requirements in Studies   : ....
(Sign Language Translator in Lectures, Voice Recorders etc.)

Availability of Equipment and facilities

    Laptop Computer / Tablet   ☐

    Smart Mobile phone   ☐

    Internet Connection at Home   ☐

I hereby certify that the details given above by me are correct and accurate.

    ....
        Signature   Date

ANNEX 2: CERTIFICATE OF DISABILITY

Health Centre University of Colombo

Certificate of Disability
Health Center, University of Colombo

Name in Full   : ....

Permanent Address   : ....

Date of Birth   :   ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐ ☐☐

Contact Details   :   Mobile No.   : ....

     E-mail Address   : ....

     Contact No. of the Guardian   : ....

Sex   :   Female ☐   Male ☐

Medium of Study   : ....

Student Registration No.   : ....

Nature of Disability   : ....
    If visually impaired, frequency of vision:

    : Long term disability …………………………

    : Short term disability …………………………

Extra time during Examinations[5]:   Yes ☐   No ☐

Renewal of Extra time :   ☐   Each Semester

                              ☐   Each Academic Year

                              ☐   Not necessary

---

[5] Students with disabilities are eligible for extra time if their disability could impede their writing speed. To receive this extra time the student should produce a letter issued by the University/Chief Medical Officer certifying that their disability/severe illness will impede their writing speed at the examination. The student should submit this letter to the IDC at the beginning of the Academic Year which is then forwarded to the Faculty Board for approval. The decision of the Faculty Board will be informed in writing by the IDC to the student. If the nature of the disability is permanent the student would not need to renew the approval in each Academic Year. The extra time given will be twenty (20) minutes for each hour of the examination.

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Certificate of Disability
Health Center, University of Colombo

Special Requirements at the Examinations:

Reading Assistants : ☐ Yes ☐ No

Writing Assistants : ☐ Yes ☐ No

Equipment : …………………………………………………………………..

    (Braille writer, Braille slate, laptop computer, halogen lamp etc.)

I hereby certify that the details given above by me are correct and accurate.

....

Signature of the Medical Officer Date

ANNEX 3: SCSD Equipment Lending Form

SUPPORT CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

FORM FOR LENDING OF ASSISTIVE EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

Students following internal degrees at the university, who have qualified to receive assistive technology belonging to the Support Centre for Students with Disabilities (SCSD) of the University of Colombo, should duly fill this form along with the signature/ fingerprint and produce it as an application before receiving the relevant equipment.

Full name :………………………………………...

Student Registration Number at the university :……………………………………….

Contact number :……………………………………….

Equipment being requested : ……………………………………………

Duration of (temporary) possession of the equipment : …………………………………

Due date for returning the equipment to the Support Centre for Students with Disabilities:

………………………………………........……………………………………………….......

I hereby certify that I am aware that this equipment in my temporary possession is used by many students other than me, and that I am bound to protect this for future use, and that I shall not surrender the equipment to anyone during the period it is in my possession, and that in an instance of a malfunctioning of the equipment I shall inform an officer at the Support Centre within 24 hours.

………………………………………   ……………………………

Applicant's Signature   Date

ANNEX 4: Buddy Volunteer Application Form

Centre for Disability Research, Education, & Practice (CEDREP)

Registration Form for Buddies

Name in Full   :

....

Permanent Address   :

....

Date of Birth   : ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐

Contact Details   : Mobile No.   : ....

                     E-mail Address   :...

Sex   : Female ☐   Male ☐

Medium of Study   :...

Student Registration No. :...

Accommodation during University Education:

University Hostel	☐
Private Boarding	☐
Home	☐
Other	☐

If you are at a University Hostel, please mention which hostel you are at,

………………………………………………………………………………………………

I would like to enlist as a buddy for a student with disabilities for:

Semester One of the current Academic Year ☐

Semester Two of the current Academic Year ☐

For the complete on going Academic Year ☐

I would prefer to assist a buddy with disability,
On campus ☐

At the hostel ☐

I would prefer my buddy with disability to be,
Female ☐

Male ☐
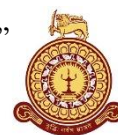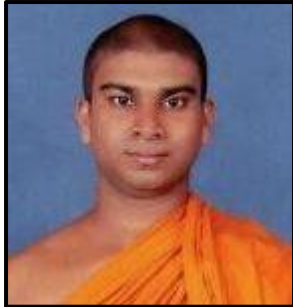
No preference ☐

I hereby certify that the details given above by me are correct and accurate. I understand that this is volunteer work that would hold me responsible for the period of service.

