2020

Higher education access and participation for persons with disability in Ghanaian public universities

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A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy

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M.Phil., ChPA, CMC, B.Ed., Dip. Ed, Teachers Certificate 'A'

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Edith Cowan University
2020

ABSTRACT

Globally, there is a growing interest in widening access and supporting participation for persons with disability in higher education. This situation is stimulated in part by major international treaties and protocols. Ghana has demonstrated its commitment to this global trend to formulate and implement national legislation on inclusive education across the country's educational system. However, in Ghana, access to and participation in the higher education system by persons with disability remains poor despite national legislation and policies to address this issue. It appears that national policies have not fully translated into institutional policies and provisions dedicated to supporting persons with disability. This study investigated how the Inclusive Education (IE) Policy (2015) in Ghana has been reflected in institutional policies and provisions that focus on students with disability in Ghanaian public universities. The aim of the study was to explore the extent to which institutional policies, arrangements, and practices in Ghanaian public universities aligned with the IE policy and addressed disability issues to increase access and participation for persons with disability.

A qualitative approach and interpretivist paradigm were adopted using a multi-case study design. In-depth interviews were conducted with a total of 36 participants: seven policy architects from the National Steering Committee on Inclusive Education; three pro-vice-chancellors; three deans of students; seven deans of school and heads of department; two heads and two staff from disability support units; as well as 12 students with disability. These participants represented architects of the IE policy and members of the three public universities in Ghana that were studied. Other data were collected from document analysis and observations and, together with data from the interviews, were used to establish how and to what extent institutional policies and provisions support access and full participation of persons with disability in Ghanaian public universities. Data from the interviews, observations, and documents were analysed thematically and presented in a narrative form.

It was evident from the findings that awareness of the IE policy and the knowledge of its contents were limited in the case study universities. Although participants' understanding of the objectives of the IE policy was consistent with the intentions of the policy, this knowledge was based on the participants' experience rather than their knowledge of the policy content. Findings showed that the context of each case university reflected the extent of resourcing for policy implementation. This study also revealed that although the case study universities have provisions and a range of support services available for students with disability, these did not meet the students' expectations. Further, it became evident from the data that attitudes towards

students with disability were mainly negative, impacting university experiences of persons with disability. In addition, although the public universities in this research did admit some categories of students with disability, the universities tended to provide adjustments rather than inclusion due, in part, to financial constraints.

This study has highlighted that knowledge of national legislation and policy on the inclusion of people with disability, resourcing, and attitudes at all levels of the university community have implications for widening access and supporting the participation of students with disability in public universities in Ghana. Finally, this study provides recommendations that may improve access and participation for persons with disability in Ghanaian public universities.

DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

i. incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

ii. contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of this thesis; or

iii. contain any defamatory material.

Signed: [redacted] Date: July 14, 2020

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I am extremely grateful to Edith Cowan University for awarding me the Edith Cowan University Post-Graduate Research Scholarship (ECUPRS), International, to pursue this PhD program. This offer has a rippling effect - my life and that of my generation will never remain the same again. Further, I am most grateful to the University for Development Studies (UDS), my employers, for granting me study leave.

My supervisors, you have all been awesome and unmatched in your roles as academic mentors and coaches. I am thankful to Associate Professor Glenda Campbell-Evans for her insight and the way she helped to enrich, direct, and shape this research. I would also like to thank Dr Susan Main who provided attention to detail, intelligence, sharpness, and assiduousness. You have both made an irreplaceable contribution to realising my PhD dream.

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the wonderful research participants in the three selected public universities in Ghana and the policymakers, who willingly shared their experiences. My deep thanks go to Dr Tanya Lyons for her editing support. Dr Enoch Odame Anto and Dr Victor Fanam Nunfam, accept my utmost gratitude for the formatting assistance. Thank you to the Graduate Research School (GRS), the regular workshops, the SOAR ambassadors, Dr Albert Amankwa, Dr Michelle Tan, Dr Kunal Dhiman, Ankje Frouws, and many more. Many thanks to you, Bev Lurie, for your self-less support. I often admire your zeal and promptness anytime I get in touch with you for support; you always sound so caring! The writing consultants, particularly Dr Jo McFarlane and Dr John Hall, and Dr Neil Ferguson, the research consultant, offered a readiness to support, passion, critical comments, and feedback. To my many colleagues: Chamila, Davidaa, Enoch, Gemma, Kourey, Nadia, Noel, Samuel, Senyo, Vanessa, and Wei, it’s been wonderful knowing you. My PhD office mate Dr Hawa Mpate, you have been so supportive from the first day we met.

To my former housemates in Joondalup, Dr Eric Adua, Dr Hayford Ofori Dr Enoch Odame Anto, and Dr Yakubu Sumaila. I have enjoyed your company, encouragement, and support. My sincere gratitude goes to (in alphabetic order as you all played your part): Rev Dr Emmanuel Aboagye, Dr Esther Adama, Dr Kwadzo Adusei-Asante, Dr Kwadzo Apiagyei, Dr Daniel Doe, Dr Jonas Klutsey, Dr Janet Serwa Boateng, Dr Kwaafo Awuah Mensah, Dr Victor Fanam Nunfam, Isaac Kosi, and your spouses for your goodwill gestures. I cannot forget the moral support I received from comrades from Ghana, Afia Asamoah, Ebenezer, Emmanuel, Justice, Selorm, and the entire membership of the ECU-Ghana Students Union, past and

present, many thanks to you. Mrs Peace Wuaku-Klutsey and Mrs Yvonne Doh, thank you for your unprecedented moral support. My sincere thank you to Pastor Gerald and Sue Keehan, Global Heart Church, Perth, and Sisterhood members, Pastor Marie, Vannessa, Pedu, and Cheryl, and many more. I have enjoyed fellowshipping with you.

I greatly appreciate the goodwill of the principal officers, management, and staff of UDS. Prof Agnes Atia Apusigah and Prof Anthony Donkor, the immediate past Dean and Vice Dean, Faculty of Education, UDS; Dr and Mrs Gideon Helegbe, and Dr Jonas Fiadzawoo, UDS; Prof Samuel Hayford and Dr Daniel Dogbe, UEW; Prof Clement Agezo; Dr Baaba Aidoo and Mr Kwasi Opuni, UCC; Mr Mawusi Asafo; CIAMC-Ghana, thank you for your outstanding support. I'm equally grateful to Prof Mawutor Avoke, the immediate past Vice-Chancellor of UEW, for introducing me to Special Education. Thank you also to Dr Patrick Swanzy, the architects of this PhD, and your wife, Sister Charity, I am extremely grateful to you for your encouragement, support, and your belief in my ability to succeed in the program. To the entire church family of Sanctuary of Wind and Fire Assemblies of God, Tamale, I appreciate your relentless prayers. The SCOAN, the Emmanuel TV Team, Wiseman Daniel of Wiseman Daniel Ministries (WDM), these acknowledgements cannot be complete without appreciating your prayer support – it's been awesome! Thank you to my colleagues Vida, Juliana, Araba, Ruhia, Rahina, Patience, Julie, and many more, for your goodwill. To George, Cate, Jamila, Selina, Mercy, Hajia, Enoch, Kasim, Eric, Mishael, Bensille, Stella, Sumaila, etc, I say, thank you. I wish I had enough space to acknowledge all of you.

I will always remember the kind-heartedness of Dr Jonas Klutsey, his lovely wife, Mrs Peace Wuaku-Klutsey, and their kids, Madiba Klutsey and Makaziwe Klutsey, as well as Ing. Amir Abdul-Wahab Ahmed, for accepting me into their home when I was stranded due to COVID-19 restrictions in Australia and in my home country, Ghana. May the Almighty God enlarge your coast.

Finally, I am extremely grateful to my kids for adapting to my absence. I remember, a few days before my departure to Perth, Yayra went to bathe but ended up pouring the boiling water on her body. I was upset but a friend reminded me that "you should know the little girl is confused because she thought you are the only person she has, and you are leaving her soon". Today, I am happy and proud to say that four years on, you are now a big girl in a senior high school. Isaac, you said my absence has affected you and even your performance in the university – if this is true, then you now have a lot of years to redeem your grades and your class. To Sister

Bright who is always in touch I say, may God richly bless you! Emmanuel Edudzie, I appreciate the wonderful parcel I received from you in Accra when I was preparing to travel - it cannot go unnoticed. Sella, Blessings, Eunice, and Eugenia, Elim, and many more, I appreciate your prayers and good wishes. To my older and younger siblings: sisters – Gertrude, Elizabeth, Janet, and Mama; brothers – Theophilus, David, Justice, Thywill, Joel, Samuel, etc and their spouses, I acknowledge your prayers and goodwill. Emmanuel Joshua, kudos for your prayer support and constant checks. Now my grandkids (my nascent professors), David, Caleb, Malike, Nueke, Ewoenam, you have been a source of great joy and inspiration. I cherish your constant prayers, and good wishes, knowing so well that the Almighty God listens to the prayers of children even better.

DEDICATION

To God be the glory – great things He has done and greater things He will do!!!

This thesis is dedicated to:

i. My father in the Lord, Prophet Temitope Balogun Joshua (T.B. Joshua), the General Overseer of the Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN), Lagos, Nigeria, and Emmanuel TV Global Network; and Evangelist Evelyn Joshua, his wonderful wife.

ii. My Pastor and his wife, Rev Aaron Lambon Fant and Mrs. Ernestina Fant, Sanctuary of Wind and Fire Assemblies of God (AG), Tamale, Ghana.

iii. Persons with disability who strive to attain higher education, and also advocate for the less privileged and the marginalised in society; and

iv. All those who dedicate themselves to advocating and ensuring equal opportunity for persons with disability at all levels of education, particularly, higher education.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

ADCET	Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training
CBM	Christian Blind Mission (International, Australia)
DACF	District Assemblies Common Fund
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act (UK)
DDA-AU	Disability Discrimination Act (Australia)
DED	Disability Equality Duty
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DHET	Department of Education and Training
DSE	Disability Standards for Education
DSU	Disability Support Unit
ECESA	European Commission for Employment and Social Affairs
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ESA	Education Sector Analysis
FOTIM	Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis
GES	Ghana Education Service
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
ICT	Information, Communication, and Technology
IE	Inclusive Education
IIEP-UNESCO	International Institute for Educational Planning
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MESW	Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare
MoE	Ministry of Education
NAB	National Accreditation Board
NCTE	National Council for Tertiary Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
PUA	Public University A
PUB	Public University B
PUC	Public University C
RPD	Rights of Persons with Disability

SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENDA	Special Educational Needs and Disability Act
SpED	Special Education Division
SRC	Student Representative Council
TEQSA	Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency
UCC	University of Cape Coast
UCT	University of Cape Town
UD	Universal Design
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UDS	University for Development Studies
UENR	University of Energy and Natural Resources
UEW	University of Education, Winneba
UG	University of Ghana
UHAS	University of Health and Allied Sciences
UMaT	University of Mines and Technology
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNESCO IITE	UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPIAS	Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation
UPSA	University of Professional Studies
URC	University Rationalisation Committee
UTS	University of Technology, Sydney
WAEC	West African Examinations Council
WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination
WHO	World Health Organization
WPRPD	White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The World Disability Report of the World Health Organization (WHO) indicated that more than a billion people experience a disability (WHO, 2011), with 80 percent of this number estimated to live in developing countries. Persons with disability are the world's largest marginalised group (United Nations Enable, 2017), and among the challenges they face, there are numerous obstacles in accessing educational services (United Nations, 2015a). The global community recognises that education is vital to create inclusive societies and to ensure that all persons participate on an equal basis to reach their maximum potential (United Nations, 2015b). The right to education is a well-established universal human right, reinforced by international human rights conventions and treaties (United Nations Human Rights Office, 2014). The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) suggested that these rights cannot be negotiated (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2007). The development and adoption of international legislation over the past few decades establish the rights of persons with disability, including the right to education. It is an indisputable fact that when education is guaranteed, access to other civil, political, social, economic, and cultural rights is enhanced (United Nations, 2015a). The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), therefore, suggested that countries have a responsibility to respect, safeguard and promote the right of all persons, including persons with disability, to education (UNESCO, 2014).

