



PHOENICIA UNIVERSITY

Policy on Reasonable Accommodation for Differently Abled Individuals

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Overview

Phoenicia University (PU) is committed to cultivating a learning and working environment that is inclusive, accessible, and equitable for all members of its community, including students, faculty, and staff with disabilities. PU recognizes that full participation in university life extends beyond the classroom and examination hall to encompass the physical campus environment, emotional and mental wellbeing, academic life in its entirety, and employment.

This policy sets out PU's commitment to providing reasonable accommodation across each of these domains, in accordance with Lebanese law, international human rights frameworks, and the University's values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Alignment with International Framework

Phoenicia University adopts the internationally recognized definition of 'reasonable accommodation' set out in the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Article 2:

"...necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms." — CRPD, Article 2

Guided by this definition, PU commits to providing modifications and adjustments to the university system — physical, academic, emotional, mental, and employment-related — based on a proven, documented need, so that persons with disabilities can participate in university life on an equal basis with others. This policy is one of the mechanisms through which PU operationalizes its institutional commitment reduced inequalities, alongside related PU policies on non-discrimination, admissions equity, and inclusive employment.

Purpose and Objective

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Affirm Phoenicia University's institutional commitment to the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in all areas of university life.
2. Define 'reasonable accommodation' in line with the CRPD and clarify the scope of accommodations available at PU, including physical, academic, emotional, mental, and employment-related accommodations.
3. Provide support to faculty, staff, and administrators in establishing accessible academic, physical, and working environments.
4. Clarify the procedures for requesting, assessing, and implementing accommodations.

5. Promote sensitivity, confidentiality, and equity in the treatment of persons with disabilities across the University community.

Scope and Application

This policy applies to all PU students, faculty, staff, and administrators, and to all academic, physical, and employment-related interactions across the University where accommodation is required for a person with a documented disability. It applies to, but is not limited to: classrooms and examinations, campus facilities and infrastructure, student services, extracurricular and co-curricular activities, internships and field placements, and recruitment and employment within the University.

Accountability

Accountable/Responsible Officer	Accountable Officer
Accountable Office	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Office
Responsible Offices	Office of the Registrar (academic and exam accommodations); Student Affairs / Health Care Center (physical, emotional and mental health accommodations); Human Resources Department (employment-related accommodations)

Policy Statement

PU maintains a strict policy against discrimination on the basis of disability and is committed to ensuring the full participation of persons with disabilities in academic, social, physical, and professional life at the University. Reasonable accommodations are provided to guarantee access and equity, without compromising the essential academic or professional standards of a given program or role.

Definitions

Disability

Defined under Lebanese Law No. 220/2000 as any physical, sensory, or cognitive impairment that limits a person's ability to perform major life activities.

Reasonable Accommodation

In line with CRPD Article 2, reasonable accommodation refers to necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments to the university system and are based on a proven, documented need to ensure persons with disabilities can enjoy and exercise, on an equal basis with others, their right to participate in academic, physical, emotional, mental, and employment-related aspects of university life.

Documented Need

Evidence, typically medical, psychological, or professional in nature, submitted by a qualified and

recognized practitioner, substantiating the existence of a disability and its functional impact, on the basis of which an accommodation is assessed and granted.

Guiding Principles

- Equal opportunity: accommodations aim to provide equitable access, not an unfair advantage.
- Individualized assessment: every accommodation is determined on a case-by-case basis according to documented need.
- Dignity and respect: persons with disabilities are treated with dignity, and their autonomy in disclosing and discussing their disability is respected.
- Confidentiality: information relating to a person's disability is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis.
- Non-discrimination: no student, faculty, or staff member will be disadvantaged in admission, assessment, academic progression, or employment on the basis of disability.
- Proportionality: accommodations are necessary and appropriate, and do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden on the University.
- Continuous improvement: PU regularly reviews the accessibility of its campus, curricula, and employment practices to reduce the future need for individual accommodation.

Areas of Reasonable Accommodation

PU provides reasonable accommodation across four interconnected domains of university life:

Domain	Reasonable Accommodations
Physical	Ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms and parking, tactile signage, accessible classroom and laboratory furniture, accessible emergency evacuation procedures, priority housing (where applicable).
Academic	Extended time and alternative formats for exams, coursework and assignments; accessible course materials and digital platforms; note-taking support; assistive technology; flexible attendance and deadline policies; accommodated internships and field placements.
Emotional / Mental	Access to counseling and psychological support services, flexible participation requirements during periods of acute need, quiet or low-stimulation spaces, adjusted deadlines with medical documentation.
Employment	Accessible workplaces and equipment for faculty and staff, flexible or modified work schedules, assistive technology, inclusive recruitment and interview processes, non-discriminatory performance evaluation

	adjusted for disability-related need.
Housing	Accessible housing, barrier-free access, reasonable room modifications, accessible furniture and bathroom facilities, emergency evacuation planning, and other housing adjustments necessary to meet disability-related needs.