....
Signature

....
Date

ANNEX 5: Disability Officers

Ven. M. Amarawansa Thero
Department of Buddhist Studies
amarawansa@bs.cmb.ac.lk

Mr. H.V.V. Migara P. Karunarathna
Department of Demography
migara@demo.cmb.ac.lk

Ms. A.N. Fernando
Department of Economics
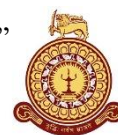**ashani@econ.cmb.ac.lk**

Dr. Kaushalya Perera
Department of English
kaushalya@english.cmb.ac.lk

Ms. R.A.S.S. Ranaweera
Department of English Language Teaching (DELT)
ranaweerasubha@delt.cmb.ac.lk

Mr. Janitha Ekanayake
Department of English Language Teaching (DELT)
janitha@delt.cmb.ac.lk

Mr. P. Krishanthan
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Ms. Nidheka Nanayakkara
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Dr. Hasith Kandaudahewa
Department of International Relations
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Mr. P.L.S.C. Leelarathne
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sumith@poli.cmb.ac.lk

Dr. Deepachandi Abeysinghe
Department of Sinhala
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Dr. M. T. M. Mahees
Department of Sociology
mahees@soc.cmb.ac.lk

Mr. M.M. Sabir
Arabic & Islamic Civilization Unit
sabir@icv.cmb.ac.lk

Ms. T.S. Rathnayake
Computer Teaching Unit
thilinisr@arts.cmb.ac.lk

Ms. Chalika Thangaraja
Journalism Unit
sasikani@jlm.cmb.ac.lk

ANNEX 6: Temporary Student Counsellors

No.	Name and Department	Contact Number
1	Dr. Ranjith Senanayake Department of Sinhala	0779069127
2	Ms. Deepachandi Abeysinghe Department of Sinhala	0771765180
3	Mr. Achinthya Bandara Department of Sinhala	0719248501
4	Dr. J.B. Pathirage Department of Sociology	0777388597
5	Ms. Luxshe Hariharan Department of Sociology	0773825246
6	Dr. Ajith Balasooriya Department of International Relations	0718384112
7	Ms. Menik Wakkumbura Department of International Relations	0715934265
8	Ms. S.A. Fathima Shanaz Journalism Unit	0715696747
9	Ms. C.S. Thangaraja Journalism Unit	0713579719
10	Dr. P. Jayasingha Department of Geography	0718433319
11	Mr. P. Krishanthan Department of Geography	0775028905
12	Mr. HVVMP Karunarathne Department of Demography	0718656888
13	Ms. VPN Senadhi Department of Demography	0767852640
14	Ms. A.G.N.D. Gunaratne Department of English Language Teaching	0718416437
15	Ms. K.K.S.G. Sylva Department of English Language Teaching	0777739646
16	Rev. Dr. M. Sugathasiri Thero Department of Buddhist Studies	0718372225
17	Rev. M. Amarawansa Thero Department of Buddhist Studies	0719211235

ANNEX 6 Contd.: Temporary Student Counsellors

18	Dr. Shamini Chandran Department of Political Science & Public Policy	0710805489
19	Ms. A.D.M. Ruwanpathirana Department of Political Science & Public Policy	0704687130
20	Dr. Darshi Thoradeniya Department of History	0777880176
21	Ms. Nideka Nanayakkara Department of History	0775611196
22	Mr. U.L.A. Ameer Arabic & Islamic Civilization Unit	0773562659
23	Dr. Kaushalya Perera Department of English	0777531150
24	Dr. A.W.A.D.R. Abayasekara Department of Economics	0717717551
25	Ms. M.H.S. Dilrukshi Department of Economics	0782446944

ANNEX 7:

DISABILITY FACT SHEETS

The University College of Dublin (UCD) has generously agreed for their Disability Fact Sheets to be included in this handbook. For further information, please visit: https://www.ucd.ie/all/ucdstudents/support/disabilitysupport/informationforstaff/supportingstudents withadisability

ATTENTION DEFICIT/ HYPERACTIVE DISORDER FACT SHEET

ADHD is usually described as being made up of three core behaviors:
- Predominantly inattentive type - problems of attention, distractibility, short-term memory and learning.
- Predominantly hyperactive type - impulsive, poorly self-monitored behavior.
- Combined type - most individuals with ADHD/ADD fall into this category