The tenets of social justice are critical in safeguarding the rights of persons with disability in educational systems. In particular, these tenets seek to disrupt and subvert arrangements that promote marginalisation and exclusionary practices in educational settings (Evans et al., 2017). It is widely acknowledged that higher education has transformative effects; it is associated with a more innovative societies, and a more visible commitment to social justice (Osman et al., 2018). Evans et al. (2017) argued that a social justice approach to disability in higher education begins with the understanding that people's capabilities and rights to contribute to and benefit from, higher education is independent of their bodies and psyches conforming to dominant standards and/or norms. This perspective demonstrates the belief that impediments to success in higher education "lie in the structural, organizational, physical and attitudinal aspects of

institutions" (p. xiii) rather than in the characteristics of the individual. Social justice is about providing opportunities for those who might have been marginalised and excluded from accessing and actively participating in higher education (English, 2016); this is an established constituent of the charter and mission of higher education as public or collective good. This mission cannot be compromised or bargained because the universities are deemed to possess a core set of values to support its realisation (Kezar, 2004. Although social justice is frequently used in mission statements and marketing claims by universities around the globe, most often social justice is neither considered a valued objective nor a philosophy relevant to the work of universities (Goodwin & Proctor, 2019). Worldwide, universities are under pressure to defend their continuous existence, improve their accessibility, and adopt strategies that will make them more inclusive of varied knowledge and experiences (Osman et al., 2018). Offering students from marginalised and underrepresented social groups the chance to participate in tertiary education is a means of enacting social justice and reducing impediments to equitable outcomes (Bonati, 2019).

Legislation is fundamental to creating an inclusive and equitable system of education. It provides the basis for articulating principles critical for developing an inclusive framework and restructuring existing features that obstruct equity (UNESCO, 2017). The UN Committee on RPD (2016) maintained that inclusive education is to be acknowledged as a basic human right of all learners. In the twenty-first century, inclusive education has become so fundamental to the education policies of a considerable number of countries that some scholars described it without hesitation as 'a global agenda' (Dyson, 2004, p. 613). In the United Kingdom, the term inclusion suggests effective schooling. It no longer refers only to the needs of persons with disability (Miles, 2000). Internationally, renowned organisations such the UN and the UNESCO, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) and the World Bank have been powerful advocates for inclusion as a fundamental principle of schooling and education systems (Armstrong et al., 2011). Inclusive education is a means of building the capacity of the school system to include learners with diverse needs. Fundamentally, the values of inclusive education must underlie all education policies and practices to offer equal prospects in education for all students; accommodate varied needs, capabilities, and characteristics of students; and remove all categories of discrimination in the learning or institutional environment (UNESCO, 2009). Central to inclusive education is students' engagement. Persons with disability can only achieve and complete their studies in

an inclusive education system if they are fully engaged in both academic and non-academic activities (Kuh, 2009).

Widening access and participation in higher education has become a critical issue on the agenda of governments around the globe (Atherton, 2017; Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013). There has been a paradigm shift in higher education towards inclusion as higher education providers identify that diversity is central to their efficient running, and as they seek to reflect and shape community aspirations by guaranteeing social justice and equity for all (Riddell et al., 2005). As a consequence, the past four decades have seen a growing number of students with disability entering higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide (Isaacs, 2020; Mantsha, 2016). Countries, especially those belonging to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), reformed their higher education sectors to consider access for persons with disability, which led to a remarkable rise in the enrolment of students with disability in tertiary education institutions from the late 1980s to 2000s. In Canada, enrolments of students with disability at the university increased by over 350 percent, from 1668 students in 1989 to 6889 students in 2001; Sweden recorded a 125 percent growth from 1993 to 1998; France recorded a 100 percent growth from 1990 to 2000; and students with disability enrolled at universities in Germany rose from 16 percent in 2003 to 18.9 percent in 2006 (Ebersold, 2008).

Education facilitates the development of the abilities and strengths of persons with disability and enable them to achieve their aspirations (Enabling Masterplan Steering Committee – Singapore, 2016). Attaining higher levels of education is related to numerous positive life outcomes such as improved employment opportunities, higher earning capacity, improved health status, higher quality of life, and higher lifetime earnings (Slee et al., 2014). Thus, it is widely accepted that ensuring educational opportunities for persons with disability creates citizens who are better able to contribute towards and participate in all facets of civic life, including employment. Ultimately, this facilitates the creation of societies that are well placed to contribute productively to economies (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). Recognising the role of higher education for both individuals and population-based economic growth, policy designers have concentrated on expanding higher education. Strategies for expansion seek to broaden the reach of higher education to include previously excluded groups such as persons with disability (Slee et al., 2014).

Students with disability are confronted with obstacles in five major areas, which hinder their participation in HEIs. These areas include the physical environment, access to information, entrance to higher education, assumptions of 'normality', and levels of awareness (Tinklin & Hall, 1999). Tinklin and Hall contended that, in most cases, students with disability are provided with support "to get round obstacles that ideally should be removed" (p. 183) to ensure their active participation. Brabazon (2015) pointed out that it is critical to create triangulated access and support structures through law, policy, andragogy, curriculum, assessment, professional development, expertise in assistive technologies, and support services for all students (p. xii). Thus, everybody has a crucial role to play in breaking down unnecessary barriers of exclusion in a manner that benefits all categories of persons (CBM International Australia, 2018). When individuals work to remodel the structure of organisations to which they belong, these organisations become responsive to the needs of all persons and stop oppressive dynamics from reproducing (Kaufman, 2016). Contending with this oppression requires a complete overhaul of systems, a reconceptualisation of what is crucial to the community, and also to the entire society (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013).

In spite of the fact that developing countries have acceded to the philosophy of inclusive education, there is often inadequate funding, support, or knowledge to undertake a successful system-wide inclusive approach for all learners (Sharma et al., 2013). Resource barriers are the most commonly used justifications for not supporting the practice of inclusion, even in the seemingly well-resourced educational environments. A lack of resources - human, material (money), and access to information and knowledge - is viewed as a major obstacle militating against inclusion across economic, cultural, and geographical boundaries (Miles, 2000). However, Miles argued that the "attitudinal barrier to inclusion is so great that the level of resourcing is irrelevant" (p. 1). Thus, it is the attitude of people towards those resources and the manner they are utilised, that is critical to promoting inclusive education.

In developing countries, disability is a major exclusionary factor for schooling (United Nations Enable, 2017; World Vision, 2007) and, indeed, for any form of education in Africa (Inclusion International, 2006; UNESCO, 2010). Lyner-Cleophas et al. (2014) argued that in Africa, access to higher education for persons with disability offers both opportunities and challenges. Traditionally, little consideration has been given to issues of access, retention, progression, and participation of students with disability within higher education institutions.

Studies conducted in Africa have revealed that higher education access, participation, and engagement for persons with disability is a 'work in progress'. For example, the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM) conducted research in South African higher education institutions (HEIs) from 2009 until 2011. It found that disability support service units in most of the institutions are placed under the student counselling services or the student affairs department. Based on their findings, FOTIM argued that this affiliation made the independent operation of disability units challenging and ineffective, and perpetuated the medical model of disability (FOTIM, 2011).

Furthermore, physical access remains a major barrier for students with disability in HEIs in most African countries (e.g., Council on Higher Education Lesotho, 2012, 2014; FOTIM, 2011; Kwesiga & Ahikire, 2006; Lord, 2017; Lord & Stein, 2018; Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Mutanga, 2018; Muzemil, 2018). In some South African universities, Mutanga (2018) found that students with disability encounter challenges such as inadequate funding conditions, limited opportunity to expand social networks, difficulties in accessing teaching and learning, and lack of fairness in assessment and examination procedures. Similarly, in Ethiopia, Tamrat (2018) reported a range of barriers that obstructed students with disability from participating meaningfully in higher education. These barriers include access to the built environment, lack of adequate educational materials, (including assistive devices and computers), absence of curricular adaptations, rigid assessment techniques, and examination procedures. Where such amenities exist, they are meagre, fragmented, and at a nascent stage. In many of the HEIs, faculty and administrative staff are ill-prepared to provide the necessary support to students with disability. Institutional disability policies and procedural structures are rare, and students with disability have limited opportunities to choose their program of study. These situations negatively impact their social and academic achievements and professional goals.

The key findings of Morley and Croft's (2011) research into widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania were that whereas disability was correlated with misrecognition, constraints, frustration, exclusion, and even danger, students' agency, advocacy, and attainment in tertiary education presented opportunities for changing damaged identities. Even though, globally, participation rates in higher education have increased, an array of social groups are still excluded. While awareness about exclusion and equality is growing, disability is an inequality that has received little policy or research attention from institutions of higher education in low-income countries. Further, there is a strong association

between disability and poverty, especially in developing countries (Morley & Croft, 2011). Accessible higher education is, therefore, critical for persons with disability to break the cycle of poverty (Braun & Naami, 2019). In African countries where data on students with disability in higher education exists, how these figures were arrived at is not disclosed (Anthony, 2011); thus, data to inform education for persons with disability in developing countries remains limited (Croft, 2013).

The Policy

Policy is pivotal for ensuring the fundamental rights of persons with disability (UNESCO, 2017; United Nations, 2015b). Globally, there is a growing interest in widening access and supporting participation for persons with disability in higher education. This situation is stimulated in part by the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy, and Practice in Special Needs Education (UNESCO, 1994) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (United Nations, 2006). These international treaties aim to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disability, and to engender respect for their inherent dignity (WHO, 2011). These treaties resulted in a major shift in global understanding and responses towards disability, including making higher education more accessible for persons with disability.

Ghana has embraced this global trend of widening access and supporting participation for persons with disability in higher education by acceding to the Salamanca Statement and also signing and ratifying the UNCRPD in 2007 and 2012, respectively. This situation made it obligatory for Ghana to formulate and implement national legislation on inclusive education across the country's educational system. Swanzy et al. (2019) contended that ratifying these international protocols suggested the willingness of Ghana to make higher education more accessible to persons with disability.

National policies on inclusion and support systems are critical in creating the needed context for educational inclusion (UNESCO, 2014). To demonstrate its commitment to international and national protocols, Ghana has enacted the Persons with Disability Act, Act 715 (Republic of Ghana, 2006), which encompasses persons with disability and their access to education. In addition, it formulated the Inclusive Education (IE) Policy (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015) that provides legal backing to educating persons with disability at all levels of

education. Both the Act and the Policy, which are the two critical legislative and policy frameworks for persons with disability in Ghana, make important provisions for the protection of the rights of persons with disability. The IE policy, for instance, aimed at ensuring that HEIs in Ghana take the necessary steps to create access and opportunities for persons with disability to participate effectively in higher education. The IE policy has four main objectives:

i. adapting education and related systems and structures to ensure inclusion of all learners;
ii. fostering/nurturing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and learner-friendly school environment for enhancing quality education;
iii. promoting human resource development for quality delivery; and
iv. ensuring and safeguarding the sustainability of policy implementation (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015, pp. 9 - 13).

Each objective has several strategies for policy enactment. (See Appendices A and B for excerpts of the Persons with Disability Act 2006, Act 715, the IE policy, the IE policy Implementation Plan, and Standards and Guidelines for Practice of Inclusive Education in Ghana).

Despite the provisions of the national IE policy, it appears very little progress has been made by the public universities in Ghana to increase access and participation of persons with disability in higher education. It has been asserted that the curriculum and the learning environment of the higher education institutions in Ghana are not suitable for students with disability (Asiedu et al., 2018; Swanzy et al., 2019; Tudzi et al., 2017). A few studies have identified difficulties associated with entry requirements and choice of programs (e.g., Armah & Kwantwi-Barima, 2016; Asiedu et al., 2018; Braun & Naami, 2019; Odame & Nanor, 2016; Odame, 2017; Swanzy et al., 2019; Tudzi et al., 2017). Tudzi et al. (2017) conducted a study into the accessibility and inclusiveness of the built environment of universities in Ghana and concluded that regardless of the international conventions Ghana has acceded to, and national level policies and legislations, the built environments in universities are not as accessible as they should be. Some of these public universities established special needs offices and disability support units dedicated to supporting students with disability before the national IE policy came into effect in 2015. However, it is unknown whether the supports they provide meet the students' needs and expectations.

