UCT's Disability Service, which is situated in the Office for Inclusivity & Change, works towards removing all physical, policy, information and attitudinal barriers that might prevent disabled students and staff from fulfilling their potential. Whether this means improving building access, arranging for extra time during exams or employing sign-language interpreters, the Disability Service is there to help.

UCT's topography poses access challenges for students and staff with disabilities. This is especially true on upper campus, which is built on multiple levels on the slopes of Table Mountain. But the university recognises that there are many different types of disability, including learning and psychosocial disabilities, which present various challenges to many members of our campus community.

"As part of the Office for Inclusivity & Change, we are dedicated to the creation of a discrimination-free and inclusive environment in which students and staff with disabilities are able to enjoy full, independent and effective participation in all aspects of university life."

EDWINA GHALL
Manager, UCT Disability Service

Office for
Inclusivity
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Upper Campus

06 Disability Service

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

DISABILITY POLICY

UCT follows an inclusive education approach which means that as a workplace and a learning institution – the university progressively realises the human rights of staff and students with disabilities through accessible education, infrastructure, and language. The inclusive Disability Policy was adopted in 2021 and governs the disability inclusive practices of the institution.

What we do

The Disability Service strives to create an enabling learning and occupational environment for its students and staff with disabilities where their learning experience and career aspirations are equal with their abilities and where their talents are nurtured and developed.

The UCT Disability Service is geared towards providing innovative support for time-sensitive solutions for students and staff with a wide variety of disabilities.

The Disability Service's work includes:

- disability advocacy and sensitisation
- improving access to inaccessible venues and allocating disabled parking according to UCT Traffic policy
- providing accessible transport between residences and lectures
- specific mobility orientation for staff and students with disabilities
- providing accessible residence accommodation
- providing lecture and study materials in an accessible format for persons with sensory impairments
- student support, psychological education and assessment for mental health concerns and specific learning disorders
- facilitating extra-time applications and/or other accommodations around exams
- supporting the development of academics to ensure accessible education

The power of words

The language we use shapes how we think about who and what we're discussing.

Language can be used as a powerful tool to bring about change and bring about new values, attitudes and social integration. At the same time, thoughtless language can reinforce stereotypes and labelling of disabled people. These stereotypes can impede access to support that is vital for disabled students to shine academically.

To this end, check this list of acceptable and unacceptable terminology to use when referring to people with disabilities. This will help to ensure that the way we speak does not compound the social marginalisation of people with disabilities.

YES ✓	NO ✗
Person with a disability	Afflicted with … / victim of …
Person without a disability	Able-bodied
Wheelchair user	Wheelchair-bound / confined to a wheelchair
Person with mental health concerns Person with a learning disability Person with an intellectual disability	Mentally retarded Slow learner Mongol/mongoloid
Deaf / Hard of hearing	Deaf-mute / deaf and dumb
	Deformed/deformity / birth defect
Person with a congenital disability	Cerebral palsied / spastic
Person with epilepsy	Epileptic
Person of short stature	Dwarf/midget
Person with paraplegia/ quadriplegia	Paraplegic/quadriplegic

The campus experience

Getting around

Students and staff with mobility and visual impairments use an accessible bus to get to campus and back home. Demand for this service is high.

In the classroom

There are currently 35 venues fitted with induction loop technology. UCT also has several portable assistive hearing systems as well as a portable induction loop for smaller venues. The induction loop system has been included in the university's Classroom Renewal Project, which has been working closely with the Disability Service and the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) to improve and standardise the university's centrally bookable classrooms.

There is an Assistive Technology lab with computers equipped with Jaws, ZoomText, Read and Write Gold, and Dragon Naturally Speaking for the use of students with disabilities. UCT also has several portable assistive devices for persons who are hearing impaired such Frequency Modulations systems, vibrating alarm clocks and Smoke Alarm detector and transmitter.