Difficulty	Possible Impact in University
Accessibility of teaching and learning material & environment	- Difficulties **maintaining effective levels of attention** making following classes and discussions problematic. **Easily distracted** by varying stimuli which can be problematic during lectures, exams, etc. **Poor short-term memory** resulting in difficulty retaining information and can lead to difficulty, or inability, with note taking during classes/lectures. **Poor attendance** due to forgetting about classes/lectures. **Difficulty managing a varied workload** – problems with focusing on more than one task. **Completing academic tasks** may take significantly longer, particularly if students need to **spend extra time going back over content.** - Difficulty **keeping up with lectures** that use large quantities of written/visual content. - Difficulties **expressing knowledge in verbal or written form without given time to plan/structure ideas**. Often students with ADHD find it challenging to impose order on their ideas. - Reduced **reading comprehension skills** affecting performance in class and exams due to concentration difficulties. - Difficulties getting to **new places** on time.

| Difficulty	Possible Impact in University
Exams/ Assignments	• Difficulty with **finding the most relevant or useful information** for assignments or examinations • Difficulty understanding question in timed exams – **misinterpreting question**. • Difficulty **managing time in exams** – focusing and allocating too much time on one element of question and not on others. • Difficulty **managing time prior to assignment submission** leading to late submission or grade penalization. Difficulty **remembering important times and dates** for submission of assignments or class tests.
Managing Assistive Technology (AT)	• Although AT has significantly enhanced the participation of students with ADHD, **learning to use new AT can initially take extra time**. • Types of AT which students may use include **applications to support memory and focus (Todoist, Kanbanflow, Google Calendar), screen reading software, voice recognition software, recording devices, mind-mapping application etc.** • Using AT **may slow the student's speed of work** making it more difficult to complete assignments and perform under the time pressures of exams.
Other difficulties	• Students who have been **recently diagnosed may experience emotional difficulties** and/or difficulties with practical tasks. Furthermore, this can affect a student's **self-esteem** and **confidence**. • Difficulties following a conversation which may lead to **behavior deemed inappropriate** – interrupting others and talking during lectures and classes. • Students entering college straight from secondary school may not be used to the classroom or exam supports as these may differ from those previously experienced throughout their second-level education. Those recently diagnosed may not have experienced any supports previously. • Students with ADHD often experience difficulty with **organization** which can lead to ineffective **time or work load management** (meeting deadlines etc.).

How can you support a student with ADHD?

Student-Centred Approach:

- If you are in doubt about how to support a student at any time, **asks the student** – they are the experts of their own needs!
- Create a space for students to **feel comfortable approaching you with any issues** (e.g. provide contact and student office hour details etc.).
- Implement any classroom and exam accommodations which were determined at the Reasonable Accommodation Committee.
- Ensure the student is aware how they can best contact you and all your **contact details are easily accessed** and identified early in the semester.

Teaching and Learning:

- **Design course material so that they can be produced in an accessible format** on request. Following the Guidelines for Accessible Documents, this provides guidelines for Word, PDF, websites and PowerPoint slides.
- **Microsoft Word files can be easily manipulated** by the student into a format that suits them.
- Be guided by Universal Design principles when designing coursework.
- **Encourage a Kinaesthetic approach to teaching** – practically engaging and involving the student as much as possible in tasks or conversation to help maintain focus.
- **Provide lecture notes, in a suitable format, in advance of the class**. Providing notes/slides before lectures helps students to focus and engage in class rather than becoming stressed and overwhelmed with note-taking. This will also ensure that the student will have time to go over the content prior to the lecture if attention levels drop during class.
- **Provide reading lists in advance and assistance with prioritizing readings**. Producing a prioritized, annotated reading list can help students to focus on the most important readings. This is particularly important as students' reading speeds/ability to maintain concentration can be greatly reduced.
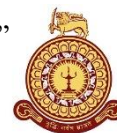
- **Provide a clear schedule of assessment for the module.** Providing a detailed guide to how the course is assessed will help students to understand what is expected of them.
- **Providing sample answers or templates** for assignments is also extremely helpful.
- **Permit the student to use Assistive Technology** in the classroom.
- Consider the student's needs when **planning field trips, placement or other activities**.
- Consider the **exam needs of the student for in-class or mid-semester exams** (e.g. does the student require a computer/assistive technology/reader/scribe?).

Communication:

- Ensure all material presenting on slides/whiteboard is **communicated verbally involving the student in conversation where possible**. Less emphasis on written content and more on verbal communication can increase attention span and lessen the pressure on a student to scan written content on slides in a short time frame. Furthermore, this will allow students to allocate more **focus on understanding** the content of the lecture.
- Provide a **brief orientation** at the start of each module, regardless of year of study, to show students how to access material on Blackboard, how to use relevant library databases and how to find other useful resources.
- **Giving feedback** on draft assignments can help students to improve their understanding of what is to be expected of them. Guidance on addressing the question, proofreading, editing and structure can be particularly useful.
- Regularly remind students of important dates and support the student if they have **difficulties meeting deadlines**.
- Following up meetings with **emails noting the main points/commitments** discussed can prevent students from forgetting about what was discussed.