While this study focuses on selected public universities in Ghana, in particular, the findings may have currency in other contexts and countries as each state grapples with its education policies and ensures equal access to education for all.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Ghana, access to education and participation of persons with disability in higher education remains poor despite national legislation - the Persons with Disability Act 2006, Act 715, and Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy, 2015, drafted to address this issue. It appears these policies have not translated into institutional arrangements or guidelines dedicated to the provision and support for persons with disability. The inadequacy of higher education provision and support for persons with disability is demonstrated by the disparities that still exist in the university system in Ghana. Firstly, there are barriers to enrolment and, secondly, if students are admitted to the university, the support necessary to ensure their success is often absent or insufficient (Asiedu et al., 2018; Braun & Naami, 2019; Budu, 2016; Morley & Croft, 2011).

There is strong evidence in the literature to show that, through the support offered by dedicated offices or units in higher education institutions, improvements to access and participation of persons with disability can be realised (Davies, 2017; Karousou, 2017; Mantsha, 2016; Newman & Conway, 2017; Plotner & May, 2017). However, the creation of disability offices or units on university campuses does not necessarily mean that universities are implementing the intent of the national policy. Policy implementation is a multifaceted and complicated procedure, and many issues facilitate or impinge on successful implementation.

Hence, this study sought to identify the extent to which there is evidence that the intentions of Ghana's IE policy are realised in three selected public universities. The extent to which institutional arrangements, policies, and practices in these three Ghanaian public universities addressed disability issues to increase access and participation, ensure equity and facilitate quality education provision for persons with disability were explored. Unlike the previous studies cited above (e.g., Armah & Kwantwi-Barima, 2016; Asiedu et al., 2018; Boakye-Yiadom & Mensah, 2019; Braun & Naami, 2019; Gavu et al., 2015; Odame & Nanor, 2016; Odame, 2017; Swanzy et al., 2019; Tudzi et al., 2017), which mainly focused on specific issues, specific universities, or specific categories of participants, this study explored a more extensive range of perspectives and a combination of issues pertinent to the inclusion of people with disability in higher education in three public universities; one old, one young, and one new.

1.3 Research Questions

The overarching question for this research is: To what extent does the implementation of Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy (2015) in three selected Ghanaian public universities support access to education and participation of persons with disability in higher education?

Within this broader question, there were four more specific research questions:

1. To what extent are the intents of Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy (2015) reflected in the institutional policies, arrangements, and practices initiated to support the engagement of persons with disability in these Ghanaian public universities?
2. What is the range of institutional provisions available for persons with disability in these Ghanaian public universities?
3. In what ways do these provisions meet the expectations of persons with disability?
4. What influences the engagement of persons with disability in these Ghanaian public universities?

To answer these questions, this research draws upon data from interviews, observations, and relevant documents from the three selected public universities in Ghana that represent different stages of implementation of the Education inclusion policy for persons with disability in higher education.

1.4 Aims and Purpose of the Study

This study examines institutional arrangements, policies, and practices available for persons with disability in three selected Ghanaian public universities. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to ascertain whether the implementation of Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy (2015) aligns with the intents of the policy and how this translates into provisions and supports made available for persons with disability. Furthermore, the study aims to establish the robustness of these institutional provisions by exploring participants' perceptions of the effects of these institutional arrangements on access to higher education and the levels of participation for persons with disability. In this study, the effectiveness of these institutional provisions is assessed from the perspectives of persons with disability, and staff in management positions at the three selected universities. The insights obtained from this study are expected to inform support for persons with disability in Ghanaian public universities (and beyond) and provide the basis for in-depth and detailed discussions on understanding the practice of inclusion in institutions of higher learning in Ghana. The designers of the IE policy are included to share a sectorial view of the policy intents and its implementation.

1.5 Context of the Study

Ghana is a country located on the west coast of Africa. It gained its independence from Britain in 1957. In 1961, it obtained its constitutional status with a unitary structure of government within the Commonwealth. The country has 16 administrative regions (Ghana Statistical Services, 2019) and 260 districts (City Population, 2019) and, together, these regions and districts facilitate governance and service provision (Swanzy, 2015). In 2018, the World Bank estimated the total population of Ghana to be approximately twenty-nine million, seven hundred and sixty-seven thousand, one hundred and eight (29,767,108) (The World Bank, 2019). The national adult literacy rate of 15 year and older is 79.04 percent (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2020).

Information on the number of people living with a disability in Ghana is limited (Aidoo, 2011; Anson-Yevu, 1988; Kuyini, 2014), despite having a clear definition of persons with disability in the Persons with Disability Act 2006 (Act 715), as data collection is both disjointed and untimely (Ministry of Education Ghana, 2018). Ghana defined a person with disability as "an individual with a physical, mental or sensory impairment including a visual, hearing or speech functional disability which gives rise to physical, cultural or social barriers that substantially limits one [or] more of the major life activities of that individual" (Republic of Ghana, 2006, p. 17).

The absence of reliable data led the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (MESW) and the Ministry of Education (MoE) to propose using the UN estimate of 10 - 12 percent of the total population having a disability (Kuyini & Desai, 2008). On this basis, there would be approximately 2.5 million people in Ghana with some form of disability. However, this differs from the 2010 National Housing and Population Census, which determined only 3 percent of Ghanaians live with disability (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013; Kuyini, 2014).

The issue of inaccurate statistics has been linked to vague guidelines, inappropriate assessment procedures for determining disability, under-reporting, inappropriate criteria, lack of standard policies for determining special education eligibility, and/or inadequate resourcing (Adera & Asimeng-Boahene, 2011; Avoke & Avoke, 2004; Kuyini, 2014; Ministry of Education Ghana, 2018). The lack of precise disability data for the overall national population has implications for students at all levels of education, as this hinders effective educational planning and policy implementation.

Figure 1.1: Map of Ghana Showing the Sixteen Regions and Capitals

Source: Cartography Unit, University of Cape Coast, Ghana (2020)

1.5.1 Higher Education

Higher education began in Ghana before the country obtained its independence in 1957. In 2017, there were 188 higher education institutions (both public and private) in Ghana, made up of public universities, public specialised/professional institutions, polytechnics/technical universities, private universities/colleges, colleges of education, colleges of agriculture, and midwifery and nursing training colleges (National Accreditation Board Ghana, 2018a). The state-owned universities are referred to as public universities and are predominantly funded and controlled by the national government. These public universities offer pre-bachelor, undergraduate and postgraduate programs including diploma, bachelor, master, and doctoral level academic programs. The modes of delivery of these programs include regular, sandwich[1] and distance (Gondwe & Walenkamp, 2011; National Accreditation Board Ghana, 2018a, 2018b).

The public universities have a selective admission policy and selection criteria, which are based on the past academic record and grades of prospective students. Students who are citizens of Ghana are exempted from paying tuition fees; however, they do pay an academic facility user fee and any residential accommodation fees. The National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) and the National Accreditation Board (NAB) have been mandated by law (NCTE Act 454, 1993; NAB Act 744, 2007) to administer and coordinate higher education institutions in Ghana jointly. However, higher education institutions are primarily self-regulated; this situation limits the capacity and legal authority of NCTE and NAB to serve as supervisory entities (Ministry of Education Ghana, 2018).

Up until the 1987 educational reforms (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013), University of Ghana (UG), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), and University of Cape Coast (UCC) were the only three universities in Ghana. As part of the 1987 education reform program, the University Rationalisation Committee (URC) was constituted by the then government to undertake a thorough review of the post-secondary education system in Ghana (Government of Ghana, 1988). The proposals of the URC formed the basis for the reorganisation of higher education, including desegregating the tertiary education system, improving administration and governing structures, improving quality and relevance of

[1] Sandwich: an educational program where learners who are mostly workers or have employments study on campus during university holidays

programs of study, improving financial sustainability, and expanding access to education, particularly for the marginalised. The recommendations of the URC report led to the establishment of a new university in the north of Ghana, the University for Development Studies (UDS), and the University College of Education, Winneba, both in 1992 (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013; Girdwood, 1999; Government of Ghana, 1988, 1991).

In 2018, Ghana had nine public universities. These nine public universities (see Table 1.1) are accredited and reaccredited periodically by the NAB. There are also three specialised professional tertiary institutions and 27 private universities (National Accreditation Board Ghana, 2018a, p. v).

Table 1.1: List of Public Universities in Ghana

University Name	**History**
1. University of Ghana (UG) (OLD)	-Founded by Ordinance on 11 August 1948 as the University College of the Gold Coast, University of Ghana Legon (UG) -Initially affiliated with the University of London in the United Kingdom -Became a fully-fledged university in 1961, and was given powers to confer its degrees and diplomas -Currently runs on the collegiate system and operates four colleges – College of Basic and Applied Sciences, College of Education, College of Health Sciences, and College of Humanities. (UG, 2018).
2. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) (OLD)	-Established by a Government Ordinance on 6 October 1951 and has grown into an independent university -Name changed to Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) by an Act of Parliament on 22 August 1961. -Currently offers over 50 programs of study in the domains of science, technology, and management (KNUST, 2019, 2020)
3. University of Cape Coast (OLD)	-Established in 1962, initially affiliated to UG -A Parliamentary Act gave it full university status in 1971. -The University of Cape Coast Law of 1992 (PNDC Law 278) was promulgated to replace the University of Cape Coast Act of 1971

	-Established when highly qualified human resources were needed in the education sector, especially at the secondary level -Original mandate was to train graduate professional teachers for the secondary schools -Currently, runs the collegiate system with expanded faculties and diversified programs -Runs five colleges as at 2018 (UCC, 2018, 2019)
4. University for Development Studies (UDS) (YOUNG)	-The first public university established in the northern part of Ghana by the Government of Ghana -Established in 1992 as an autonomous university with four campuses - Nyankpala, Tamale, Navrongo, and Wa across three administrative regions of Ghana – Northern, Upper East, and Upper West Regions -Has 15 Faculties/Schools/Institutes -Currently offers 120 academic programs (UDS, 2019)
5. The University of Education, Winneba (UEW) (YOUNG)	-Established 1992 as the University College of Education by the PNDC Law 322 -Affiliated to UCC with five campuses across two administrative regions: Central Region and Ashanti Region -Included seven diploma awarding institutions. -Full university status declared by the University of Education, Winneba Act 2004 (Act 672) on 14 May 2004 (UEW, 2019) (UEW, 2014)
6. University of Mines and Technology (UMaT) (NEW)	-Established in 1952, affiliated with KNUST, Kumasi, in 1976. -Renamed Tarkwa School of Mines, a college status was conferred on it in 2001 as Western University College of KNUST -Was restructured by the University of Mines and Technology, Tarkwa, Act 2004, Act 677. -Envisioned to grow into a centre of excellence in Ghana and Africa, turning out professionals in mining, technology, and similar disciplines (UMaT, 2014)
7. The University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) (NEW)	-Established in 2011 by legislative Acts of the Republic of Ghana, Act 828, 2011. -Began operations in 2012 with the main campus located in Ho and another in Hohoe in the Volta Region of Ghana (UHAS, 2019). -The only public university in Ghana entirely dedicated to the training of health professionals (UHAS, 2020)

8. The University of Energy and Natural Resources (UENR) (NEW)	-Established in 2011 by legislative Acts of the Republic of Ghana, Act 830, 2011; student enrolment began in September 2012 -Has three campuses situated in Sunyani, Nsoatre, and Dormaa Ahenkro. (UENR, 2019) -Adopted an interdisciplinary collaboration approach in program delivery -Programs include management, law, and policy, science, economics, technology, and engineering -Operates six schools: Engineering, Sciences, Geosciences, Agriculture and Technology, Natural Resources, and School of Graduate Studies (UENR, 2020)
9. University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA) (NEW)	-Established as a private, professional institution in 1965 -Taken over by the government of Ghana by the Institute of Professional Studies (IPS) Decree, SMCD 200, 1978 -Upgraded to a tertiary institution by the Institute of Professional Studies Act, Act 566, 1999 -Mandated to offer tertiary and professional education programs in Management, Accountancy, and other related disciplines -Began offering bachelor's degree programs in from 2005 -Received a Presidential Charter in September 2008, conferring upon its full public university status, hence The University of Professional Studies Accra (UPSA, 2019)

1.5.1.1 Enrolments

There have been fundamental changes in policy and several strategic guidelines instigated in the past 20 years, that have resulted in a remarkable rise in the enrolment statistics of higher education institutions (both public and private). The enrolment figures for the three public universities established before 1992 were 14,500; however, by 2002, the student population had increased to 86,570 and then to 121,390 in 2005 (Adu & Orivel, 2006). The total enrolment in all higher education institutions in Ghana during the 2012/2013 school year was 215,379 (ICEF Monitor, 2014). The 2014 annual report of the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) indicated that the enrolment figure for public universities alone was 138,414 (NCTE, 2014). The nine public universities enrolled more than 50% of all tertiary level students in Ghana. For example, in the 2015/2016 academic year, Ghana had 164 tertiary institutions with a total student enrolment of 432,257. The enrolment in the nine public universities was 237,171 (54.90%). Similarly, in the 2016/2017 academic year, the enrolment in all these public

universities totalled 453,314, 257,720, 56.85% of this figure (National Accreditation Board Ghana, 2018a, 2018b).

