GUIDELINE FOR A

PROACTIVE APPROACH FOR LECTURERS

Inspiring excellence,
transforming lives
through quality,
impact, and care.

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UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
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The application of the principles of universal design and universal access at the UFS will be instrumental in the improvement of the institutional culture concerning people with disabilities, thus moving away from the traditional focus on the individual with the problem. This will enable the UFS to create an environment where students with disabilities can experience all aspects of student life equal to their non-disabled peers (UFS, 2018).

Accordingly, the UFS Learning and Teaching Strategy (2019 –2024) states that the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), in collaboration with CUADS, will implement and promote the universal design principles. This guideline assists academic departments in adapting their teaching and learning methodologies to include the needs of students with disabilities by using inclusive instructional strategies that benefit a broad range of learners in a diverse learning community.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an educational framework that many international and some national institutions are starting to adopt to address the challenges that students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties face. UDL has at its core "equitable opportunity" with a focus on learning (Meyer et al., 2014: 4). It makes it possible to phase out unnecessary specific accommodations which, according to Tobin and Behling (2018: 32), entail making one change, one time for one person. Instead, a UDL approach in teaching and learning allows students to seamlessly navigate through their modules without having to depend on specific accommodations; it provides them with an increased opportunity to continue with their tertiary education (Tobin & Behling, 2018: 32). Therefore, the accommodations are better suited for a specific kind of student, because the design elements in modules are suited for a variety of needs.

Consequently, the UFS Learning and Teaching Strategy also states that UDL offers an approach that centres on accessibility and inclusivity in curriculum design and learning. To have a mainstream approach to curriculum design, learning and teaching, UDL expresses the belief that a classroom designed for students at the margins is better for all students—including students with disabilities (Rhodes, Barone, & Dean, n.d.). Whilst universal design principles align well with a learning-centred approach, it also creates a thriving learning environment—both face-to-face and digitally—that embraces diversity and a sense of belonging among the student population (Al-Azawei, Serenelli, & Lundqvist, 2016).

To this end, this guideline document aims to outline the principles and provisions that could guide staff at the UFS on the path to becoming a universally accessible institution. The learning and teaching process may be regarded as the most important area of focus to ensure that students with disabilities can gain 'epistemological access' to higher education and its benefits. The importance suggests that academic and academic support staff have a critical role to play in creating equitable opportunities for students with disabilities (Howell, 2015).

THE PROVISION OF
SPECIFIC ADAPTATIONS AND ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The UFS is committed to providing equal access for students with disabilities. Therefore the CUADS can assist / information regarding the accommodation of the student. Accommodations are necessary for the student to have an equal opportunity to participate as fully as possible in the class and demonstrate knowledge of the module content. Please note that disability-related information is confidential and should be discussed only on a need-to-know basis. Take note that not all students disclose their disabilities or have invisible disabilities.

Although the existence of impairment cannot be denied, a person only really becomes disabled once they interact with their environment. When a person's environment, whether physical, social, educational or attitudinal, is designed in such a way that it is accessible to the greatest variety of users, allowing for different options and ways of use, the degree of disability that might be experienced can be reduced significantly. This also benefits people without disability and caters for different access preferences (University of the Free State, 2018) and will cover students who prefer not to disclose their disabilities.

In line with "universal design" and "universal learning design", it is important to recognise that some adaptations, including the provision of assistive devices and/or specialist support, will be required.

1 A "plus-one" approach that benefits all students, including students with disabilities

UFS staff are not required to become experts on matters of disability. However, they can apply "plus-one thinking" to their modules (Tobin, 2018: 132). For example, providing students with more than one way to access course content and more than one way to express their content knowledge.

UFS staff are encouraged to start small. For example, they may start with aspects in their modules where students usually have challenges. After a staff member identifies these aspects in their modules/lectures, one more alternative interaction of information can be added (Tobin & Behling, 2018: 140). For example, should a lecturer become aware that students repeatedly ask the same questions about a specific assignment every year, the lecturer can upload a step-by-step video or an audio explanation on the Learning Management System (LMS) to pre-empt the problematic area in their module.