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) FACT SHEET

What is Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

- "Autism is a **lifelong developmental disability** that affects how a person **communicates with, and relates to, other people**. It also affects how they **make sense of the world** around them" (National Autistic Society, 2017).

- Asperger's Syndrome falls under the umbrella of ASD.

How can ASD impact a student's university experience?

Characteristics	Possible impact in University
Social Communication & Interaction	• Difficulties with **back & forth conversation & initiating interactions.** • Difficulties with **non-verbal communication** such as use of eye contact, body language. • Difficulties understanding abstract concepts and sayings/phrases/rhetorical questions due to **thinking literally**. • Difficulties **developing and maintaining relationships** with peers and staff and **adapting to social situations** (thinking on the spot). • **Giving presentations and working in groups** can be particularly difficult and stressful for students with ASD.
Repetitive engagement in activities and behaviors	• **Changes in routine can be stressful**, particularly as students manage an irregular and ever-changing college timetable. • **Transition into the college environment** can be difficult. • **Difficulties seeing alternative perspectives** and understanding the reasoning for something if it not explicit. • Some students with ASD may **have certain intense interests**, which can make it difficult to complete modules of less interest.

Characteristics	Possible impact in University
Sensory Processing Difficulties (How one experiences the world through the senses)	• Can be **highly sensitive to sensory input** (e.g. specific sounds, bright lights, textures, weird smells etc.). • In college, difficulty with: **Big lecture theatres/labs with many distractions** (People, lights, noises). **Noisy & crowded environments** (e.g. bus, moving between classes).

Other Characteristics	
Executive functioning (higher-thinking skills)	• Difficulties **managing multiple deadlines** in self-directed manner. • Difficulties with **time management and organization.**
Central Coherence (seeing the 'big picture')	• Can get **caught up with small details.** • Difficulty **pin-pointing the main message** of a lecture.
Independent living skills	• **Living out of home** for the first time. • **Managing life skills** (e.g. cooking, cleaning, managing finances transport etc.) on top of college work can be stressful.

How can you support students with ASD?

Student-Centred Approach:

- Ask yourself, **'how can I support this student and their individual needs?'**
- Create a space for students to **feel comfortable approaching you** (e.g. provide contact and student office hour details etc.).
- Implement any classroom and exam accommodations which were determined by the Reasonable Accommodation committee.

Communication:

- Ask **one question at a time** and give them time to answer.
- Be **literal and explicit in your language** - avoid the use of saying/phrases etc.
- If a student looks anxious, **use less non-verbal communication**.

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- Be aware that they **may find it difficult making eye contact**.
- Be aware of the **environment you are in** (is it noisy/crowded?).
- Be **watchful for possible bullying** from other students.
- Inform students about **college supports** (e.g. Maths Support Centre, Writing Support Centre, UCD Access and Lifelong Learning Centre, Student Counselling Service).

Teaching and Learning:

- Be guided by Universal Design principles when designing coursework.

Highlight the main point of a lecture.

- Provide information **in more than one way** (e.g. visual and verbal explanations etc.).

Give clear and explicit instructions on what is expected of them for assignments and assessments, possibly providing an example of good work.

- Give **notice for changes in routines where possible** (e.g. change of lecture time/location, deadlines).
- Some students may be very uncomfortable with giving presentations. **Offering to listen to the presentation privately or allowing the student to complete an alternative assessment** can be very helpful.

Group work can also be particularly difficult:

- **Guide all students about how to effectively communicate** within a group.
- Give students a **template which allows them to complete all steps** of the group work.
- Spend some time with the groups to ensure they **start in a structured manner**.

BLIND OR VISION IMPAIRED FACT SHEET

What does 'blind' or 'vision impaired' mean?

- A person who is blind or vision impaired is unable to see well, even with the use of glasses or contact lenses.
- Most people who are blind or vision impaired have some degree of sight and the effects of vision impairment can vary greatly.
- Visual disabilities can include someone only have peripheral vision, blurred vision, light sensitivity, glare sensitivity, contrast sensitivity and light/dark adaptation.

