	EPOKA UNIVERSITY POLICY “ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES”			
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1. PURPOSE AND APPLICATION

EPOKA University is committed to ensure that all students with disabilities receive education in a supportive environment that values diversity, inclusion, and participation. All units will use inclusive practices and reasonable adjustments to carry out changes in procedures or environments to remove any disabling effects or barriers to participation.

This policy applies to all disabled students regardless of nationality, fee status or residence.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

EPOKA University will ensure that in all its policies, procedures, functions and activities consideration is given to the means of enabling disabled students' full participation in all aspects of the academic and social life of the institution.

3. DEFINITIONS

Students with disabilities: In compliance with the provisions of the Law 93/2014 “On the Inclusion and Accessibility of Disabled Persons”, *students who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, including environmental and residential ones, may impede their full and efficient participation in society, on equal terms with the others, are considered to be “students with disabilities”.*

4. POLICY


4.1. PRINCIPLES

EPOKA University will ensure that the requirements of disabled students are considered during program validation and that appropriate amendments are made. Program specifications that raise barriers to access by disabled people will be reconsidered and reasonable adjustments made to minimize such barriers.

It is the responsibility of the Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments to promote equality and diversity through their Faculties or Departments and to ensure that the policy and legal framework are implemented.

Students with disabilities are responsible for requesting any review of implemented reasonable adjustments if such adjustments are not proving to be effective in meeting their entitlements.

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Institutional and Legal Affairs Office	Institutional and Legal Affairs Office	Rectorate

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4.2. DISCLOSER AND CONFIDENTALLY

The University will manage the process of information sharing and will treat all personal data in accordance with the Law on Personal Data Protection Nr. 9887, dated 10.3.2008, as amended. Access to disability-related information will be provided to third parties only under necessary conditions, or in cases when reasonable adjustments must be implemented, after taking the written consent of the concerned student.

The Dean of Students Office represents the welcome point which provides information and services for all the students with disabilities. The Dean of Students Office is responsible for the investigation and procedural fulfilments regarding the related problems and carries out any other function connected to the services offered to them by closely cooperating with the respective Department and other concerned units.


4.3. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY

In compliance with the regulations in force, EPOKA University guarantees accessibility, at all levels, in order to facilitate the full participation of students with disabilities in the university life.

In particular, the university:

- a) checks the needs of students with disabilities and within the limit of available resources, identifies technological aids, both hardware and software, to be available for free use;
- b) promotes the raising of awareness at the institutional level by providing information to the academic, assisting academic and administrative staff members on the available teaching facilities and resources that can be used for students with disabilities;
- c) ensures the collaboration with specialized staff or specialized centers through the signing of cooperation agreements or memoranda of understanding;
- d) ensures the accessibility of premises and places of study and life (classrooms, libraries, laboratories and other facilities) for the students with disabilities;
- e) promotes awareness-raising actions outside university structures with initiatives such as, for example, study awards for the best papers on the disability problems of students, conferences on specific issues, organization of the International Day of people with disabilities, etc.

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4.4 THE ACCESSIBILITY TEAM OF EPOKA UNIVERSITY

The Accessibility Team of EPOKA University will be composed by at least one representative from each of the following units of the University and will perform its duties and responsibilities deriving from this Policy and other legal acts of the University under the coordination of the Dean of Students Office. The Rectorate approves the establishment of the Accessibility Team of EPOKA University and any eventual changes in its composition. **An academic advisor from each faculty assigned by the Decanate** - *advises students during the course registration period and informs and provides students with documents containing information about the university rules and regulations in force.*

A representative from the Admission Office assigned by the University Administrator- *develops, implements, and oversees operational systems for the management of the recruitment of candidates for admission to the study programs offered by EPOKA University. He/she collaborates closely with faculty, staff, and other members of the university, as well as with colleagues and partners outside the university.*

A representative from the Registrar’s Office assigned by the University Administrator- *provides services and facilitates the academic experience of students with disabilities enrolled in the University, from the time of registration to graduation. These services include maintaining all students' records, transcript processing, enrollment verifications, scheduling, course registration, maintaining records on the student database, diploma mailings etc.*


A representative from the ICTC Office assigned by the University Administrator- *checks the needs of students with disabilities and within the limit of available resources, identifies technological aids, both hardware and software, to be available for free use.*

A representative from the Dean of Student’s Office assigned by the University Administrator- *supports students with disabilities and follows-up the fulfillment of the relevant procedures regarding the related problems and carries out any other function connected to the services offered to them by closely cooperating with the respective Department and other concerned units.*

A representative from the Transportation and Security Office assigned by the University Administrator- *manages and coordinates the transportation process, and prepares the transportation schedule.*

A representative from the Administrative and Technical Affairs Office assigned by the University Administrator- *ensures the accessibility of premises and places of study (classrooms, libraries, laboratories and other facilities) for students with disabilities.*

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A representative from the Career Planning and Alumni Office assigned by the University Administrator-*ensures the collaboration with specialized staff or specialized centers through the signing of cooperation agreements.*

A representative from the Library assigned by the University Administrator-*supports the effective delivery of Library services to students with disabilities.*

A representative from the International Relations Office assigned by the Rector-*informs and supports the participation of students with disabilities in the exchange and mobility programs offered by the university.*

A representative from the Institutional and Legal Affairs Office assigned by the Rector-*ensures that this policy and the legal framework in force are properly implemented.*


4.5 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Department is responsible for the integration of students with disabilities and the proper conduct of the teaching process.

In particular, the Department:

- identifies and formulates proposals on initiatives to be activated on the basis of the data related to students with disabilities enrolled at the University for each academic year;
- guarantees the right of study for students with disabilities through the provision of services and aids necessary to overcome the barriers imposed by the different types of disabilities and the adoption of dispensatory or compensatory measures in cases of learning disabilities;
- promotes knowledge of the available services and supporting materials for students with disabilities to make them effective and accessible by the interested parties;
- customizes, as far as possible, the service offered by the University through the possibility - on request by interested parties - to adapt schedules and evaluation methods in the exams pursuant to the Law 80/2015 “On Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Albania” and the Law 93/2014 “On the Inclusion and Accessibility of Disabled Persons”;
- promotes awareness raising actions within the respective academic, assisting academic and administrative staff members.

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4.6 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

In order to benefit from services, the concerned student must provide the necessary information and documentation in accordance with the current legislation for the Disability Service and subsequently needs to:

- a) notify the Dean of Students Office for any special educational needs (needs not of a nursing or personal assistance type, because they are not competence of the University) well in advance of the start of teaching activities;
- b) act and behave according to the rules and regulations of the university.

4.7 EXCHANGE STUDENTS

In cases when a student will be part of an exchange program to another institution as part of his/her degree program, the relevant information may be shared with the written consent of the concerned student to ensure that reasonable adjustments will be provided at the host institution and to also ensure that the student engaged in the exchange program will not face difficulties.

4.8 FINAL PROVISIONS

Anything which is not contemplated in this policy will be subject to the current national legislation, stipulated in the Law 93/2014 “On the Inclusion and Accessibility of Disabled Persons”.

5. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Form on the provision of information
- Form on the provision of the written consent and authorization

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