



Roadmap towards Equal Access in Higher Education

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Outline

HE and persons with disabilities in selected international documents

- CRDP
- IAU Policy Statements

Students, Professors and Staff with disabilities at HEIs

- Inclusion
- Challenges

The way forward

- Individuals/ Organisations: Guidelines
- Systems: Open access
- At IAU

Towards inclusive universities: Selling Points

Building a worldwide higher education community

The IAU in brief



- Created in **1950**, IAU is the largest **global** university association (NGO)
- Based at **UNESCO**, IAU acts as an independent voice for higher education
- IAU brings together Members from **120** countries
- Besides **Institutional** Members, IAU also has **Organizational** Members, **Affiliates** and **Associates**

Higher education in CRDP

Directly addressing higher education:

5. States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access **general** tertiary education, vocational training, adult education and lifelong learning without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. To this end, States Parties shall ensure that **reasonable** accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities.

Are general and reasonable enough?

Higher education in CRDP

And indirectly:

4. In order to help ensure the realization of this right, States Parties shall take appropriate measures shall take appropriate measures to employ teachers, including **teachers** with disabilities, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train **professionals and staff** who work at all levels of education.

What about other disabilities? Does this include researchers, and students?

IAU Policy Statements

- **Equitable Access, Success and Quality in Higher Education**

Select key principle: Access to higher learning **should** be made possible to all regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, economic or social class, age, language, religion, location **or [dis]abilities.**

Shouldn't it be: must be made possible to all (full stop)?

- **Universities and Information and Communication Technologies (2004)** has no item on people with disabilities.

Inclusion at higher education level

Universities are doing a lot:

- counselling services;
- academic support;
- social activities;
- Transition to active life;
- high-level position in charge of pwd;
- Preparation of staff and faculty;
- one of the missions of most open universities;
- research and study programmes.

Challenges for higher education

- Difficulty in reaching out to and involving everybody:
 - Disability Statistics managed by Cornell University : in the year 2013 only 13.5% of non-institutionalized persons aged 21 to 64 with a disability in the US have an educational attainment of a BA degree or higher, compared to 32.1 % for persons without a disability.
 - in the UK, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), in 2013/2014, only 3.4% of full-time academic staff had a disability.
 - In Europe, whilst overall graduation rates have increased, this has not necessarily increased the diversity of the student population.

Challenges for higher education

- Need for continuous awareness raising and training of the higher education community and beyond (schools, parents, labour market). Eliminating barriers being only a first step, the second one being to manage a cultural shift in which the uniqueness of everyone is the keyword.
- Rapid changes in technology.
- Numbers : More students with disabilities reaching HE and lifelong learning
- Financial constraints: support – mainly on an individual basis, is receding, when and where available.

Guidelines for Accessible Information

A solution supported by the IAU is to write all contents for learning in the most accessible way from their inception.

The Guidelines are a tool for all practitioners from students, to professors, and including staff and librarians, to easily produce content that is accessible to all. They include three levels of difficulty:

- Easy: actions that can be completed with a general knowledge of common software programmes;
- Advanced (once easy becomes automatic);
- Professional (can be used in procurements).



ICT4IAL

ICT for Information
Accessibility in Learning

www.ict4ial.eu

Open Educational Resources

Another solution supported by the IAU is the publication of all content using an Creative Commons Licence so that all content can be freely adapted and hence offer the possibility to respond to each individual's needs.

At IAU

The Guidelines are tabled for approval by the Association's General Assembly which is to take place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 13-16 November 2016. The theme of the General Conference is : ***Higher Education: A catalyst for innovative and sustainable societies.***

The General Assembly will also be asked to adopt the new strategic plan for the Association which comprises ICT. Its second objective is: **To promote the design of inclusive ICT strategies** and includes the revision of IAU Policy Statement on Universities and ICTs.

Towards inclusive universities: Selling points

- UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030. Goal 4 on Education:

By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education for the vulnerable, including people with disabilities.

- There is evidence that high-performing education systems are also those which are the most equitable (OECD, 2012).
- World leaders stated that no education target should be considered met unless met by all (World Education Forum, Incheon, 2015)