Difficulty	Possible Impact at University
Accessibility of teaching and learning material & environment	- Difficulties seeing print, presentation slides and whiteboards. - Difficulty keeping up with lectures that use large quantities of visual content. - Difficulty, or inability, with notetaking during classes/lectures. - Completing academic tasks may take significantly longer, particularly if students need to spend extra time converting materials into accessible formats. - Difficulty with navigation and orientation around campus and placement sites. - Students may have difficulty with last minutes changes to lecture times/locations if they have not been given adequate notice.
Managing Assistive Technology (AT)	- Although AT has significantly enhanced the participation of students who are blind or vision impaired, learning to use new AT can initially take extra time. - Types of AT which students may use include a screen magnifier, screen reading software, voice recognition software etc. - Using AT may slow the student's speed of work such as not being able to read for long periods of time, making it more difficult to complete assignments and exams.

Difficulty	Possible Impact at University
Other difficulties	• Managing the use of a personal assistant or guide dog if this is required. • Students who have been recently diagnosed may experience emotional difficulties and/or difficulties with practical tasks.

How can you support a student who is blind or vision impaired?

Student-Centred Approach:

- If you are in doubt about how to support a student at any time, **ask the student** – they are the experts of their own needs!
- Create a space for students to **feel comfortable approaching you with any issues** (e.g. provide contact and student office hour details etc.).
- Implement any classroom and exam accommodations which were determined by the Reasonable Accommodation Committee.

Teaching and Learning:

- **Design course material so that they can be produced in an accessible format** on request. Following the Guidelines for Accessible Documents, which provides guidelines for Word, PDF, websites and PowerPoint slides?
- **Microsoft Word files can be easily manipulated** by the student into a format that suits them.
- Be guided by Universal Design principles when designing coursework.

Provide lecture notes, in a suitable format, in advance of the class.

- Read PowerPoint **slides aloud** and **describe any diagrams or visual aids**.
- **Provide reading lists in advance and assistance with prioritising readings** for students who require an alternative format such as Braille or e-book. The production of texts in alternative formats is time consuming and costly.
- **Permit the student to use Assistive Technology** in the classroom.
- Consider the student's needs when **planning field trips or other activities**.
- Consider the **exam needs of the student for in-class or mid-semester exams** (e.g. does the student require a computer/assistive technology/scribe?).
- Support the student if they have **difficulties meeting deadlines.**

Communication:

- **Face the class when presenting** and ensure all material presenting on slides/whiteboard is **communicated verbally**.
- Some students who are blind or visually impaired may not recognize your voice; hence it can be **helpful to say your name when you greet the student**.
- **Guide dogs are at work and hence should not be disturbed**.
- **Always ask the student if they require assistance** before doing so.

DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING FACT SHEET

What does 'deaf' or 'hard of hearing' mean?
- A person who is hard of hearing can have mild to severe hearing loss.
- People who are profoundly deaf may communicate with Irish Sign Language (ISL) or lip reading.
- Some deaf people use hearing aids or cochlear implants which allows for some level of verbal communication.
- Some hearing aid users can receive a signal from a Loop System which amplifies sound sources in large rooms such as lecture theatres or reception areas. The symbol indicates the presence of a Loop System.

Difficulty	Possible Impact at University
Accessibility of teaching and learning material & environment	- Difficulty keeping up with **aurally presented material** (e.g. lectures in the spoken word). - Difficulty in lectures where student may have to **simultaneously concentrate** on presentation slides, lecturer (for lip-reading), speed-text operator or ISL interpreter and their own notes. - Difficulty **reviewing lecture notes with minimal or no written content** included (e.g. images only). - Difficulty with **completing written work**, particularly if ISL is considered their first language. - Difficulty **completing assignments and exams** due to difficulties with written expression, reading comprehension and possibly misinterpreting ambiguous information.
Communication	- Difficulty **following class discussion** in tutorials. - Difficulty **communicating within a group work** setting. - Difficulty with **oral presentations.** - Difficulty **socially integrating** with the class and may experience **feelings of isolation**.
Difficulty	**Possible Impact at University**
Other	- Managing the **use of an ISL interpreter/speed-text operator/note- taker/radio aid** if this is required. - Students who have been **recently diagnosed may experience emotional difficulties** and/or difficulties with practical tasks.

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How can you support a student who is deaf or hard of hearing?

Student-Centred Approach:

- If you are in doubt about how to support a student at any time, **ask the student** they are the experts of their own needs!
- Create a space for students to **feel comfortable approaching you with any issues** (e.g. provide contact and student office hour details etc.).
- Implement any classroom and exam accommodations which were determined by the Reasonable Accommodation Committee.

