



St Joseph's Theological Institute NPC

(Company number 2003/009125/08. PBO number 930007111)

Registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training as a Private Higher Education Institution under the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Registration Certificate number 2003/HE08/003).

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Policy on Disability

Title	Policy on Disability
Compiled by	President's Office
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Approved by	Board of Directors
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1. Acronyms

AC	Academic Council
CHE	Council on Higher Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
HEQF	Higher Education Qualification Framework
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualification Sub-Framework
NPC	Non-Profit Company
QUAAC	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SJTI	St. Joseph's Theological Institute

2. Policy

St. Joseph's Theological Institute has since its inception successfully catered for persons with physical disabilities such as blindness, deafness and polio victims. The Institute is committed to making tertiary education and the working environment universally accessible and inclusive for all students and staff including those with disabilities. This policy is congruent with the commitment of the Institute to the removal of cultural, physical, social and other barriers that prevent people with disabilities from entering, being employed, using or benefiting from the Institute.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is guided by section 54(1)(a) of the Employment Equity Act, No. 55, 1998, the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 and is based on the Constitutional principle (Act 108 of 1996) that no one may unfairly discriminate against a person on the grounds of disability. The policy acknowledges and is in compliance with the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act 103 of 1977 (amended in

2008), the Code of Good Practice: Key aspects on the Employment of People with Disabilities, the Higher Education Act of 1997, the White Paper on Education, and other relevant legislation.

4. Definition of Disability

The Institute accepts that a person with a disability is a person limited or impaired in one or more functional activities which prevent full and equal academic, social and economic participation. The impairment may be permanent, recurring or transitory and may be sensory, physical, cognitive or psychological.

5. Objectives

The Institute's objectives specifically aim to:

- i. Provide current and prospective students and staff who have disabilities with opportunities to realise their individual capabilities for physical, social, emotional and academic development through full participation at the Institute.
- ii. Develop and maintain, where it will not cause unjustifiable hardship to the Institute, an accessible and safely built environment in which all people (including those with disabilities) can participate in Institute activities.
- iii. Ensure reasonable facilitation for students and staff with disabilities in all aspects of their participation in the workings of the Institute.
- iv. Ensure access to Institute academic programmes for people with disabilities who meet the criteria for admission and to develop appropriate administrative procedures for their enrolment, induction, orientation and tuition.
- v. Encourage and assist students and staff with disabilities towards independence in a manner that ensures dignity, self-sufficiency and responsibility.
- vi. Make available opportunities, within budgetary constraints, for the participation of persons with disabilities in sports, recreational and social activities
- vii. Implement affirmative action measures to ensure equitable representation of persons with disabilities in both the student and staff population.
- viii. Ensure that the policies and practices relating to the provision of support services and access to the resources and benefits of the Institute do not discriminate against people with disabilities.
- ix. Co-operate and collaborate with other relevant institutions to effectively meet the needs of staff and students with disabilities.
- x. Ensure that all staff have access to disability awareness training and develop appropriate skills so as to enhance service delivery and communication with persons who have disabilities and thus contribute to a friendly and welcoming organisational culture in this regard.
- xi. Enable the transition to lifelong learning and/or employment of people with disabilities through the provision of inclusive employment practices and the removal of attitudinal and artificial barriers.

6. Language

The Institute is aware that the use of terminology that emphasizes the disabilities of people leads to categorisation, stigmatisation, discrimination and exclusion. The Institute discourages the use of such terminology and calls for extreme sensitivity.

7. Consultation

The Institute recognises the importance of consultation with people with disabilities in all decisions that affect their opportunity for full participation in Institute life.

8. Strategic Planning

In order for St. Joseph's Theological Institute to meet its objectives, the Institute's Board of Directors in its normal fulfilment of its duties assesses the ongoing needs of staff and students with disabilities. Furthermore, the Institute's Board of Directors will develop and maintain a Disability Action Plan that incorporates strategies to ensure that issues of access, participation and retention of current and prospective students and staff with disabilities are addressed.

The Disability Action Plan shall include:

- i. An analysis of present performance of the Institute in relation to relevant performance indicators such as access, participation, retention and advancement (students and staff);
- ii. Targets for future performance;
- iii. Strategies for achieving targets;
- iv. Time frames and responsibilities for achieving targets;
- v. Plans for commitment of resources (human and financial) to support strategies.

9. Responsibility for Policy Implementation and Support Services

The Institute endorses the principles advocated in The National Development Plan released in 2012 and the White Paper on an Integrated National Disability Strategy (1997), that the national and institutional approach on issues of persons with disabilities should be rooted in human rights and equitable development. Responsibility for implementation of this policy will vest with every member of staff, and also the Student Forum of the Institute. The overall development and implementation of policy will be supervised by a Disability Compliance Officer appointed by the Board of Directors of the Institute.

10. Overarching strategies

10. 1. Physical Environment

The Institute is committed, within available resources, to providing a safe, healthy and barrier-free built environment. The Board of Directors which has responsibility for designing and planning of new buildings or facilities as well as the renovation, alteration and extension of the existing built environment will ensure that all new projects are designed and constructed to provide for access and use by people with disabilities. These standards will be compatible with national and international standards for universal access. Compliance with these standards will be a prerequisite for the approval of any new buildings or facilities as well as renovations and extensions.

10. 2. Information Technology

The Institute will assist with access to up-to-date adaptive and assistive technology for students and staff with disabilities. The ICT Consultant shall endeavour to ensure that access issues are considered when purchasing new software and hardware for general student/staff use and when developing teaching and resource material that is electronically delivered. Help sheets/information on the use of software and accessibility options and aids will be readily available in alternative formats throughout the Institute.



10.3 Library Services

The Institute Librarian will be responsible for ensuring efficient access to information for students and staff with disabilities. Within legal and budgetary constraints, the latter shall ensure that appropriate resources are provided that utilise media which are alternative to printed media e.g. digital, Braille and/or audio recorded material for impaired people.

10.4. Media & Communication

The image of the Institute in promotional materials will reflect a welcoming institutional culture for persons with disability and these materials will where possible be available in alternative formats.

11. On-going development with respect to Institute policies

Like all Institute policies this policy will be reviewed every three years. The normal time for review will be when the prospectus is compiled i.e. prior to 30 November of the third year of the three-year period. Should urgent revisions be necessary the review will be done as and when necessary.