Financial Assistance

PU is committed to reducing financial barriers that may prevent students with disabilities and special needs from accessing higher education. In partnership with Rehabilitation International's Global Disability Development Fund (RI's GDDF), the University offers the Achievers Scholarship Fund, which provides financial assistance to eligible students with disabilities and special needs by covering tuition costs. To be eligible, applicants must have a documented disability or special need, be Lebanese Baccalaureate graduates admitted to PU, demonstrate financial need, and maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout their studies.

Students with documented disabilities or special needs who do not meet the eligibility requirements for the Achievers Scholarship Fund may still be considered financial assistance through the University's regular financial aid assessment process. Each application is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the applicant's financial circumstances and support needs. Where appropriate and subject to the University's available resources and applicable policies, tuition assistance, financial support, or other reasonable accommodations may be provided to ensure that financial hardship does not prevent qualified students with disabilities from accessing, participating in, or successfully completing their higher education.

Procedures for Requesting Accommodation

Students — General and Academic Accommodations

- The student submits a request initiated through the Health Care Center, which will coordinate with the Office of the Registrar and Student Affairs Office.
- An appointment is scheduled involving the student, the Office of the Registrar, and the Health Care Center to review the accommodation request and assess documented need.
- The Office of the Registrar consults with the Dean of the relevant college, and where applicable for Facilities Management or Student Affairs, to coordinate the specific accommodation.
- Where the student is deemed eligible, the Office of the Registrar issues an official Accommodation Notice via email to the student and the relevant college(s).
- The college is responsible for forwarding the notice to relevant instructors who implement the accommodation as specified.

Students — Examination Accommodations

- The student completes the Exam and Assessment Accommodation Request Form, available on PUSIS under Online Forms, and submits the required medical documentation.
- The review, approval, and notification process follow the same steps outlined as the General and Academic Accommodations.
- The Accommodation Notice specifies the exact examination of accommodation(s) granted (e.g., extended time, alternative format, distraction-reduced room, scribe support) for implementation by instructors and exam invigilators.

Faculty and Staff — Employment Accommodations

- The employee submits a request, with supporting documentation, to the Human Resources Department.
- HR reviews the request in consultation with the employee's supervisor and, where relevant, a medical professional, assesses documented need and feasibility.
- HR communicates the outcome to the employee in writing and coordinates implementation with the relevant department, including any necessary adjustments to the physical workspace, schedule, or job duties.
- Requests are reviewed periodically or upon change in circumstances to ensure continued appropriateness of the accommodation.

Types of Disabilities and Common Accommodations

The table below outlines common categories of disability and typical accommodations that may be included in an Accommodation Notice.

Disability Type	Description	Common Accommodations
ADHD	Difficulty with attention, organization, or impulse control.	Extended time, reduced-distraction environment (testing and study spaces), structured task planning.
Neurodiverse Learning Profiles	Neurological differences affect reading, writing, or math skills, such as dyslexia and dysgraphia.	Extended time, quiet testing environment, alternative formats, note-taking support, and — where required — an officer from the Office of the Registrar to write the exam on the student's behalf.
Mobility and Physical Support Needs	Conditions affecting mobility or physical functioning.	Accessible classrooms, buildings, and facilities; assistive devices; accessible parking and transport; extended test time.

Blind or Low Vision	Visual impairments not fully correctable by lenses.	Screen readers, accessible digital materials, audio versions of texts, tactile signage, and — where required — an officer from the Office of the Registrar to write the exam on the student's behalf.
Speech-Language Impairments	Challenges with verbal communication or language processing.	Alternative formats for participation, extended time, and speech support for presentations, speeches, or oral gradings, as needed.
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	Partial or full hearing loss.	Captioned videos, sign language interpreters, real-time transcription, visual alert systems.
Psychological / Mental Health Conditions	Conditions such as anxiety, depression, PTSD, or other mental health diagnoses may affect participation.	Flexible attendance and deadlines, quiet spaces, access to counseling, modified participation requirements, examination breaks.
Chronic Health Conditions	Ongoing medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, epilepsy, autoimmune disorders) requiring periodic accommodation.	Flexible scheduling, permission for medication/food/rest breaks, modified attendance policies, access to private space when needed.

Confidentiality and Sensitivity

- Accommodation Notices and related documentation are confidential and are shared only with individuals who require the information to implement the accommodation.
- Faculty and staff must not disclose information about a student's, colleague's, or employee's disability or accommodation to unauthorized third parties.
- Faculty and staff should avoid intrusive questions and respect the individual's privacy and autonomy in discussing their disability.

Legal and Policy Framework

- ✓ Lebanese Law No. 220/2000 on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- ✓ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), in particular Article 2.
- ✓ United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy.

- ✓ United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities.
- ✓ Phoenicia University Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy.
- ✓ Phoenicia University Student Code of Conduct and Employee Handbook.



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