Teaching and Learning:

- Be guided by Universal Design principles when designing coursework.
- Ensure all **essential information is available in written format**. Write out new vocabulary on the board with an explanation.
- **Provide the student with lecture notes and other materials in advance of class**. They can prepare for the class and establish what the lecture is about, as deaf or hard of hearing students may not hear all the information provided in the lecture.
- Provide the student (and the ISL interpreter or speed-text operator, if applicable) with a **glossary of terminology** to help the student understand the content. This allows the student and ISL interpreter to decide on a sign for a term which does not have one.
- **Provide a list of topics for discussion in advance of tutorials** to give the student an opportunity to prepare and understand the discussion taking place.
- **Permit the student to use Assistive Technology** in the classroom.
- Consider the **exam needs of the student for in-class or mid-semester exams** (e.g. does the student require assistive technology? Is the environment noisy?).
- Encourage students to **speak one at a time during group work**.

Communication:

- **Address and look directly at the deaf person**, not the interpreter.
- **Face the class when presenting** to allow the student to lip-read (do not stand under a light as this will create a shadow, making it difficult to lip-read).
- **Repeat any questions or comments** made in class by other students for the benefit of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- **Always ask the student if they require assistance** before doing do

MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES FACT SHEET

Mental health is not just the absence of mental illness. It is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO, 2007). Mental illness can be defined as the experiencing of severe and distressing psychological symptoms to the extent that engagement in our day to day activities can be affected. Mental Health Difficulties include: Depression, Anxiety, Bi-Polar Disorder, Eating Disorder, OC How can mental health difficulties impact a student's university experience?

Characteristics and possible impacts at university

Social Communication & Interaction

- Difficulties with **initiating interactions.**
- Difficulties **seeking support, asking questions, or initiating interaction** with peers or staff due to low self-esteem and confidence.
- Difficulties in socializing or dealing with other students
- Difficulties with **non-verbal communication** such as use of eye contact.
- Difficulties **developing and maintaining relationships** with peers and staff and **adapting to social situations** (thinking on the spot).
- **Giving presentations and working in groups** can be particularly difficult and stressful for students with anxiety.
- **Changes in social and daily routine can be stressful**, particularly as students first enter college after spending a long period in the same daily routine and social environment of a secondary school. **Transition into the college environment** can be difficult and very overwhelming.

Performance in class and exams

- **Attendance can vary** as a student experiencing mental health difficulties or 'low' periods may have a tendency to isolate or avoid overwhelming social and physical environments/situations. Varied attendance may also be as a result of high levels of anxiety and fatigue.
- **Difficulties seeing alternative perspectives** and understanding the reasoning for something if a student is prone to anxious or negative thinking.
- **Low attention span** due to condition or medication.

- Some students with OCD may **have certain intense interests or behaviors** which may affect their ability to maintain concentration or engage with others in the class.
- Difficulties with **organization and time keeping**.
- Difficulties with **meeting deadlines** due to feelings of inadequacy with regard to assessments.
- Students may become overwhelmed when in the following environments:
  - *Big lecture theatres/labs* with many distractions (people, lights, noises).
  - *Noisy & crowded environments* (e.g. bus, moving between classes).

Independent Living Skills

- **Difficulty living away from home** for the first time and managing independently without level of support previously experienced.
- **Managing life skills** (e.g. cooking, cleaning, managing finances, transport etc.) on top of college work can be stressful. Often during periods of high anxiety or whilst experiencing a depressive episode, a student may neglect self-care, personal hygiene, nutritional intake, under/over exercising, rest and relaxation.
- **Motivation and interest levels** can vary due to effects of illness or medication.
- Difficulties **managing multiple deadlines** in self-directed manner.
- Difficulties with **time management and organization.**

How can you support students with mental health difficulties?

Student-Centred Approach:

- If you are in doubt about how to support a student at any time, **ask the student** –
  - They are the experts of their own needs!
- Create a space for students to **feel comfortable approaching you** (e.g. provide contact and student office hour details etc.).
- Implement any classroom and exam accommodations which were determined by the Reasonable Accommodation Committee.

Communication:

- Ask **one question at a time** and give them time to answer.
- If necessary, offer alternative methods of contact, e.g. email.
- Be **literal and explicit in your language** – anxious thoughts can lead to misinterpretation of statements/responses/feedback.
- If a student looks anxious, **use non-verbal communication,** take a seat, soften voice, open hands, etc., create a more comfortable environment for the student.
- Be aware that they **may find it difficult making eye contact** if particularly anxious.
- Be aware of the **environment you are in** (is it noisy/crowded?).
- Be **watchful for possible bullying** from other students.
- **Contacting students** to provide them with the work they have missed or just with some encouraging words can alleviate their anxiety about returning to class after a period of absence.
- **Encourage** students to return to class if they have been absent.