Even though the comprehensive and innovative policy initiatives of the government have, over time, led to a substantial increase in enrolment, access is still inadequate and the opportunity to access higher education in Ghana remains insufficient (Atuahene & Owusu-Ansah, 2013; Budu, 2016). Entry into the higher education system is contingent on socioeconomic standing, the region of origin, and the types and locations of secondary schools. Only a little over 30 percent of the students in Ghana who apply for admission gain entry because of the restricted number of places available (Budu, 2016). A high percentage of qualified students are turned away each year because of limited resources. Applications for entry far exceed admissions, particularly for public universities (GhanaWeb, 2019). Where higher education appears to be the preserve of a privileged minority, the near absence of persons with disability is likely to go unnoticed (UNESCO, 1999).

In 2007, Ghana had a total higher education disability enrolment ratio of six percent in comparison with 26% percent globally (UNESCO, 2010). The six percent disability enrolment ratio for Ghana comprised all persons with disability enrolled at all levels of post-secondary education such as universities, polytechnics, and all other degree, diploma, and certificate awarding professional and technical institutions. The population and housing census carried out in Ghana in 2010 identified that only about five percent of persons with disability had some post-secondary education up to postgraduate level (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). Thus, very few persons with disability receive higher education in Ghana as compared to other parts of the world.

1.5.2 Special Education in Ghana

Special education started in Ghana during the colonial era from a philanthropist missionary effort in 1936, almost a century after the introduction of formal education. Training was initially provided for children with vision impairment and, later, children with hearing impairment were included. The special schools, in those days, emphasised literacy courses and handicraft training (Aidoo, 2011; Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015; Anson-Yevu, 1988; Avoke, 2001). The Ghanaian government took over the administration of special schools in 1957. In the late 1960s, the MoE assumed over-all responsibility for the administration and management of special schools (Anthony & Kwadade, 2006), marking a notable shift in the way that persons

with disability were supported. The Special Education Unit, now named the Special Education Division (SpED), was in complete charge of the management of special schools in 1970 (Anson-Yevu, 1988). The provision of inclusive education for persons with disability in Ghana began during the mid-1990s and increased steadily, particularly at the pre-university level (Ametepee & Anastasiou, 2015). By the 2000s, the practice of special education had embraced the 'social model' to understand disability (Aidoo, 2011; Avoke, 2002), which focuses on the removal of socially constructed barriers to facilitate the full participation of persons with disability in society (World Policy Analysis Center, 2017), including participation in education. This model influences the provisions and the services made available for persons with disability, particularly at the pre-university level.

Today, the provision of special education in Ghana is largely a public-sector effort with the government building and managing most of the schools. The private sector, including religious and non-religious bodies, has been an essential part of the historical evolution and contemporary delivery of special education (Kuyini, 2014). In the 2014/2015 academic year, a total of 6853 persons with disability were enrolled at the pre-tertiary level of education. Thus, 6264 were pursuing basic education in segregated special schools[2] catering for children with sensory impairment and intellectual disability; 589 were enrolled in integrated senior high schools (Ministry of Education Ghana, 2015). In recent times, other disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder and psychiatric disorders have been given attention by the Special Education Division of the Ghana Education Service (Aidoo, 2011; Kuyini, 2014). However, most children with severe and profound disabilities are not enrolled in schools at all (Kuyini, 2014). Available statistics indicates that 40.1% (four out of ten) of persons with disability aged three years and older in Ghana never attended school. Only 3.4% and 17.4% receive pre-school (nursery and kindergarten) and primary education, respectively (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014).

1.5.3 Inclusive Education

Commitment to inclusive education at the governmental level should demonstrate itself in apposite legal frameworks designed following pertinent international treaties and conventions, ensuring appropriate understanding and interpretation of inclusive education as a human right

[2] Special schools, also known in some countries as schools for specific purposes [SSPs]), offer specialist and intensive support in a dedicated setting for learners with moderate to high learning and support needs. These schools support learners with autism, mental health issues, intellectual disability, sensory impairment, physical disability, behaviour disorder, or learning difficulties (New South Wales Government, 2020).

issue. The primacy given to inclusive education in national policy, planning, and implementation needs to be mirrored in proportional national budgetary allocations and in requesting development assistance from international donor agencies and development partners (UNICEF, 2014c).

In Ghana, relevant government legislation and policies relating to the educational right of persons with disability have been enacted over time. For example, the 1992 constitution of the Republic of Ghana stipulated the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities for all persons. Further, Article 25 clause 1c of the 1992 constitution stated: "higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means …" (Government of Ghana, 2013). In 2005, the Special Educational Needs (SEN) policy framework that addresses the issues concerning marginalisation, segregation, and inequality, which had hitherto created barriers for persons with disability to access education, was promulgated (Special Education Division of the Ghana Education Service, 2005). In 2006 the national legislation that gives recognition to persons with disability in Ghana was passed after a protracted advocacy process to compel the government to pass the legislation (Republic of Ghana, 2006). This legislation affords equal opportunities for Ghanaians with disability across economic, social, educational, and political dimensions. The Disability Act of 2006, Act 715, has highlighted a commitment to protecting the rights of persons with disability and to ensuring their equitable participation in higher education. Act 715 was welcomed with great excitement because it sought to remove discrimination and eliminate barriers to higher education access for persons with disability (Swanzy et al., 2019).

At the core of inclusive higher education practice and provision for persons with disability is the 2015 Inclusive Education (IE) Policy of Ghana. The IE policy aims to build an education system that is receptive to learner diversity and to guarantee that all learners have the best possible opportunities to learn at all levels of education. Further, the IE policy explicitly states that admission into both public and private tertiary and higher education institutions should be offered to any applicant who meets the necessary entry requirements and also provides for reasonable adjustment upon enrolment (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015).
The government of Ghana has focused on inclusive education in recent years with support from non-governmental organisations and development partners, particularly at the basic school level. In 2015, more than 2000 schools were practicing IE in 48 districts throughout the ten regions of Ghana. Since 2012, UNICEF has provided support to the Special Education Division

of the Ghana Education Service in implementing and expanding the IE concept and practice in 14 districts. Consequently, all the 998 schools in the UNICEF supported districts are implementing IE. All heads and staff of these schools have received training in basic screening and identification of persons or children with disability. Nevertheless, challenges remain. These challenges include negative perception of the public towards persons with disability in society, negative attitudes of teachers and school children, unfriendly nature of schools and facilities, lack of supervision due to limited logistics, lack of assistive devices, and inadequate teaching-learning materials (Ministry of Education Ghana, 2015). For example, a study conducted by Opoku et al., (2017) highlighted that attempts at implementing inclusive education at the primary school level in Ghana have been slow due to challenges, including uncoordinated efforts and poor resourcing. The inclusive and special education sub-sector is also severely underfunded: in 2015, only 0.6% of total recurrent education expenditure was spent on inclusive and special education (Ministry of Education Ghana, 2018).

The prevailing cultural beliefs in Ghana continue to inhibit the implementation of inclusive education policies in HEIs. In Ghana, conceptualisations of disability are deep-rooted in cultural beliefs, norms, and history, having implications for educational policy implementation and provision of services for persons with disability (Anthony, 2011). For instance, it is a common belief among Ghanaians that persons with disability possess evil spirits and are conduits of bad omen for the family and the entire community. Historically, these beliefs resulted in viciousness, infanticide, and/or negative attitudes (Agbenyega, 2003; Avoke, 2002; Kuyini, 2014). Society's perception of the causes of disability and their potential to cause harm have consequences for educational service provision for persons with disability in Ghana (Kuyini, 2014).

Literature highlighted that mandatory legislation by itself may not be a solution for the design and implementation of inclusive education programs and the provision of related services to persons with disability. However, such legislative instruments will unequivocally state the services that are required for inclusive settings, who is responsible for providing them, as well as where, when and how these services need to be offered (Chataika, 2007; Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). UNESCO (2014) asserted that it is ideal to design mechanisms for appropriate monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact of inclusive education regarding the learner, the education system, and wider societal development.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Provision and support for persons with disability in many higher education institutions in Ghana remain poor despite legislation and policy provisions. Therefore, this study aims to examine the access to, and participation in, higher education by persons with disability in Ghanaian public universities, together with the provisions and support available to them. This is significant because the study and its findings will assist to:

- highlight and promote the agenda for inclusive higher education for persons with disability in universities,
- provide data and analysis relevant to policymakers and higher education institutions which will enable them to meet social justice requirements for access and the full participation of all in education,
- inform and raise the awareness of university leadership to be committed to and value the design of institutional policies aimed at creating enabling institutions and conducive learning environments for persons with disability,
- enlighten faculty on good practices regarding curricula, pedagogy, assessment, attitudes and ways of handling issues concerning students with disability,
- potentially positively impact the attitude of the university community towards persons with disability,
- engender discussions and conversations regarding ways to increase higher education access and participation for persons with disability, thereby promoting the disability inclusion agenda within the society, and
- provide a useful resource for future researchers who may want to extend the frontiers of disability research in higher education.

1.7 Organisation of the Chapters of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into nine interrelated chapters. The first chapter has presented information on the introduction, which includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, and aims and purpose of the study. The first chapter also provides the context of the study, including an overview of higher education, special education, and inclusive education in Ghana. The first chapter concludes with the significance of the study.

In chapter two, the literature relevant to this research is reviewed to extend the overview of information presented in the first chapter. Chapter Two also presents the conceptual framework of the study to position the research. Chapter Three focuses on the methodology used for this

study. This chapter also presents the ethical considerations that guided the study, access to participants, data security and storage, the theoretical framework, research paradigm, research design, data collection methods, selection of research participants, procedures for data analysis and presentation, and measures adopted to ensure the validity of the study.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six present and analyse the findings of the study, which are organised according to the three case study universities. The findings emerging from the policymakers' data were analysed and presented in Chapter Seven. The eighth chapter compares and contrasts the three cases, identifying the similarities, differences, isolated cases, and discusses them in relation to the literature review. The ninth chapter presents conclusions drawn from the study, which are based on the key reported findings. The study limitations and implications, recommendations for practice, and future research are also outlined in the ninth chapter.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Literature from around the world highlights the rising interest in creating access and providing support for persons with disability to participate and succeed in higher education. Globally, it also remains an area of current research and focus (ADCET, 2019). Various studies since the 1990s (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2016; Asiedu et al., 2018; Barkas et al., 2020; Braun & Naami, 2019; Chataika, 2007; Denhart, 2008; Ebersold & Meijer, 2016; Forlin, et al, 2013; Fossey, 2015; Fuller, Bradley, et al., 2004; Fuller, Healey, et al., 2004; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Gilson, 2020; Goodley, 2016; Healey et al., 2006; Hockings, 2010; Lord, 2017; Mantsha, 2016; Mask & DePountis, 2018; Moriña, 2017; Odame, 2017; Riddell et al., 2002; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011; Slee et al., 2014; Tinklin & Hall, 1999; Tinklin et al., 2004a; Tomlinson, 1997; UNESCO, 1999; West et al., 1993; Zafrir, 2016) have investigated higher education access and experiences of persons with disability. These studies have identified that issues such as policy and provisions, physical access, support and services, social and academic engagement within the university environment, attitudes, and financing, have implications for disability inclusion in higher education.

This literature review begins by examining conceptual discourse on disability and inclusion. This is followed by an exploration of literature on the accessibility of the physical environment and support systems for academic and social aspects of inclusion in HEIs. Subsequently, selected examples of disability support and services provided by universities from the global context are outlined. The penultimate section of this chapter explores the literature on policy, the institutional disability policy context, and higher education policy and provision for persons with disability in the international context. The final section of this literature review examines financing inclusive education in HEIs. Figure 2.1 illustrates the content of the literature review. Included also in this chapter is the conceptual framework for this study. The conceptual framework explains the relationship between levels of legislation and action within a social justice philosophy and its outcomes for an individual or a student with disability (see Figure 2.2). It is drawn from the literature highlighting social justice and disability in higher education.

