



UCT's Disability Service 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.



"The services UCT offers to ensure fair access for its staff and students who have disabilities are constantly evolving. We work towards finding solutions to a problem. Instead of offering a set itinerary of services, the Disability Service is approached by staff and students who explain their particular needs, and together we agree on the most appropriate solution."

REINETTE POPPLESTONE
Manager, UCT Disability Service

CONTACTS

REINETTE POPPLESTONE (Manager)

+27 (0)21 650 5090
Reinette.Popplestone@uct.ac.za

EDWINA GHALL (Coordinator: Barrier Free Access)

+27 (0)21 650 5089
Edwina.Ghall@uct.ac.za

MARGIE LE ROUX (Psychologist)

+27 (0)21 650 3616
Margie.leRoux@uct.ac.za

LESEGO MODUTLE (Coordinator: Disability Advocacy)

+27 (0)21 650 5088
Lesego.Modutle@uct.ac.za

KATE REYNOLDS (Sign-language interpreter)

Kate.Reynolds@uct.ac.za

DENISE OLDHAM (Coordinator: Direct Services)

+27 (0)21 650 2737
Denise.Oldham@uct.ac.za

PEARL TUKWAYO (Administrative assistant)

+27 (0)21 650 2427
Pearl.Tukwayo@uct.ac.za



**WHERE TO
FIND US**

Room 4.03
Fourth Floor
Steve Biko Students' Union Building
Upper campus



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**Disability
Service**



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

DISABILITY POLICY

UCT launched its Disability Policy in 2011. The landmark policy is aimed at optimising access to the university's world-class facilities for all students and staff. The policy is not yet perfect, says Disability Service manager Reinette Popplestone, but it is a big step in the right direction.

What they do

The UCT Disability Service finds ways to mainstream people with disabilities and provides specialist services where mainstreaming is not possible. It's about ensuring that everyone is given a fair chance at thriving academically and socially at UCT.

The unit assists the university with dealing appropriately with students, staff and visitors with disabilities, and puts into practice the policy of equal opportunities that UCT adopted in 2011.

The Disability Service's work includes:



- advocacy on disability issues
- support in transforming attitudinal barriers that may be encountered
- improving access to inaccessible venues and providing designated disabled parking
- making available lecture and study material in alternative format for people with sensory impairments
- ensuring fully accessible transport between residences and lectures
- providing accessible residence accommodation
- making available literature and material related to disability and disability research
- facilitating extra-time applications and/or other accommodations around exams.

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 
Disabled person / people with disabilities	Afflicted with ... / victim of ...
Non-disabled	Able-bodied
Uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair-bound / confined to a wheelchair
Disability	Handicap Physically/mentally challenged Cripple/crippled
Deaf	Deaf-mute / deaf and dumb
	Deformed/deformity / birth defect
Persons with cerebral palsy	Cerebral palsied / spastic
Persons with epilepsy	Epileptic
Person of short stature	Dwarf/midget
Person with paraplegia / he/she has quadriplegia	Paraplegic/quadruplegic

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 a lab with 14 computers equipped with Jaws, ZoomText, Read and Write Gold, and Dragon Naturally Speaking for the use of students and staff with disabilities.

Outside the classroom

The Disability Service enjoys a working relationship with the Student Sports and Recreation Department. UCT has held a number of sporting events focused on disabled sports in the last few years, and disabled students are encouraged to play sports on campus.