Teaching and Learning:

- Be guided by Universal Design principles when designing coursework.
- Give clear and explicit instructions on what is expected of them for assignments and assessments, possibly providing an example of good work.
- Many students are taking medication for their mental health difficulties. These medications can have a number of side-effects, most notably fatigue. Therefore, **try not to draw attention** to students who appear tired in class. Instead, using a varied approach to teaching can **help these students to stay alert** and engage with the material being covered.
- Some students may be very uncomfortable with giving presentations. **Offering to listen to the presentation privately or allowing the student to complete an alternative assessment** can be very helpful.
- **Provide slides/notes before class**. This can help students to focus on the material being presented. This is also helpful to those students who may not be able to attend class due to the difficulties they are experiencing.
- Provide the opportunity for students to **discuss draft assignments**. This helps students to meet deadlines and increase their confidence in their work.

Group work can also be particularly difficult:

- **Guide all students about how to effectively communicate** within a group.
- Give students a **template which allows them to complete all steps** of the group work.
- Spend some time with the groups to ensure they **start in a structured manner**.

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES FACTSHEET

What is a physical disability?

- **Conditions that affect one's physical body** can lead to a physical disability.
- There is a **wide range of conditions which can cause a physical disability**, such as an acquired brain injury, cerebral palsy, Multiple Sclerosis (MS), spinal cord injuries, spina bifida, arthritis and accident injuries or amputations.
- Furthermore, people with **respiratory or cardiac conditions** may experience **difficulties with mobility**, such as those with cystic fibrosis.

*Remember – it **may not always be obvious** that a student has a physical disability.*

How can a physical disability affect a student's university experience?

Difficulty	Possible impact at University
Accessibility to college environment & facilities	- Difficulties with **physical access to buildings, classrooms and other college facilities.** - Difficulties with appropriate **physical access on course field trips and activities outside of the classroom**, as well as **society events**. - Difficulties **moving from one location to another** in a short space of time. - May require assistance for **accessing library and lab material (e.g. books or equipment on high shelves etc.).**
Completing college assignments and exams	- Difficulties with **writing for long or short periods of time.** **Managing the use of a computer or scribe for exams, if applicable.**
Fatigue and/or pain	- Depending on the student's disability, they may experience **fatigue and/or pain which may impact their attendance and participation within college.** **Fatigue and/or pain can be exacerbated during periods of high stress, such as when deadlines are due or exams.**

"CEDREP, Faculty of Arts – Disability Handbook 2021"

Difficulty	Possible impact at University
Attendance	**Fatigue and/or pain** may impact a student's attendance. - Difficulties with **accessing public transport**. **May have to attend medical appointments off campus.**
Other difficulties	Managing the use of a **personal assistant (PA),** if applicable. **Students who have recently acquired a physical disability may experience emotional difficulties.**

How can you support a student who has a physical disability?

Student-Centred Approach:

- If you are in doubt about how to support a student at any time, **ask the student** – they are the experts of their own needs!
- Create a space for students to **feel comfortable approaching you with any issues** (e.g. provide contact and student office hour details etc.).
- Implement any classroom and exam accommodations which were determined at the Reasonable Accommodation Committee.
- **Be aware that students may tire of fatigue easily**. Ensure to plan breaks or rest periods during lectures, class tests and labs.
- **Always ask the student if they require assistance** before doing so.

Teaching and Learning:

- Be guided by Universal Design principles when designing coursework. Emphasis should be placed on **'Principles 6: Low Physical Effort'**, to ensure students with a physical disability are enabled to participate to the best of their ability without the need for unnecessary physical exertion.
- Furthermore**, offering breaks during longer classes or labs** can help students who are struggling with fatigue and concentration difficulties.
- Consider the needs of students with physical disabilities when **booking rooms and organizing events** (i.e. is the building and/or room accessible?)
- **Permit the student to use Assistive Technology** in the classroom (e.g. recording device, laptop etc.).

- **Provide lecture notes in advance of the class.** This reduced the amount of written notes a student will have to take, and provides students who may have to be away from class at times with an opportunity to catch-up with material (e.g. for attending appointments, illness, fatigue).
- Consider the student's needs when **planning field trips or other activities**.
- **Be understanding if a student is late for class**, it may take them longer than others to get there.
- Consider the exam needs of the student for in-class or mid-semester exams. (E.g. does the student require a computer/assistive technology/scribe?).
- Support the student if they have **difficulties meeting deadlines,** as they may experience difficulties meeting deadlines due to hospitalization, exhaustion or other effects.