At the start of the 1st and 2nd semesters, extend a friendly invitation to students to encourage disclosure of their learning or physical disabilities to you via email or in person. This allows you to plan for your specific student cohort and prevents too many special accommodations from having to be made retrospectively.

2 Provide alternatives for course content

a. Make **paper-based textbook chapters or handouts** accessible in electronic format (PDF) on the LMS well in advance; this can be adapted to audio format for students who cannot access visual information. In this way, students who are blind or visually impaired are included, since they can download information from Blackboard and use screen-reading software that converts textual information to audio information. This makes content more easily accessible to all students, not only students who are visually impaired.

b. Provide **closed captions for educational videos** used in UFS courses. In this way, students who are Deaf or hard of hearing can also access this content. Additionally, English Second Language learners or students preferring to read content also benefit from this alternative source of information.

c. **Use verbal/audio descriptions** when showing images on projectors or PowerPoint, or when writing equations on the board. In this students with visual impairments, students who are blind, or students who are simply sitting too far away to see what is written, are included. Use descriptive words like "top right" or "bottom left" instead of "here and there."

d. Finally, for **essential course information**, provide **multiple alternatives** to access key information. For instance, if key information of a course is explained in a short video, which includes closed captions, or a short audio with downloadable text, the same information can also be provided in infographic form or audio form. In this way, a group of diverse learners are catered for. For example, English Second Language Learners, students with textual challenges and students who are Deaf or hard of hearing, benefit from these types of added alternatives.

3 **Welcome the use of assistive technology or support staff in your classes**

To create an inclusive classroom culture:

a. Invite students to **switch on assistive technology** at the beginning of each class; in this way, lecturers model acceptance of the diverse needs of their students. For example, lecturers may tell students to switch on their digital recorders as the lecture is about to start. This type of accommodation creates an inclusive culture and takes the load of the university's LMS.

b. When using impromptu text during class, make use of **cooperative learning strategies** like providing students who are visually impaired with a **"reading buddy"** – should the student feel comfortable with this alternative. Ideally, this text should be accessible on LMS or in another type of electronic form beforehand, so that students can prepare before coming to class. By providing one more alternative, you provide your students with more autonomy and make them less dependent on special accommodations having to be made for them.

In a nutshell, the provision of alternatives instead of relying on single-stream materials provides students with more than a single option to access and express information, which provides them with more independence.

4 **Assessments and assignments**

To ensure students with disabilities are given the same opportunities as other students to demonstrate the achievement of the required learning outcomes different methods of assessment or examination procedures must be used (Howell, 2015). When providing students with assessments, provide more than one option of assessment **where and if possible.** In this way, fewer modifications for adaptations (reasonable accommodation) have to be made. Examples of options might include:

flexibility of submission dates,

an essay or oral assessment,

a video or textual assignment,

PowerPoint slides or paragraph answers,

role-play assignment,

concessions *(as approved by the Reasonable Accommodation Panel's Extra-time Subcommittee)*.

Should certain types of assessments be inflexible, then **scaffold the assignment** by providing clear steps for the content and structure that is expected of students. Again, scaffolded information benefits all students.

Depending on the type of assessment undertaken, a reasonable accommodation or modification may be necessary; in this case, CUADS should be contacted for better collaboration.

The overarching concern for institutions should be flexibility without compromising the demonstration of the essential learning outcomes of the programme (Howell, 2015).

5 Practical guidelines for the classroom

The CUADS provides a support service to the following categories of students with disabilities and we recommend that students be invited to meet with you to discuss possible accommodations, where applicable. Students on the CUADS database have disclosed their disability and therefore have a documented disability. Listed here are some examples and specific contact persons for guidance when necessary:

STUDENTS WHO ARE DEAF, HARD OF HEARING AND DEAFENED

CUADS contact person: Charity Morrison
x9348 | morrisoncy@ufs.ac.za

- Make sure that the student has a clear view of both the lecturer and the sign language interpreter/lip speaker.

