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DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this Policy, the following terms and definitions are provided:

Persons with Disability: Persons who are disadvantaged by reason of any verifiable physical or mental impairment sufficiently serious to interfere with their normal day-to-day functioning.

The Act: Ghana Persons with Disability Act, 2000 (Act 715)

The Convention: The UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disability (UNCRPD)

The University Community: Staff, students, visitors of Bolgatanga Technical University and their dependents.

Universal Design Principles: The design of products, environment, programmes and services to be usable by all people without the need for adaptation or specialized design.

ACRONYMS

PWDs – Person(s) with Disability.

UNCPWD - United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

BTU – Bolgatanga Technical University.

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

Disability is an unpredictable human condition that every person is most likely to be exposed to in life. This unpredictable human condition is classified as an issue of human rights and economic development under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Persons with disabilities experience worse socioeconomic outcomes and poverty than persons without disabilities, and many do not have equal access to education and employment opportunities. To this end, Bolgatanga Technical University (BTU) designed this policy to demonstrate its commitment to promoting equal opportunity for all by eliminating unlawful discrimination against persons with disabilities (PWDs), promoting positive attitudes towards disabled people and encouraging the participation of persons with disabilities in all University activities.

This policy takes inspiration from the following sources:

- i. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana
- ii. The Ghana National Disability Policy (2000)
- iii. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), 2007
- iv. Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715)

1.1 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This policy is developed in order to provide a framework through which the University can raise awareness and demonstrate commitment to disability issues within the University community.

The Policy, therefore, seeks to:

1. state the role of the University regarding disability;

2. raise awareness on disability issues within the University community;
3. promote the participation of persons with disabilities regarding the accessibility to employment opportunities, academic programmes, accommodation and all other services available in the University;
4. eliminate discrimination of staff and students on the basis of disability; and
5. empower PWDs to become independent, self-sufficient and well integrated into the University community.

1.2 POLICY SCOPE

This Policy applies to all members of Bolgatanga Technical University, including staff, students, and visitors of the University and their dependents. All members of the University Community are expected to be aware of this Policy and its legal framework and to courteously treat persons with disability in accordance with these provisions.

SECTION TWO: THE POLICY PRINCIPLES

Bolgatanga Technical University Disability Policy provides guidelines on the following thematic areas:

- i. disclosure of disability, record keeping, and data management
- ii. access to building facilities
- iii. employment equity and employee support
- iv. access to tertiary education for PWDs
- v. teaching and learning support for students with disabilities
- vi. rights and responsibilities of PWDs

- vii. communication and awareness of the Disability Policy

2.1 Disclosure of Disability, Record Keeping and Data Management

Bolgatanga Technical University is committed to creating an institutional environment conducive to support the needs of persons with disability. To this end,

- i. the disclosure of disability is necessary where a member of the University community requires special support or facilities from the University.
- ii. the disclosure shall be made to the University's designated official for the necessary assistance.
- iii. disclosed information shall be treated as private and confidential.
- iv. staff and students shall be encouraged to disclose any disability that may have a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

2.2 Access to Building Facilities /Infrastructure

The University shall provide access to the built environment for people with disabilities. To this end,

- i. every building on campus shall have the appropriate facilities to enable PWDs to have easy access and move about freely in the facilities.
- ii. the University shall ensure that disability-friendly extensions are made on existing buildings and facilities where feasible.
- iii. the University shall encourage the adoption of the Universal Design Principles as a feature of all new infrastructural development,

- iv. the University shall formulate and implement standards and guidelines to ensure that the Universal Design Principles are applied in the design, construction, and maintenance of all buildings and other facilities of the University.

2.3 Employment Equity and Employee Support

- i. the University shall include disability mainstreaming in its human resource planning.
- ii. the University shall facilitate the recruitment, retention and career development of persons with disabilities.
- iii. the University shall provide disability-friendly accommodation that will optimize the ability of staff with disabilities to meet the requirements of their job responsibilities.

2.4 Access to Tertiary Education for Students with Disabilities

The University acknowledges the existence of inequalities of access to education throughout the education system for persons with disabilities, and learners with disabilities have been especially vulnerable to exclusion from higher education. Consequently, the University shall develop admission and progression practices and policies to encourage the admission and academic progression of students with disabilities to maximize the participation of PWDs in higher education.

2.5 Teaching and Learning Support for Students with Disabilities

The University shall provide for the learning needs of students with disabilities, by adopting appropriate teaching and learning methods, and assessment tools without the academic standards of the University being compromised.

If, after due consideration, certain programmes or teaching and assessment methods pose insurmountable obstacles relating to a student's level of disability, the University's designated official in consultation with the Dean of the School/Faculty shall advise the student appropriately.

2.6 Rights and Responsibilities of Persons with Disabilities

Bolgatanga Technical University recognizes that persons with disabilities are entitled to equal opportunities just like persons without disabilities. Recognizing this fact, both staff and students with disabilities are entitled to equal opportunities to work and learn within the University community. Just as any other person, PWDs also have equal responsibilities to adhere to the University's administrative and academic rules and regulations. The rights and responsibilities of persons with disabilities within the University shall include the right to:

- i. demonstrate how their disability affects a particular delivery system, instructional method, or assessment criteria when applying for consideration.
- ii. be evaluated based on their ability, and not their disability. If their disability affects the outcome of an evaluation method, they are entitled to an agreed alternative evaluation and assessment methods.
- iii. request special services in a timely manner.
- iv. access services, transportation and extra-curricular activities.

SECTION THREE: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The Directorate of General Services shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy.

The Directorate shall publish and make accessible this policy to all members of the University community through the University website.

The Directorate shall assist members of the University Community with special needs to obtain disability-friendly accommodation and provide them with an equal opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of University life.

This policy shall be reviewed as and when recommended by the Academic Board.

REFERENCES

The 1992 Constitution of Ghana.

The Ghana National Disability Policy (2000).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), (2007).

Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715).