SIGNIFICANT ONGOING ILLNESS FACT SHEET

What is a Significant On-going Illness?

- A significant on-going illness is a medical condition that has a persistent and substantial effect on the health of an individual.
- Significant on-going illnesses include Epilepsy, Diabetes, Cystic Fibroses, Multiple Sclerosis, and Crohn's Disease, Fibromyalgia, Hemophilia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and many more.

Difficulty	Possible impact at university
Accessibility to college environment & facilities	- May require **access to equipment and medication** in class or in exams - Difficulties with **physical access to buildings, classrooms and other college facilities.** - Difficulties with appropriate **physical access on course field trips and activities outside of the classroom**, as well as **society events**. Difficulties **moving from one location to another** in a short space of time, if experiencing fatigue/ pain and/or nausea.
Completing college assignments and exams	**Fine- motor** activities may be affected e.g. handwriting. - Difficulties with **writing for long or short periods of time.** - Managing the **use of a computer or scribe** for exams, if applicable. - Missing deadlines due to hospitalisation or other effects of the illness. Examples of significant ongoing illnesses' affecting performance: **Epilepsy** - Periods of excessive stress such as exam periods or nearing assessment deadlines may bring on seizures which may result in missing deadlines or exams. **Diabetes** - Periods of excessive stress can result in students' blood sugar becoming difficult to regulate. This can result in poor concentration levels or extreme fatigue for the student.

Difficulty	Possible impact at university
Fatigue and/or pain	- Depending on the student's illness, they may experience **fatigue and/or pain which may impact their attendance and participation within college.** - Fatigue and/or pain/ effects of illness can be **exacerbated during periods of high stress,** such as when deadlines are due or exams. Medications often have side-effects including fatigue, nausea and disrupted sleep patterns.
Attendance	**Fatigue and/or pain** may impact a student's attendance. - Difficulties with **accessing public transport**. Missing days or weeks of classes due to hospitalization/ appointments off campus or other effects of the illness
Other difficulties	- Managing the **use of equipment and medication** if applicable. - Students who have recently acquired a significant ongoing illness **may experience emotional difficulties.** **Poor concentration** due to fatigue and/or pain

How can you support a student who has a significant ongoing illness?

Student-Centred Approach:

- If you are in doubt about how to support a student at any time, **ask the student** – they are the experts of their own needs!
- Create a space for students to **feel comfortable approaching you with any issues** (e.g. provide contact and student office hour details etc.).
- Implement any classroom and exam accommodations which were determined at the Reasonable Accommodation Committee.
- Be aware of the symptoms of a seizure in the case that a student **may require immediate medical attention**..
- **Be aware that students may fatigue easily**. Ensure to plan breaks or rest periods during lectures, class tests and labs.
- **Always ask the student if they require assistance** before doing so.

Teaching and Learning:

- Be guided by Universal Design principles when designing coursework. Emphasis should be placed on **'Principles 6: Low Physical Effort'**, to ensure students with an illness affecting fatigue are enabled to participate to the best of their ability without the need for unnecessary physical exertion.
- Furthermore**, offering breaks during longer classes or labs** can help students who are struggling with fatigue and concentration difficulties.
- Consider the needs of students with a significant ongoing illness when **booking rooms and organizing events** (i.e. is the building and/or room accessible and does the student have access to needed equipment?)
- **Avoid the use of invasive lighting** in the teaching environment and lecture content (flashing lights, bright lights) which may trigger a seizure. If doing so, please inform the student in advance of lecture/tutorial/lab.
- **Permit the student to use Assistive Technology** in the classroom (e.g. recording device, laptop etc.).
- **Provide lecture notes in advance of the class.** This reduces the amount of written notes a student will have to take, and provides students who may have to be away from class at times with an opportunity to catch-up with material (e.g. for attending appointments, illness, fatigue).
- Consider the student's needs when **planning field trips or other activities**.
- **Be understanding if a student is late for class**, it may take them longer than others to get there.
- **Consider the exam needs of the student for in-class or mid-semester exams** (e.g. does the student require a computer/assistive technology/scribe?).
- Support the student if they have **difficulties meeting deadlines,** as they may experience difficulties due to hospitalization, exhaustion or other effects of illness.

2021

DISABILITY HANDBOOK

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