- If the student who is hard of hearing lip-reads, make sure they sit in front and can see your mouth, therefore limited movement is advised. Also, face the class and engage with eye contact.

- Allow more **time for group discussions** when educational interpreters are part of the conversation. A three-way conversation takes longer than a two-way conversation. Also, inform students in the group to talk one at a time.

- Repeat other students' comments or any questions asked, as they will be missed.

- Instructional material should be available in text form.

- Sign Language interpreters provided by Interpreter Services (Siphiwe Nzelwane – x7857 | *nzelwanels@ufs.ac.za*) in cooperation with CUADS for Deaf students.

- Lip-speaker provided by Interpreter Services for deafened students.

- Allow the student to record lectures to use for note purposes.

- Where needed, depending on the communication access needs, other options can be considered in consultation with the student and CUADS.

- Keep an open flow of email communication.

- Switch subtitles on when showing videos.

- Clarify vocabulary and key terms.

- Support academic text with a visual representation of text (e.g. mind map/infographic).

- Provide new content in more than one format.

STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

CUADS contact person: Zingisile Sesing
x3489 | sesingzj@ufs.ac.za

If possible, allow students who are visually impaired to sit at the same place during each class and encourage other students to share the space with them.

- Say the student's name when you are talking to them or asking them a question.

- If possible, identify the students by name when responding to questions or raised hands as this allows the blind student the opportunity to learn to identify the different classmates by voice**.**

- The student may make use of a service animal. As the guide dog is a working animal it should not be petted, fed titbits or fussed over.

- Verbalise when writing on the board or overhead projector, when demonstrating something or when non-verbal information is being provided.

- Verbalise when a stranger or a visitor enters the lecture room or if the room or student groups have been rearranged in any way.

- Feel free to use words such as 'look' and see' as the student will perceive through the detail that follows.

- Ask the student for ideas or suggestions.

- Diagrams and graphs of importance can be converted with a method done called zy-fuse (embossed paper).

- Provide class hand-outs electronically before class.

- If you have a student using Braille, note that it could take twice as long as a sighted student to complete an assignment.

- An assignment can be modified as long as the competency or skill required by the assignment can be fully demonstrated.

- If assignment documents are delayed due to the text conversion process please be flexible with deadlines.

- However, the student remains responsible for working to schedule and handing in on time.

- Stress assignment organisation and ideas rather than layout and mechanics of the report.

- Practical sessions or laboratory work will pose challenges and one possible solution may be group work. Another measure would be to replace the practical work with theory.

- Practical reports, fieldwork reports and field trips (if undertaken) can be done as audio commentary or with human support as a guide.

- Blind students make use of computers and specialised software and will therefore submit assessments in typed or electronic format.

- Due to the nature of blindness, generally, blind students have developed exceptional memory skills.

- Students receive all their study material and textbooks according to the format of their choices, which includes braille, audio (material is read on a digital recorder), enlarged material and E-text.

- Allowing the student to record lectures to use for note purposes.

- Availing lecture notes/handouts, and study material (guide and textbooks) before classes commence to the CUADS Accessible Material Production Office in electronic format (Tigo Vorster – x9472 | *vorstera@ufs.ac.za*).

- Offer or avail a scribe with class work/tests, if necessary during lectures, or to submit class work afterwards or work on a personal laptop in class.

- Ensure videos have good-quality audio.

STUDENTS WITH MOBILITY IMPAIRMENTS
(e.g. wheelchair users, amputees, cerebral palsy, muscle dystrophy, spina bifida, and multiple sclerosis)

CUADS contact person: Mosa Moerane
x9980 | moeranemm@ufs.ac.za

Make sure there is a UFS desk with the wheelchair sign on it that it is accessible to the student and that there is no chair behind it.