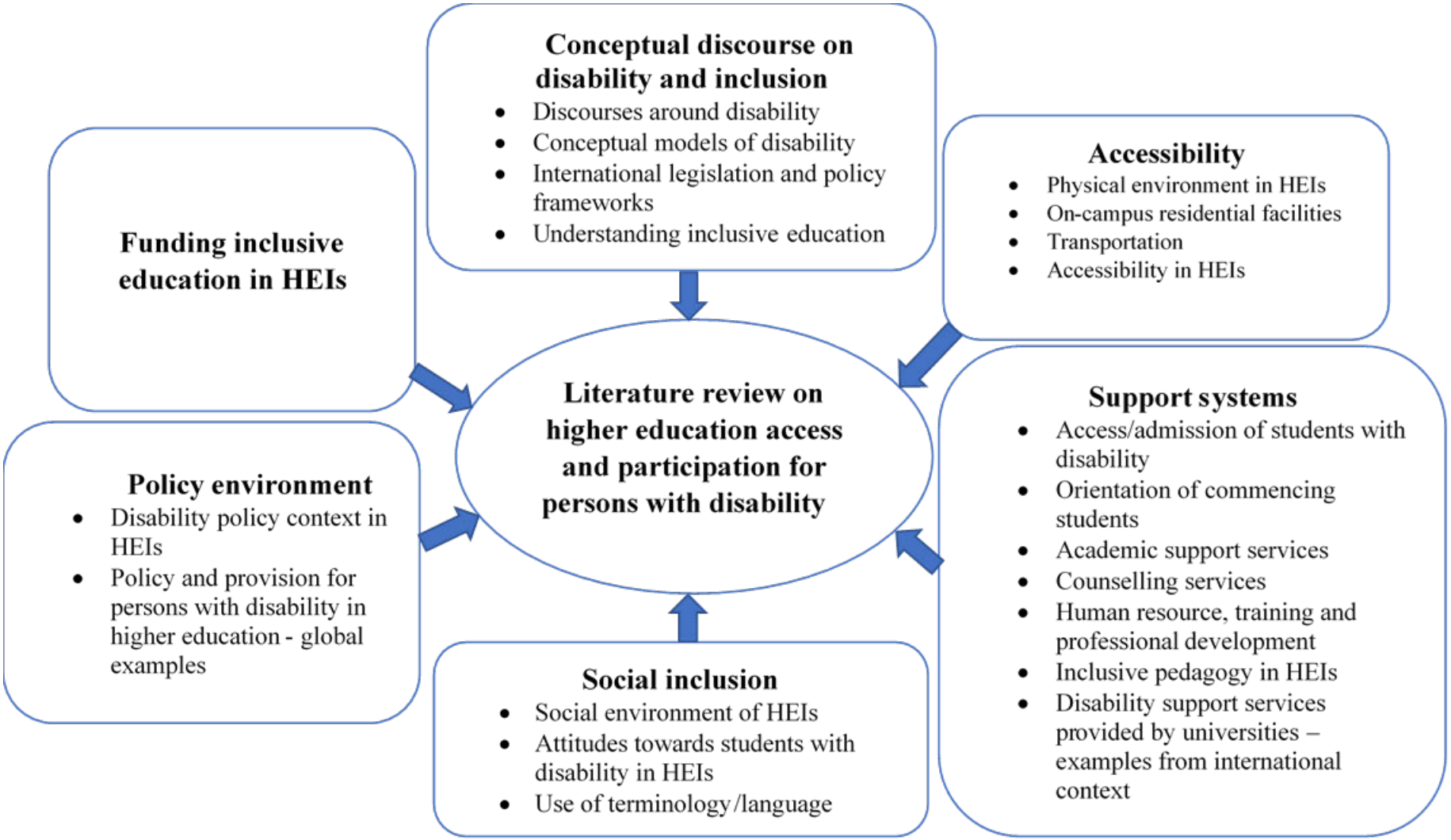

Figure 2. 1: An outline of the content of the literature review

2.2 Conceptual Discourse around Disability and Inclusion

This section reviews literature relating to discourses around disability, conceptual models of disability, international legislations and policy frameworks, and ways of conceptualising inclusive education.

2.2.1 Discourses around Disability

The World Health Organisation (WHO, 2001) asserted that disability is complex, multidimensional, dynamic, and contested. How people conceptualised disability is also varied and has distinct connotations, depending on the context in which the term is used. The standards for identifying persons with disability change with time and over social and cultural settings (Francis & Silvers, 2016). To illustrate this, in 2001 the WHO defined disability as:

> an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. It denotes the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors). Activity limitations are difficulties an individual may have in executing activities. Participation restrictions are problems an individual may experience in involvement in life situations. Environmental factors are the physical, social, and attitudinal environment in which people live and conduct their lives. These are either barriers to or facilitators of the person's functioning. (pp. 212-213)

More recently, WHO (2020) modified the definition of disability, making it more precise, simple, and much easier to conceptualise, and also by reducing negative connotations, which might be embedded in the earlier definition and impact how disability is perceived, particularly in different socio-cultural settings. It reads:

> Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. An impairment is a problem in body function or structure; an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action; while a participation restriction is a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations. (para. 1).

In defining who meets the criteria, Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) states that: "persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (United Nations, 2006, p. 4). Disability is also conceptualised as being a multifaceted experience for the individual concerned. Physical and social environmental factors also influence disability outcomes. WHO (2020), therefore, maintained that disability

is not entirely a health problem. It is an intricate phenomenon, reflecting the interplay between features of an individual's body and features of the society in which that individual lives.

2.2.2 Conceptual Models of Disability

Medical and social models of disability are the commonly used conceptual frameworks for understanding and responding to disability (Oliver, 1990). The construction of the medical model was predicated on the disease model and, as such, the onset of disability had been reduced to individual pathology. Thus, disability is seen as the effects of the impairment on everyday activities. This perspective influences medical experts to consider disability as a condition that requires medical treatment, application of diagnostic and curative measures, prevention, or care for persons with disability. The medical approach has been criticised as obsolete and is unacceptable to the Disability Rights Movement as it does not align with global legislation and ideal practice (Goodley, 2016). Goodley contended that "the idea that disability is a property of the individual is a well-worn metaphor that masquerades as truth" (p. 6).

Within the medical model, there is no anticipation that society will make modifications to transform people's attitudes or modify the environment so that persons with disability can participate actively. Persons with disability are made to rely on medical intervention, such as medication, therapy, or other forms of treatment to deal with the symptoms and difficulties associated with their impairment (Evans et al., 2017). Evans et al. thus, contended that the medical model adherents who are interested only with curing the illnesses or physiological aberrations shown by persons with impairments might tend to view persons with disability as unfit to receive higher education or be employed in any capacity. Students with disability are, therefore, regarded as unhealthy and not able to participate in normal activities required of students in HEIs.

The social model of disability originated in Britain in the1970s from the advocates in the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) and was given academic recognition through the scholarly work of Finkelstein (1981), Barnes (1991) and Oliver (1996). The term 'social model of disability' was introduced by Oliver (1981). The basic definition of disability in the British social model is as follows:

> It is the society that disables physically impaired people. Disability is something imposed on top of our impairments by the way we are unnecessarily isolated and excluded from full participation in society. Disabled people are, therefore, an oppressed group in society. (UPIAS, 1976, p. 3)

Llewellyn and Hogan (2000) perceived disability as originating from society and stressed that social conditions and situations could influence the level of disability observable. Disability is only present in as much as it is created by society and attributed to persons who are impaired. The social model accentuates the fact that persons who are different due to an impairment experience oppression and marginalisation from society (Shakespeare & Watson, 2001). Similarly, Slee et al. (2014) contended that from a social model perspective, disability is understood as:

> a consequence of the social responses to people's differences. In other words, institutions, cultural practices and social discourses, including policy texts, established medical authorities, institutional structures and built environments, more or less exclude or include people with diverse identities. Our social and cultural practices and institutions variously disable or enable. (p.25)

Levitt (2017) argued that the social model is an invaluable empirically grounded perspective which has contributed immensely to transforming societal relationship with persons with disability and the understanding of disability. It aimed at ensuring societal barriers such as cultural, architectural, economic, social, and education are eliminated so that persons with disability can participate equitably in normal life's activities (Barnes & Mercer, 2010). Thus, the model has assisted in transforming the lives of countless persons with disability (Levitt, 2017).

Further, the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM, 2011) contended that the model of disability embraced by a university might have a major influence on the services provided, and the mode in which they are provided, thus, the 'what and how' of service delivery. If an institution adopts a more medical definition, the consequence is that individualised services will be provided. This situation is coupled with major environmental barriers that students with disability would have to contend with, such as inaccessible buildings and negative attitudes of other members of the university community. However, if the university espouses a more social model approach, concerted efforts will be made to address environmental barriers and also respond to the more individual impairment needs of students. Similarly, Ebersold (2008) reported that a developmental approach to disability nurtures quality and effectiveness; whereas a medical perspective limits the ability to pay attention to quality. WHO (2011) suggested that disability needs to be regarded neither as entirely medical nor entirely social. Persons with disability also suffer pain, which requires medical attention. In addition, persons with severe and profound disability cannot function in society without considerable support. A combination of the medical and the social models may be a viable mix

and the most practical approach to understanding disability and issues that affect the education and training of persons with disability. This approach is evident in national and international legislation, policy frameworks, treaties, conventions, and agreements, which have led to the removal or reduction of social and attitudinal barriers that militate against educational provision and support for persons with disability to access education at all levels.

2.2.3 International Legislations and Policy Frameworks

The introduction of anti-discriminatory legislation, agreements, and regulatory frameworks have led to the improvement in access and participation of persons with disability in education on the global scene. Examples of international initiatives that have sought to pursue the rights and welfare of persons with disability are: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) (United Nations Human Rights Office, 2014); The Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960); The World Declaration on Education for All (UNESCO, 1990); The United Nations Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) (United Nations, 1993); and The Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All (UNESCO, 2000).

The Salamanca Declaration and the accompanying Framework for Action adopted in 1994 at the World Conference on Special Needs Education Access and Quality held in Salamanca, Spain, are the most important international documents in special education (UNESCO, 2005). The 16th Guideline for Action states that legislation should recognise the value of equitable opportunity for youth and adults with disability in higher education offered in inclusive environments (UNESCO, 1994).

In 2006, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was adopted (United Nations, 2006). The UNCRPD reflected a marked shift from the medical model to the social model of disability (World Policy Analysis Center, 2017). Article 24 of this Convention states that member countries are to guarantee that legal provisions are in place to ensure the right to education at every level for persons with disability. Specifically, Article 24(5) of the UNCRPD states that “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. …reasonable accommodation is provided to persons with disabilities” (p. 18). The Convention signifies a meaningful change because it has seen disability not only as a social welfare issue but as a component of the human

rights act. Further, the Convention mirrors a notable shift in understanding and responding to disability globally (United Nations, 2006). For example, Singapore signed the UNCRPD in 2012 and ratified it in 2013. To progressively meet the obligations stipulated by the UNCPRD, the country developed three Enabling Masterplans – 2007 to 2011, 2012 to 2016, and 2017 – 2021 representing first, second, and third respectively (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2016a). Poon and Wong (2018) suggested that the present state of service provision for persons with disability in Singapore is characterised with a developmental pace that exceeds any period in history, as unprecedented provisions are implemented to foster inclusion. Similarly, the Parliament of Australia (2016) maintained that educational institutions or government policies that did not provide equal and inclusive educational opportunities to persons with disability violate the mandates of the UNCRPD.

The most recent international agreement enacted regarding education for the disadvantaged and the marginalised, including persons with disability, is the Education 2030 Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 adopted by 184 nations, including Ghana. Strategies stipulated in the roadmap include: identifying and removing barriers that exclude vulnerable children and youth; creating opportunity for lifelong learning for all citizens; developing indicators to assess progress towards equality; gathering better quality data on persons with disability; and using the statistics to inform policy and programming (UNESCO, 2015).

