Reasonable Accommodation and Accessibility Policy

1. Purpose

To provide a structured process for identifying and addressing accessibility barriers and arranging reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities among students, staff, applicants and visitors, enabling equal access and participation.

2. Scope

This policy applies to persons with disabilities who study, work, apply for admission or employment, conduct research, visit or otherwise access University premises, programmes, services and activities. It covers physical, digital, communication, academic, examination and workplace accessibility, subject to applicable law and reasonable assessment of individual requirements.

3. Definitions

- **Person with disability:** A person covered by the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and applicable rules, as amended.
- **Reasonable accommodation:** Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden, where required, to ensure persons with disabilities can exercise rights and participate equally.
- **Accessibility:** The extent to which buildings, transport, information, communication, digital platforms, services and facilities can be accessed and used by persons with disabilities.
- **Accommodation request:** A request for an adjustment, support service, assistive aid or modification to remove a disability-related barrier.

4. Policy Statement

VISTAS is committed to an accessible and inclusive learning and working environment. The University shall consider and provide reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in accordance with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, applicable rules and other relevant requirements. A documented mechanism shall receive requests, assess needs, decide and implement appropriate adjustments, and review accessibility barriers. Resource requirements shall be identified and placed through the University's approved budget and administrative processes.

5. Policy Principles and Commitments

- Persons with disabilities shall have equal opportunity to access admission, education, employment, research, campus facilities, information, events and University services.
- Requests for reasonable accommodation shall be considered individually, promptly, respectfully and without discrimination.
- Possible adjustments may include accessible routes and facilities, assistive technology, accessible learning materials, communication support, examination arrangements, suitable workstations, modified work processes and other appropriate measures.
- Where supporting documentation is reasonably required, the University shall seek only information relevant to assessing the accommodation and shall protect it as confidential information.

- An Accessibility Officer or designated office shall coordinate requests and maintain a secure accommodation register with restricted access.
- Urgent or temporary arrangements may be considered while a request is being assessed, where practicable and appropriate.
- Where a requested adjustment cannot be provided in the exact form sought, the University shall discuss effective alternatives with the individual and record the reasons and proposed alternative.
- An annual accessibility review shall identify physical, digital, academic and workplace barriers and recommend a prioritised improvement plan.
- An adequately supported funding mechanism shall be pursued through a designated budget provision or approved funding process. The annual plan shall identify estimated costs, priority, funding source, approval status and expenditure, where applicable. No funding amount shall be represented as allocated until formally approved.
- Personal information and disability-related records shall be handled confidentially and shared only on a need-to-know basis, subject to law.

6. Implementation Procedure

1. A student, employee, applicant or authorised representative may submit an accommodation request to the Accessibility Officer / designated office through the published accessible channel. Assistance shall be provided where a person cannot complete the form independently.
2. The office shall acknowledge the request, normally within five working days, and arrange a discussion with the individual to understand the functional barrier and requested adjustment.
3. Relevant academic, HR, facilities, IT or other offices shall assess the request in consultation with the individual and, where necessary, qualified professionals.
4. A decision shall be communicated in writing, normally within 15 working days where practicable. If more time is required, the individual shall be informed of the reason and expected timeline.
5. Approved adjustments shall be assigned to a responsible office with an implementation date. Any required expenditure shall be processed through the approved budget and procurement procedures.
6. If the requested adjustment is not feasible in the proposed form, the office shall document the reasons, consult the individual and identify an effective alternative wherever possible.
7. The individual may seek a review by the designated senior authority if dissatisfied with the decision or implementation.
8. The Accessibility Officer shall monitor implementation, review unresolved requests and prepare an anonymised annual report on requests, types of accommodation, response times, barriers and resource requirements.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
Accessibility Officer / designated office	Receive and coordinate requests, maintain confidential records, monitor implementation and prepare annual reports.
Human Resources Department	Coordinate workplace accommodation, recruitment access and employee-related adjustments.

Student Affairs / Academic offices	Coordinate academic, examination, learning and student-service accommodations.
Estate / Facilities and Administration	Assess and address physical access, signage, sanitation, transport and campus infrastructure requirements.
IT / Library / Learning support	Support accessible digital platforms, electronic materials, assistive technology and information access.
Finance and Purchase offices	Assess cost estimates and process approved budget, procurement and funding requirements.
Heads of Schools / Departments	Implement approved academic or workplace adjustments and maintain confidentiality.
Competent Authority	Approve policy, resource mechanisms and significant corrective measures.

8. Records and Supporting Evidence

- Approved policy and designation / appointment order of Accessibility Officer
- Published accommodation request and review procedure
- Confidential accommodation request register and decision records
- Accessibility audit reports covering infrastructure, digital access and services
- Individual implementation records with personal details appropriately protected
- Annual accessibility improvement plan with cost estimates, funding source, approvals and expenditure records
- Training and awareness records

9. Review and Amendment

This policy shall be reviewed at least once every three years, or earlier if applicable law, University structures, identified risks or implementation reviews require amendment. The review date, approved amendments and responsible authority shall be recorded.

Created / Revised on: _____

Approved by: _____ Date: _____

Signature / Seal: _____