- Make sure that classes are scheduled in venues that are accessible to students using wheelchairs.

- A wheelchair is part of a student's personal space. No one should push or touch it without asking first.

- When speaking one-to-one to a student using a wheelchair, bend down so that both of you are at the same level.

- Do not question specific needs/accommodations requested when certain matters are very personal/related to inaccessibility.

- Allowing the student to record lectures to use for note purposes.

- Pardoning the student if late within a few minutes due to challenges experienced with physical access.

- If possible or necessary, change the lecture venue if inaccessible or make alternative arrangements with the student.

- Offer or avail a scribe with class work, if necessary during lectures, or to submit class work afterwards.

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES
(e.g. dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, hyperactivity or combination of the aforementioned)

CUADS contact person: Thandiwe Pala
x3095 | palast@ufs.ac.za

How the student receives and processes information accurately via auditory, spatial or visual means, retains and then expresses knowledge, can differ from one learning difficulty to another.

- Provide a clear overview of what will be covered, preferably as a hand-out, highlighting the main arguments, key concepts and new/difficult vocabulary.

- When introducing a new theme or concept, clarify the new language and provide as many concrete examples as possible.

- Allow time for students to read a handout if used during the lecture.

- Avoid asking this group of students to read aloud or to respond to questions.

- Use a clear, concise writing style.

- When writing notes or creating slides, avoid patterned backgrounds and use a clear font such as Arial rather than Times New Roman.

- Avoid lots of dense text – use paragraphs, headings, sub-headings, and bullet points.

- Where there is a choice, provide references that have electronic copies available which enables the student to use text-to-speech software.

- Use a variety of means for presenting information e.g. videos, flow charts, diagrams etc so that note-taking is reduced.

- Start the teaching session by reviewing the previous one and providing overviews of the main topics and structure of the previous one.

- Break information down if task details are long.

- Provide instructions in written form if required and assignment deadlines well in advance.

- Allowing the student to record lectures to use for note purposes.

- Allowing individual tutor sessions instead of group tutor sessions.

- Availing lecture notes/handouts, and study material (guide and textbooks) before classes commence to the CUADS Accessible Material Production Office in electronic format to prepare audio material, if applicable: *vorstera@ufs.ac.za*.

STUDENTS WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL CONDITIONS

CUADS contact person: Mosa Moerane
x9980 | moeranemm@ufs.ac.za

- The relationship with students with psycho-social conditions should be characterised by respect for their rights to dignity, confidentiality and equity.

- The learning processes may be affected and the students may have to deal with anxiety, apathy, low self-esteem, lack of confidence, fatigue, irritability, erratic behaviour, panic attacks, attention deficit and fluctuating motivation, disorganization, difficulties with focusing, concentrating and completing work in a timely fashion.

- The ability to consistently function effectively and function may vary from day to day.

- Flexible delivery of teaching material via electronic media is particularly helpful for students who are unavoidably absent from class, or who cannot participate in classes for extended periods.

- Consider requests for flexibility, extensions, or scaffolding of assignments on a case-to-case basis.

- Do not attempt to counsel the student rather refer to Student Counselling and Development (SCD).