2.2.4 Conceptualising Inclusive Education

There are several arguments about the lack of a clear definition of inclusion and criticisms about what it really entails (Ainscow, 2005; Florian, 2014; Forlin et al., 2013; Graham & Slee, 2008; Stubbs, 2008). Graham and Slee (2008) contended that the term ‘inclusion’ “is troubled by the multiplicity of meanings that lurk within the discourses that surround and carry it” (p. 279). According to Forlin et al., (2013), “inclusive education is a contentious term that lacks a tight conceptual focus, which may contribute to some misconception and confused practice” (p. 6). Florian (2014) maintained that “inclusive education has been criticised as promising more than it delivers” (p. 286). It is, therefore, not a surprise that reviews of inclusive education arrived at a conclusion that the concept lacks a clear definition. Some scholars have followed different lines of research intended to explore various ideas about the meaning of inclusion and the nature of inclusive practices.

Stubbs (2008) refers to inclusive education as an extensive range of approaches, activities, and processes that are intended to actualise the universal right to quality, appropriate, and relevant education. It recognises that learning starts at birth and continues throughout life. Inclusive education "seeks to enable communities, systems, and structures in all cultures and contexts to combat discrimination, celebrate diversity, promote participation and overcome barriers to learning and participation for all people" (p. 40). Features which are core to inclusive education are whole systems approaches; whole education environment; whole-person approaches; supported teachers; learning-friendly environments; effective transitions; recognition of partnerships; and monitoring (UN Committee on RPD, 2016, para. 12).

Inclusion can be seen as a process that assists in overcoming barriers restraining the presence, participation and achievement of learners of all abilities in schools (Department of Education - Tasmania, 2015; UNESCO, 2017). It involves a process of complete restructuring incorporating modifications and changes in content, teaching methodologies, approaches, arrangements, and strategies in education to surmount barriers with the vision of providing all students with a participatory and equitable learning experience and environment that appropriately responds to their needs and choices (UN Committee on RPD, 2016, para. 11). Inclusion is, therefore, "a dynamic approach of responding positively to pupil diversity and of seeing individual differences not as problems, but as opportunities for enriching learning" (UNESCO, 2005, p. 2).

Ainscow (2005, pp. 118 - 119) delineated four important elements, which have tended to be critical features in defining inclusion. He stated that inclusion:

- is a process
- is concerned with the identification and removal of barriers
- is about the presence, participation, and achievement of all students, and
- involves a particular emphasis on those groups of learners who may be at risk of marginalisation, exclusion, or underachievement.

Several years of research have conclusively established that the process of inclusion is contextual and takes a variety of forms interrogating "what constitutes good practice, what counts as evidence of such practice and how it can be known" (Florian, 2014, p. 288). Furthermore, current understanding and interpretations of inclusive education converged on the notion that effective schools are inclusive and put to advantage "the richness that diversity brings" (Department of Education - Tasmania, 2015, p. 16). Research has highlighted the

academic and social benefits of providing educational services to all categories of learners in an inclusive environment (Giorcelli, 2016). The process of inclusive education, thus, strengthens the capacity of the education system to reach out to all learners (UNESCO, 2017). Inclusive education "is an educational philosophy and practice that aims to improve the learning and active participation of all the students in a common educational context" (Moriña, 2017, p. 2). There is a consensus that "inclusive education is a human right, best for everyone, based on evidence, and supported by law" (The Queensland Collective for Inclusive Education, 2018, para. 1). Educational provision for persons with disability in segregated settings can no longer be justified (Giorcelli, 2016).

According to UNESCO (2005, p. 15), the philosophy of inclusion demonstrates the ethical responsibility to ensure that statistically disadvantaged (vulnerable, excluded or underachieving) groups are cautiously monitored, and measures are put in place to guarantee their "presence, participation and achievement" in the school system. Rieser (2012) argued that the rationale behind the UNESCO's definition of inclusion is to challenge special education or integration systems to understand and appreciate the need to accept persons with disability and modify the school system to fit persons with disability instead of persons with disability having to fit into the system. Bennett (2009) argued that inclusion "relates not just to access but to active and productive involvement" of diverse categories of students, including those with disability, in academic and non-academic activities to the greatest extent possible (p. 2).
Furthermore, to create the required framework for the development of inclusion, national policies on inclusion, local support systems, and appropriate forms of curriculum and assessment are crucial (UNESCO, 2009). Inclusion is a component of a broader approach of promoting inclusive development with the aim of "creating a world where there is peace, tolerance, sustainable use of resources, social justice, and where the basic needs and rights of all are met" (Stubbs, 2008, p. 40). Closely linked to inclusive education is the concept of the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). LRE relates to providing persons with disability opportunity to live in environments that offer them an array of choices with the rarest restrictions (Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017).

Literature reports that implementation of educational inclusion comes with a myriad of challenges in both developed and developing countries (Ainscow, 2005; Armstrong et al., 2011; Graham & Slee, 2008; Morley & Croft, 2011). Ainscow (2005) argued that "inclusion is the major challenge facing educational systems throughout the world" (p. 109). Similarly,

Armstrong et al. (2011) argued that the implementation of inclusion is challenging within and across educational systems in both developed and developing countries. Accurate, reliable, and consistent data regarding the profiles, programs, experiences, levels of participation and achievements of persons with disability are lacking in HEIs (Ebersold & Evans, 2003; Croft, 2013).

Some scholars contended that certain practices in educational institutions do not adequately represent inclusion. Graham and Slee (2008) contended "that to include is not necessarily to be inclusive. To shift students around on the educational chessboard is not in or of itself inclusive" (p. 278). Similarly, placing students with disability in mainstream classrooms without the required structural changes to, for instance, organisation, curricular, and approaches to teaching and learning, is not inclusion (UN Committee on RPD, 2016, para. 11). Ainscow (2005) argued that most of the barriers experienced by students emanated from existing ways of thinking. As a result, approaches for developing inclusive practices need to involve interruptions to thinking aimed at encouraging the exploration of overlooked possibilities for moving practice forward. Similarly, Adams and Brown (2006) maintained that inclusive education involves a cultural shift that requires HEIs to see students with disability and staff equally, "and view difference as a positive contribution to the lifeblood of an institution, rather than as problems which need to be overcome" (p. 4). The practice of inclusion thus involves identifying and eliminating barriers and obstacles to quality education (Forlin et al., 2013). Studies conducted into inclusion in both pre-tertiary and tertiary education have concluded that inclusion requires restructuring of educational systems to provide a fair chance of quality education (Barkas et al., 2020).

The shift towards inclusion is not merely a procedural or structural modification but is also an undertaking with a strong philosophy. Inclusive education has several aspects: elimination of barriers, recognition and appreciation of diversity, respect for human rights with emphasis on the rights of all persons (including persons with disability) to access education at all levels in inclusive environments; and, issues of equity and social justice.

2.3 Accessibility

Accessibility is a broad concept encompassing the usability of environments, amenities, and resources by persons with disability (UNICEF, 2014a). The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, 2016) explained that accessibility is

“the practice of identifying and breaking down the barriers that hinder persons with disabilities from living a full and effective life of dignity, respect, and independence. Promoting accessibility thus refers to promoting means through which persons with disabilities will be able to interact as equal members of society” (p. 14). Valdes (2004) defined accessibility as providing flexibility to adapt to the needs and preferences of each user. According to the International Standard for Building Construction (ISO 21542, 2011), accessibility means “provision of buildings or parts of buildings for people, regardless of disability, age or gender, to be able to gain access to them, into them, to use them and exit from them”(p. x). Thus, the design, construction, and management of the built environment need to allow persons independent use and egress in an equitable and dignified manner and to the greatest extent possible.

Further, the European Commission for Employment and Social Affairs (ECESA, 2003) explained that “accessibility means firstly that everybody should have equal access to the built environment - the buildings; what is around and between buildings; and the virtual environment” (p. 5). It is providing safe, healthy, convenient, and suitable buildings and places usable by all members of society. These buildings and places should be well-designed, accessible from the ground floor to the top with adequate means of autonomous exit. Rapley (2013) maintained that accessible and usable environments are non-excludable, non-rivalrous, and equitable. Thus, accessibility is beneficial to all persons, and ensures equality of participation.

There is a growing recognition that an accessible built environment allows for diversity. It is fundamental to a society built on equal rights; and offers its citizens independence or autonomy and the opportunity to pursue social and economic life actively. An accessible environment suggests that an individual will be able to receive education and training, seek employment, and pursue an active social and economic life. It leads to infrastructural investment, higher productivity, and sustainable development. Accessibility to the built environment is beneficial to a large number of individuals and groups within society – it is no longer restricted to a minority group with disability (ECESA, 2003).

Article 9 of the UNCRPD dwelt extensively on accessibility for persons with disability. The Article, inter alia, stated that parties are to ensure that persons with disability live an independent life and participate fully in all areas of life in society by providing equitable access to the physical environment. Thus, countries that ratified the Convention need to take

appropriate measures to ensure, on an equal basis, access to the physical environment, including buildings, roads, transportation, schools, housing, medical facilities, and information and communications technology facilities, among others. And that obstacles and barriers to accessibility need to be identified and eliminated (United Nations, 2006). As signatories, it is mandatory for these countries to improve accessibility of educational facilities, public spaces, transportation, and access to information and communication technology (ICT) for persons with disability (UNESCAP, 2016). ICT accessibility relates to applying and integrating enhanced and technology facilitated processes to respond to the specific needs of persons with disability. For example, internet, ICT products, computer applications and software (UNESCAP, 2016). In this literature review, literature regarding ICT accessibility has been reviewed under academic support services and placed under support systems.

2.3.1 Importance of Accessibility in Higher Education

Adjustments made to the built environment in the universities to ensure they are physically accessible are ultimately beneficial to a much larger group of people (FOTIM, 2011; LaGrow, 2017). Literature has shown that providing accessible grounds, facilities, and built environments on campus positively impact the overall experiences of students, staff, and visitors with disability (ADCET, 2017; Brabazon, 2015; Equality Challenge Unit, 2009; FOTIM, 2011; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013) and an institution's reputation (Equality Challenge Unit, 2009). It is a good practice internationally (ADCET, 2017).

When all the physical aspects of the campus are accessible, it facilitates academic success, retention, and social inclusion of students with disability (Evans et al., 2017). Physical accessibility in HEIs ensures a safe, supportive, and accepting environment, and provides a multiplicity of opportunities for engagement. Gillies and Dupuis (2013) argued that it is almost impossible for social networks and personal improvement to happen when sections of the populace are excluded from various facets of the institution's community life. Further, there is a strong business argument for ensuring that the campus environment responds to issues of equality. HEIs attract a diverse range of students when the learning environment is welcoming, popular, and inclusive (Equality Challenge Unit, 2009). An accessible campus also expands the scale and scope of students who can enrol in courses (Brabazon, 2015).

An accessible physical environment is a powerful predictor for successful inclusion of people with disability in HEIs. It is a precondition for the equal and full participation of persons with

disability in society and educational systems (UNICEF, 2014a). Ensuring accessibility for persons with disability in HEIs is a matter of right, respect, and fairness.

2.3.2 Negative Impact of Inaccessibility

Inaccessible environments create both permanent and temporary barriers and obstacles for all persons, especially persons with disability. Those whose lives are constrained by an inaccessible built environment are predominantly persons with vision or hearing impairment, and physical challenge (ECESA, 2003). Persons with disability often recognise limited access to the built environment as a prominent barrier not only to social but also to educational and economic opportunities. Particularly in developing countries, the situation of poor accessibility plays a vital role in the iterative cycle of disability and poverty (CBM International Australia, 2018).

Furthermore, older buildings in HEIs present structural or architectural barriers obstructing physical accessibility, and there are difficulties in surmounting them (Ebersold & Evans, 2003; Newman & Conway, 2017). When students with disability cannot move around the campus or gain access to the necessary physical and learning facilities, "they are effectively denied higher education" (UNESCO, 1999, p. 26). Inaccessible or unsuitable main campus buildings, circulation areas, poor teaching and learning environments, accommodation, and social spaces and amenities negatively impact students' academic and social experiences (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015). Thus, faulty, and inaccessible designs create architectural and physical barriers for persons with disability and impede access to education, facilities, and services that facilitate their active engagement (UNICEF, 2014a). Persons with disability are frequently exposed to unsafe or uncomfortable environments, which restricts their inclusion and engagement within the campus (Budu, 2016; Chataika, 2007; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Paul, 2000).

