

Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU), Karachi

Policy for Students with Disabilities

1. Purpose and Principles

1.1 Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU), Karachi is committed to ensuring that no individual is denied access to higher education on the basis of disability. The University affirms the right of students with disabilities to equal access, participation, and attainment in higher education.

1.2 This Policy aims to create an inclusive, accessible, and enabling academic environment at SMIU by facilitating the full participation of students with disabilities in academic, administrative, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

1.3 SMIU recognizes that disability encompasses a wide range of physical, sensory, intellectual, and mental impairments, each of which may require individualized support and reasonable accommodations.

1.4 The University acknowledges students with disabilities as valuable members of the academic community and undertakes to remove physical, academic, administrative, technological, and social barriers that may hinder their educational progress.

1.5 This Policy is framed in alignment with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Policy for Students with Disabilities (2021, as amended), the Higher Education Commission Ordinance, 2002, relevant provincial and federal legislation, and Pakistan's commitments under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

1.6 No student at SMIU shall be subjected to discrimination, exclusion, or disadvantage at any stage of admission, enrollment, assessment, or graduation on the basis of disability.

2. Scope of the Policy

2.1 This Policy applies to all prospective, enrolled, and continuing students with disabilities at Sindh Madressatul Islam University, including those who acquire a disability during the course of their studies.

2.2 For the purpose of this Policy, "disability" refers to any long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairment which may hinder full and effective participation in university life on an equal basis with others, as recognized under applicable laws.

2.3 "Disability Certificate" means a valid certificate issued by the relevant National or Provincial authority, CNIC with disability logo, or proof of registration as a person with disability in NADRA records.

3. Accessibility Committee and Disability Coordinators

3.1 Accessibility Committee

SMIU shall establish a standing Accessibility Committee comprising five (05) members appointed by the Vice Chancellor, including:

- Director Student Affairs or a senior faculty member (Chair)
- Two faculty members (at least one female)
- One student representative nominated by students with disabilities
- One representative from the Medical Center / Psychological Wellbeing Unit / Planning & Development Department
- One staff member as Secretary

Members shall serve for a term of three (03) years.

3.2 Functions of the Accessibility Committee

The Accessibility Committee shall:

- Assess and determine reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities
- Facilitate academic, examination, and campus-related accommodations
- Provide counseling support where required
- Advise faculty and departments on inclusive teaching practices
- Recommend improvements in infrastructure and services
- Promote disability awareness through seminars and training
- Liaise with relevant organizations and donors to enhance support services

3.3 Role of Disability Coordinators

Disability Coordinators shall:

- Serve as focal persons for students with disabilities
- Guide prospective and enrolled students regarding available facilities
- Coordinate with faculty for timely provision of accommodations
- Maintain confidential records of student needs and support provided
- Facilitate referrals for counseling or academic support when required

4. Admissions-Related Matters

4.1 Admission forms at SMIU shall include an optional section for disclosure of disability and accommodation needs. Disclosure shall not adversely affect admission decisions.

4.2 Applicants with disabilities shall be provided necessary information regarding campus accessibility, support services, and Disability Coordinators prior to admission.

4.3 Entrance tests and interviews shall be conducted with reasonable accommodations such as extra time, assistive technology, scribes, readers, alternative formats, or accessible venues, as appropriate.

4.4 Financial assistance, fee concessions, disability quotas, and age relaxation shall be provided in accordance with applicable laws, HEC guidelines, and University regulations.

5. Reasonable Accommodations

5.1 SMIU shall provide reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to learning, assessment, facilities, housing, transportation, and digital platforms.

5.2 Accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Assistive technologies and alternate learning materials
- Modified examination arrangements
- Counseling and medical support
- Accessible classrooms, hostels, libraries, and washrooms
- Campus mobility support

5.3 Accommodations shall be determined on an individual basis through consultation with the student and implemented in a timely and confidential manner.

6. Examinations and Assessments

6.1 Examination accommodations shall be arranged in advance upon submission of a valid Disability Certificate. Academic standards shall not be compromised.

6.2 Faculty, in coordination with Disability Coordinators, shall ensure fair assessment methods that allow students to demonstrate learning outcomes effectively.

7. Grievance Redressal

7.1 Students with disabilities may submit grievances related to discrimination or lack of accommodation to the Disability Coordinators.

7.2 Unresolved matters shall be referred to the Accessibility Committee and, if necessary, to the Vice Chancellor.

7.3 Students may approach the Higher Education Commission in cases of non-compliance with HEC policies.

8. Financial Support

8.1 SMIU shall establish a dedicated fund to support reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities, supplemented through University budget and philanthropic contributions.

9. Monitoring and Reporting

9.1 SMIU shall submit annual compliance reports to the Higher Education Commission as required.

9.2 The University shall periodically review and update this Policy to ensure alignment with national standards and best practices.

10. Interpretation and Implementation

10.1 Any matter relating to the interpretation or implementation of this Policy shall be resolved in consultation with the Vice Chancellor and in accordance with HEC guidelines.

10.2 This Policy shall come into force with immediate effect upon approval by the competent authority i.e. Vice Chancellor of Sindh Madressatul Islam University.