- Provide both verbal and written instructions with reminders of impending due dates for assignments and exams.
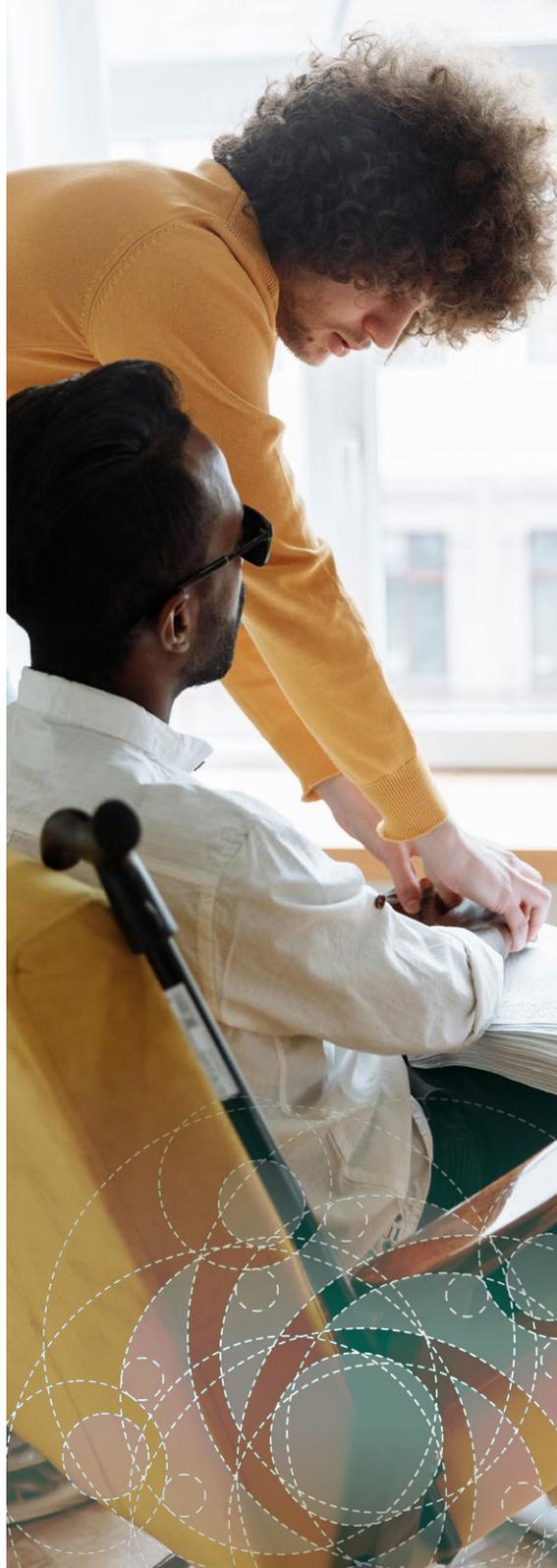
TEMPORARY IMPAIRMENTS
(e.g. a broken hand)

- Students who have temporary impairments are also accommodated in our test and exam venue.

CUADS South Campus
Disability Coordinator: Galekgolwe Motaung
x1355 | motaungge@ufs.ac.za

CUADS Qwaqwa Campus
Disability Coordinator: Thokozile Molapo
x5189 | molapotb@ufs.ac.za

6 Other practical guidelines

a. Faculties to communicate lecturers' details for each module to CUADS to facilitate coordination of different CUADS activities.

b. Faculties assist with the identification of tutors for specific modules, which is necessary for specific information due to inaccessibility thereof, i.e. Mathematics for students with visual impairments.

c. Include information regarding CUADS and SCD in study guides as well.

d. Professions – i.e. Social Work, where 3rd party involvement might be necessary (human support for student) explore how to deal with confidentiality.

e. Consider modification of assignment deadlines or catching up when falling behind schedule should the student's disability warrant this. The lecturer determines due dates consistent with the essential requirements of the module and this can be done in consultation with CUADS. Whenever possible, the student will initiate a discussion about modified deadlines before each assignment's due date.

f. When required, the CUADS will request the assistance of the academic department to identify individual tutor assistance.

g. The lecturer provides presentation slides to the students before the class. As mentioned students must be invited to meet with you to discuss possible accommodations.

h. Assessment accommodations

Extra time for all tests and examinations as determined by the UFS Reasonable Accommodation Panel Extra Time Subcommittee. Application forms can be obtained by emailing *ufsextratimeapp@ufs.ac.za*.