Students with disability encounter rigid situations such as challenges in getting around, restricted access to lifts and toilets, information shortage, inadequate technical facilities, insufficient automatic door sensors, and isolation (Ebersold & Evans, 2003). The different environmental and cultural barriers that may be encountered when planning inclusiveness in higher education building design need consideration to allow the environment to be used by every person without recourse to intensive individual customisation (Equality Challenge Unit, 2009).

2.3.3 The Cost of Providing Accessibility

There is debate in the literature regarding the cost of providing accessibility. Some scholars maintained that it is prudent to provide for accessibility at the start of new projects because it is cost-effective. It reduces the need for costly modifications or alterations to accommodate a broader range of needs in the future (Brabazon, 2015; ECESA, 2003; Equality Challenge Unit, 2009; ISO 21542, 2011). Similarly, Brabazon (2015) argued that recognising the needs of persons with disability at the beginning of the planning process and applying Universal Design Principles is much cheaper than retrofitting spaces. The cost of providing accessibility and usability measures are minimal and raise the value of the property in terms of sustainability if ISO 21542 (2011) design requirements are taken into consideration in the early stages of building design. Evans et al. (2017) contended that many HEIs have campuses that were constructed long before the introduction of the concept of universal design, and completely renovating these facilities might not be feasible. However, Brabazon (2015) argued that retrofitting buildings and rooms around campuses is a necessity though it is not cost effective in financial terms.

Furthermore, the concern of balancing expressed infrastructure needs against preserving old buildings is crucial. The value of architecture and preservation of history need to be matched with the service delivery needs of students with disability (FOTIM, 2011). Experience demonstrates historic buildings can also be made accessible without compromising their architectural or historical integrity (ECESA, 2003). ADCET (2017) suggested that moving towards campus spaces that are entirely accessible for all persons is an evolving process, which is achieved incrementally.

Literature has shown that there is a danger that whenever decisions are being made about building and constructing interfaces, persons who may use these facilities are not consulted due to “paternalistic and ill-informed assumptions” about the needs and perspectives of persons with disability in policy making and research. These situations have led to the emergence of an important principle or code within the disability community that “people with disabilities should be included in the design, implementation, and evaluation of all aspects of disability-related policy-making and research” (Brabazon, 2015, p. 28). Evans et al. (2017) noted that universal design policies and principles ensure that products, such as furniture and equipment, procured by the institution are usable by all. Thus, whenever plans for constructing or retrofitting buildings or landscape architecture are being considered, diverse users of the space

must be given due consideration. Representatives of the various categories of users of facilities and particular space, including persons with disability, need to be involved in the planning process. Inaccessible or unwelcoming environments can directly lead to exclusion (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013).

2.3.4 Critical Elements of Accessible Physical Environment in HEIs

Providing accessible spaces in educational institutions does not only meet mandatory accessibility requirements, but it is also the best practice approach employing universal design (UD) principles (ADCET, 2017). The literature highlighted essential elements regarding accessibility to the physical environment of HEIs to include entrances; maps and processes; paths of travel (external); signage, ramps; paths inside buildings; teaching spaces; study spaces; stairs, lifts, and ramps; classroom design; furniture; restroom facilities; emergency procedures; communication and parking spaces. All these elements need to have overt or covert disability-friendly features to ensure accessibility such as raised tactile or braille information; warning tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs) at the top and bottom of ramps; automatic reflex doors; wide lifts; adequate circulation spaces; ramps with gradual slope; safety curbs or curb rails at the floor level and grab-rails (ADCET, 2017; Curtin University, 2019; Evans et al., 2017; University of Canberra, 2015). Every space on the campus needs to be designed to curtail the risk of injury. There must be slip-resistant, smooth, and secure floor coverings and walking surfaces provided both inside and outside buildings (Evans et al., 2017).

Risk to injury should also extend to campus evacuation plans that include provisions for people with disability in emergencies. It is important to have designated staff, for example, fire wardens and/or security, who are trained to support the evacuation of people with disability during emergencies (ADCET, 2017).

2.3.5 On-Campus Residential Facilities

Students' on-campus residential facilities form an integral component of the built environment in HEIs. Providing on-campus residential facilities for students with disability is a critical element of successful inclusion of people with disability in higher education. However, student residential accommodation is often seen by HEIs as a commercial venture that could yield revenue for the university. Thus, the residential housing is often self-financing, with revenues being able to cover operational expenditures and capital maintenance (Department Education Training Australia, 2018).

Regardless of these financial constraints, dilemmas, and/or realities, literature has shown that some HEIs have accommodation arrangements in place for students with disability. Others have designed and/or modified their residential facilities to make them accessible. Examples of accommodation considerations include many specially modified rooms at Monash University, University of California and University of Pennsylvania (Monash University, 2019; University of California, 2018; University of Pennsylvania, 2019), special arrangement for on-campus accommodation in Nanyang Technological University (Nanyang Technological University, 2018), the opportunity to select rooms at the University of Zimbabwe (UZ) (Chataika, 2007), and securing rooms on the ground floor at University of Ghana (UG) (Asiedu et al., 2018). Similarly, UNESCO (1999) reported that adapted living accommodation was available in 13 out of 35 universities in 35 countries[3]. Additionally, financial incentives are provided by some institutions to attract prospective students, including those from the equity groups, to live in the university residential facility (Department Education Training Australia, 2018).

Residential accommodation and/or buildings need to be designed so that all persons can gain access, engage actively, and independently participate in all aspects of university residential life (Curtin University, 2019), including communal or social areas within the space, without any restriction (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). In a study, Boakye-Yiadom and Mensah (2019) found that students with disability are confronted with numerous challenges in university halls of residence. These issues relate to theft/loss of items, safety and security and fear of evacuation during critical incidents such as fire outbreaks and active shooter situations. Further, FOTIM (2011) reported that accessible residential accommodation arrangements tend to segregate, isolate, and exclude students with disability because these facilities limit their mobility and social interaction, suggesting that the segregated residential arrangements cannot be a long-term response to students' access needs.

In the USA, for example, university residential facilities are seen as an opportunity for the social inclusion of students into the university community. Universities encourage students to live on campus in the university halls of residence and join fraternities for social activities. This opportunity allows students to become an integral part of the university system from not only

[3] These 35 countries are across Africa, Arab States, Asia & Pacific, Europe, and Latin America.

an academic sense but also from a social, sporting, and cultural level (Department Education Training Australia, 2018).

2.3.6 Accessible Transportation

Accessibility is progressively being recognised as a fundamental component of a high-quality, efficient, and sustainable transport system. Easier access to the various means of transportation benefits all users and has economic benefits for service providers and transport operators (ECMT, 2006). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2010) explained that accessible transport relates to making transport systems and services easily usable by all persons. Transport facilities such as bus stops, train stations, roads, and street signs also form an integral part of accessibility (ECESA, 2003).

Accessible transport can be enhanced by eliminating any feature that creates a barrier for a specific category of persons. It is crucial to consider the types of impairment or disability particular passengers experienced, and the barriers that the system causes for such persons. UNDP (2010) further contended that "if using a transport service requires users to perform an action that they are not capable of doing, then that service is not available to them" (p. 1). Accessible transport ideally delivers much more than vehicles that can be used by a person in a wheelchair. UNDP (2010) provided guidelines and standards for accessible transport such as the appropriate design of buses with disability-friendly features and priority seat reservation for persons with disability.

The University of Chicago, for example, has a bus transportation system where accessible features such as lifts and ramps are available on all buses ensuring they can be used by anyone, including students with disability and even those who have temporary problems with steps (The University of Chicago, 2019). In a survey, UNESCO (1999) found that nine out of the 35 universities they surveyed reported special transport arrangements to and from the campus, and five provided special means of transportation within the campus. Similarly, FOTIM (2011) reported a good practice feature for students with a mobility challenge, which aimed at removing barriers to transportation in one of the universities where a dedicated bus and driver have been assigned to provide around the clock transport services for students with disability. This transport arrangement is accessible all day as per a negotiated schedule. In contrast, Lord (2017) reported that HEIs in Egypt lack accessible transportation systems to aid the movement of students with disability within or between campuses.

2.3.7 Research on Accessibility in HEIs

Literature has suggested that, in the past, HEIs in the global north also contended with issues regarding physical accessibility (Low, 1996; Tinklin & Hall, 1999; West et al., 1993). These countries and their higher education systems were able to overcome accessibility issues with purposeful research, formulation and implementation of well-thought-out policies and are being encouraged to go beyond the minimum accessibility standards (ADCET, 2017; ECESA, 2003; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). However, developing countries, including Ghana and their institutions of higher learning, are far from reaching the minimum national and international accessibility standards or requirements. For instance, Naami (2014) reported that there is not a single accessible public transport system in Ghana. Similarly, Tudzi et al. (2017) indicated that disability-friendly vehicles are not common in Ghana and, therefore, lacking on university campuses. This situation poses mobility challenges to students with disability who commute between multiple campuses to access learning. Odame (2017) also reported similar findings.

Research carried out in African countries revealed that there are major issues relating to the accessibility of the physical environment within HEIs with which students with disability have to contend (e.g., Council on Higher Education Lesotho, 2012, 2014; Emong & Eron, 2016; Kwesiga & Ahikire, 2006; Lord, 2017; Lord & Stein, 2018; Morley & Croft, 2011; Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Muzemil, 2018). Similarly, research conducted into accessibility of the physical environment in HEIs in Ghana highlighted major access barriers to the built environment, terrain and transport facilities (e.g., Ansah & Bamfo-Agyei, 2014; Asiedu et al., 2018; Braun & Naami, 2019; Gavu et al., 2015; Odame, 2017; Tudzi et al., 2017).

Accessibility and mobility are indispensable human needs (Odame, 2017). ECESA (2003) suggested that accessibility for all must be seen as an inclusive process because its benefits cut across all dimensions of society and are critical in meeting the challenges of growth and sustainable development. Students with disability encounter barriers because they have to navigate an environment which was not designed for them; if they are to enjoy equitable access this environmental deficit would have to be overcome (Tinklin & Hall, 1999). If students with disability cannot access the physical environment of the HEIs, then their right to higher education, and for that matter, their future economic independence is being repudiated. Dealing with higher education access for students with disability does not only entail modification of the built environment but also needs programmatic and pedagogical transformation and a shift in institutional culture (Slee et al., 2014).

2.4 Support Systems in Higher Education Institutions

Support systems involve established structures and arrangements fundamental to ensuring higher education access, achievement, and success for students with disability. Support systems mainly ensure that students with disability engage actively in all facets of student life on campus and also minimise the influence of disability on their learning (McCarthy et al., 2018). These provisions are critical in shaping the experiences of prospective, current, and graduating students with disability.

2.4.1 Admission and Enrolment of Students with Disability in HEIs

Tertiary institutions have an obligation to modify their admission criteria to cater for the varied pre-higher education contexts of minority groups, such as potential students with disability, reform the curriculum and also provide the necessary support to ensure that those admitted into the system have positive academic and social experiences (Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Waetjen, 2006). The Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA, 2017) explained that 'diversity' and 'equity' refer broadly to creating equitable opportunities for access and success in higher education for historically disadvantaged or underrepresented student populations such as students with disability (p. 1). Harvey and Brett (2016) contended that the admissions system cannot be improved without acknowledging the value of student equity. The respect for equity must also recognise the interplay and trade-offs with other key elements of the admissions procedure, particularly efficiency, predictive validity, transparency, and accountability.

Blessinger et al. (2018) maintained that fair access to higher education requires equity. Equity is founded on the fairness principle that everyone is entitled to uniform and just opportunities to access and participate in higher education. In broad terms, "just treatment means that everyone has a human right to access and participate in higher education as a matter of social justice" (para. 11). Equity policies and practices, therefore, facilitate the achievement of greater inclusion in tertiary education institutions. Similarly, UNESCO (2017) maintained that equity relates to ensuring that there is fairness, such that education for all students is regarded as having equal value. Equity is not only about gaining admission into an institution of higher learning. It is also about having equitable opportunities to choose from the array of HEIs and the range of academic programs, and it is about being offered the opportunity to persevere, advance, and finish one's studies and enjoy equitable labour market outcomes (Salmi & Bassett, 2014). There is an extensive history of foregrounding social justice in education and its centrality to schooling in a democratic society (Hytten & Bettez, 2011). Social justice is a

critical core value in tertiary education and fundamental to practices intended to eliminate barriers to college study and prepare students to function in a more diverse society (English, 2016). Ensuring that all students access quality education also recognises the inherent value of diversity and respect for human dignity (UNESCO, 2016).

Admission procedures need to be transparent to ensure equity of access. According to TEQSA (2019), "admission transparency" means that HEIs provide unambiguous and clear information about their respective admission requirements, processes, and the various entry pathways so that prospective students, regardless of their background, can easily understand. Access to information to prospective students can be widened by providing contact or inquiry lines, links to institutions' homepages, and websites that meet accessibility criteria of institutions for further details. HEIs need to consult more intensively with students with disability to establish the kind of support they would like to receive upon admission (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010). Accurate, relevant, timely, publicly available, and accessible information is pivotal, particularly for students with disability, to enable them to make informed decisions regarding available educational provisions and support services available for them upon enrolment, progression, successful completion, and graduation, as well as likely impediments (TEQSA, 2017).

TEQSA (2019) maintained that tertiary education institutions have autonomy over their admissions policies, though consistent with mandatory legislative requirements. Because of this institutional autonomy, the entry requirements of HEIs, particularly for students with disability, is most often dependent on their specific policy approach (Ebersold & Evans, 2003). That said, Article 24 (1 and 5) of the UNCRPD stipulated that States Parties must recognise the right of persons with disability to education without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity at all levels, including tertiary level education (United Nations, 2006). Thus, in most countries, particularly in European countries such as Australia, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, and New Zealand, universities run various structures, arrangements, policies, disability action plans, pathways, and special admission schemes, among others, to provide equitable access and opportunities for students with disability (e.g., Edith Cowan University, 2016; The University of Queensland, 2017; University of Cambridge, 2019; University of Oxford, 2019).

The University of Technology, Sydney (UTS, 2017) offers special admission schemes for prospective students affected by a disability and/or long-term health condition. University of Cambridge (2019) and the University of Oxford (2019) welcomes applicants with disability with the assurance that their respective applications will not be negatively influenced if they declare their disability. Thus, their applications will be processed precisely in the same manner as any other. This disclosure allows HEIs to respond to their educational needs when they are admitted (Universities Admissions Centre, 2019).

In a survey, UNESCO (1999) reported that while most of the universities it surveyed, 24 out of 35, indicated no explicit admission processes, the remaining 11 universities used affirmative action where students with disability benefited from modified entrance criteria involving adjusting examination score thresholds and exemption from passing certain subjects. For example, students with vision impairment are not required to pass Mathematics to gain admission into the university. Students with disability are also allocated to their first-choice departments even if they obtain the minimum entry requirements.

However, unfair practices, inequities, discriminatory practices, limited access to information, and other exclusionary propensities regarding admissions of prospective students with disability into HEIs are well documented in the literature (e.g., Ebersold & Evans, 2003; Emong & Eron, 2016; Fuller, Bradley, et al., 2004; Madriaga, 2007; Tamrat, 2018). The underlying forces controlling admission and provision for persons with disability are usually compromised when institutions have no clear disability statement and do not delineate how it will be put into operation. In the absence of detailed policy strategies stipulating their obligations and outlining institutional commitment, admission of persons with disability is done "more as an occasional act of philanthropy on behalf of the needy than an educational duty inherent in the institution's mission…" (Ebersold & Evans, 2003, p. 26). Similarly, in some African countries, higher education institutions are often unprepared to admit persons with disability because they do not have a policy on inclusive education (Kochung, 2011).

Further, it was reported that some persons with disability had challenges in selecting universities to enrol because they were unable to gain prior information regarding the ability of the institution to respond to their learning and assessment needs (Fuller, Healey, et al., 2004). In the absence of information to make informed choices, prospective students with disability experience anxiety and stress and are confronted with challenges in preparing for post-

secondary education (Madriaga, 2007). In addition, students with disability were restrained by some universities from choosing certain courses or pursuing certain programs of study (Kwesiga & Ahikire, 2006; Lord, 2017; Mosia & Phasha, 2017; UNESCO, 1999) because some institutions lack the necessary resources and also underrated the ability of students with disability (Kwesiga & Ahikire, 2006; Mosia & Phasha, 2017). Similarly, criteria for admission into HEIs are complex, stringent, and inflexible for vulnerable students, such as those with disability intending to enrol. In Egypt, assessment by Lord (2017) revealed impediments to admission and program choice within HEIs, faculties, and the various departments located within faculties. Most faculty members and administrators lack awareness of the decree providing legal backing for admission of students with disability. These experiences mirrored weaknesses relating to admission arrangements, policies, and practices in some other HEIs. Chataika (2007) maintained that persons with disability do not have adequate representation in higher education because, among other factors, the admission process and procedures fail to reflect the support they require.

2.4.2 Orientation Programs for Commencing Students

Orientation refers to "finding your place and knowing the direction you want to move in as you face a new situation, environment, or experience". It relates to providing adequate information and support aimed at ensuring that individuals meet their respective goals (Barr, 2010, ix). An orientation program is one of the critical support services provided by HEIs for all commencing students, including those with disability. The program is customarily offered by all HEIs serving a lot of purposes with a myriad of benefits for commencing students, including those with disability (e.g., Barr, 2010; Cayton, 2017; Edith Cowan College, 2019; Mack, 2010; Macquarie University, 2019; Mann et al., 2010; Middle East Technical University, 2017; UTS, 2017; Vickerman & Blundell, 2010; Williams, 2007).

Orientation programs support new students to familiarise themselves with the learning community and inform them about institutional resources to facilitate their academic and social success. They incorporate an organised and systematic attempt to present commencing students seamlessly and meaningfully to the institutional environment. Orientation programs highlight the crux of the institution and academic life, culture, traditions, history, people, and adjoining communities, thus, providing students with a complete understanding and perspective of the higher education experience. While providing a formal introduction to the institution, the

fundamental goal of an orientation program is to acquaint students with academic and behavioural expectations, education programs, and the student life of the institution (Mack, 2010). Orientation programs, thus, define students' expectations, escalate their determination, perseverance, and support their attainment of success in higher education (Williams, 2007).

Further, orientation programs offer commencing students' opportunities for social inclusion, through meeting other students and staff. Attending orientation gives students the best start possible to university life, and also starts them on the path to building a rewarding career (UTS, 2017). It is a critical stage in making sure that students are offered advice regarding academic support systems, student welfare programs, and safety information for life in the university and beyond (Edith Cowan College, 2019; Middle East Technical University, 2017). Orientation represents a critical stage in the student journey because the program presents new students to university life and allows them the opportunity to adjust to the new physical, academic, social, and emotional environment. Orientation is one of the programs the university can use in supporting students to succeed. It provides the opportunity for a consistent, interconnected, and appealing initial imprint for commencing students, setting expectations that impact their retention and progression (Macquarie University, 2019, para. 1). Orientation programs enable commencing students with disability to be conversant with the support services available to them and to learn how to access these services (Wilson & Dannells, 2010).

In addition, for students with vision impairment and deaf-blindness, Article 24 (3, a) of the UNCRPD stipulated that educational institutions train students to acquire skills in orientation and mobility (United Nations, 2006). Orientation and mobility services offer students with various degrees of vision impairment and deaf-blindness skills and conceptualisations required to navigate independently and safely within the campus environment. Training in orientation and mobility may comprise skills, such as finding locations on campus or in unfamiliar destinations, and the ability to orient oneself upon getting lost. Training also includes the deployment of the rest of the senses, such as the kinaesthetic sense, negotiating obstacles and stairs, using buses and transit, crossing streets, and solving problems (Office of Students with Disability Gallaudet University, n.d.).

Providing quality orientation programs appears 'deceptively simple'; however, the procedure is complicated and the choices of how to best offer support to commencing students, including those with disability, are numerous (Barr, 2010). Orientation, thus, requires careful planning

and implementation while considering the nuances of a particular institution (Mack, 2010). Disability support staff and experts in special needs education play a central role in planning and implementing institutional wide and disability-specific orientation programs (Wilson & Dannells, 2010). Investing in quality orientation programs is money well spent by a tertiary institution (Barr, 2010). It is pivotal to discover the subtle balance between the everyday needs of students, the responsibility of the institution, and appropriate accountability by offering an exhaustive orientation program to enable successful transition, adaptation, and adjustment of commencing students, particularly those with disability (Mack, 2010).

2.4.3 Academic Support Services

In this section, literature regarding academic support services has been reviewed under areas such as reasonable adjustment, learning support, assistive technology and equipment, and assessment and examination. For many students with disability, academic support is a precondition for a successful higher education experience**.** The most potent barriers in HEIs, which constrain the teaching and learning process, may be rooted in attitudes of teachers, approaches to teaching, the course structure, or modes of assessment (UNESCO, 1999).

2.4.3.1 Reasonable Adjustments

Portions of Article 24 of the UNCRPD stipulated the learning support students with disability need to receive in educational settings. The Article specified the provision of reasonable adjustments and individual support measures to facilitate effective education and success for students with disability (United Nations, 2006). Reasonable adjustments, also called reasonable accommodations, are measures or actions that schools and teachers undertake to provide appropriate learning environments, teaching and learning activities, assessments, specialist equipment such as assistive technologies, and support to respond to the needs of students enabling them to access and participate fully in achieving curriculum outcomes (Redpath et al., 2013; Shaddock et al., 2007; UNESCAP, 2016).

The concept of reasonable adjustments requires institutions of higher education to take reasonable steps in ensuring that students with disability do not experience a ‘substantial’ disadvantage in using their services. Teaching, learning, research, and assessment activities need to be designed from the onset with the needs of students with disability in mind, thus building in accessibility requirements when designing services to facilitate inclusivity (Redpath et al., 2013). Students with disability have a legitimate right to reasonable adjustments to ensure

that their needs to access education are catered for (Equality Challenge Unit, 2013) and to facilitate their access and participation in education on an equal footing or basis with other students (Fossey et al., 2015).

2.4.3.2 Learning Support

Scholars, Fossey et al. (2015) highlighted that supporting students with disability to participate in higher education is multifaced and intricate in practice, incorporating processes such as recognising, negotiating and implementing learning supports, and procedures, which involves the engagement of a network of people.

Learning support is critical in facilitating the academic achievement of students with disability or on-going health conditions regarding their engagement with, and completion of higher education. These support services are presumed to have positive impacts on the study experiences, course retention, and successful completion. Evidence suggests there is parity between the academic achievement of students with disability who receive support services and students with no known disability. However, students with disability who do not benefit from any institutional and/or learning support underperform (Madriaga et al., 2011; Redpath et al., 2013). For instance, some students require access to their notes before lectures (Redpath et al., 2013) because they need to read the information at their own pace to fully understand the content (Kendall, 2016). Tinklin et al. (2004a) suggested that simple adjustments, such as regularly providing course notes and handouts online, would successfully do away with the 'special needs' of some students and be a valuable resource for all category of students.

Faculty and students with disability perceived that the procedures underpinning the use of disability support services are complex to negotiate and that numerous factors are responsible for this complexity (Fossey et al., 2015). Fuller, Healey, et al. (2004) found that in some instances, even when students with disability declared their impairment, there are no mechanisms in place to communicate this information to their lecturers. Similarly, it could be very frustrating for students with disability to indicate their needs under difficult circumstances and still have some lecturers who are unwilling and inflexible to make these adjustments. Lack of awareness can result in faculty staff not appreciating how frustrating it can be for students to repeatedly request assistance and provide justification for this support and still not receive it (Redpath et al., 2013).

Furthermore, students reported difficulties regarding learning support in areas such as access to lecture notes or slides and/or recording/audio-taping lectures; lack of note-takers during lectures, provision of braille and electronic-formatted lecture notes and course materials; large print handouts; quality scanned materials; equipment to enlarge computer screen characters; screen readers; and qualified readers (e.g., Dowrick et al., 2005; Kendall, 2016; Lord, 2017; Moriña Díez et al., 2015; Mortimore, 2013; Newman & Conway, 2017; Redpath et al., 2013; Riddell et al., 2005; Vickerman & Blundell, 2010).

Further, some faculty members, especially in older HEIs, felt that reasonable adjustments made to teaching practices could lower standards and give undue benefit to students with disability (Tinklin et al., 2004a; Vickerman & Blundell, 2010). Teachers demonstrate a lack of awareness of legislative requirements, which made support for students with disability an obligation (Dowrick et al., 2005; FOTIM, 2011; Lane, 2015). