

# INCLUSION POLICY

## of Saint Joseph University of Beirut

The French text of this Policy was approved by the University Board at its 217<sup>th</sup> meeting on February 22, 2023

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### 1. Preamble

As of September 2021, and in accordance with the provisions of Lebanese Law no. 220, which came into effect on June 8, 2000, the Saint Joseph University of Beirut (hereinafter referred to as “the University”) has committed itself to establishing and maintaining an inclusive work environment, free from any form of discrimination, and which upholds the dignity of all members of the University community. To translate vision into action, the University’s commitment to inclusion has been matched by this Policy.

### 2. Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to outline the principles, procedures, and roles regarding the inclusion of members of the University community with disabilities, to support them in their academic, community, and professional journeys.

### 3. Definitions

**Disability:** according to Lebanese Law no. 220 on the Rights of Disabled Persons (Law 220/2000), a disability is any activity limitation, restriction or incapacity to engage in social life as a result of a substantial, lasting, or permanent impairment of one or more physical, sensory, mental, cognitive or psychological functions, multiple disabilities or a disabling health disorder.

**Persons with a disability:** any person with an impairment that results in a significant and persistent incapacity, and who is prone to encountering barriers in the performance of everyday activities.

**Students with a disability:** refers to students with a hearing, motor, organic, or visual impairment, learning difficulty, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), speech and language disorder, neurological disorder, mental health disorder, or autism spectrum disorder (ASD), resulting in incapacities.

**University Community:** any administrative staff member, tenured or non-tenured; any instructor, tenured or non-tenured; any student or intern; any researcher or PhD candidate; any guest of the University; any contractor hired by the University; any administrator.

**Impairment:** a loss, a deformity, or an insufficiency of an organ or a structure (birth defect or acquired defect as a result of disease or accident).

**Incapacity:** a condition that reduces a person’s ability to function and may be physiological, anatomical, intellectual, or psychological.

**Significant incapacity:** for the incapacity to be significant, it means that it is substantial and presents a certain degree of severity or gravity.

**Persistent incapacity:** the persistence of the incapacity, arising from an injury or illness, implies continuity as opposed to temporariness.

**Barriers:** these represent the physical or social characteristics of the environment in which a person finds themselves, and which, when combined with their incapacities, limit their activities. These barriers are encountered in the performance of daily and domestic activities as well as in activities related to leisure, education, or employment.

**Discrimination on the basis of disability:** a direct or an indirect distinction or exclusion based on the physical or mental condition of the person with a disability.

**Accommodations:** conditions or means put in place in a learning, an assessment, or an employment setting to address, without discrimination or bias, the functional impairment of a student, an instructor, or a member of the administrative staff, thereby ensuring fair and equitable access to resources and information necessary for their education and employment. The purpose of accommodations is to enable the person with a disability to demonstrate the ability to master the content and skills required to succeed in a course or job, without disadvantages related to the functional impairment, while meeting the objectives of the activity.

## 4. Legal Framework

This Policy is based on:

- The University Regulations and Bylaws;
- The rights of Instructors and Staff Members as outlined in the University Charter and Bylaws, the USJ Mission Vision 2025, and the Instructor Code;
- The rights of University Students as defined by the University Charter and Bylaws, as well as the Academic Regulations - General Rules and the USJ Mission Vision 2025.

This Policy draws on the University's Vision Statement, issued on September 21, 2021, and published on its website.

## 5. Functioning

### 1.1 Disability Support Office (DSO)

A Disability Support Office (hereinafter referred to as “DSO”) is established within the University and consists of an Inclusion Officer and an Inclusion Coordinator, both of whom are appointed by the Rector of the University.

The purpose of the DSO is to:

- serve as a first responder to individuals with disabilities;
- welcome, guide, and facilitate exchanges with persons with disabilities and with the faculty or institution concerned regarding the requirements of their program of study or employment;
- inform persons with disabilities of the accommodations available and the procedures associated with them and ensure that they comply with the procedures in effect;
- ensure that the appropriate accommodations are in place and provide support to persons with disabilities;
- work jointly with all the University's entities, in particular the Human Resources Office, the Financial Aid Office, the Student Life Office, the Student Information and Orientation Office, the Admissions Directorate, the Fondation USJ, and the Career and Placement Office, in the practical implementation of suitable or alternative measures for the integration of the persons in question.

### 1.2 Inclusion Officer

The Inclusion Officer is a key person at the University who works to develop and facilitate the implementation of the Policy and related actions for people with disabilities within the University community.

The Inclusion Officer shall:

- represent the University on issues and topics of inclusion and disability;
- liaise with the Inclusion Coordinator on all activities for which the latter is responsible;
- coordinate actions and projects in favor of the orientation and professional integration of people with disabilities, carried out by the various faculties and institutions of the University or by partners outside the University.

### **1.3 Inclusion Coordinator**

The Inclusion Coordinator follows up on the individual situation of people with disabilities. They work to establish the person's "situation" in terms of disability, while taking into account factors related to their family, social and professional background.

The Inclusion Coordinator shall:

- inform, refer and guide people with disabilities by ensuring coordination between the various parties involved;
- assess the situation of the person with a disability and their needs in terms of care, to provide information on all issues relating to their social rights and to direct them to the appropriate department;
- suggest an adapted management for the person with a disability;
- collaborate with the University's administrative and academic officers to ensure that the proper equipment and facilities are in place to facilitate the inclusion of people with disabilities.

## **6. Role of the University with Regard to the USJ Community**

- Promote the Policy and acquaint the University community with the procedures regarding persons with disabilities;
- Establish the Disability Support Office, per the provisions of Article 5.1 of this Policy;
- Provide support to members of the University community through the DSO in the implementation of this Policy;
- Support the recruitment of persons with disabilities within the University;
- Set up a system to welcome and support students with disabilities to ensure accessibility to the courses and jobs within each faculty, campus, institution, and department;
- Identify, in collaboration with the DSO, the difficulties that may be encountered by members of the University community, particularly students with disabilities;
- Encourage instructors to implement the appropriate measures recommended by the DSO to help facilitate the journey of students with disabilities.

## **7. Students with a Disability**

### **1.1 Admission**

Admission requirements are the same for all students, including those with disabilities. The review of the application for admission is strictly based on the application itself, without any discrimination or bias.

### **1.2 Role of Students with a Disability**

- Undertake to inform the administration of their disability status.
- Submit a request for accommodations by contacting the DSO to inform them of their situation and their special needs;
- Provide the assessment reports and provide the respective administrative and academic officials with a statement confirming the need for accommodations as early as the student's initial enrollment;
- Keep the DSO updated on any changes in the student's status.

## **8. Instructors and Staff Members with a Disability**

### **1.1 Recruitment**

The conditions of recruitment are the same for all instructors and administrative staff, including persons with disabilities. The review of the recruitment application is based on the recruitment criteria and conditions drawn up by the University's Human Resources Office (for all administrative staff) and the criteria and conditions of the faculties and institutions (for faculty).

### **1.1 Role of Instructors and Staff Members with a Disability**

- Undertake to inform the administration of their disability status.
- Submit a request for accommodations by contacting the DSO to inform them of their situation and their special needs.
- Keep the Human Resources Office and the DSO updated on any changes in their status.

## **9. Confidentiality**

All documents and information, including personal data, submitted to individuals involved in any capacity in the admissions, recruitment, and follow-up processes are treated as confidential and shall not be disclosed, directly or indirectly, to any third party or used for any purpose other than as outlined in this Policy.

## **10. Policy Implementation and Enforcement**

This Policy shall be implemented as of the date of its adoption by the University Board and may be amended by the University Board in accordance with the provisions of Article 66 of the University Bylaws.