Although assessment accommodations are provided within the CUADS, as an alternative test/exam venue with invigilation provided by the Exam Division, the academic department whenever possible must ensure academic presence during tests and examinations similar to the main venues or provide a contact number.

Test papers must be provided in electronic format to the CUADS Alternative Assessment Office by emailing *cuadsexams@ufs.ac.za* or be delivered to the CUADS (Level 2 in the Library, Room 224). Test scripts will be delivered to your office. Exam papers are dealt with by the Exam Division. For assistance please contact the CUADS Alternative Assessment Office at 051–401 3095 or the email address provided.

Adopt a **mindful approach** to the student cohort being taught. Make contact with students who have disabilities in your cohort; if you are unsure about a productive way to provide equal access to information ask them first or contact the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS) or the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL).

ROLE OF **CUADS**

While CUADS mainly enables building capacity in all institutional functions to be able to respond effectively to the needs of students with disabilities, it is not a structure to address the "problem" of disability by taking over core institutional functions. It also raises awareness about disability and provides expert advice, but primarily orientated toward the creation of equitable opportunities for students with disabilities to succeed academically. In addition, it advises necessary learning adaptations, and together with academic staff facilitates flexible learning and teaching practices. The activities of CUADS are:

1. Provision of **disability support** through a specialist and a holistic coordinated approach with data on students making use of CUADS services and requiring reasonable accommodation. Confirmation of these students can therefore be obtained from CUADS.

2. Provision of **accessible transport** between Bfn and South Campuses.

3. Provision of **accessible study material** through the coordination and production of accessible learning material (Braille, enlargements, audio, zy–fuse) and lectures with Academic Departments and lecturers.

4. Provision of **communication access** through the facilitation and coordination with Interpreter Services (Sign Language interpretation, lip-speaking, real–time captioning, transcribing).

5. Facilitating and coordinating **alternative assessment** options together with academic departments, Exam Division and Extra–time Subcommittee (concessions).

a. CUADS computer facilities (assistive technology and software; alternative furniture and adapted hardware for physically impaired and blind students)

b. Accessible venue and specialised exam and test venue for alternative test and exam procedures.

c. Question papers will be coordinated through the Alternative Assessment office at CUADS with lecturers for tests and with the Exam Division during examinations.

d. Concessions are accommodated in the alternative assessment venues of CUADS.

6. Collaborate with the Centre for Teaching and Learning **student academic support** to ensure students with disabilities are supported academically, i.e. A_Step Tutor Programme, Unit for Academic Language and Literacy Development (Write Site).

7. **Liaison, awareness and advocacy** for the development of programmes regarding disability and universal access (i.e. Student Affairs, HR & CTL).

8. Ensure **accessibility** to all buildings and facilities for all users, according to the principles of Universal Access and Universal Design together with University Grounds & Estates.

ROLE OF **CTL**

1. Provision of facilitator and lecturer training with CUADS input.

2. Provision of voluntary support sessions with specific modules, i.e. Academic Literacy courses, A_Step Tutor Programme, Write Site.

Keep in touch

We aim to provide holistic support to UFS students with disabilities, and pride ourselves on being accessible to our students and other university stakeholders.

You can reach the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS) on any of the following platforms:

Visit us on your campus
- **Bloemfontein Campus (BFN):**
  Level 2, Sasol Library (next to the Johannes Stegmann Art Gallery)

- **South Campus (SC):**
  Room D125, Neville Alexander Library

- **QwaQwa Campus (QQ):**
  Room FG0013, Intsika building

Call us
+27 51 401 3713 (BFN)
+27 51 505 1355 (SC)
+27 58 721 5189 (QQ)

Send us an email
cuads@ufs.ac.za

Facebook
https://web.facebook.com/Centre-for-Universal-Access-and-Disability-Support-UFS-1509109672744423/

Instagram
https://instagram.com/cuads_ufs?utm_medium=copy_link

LinkedIn
https://www.linkedin.com/company/cuads-ufs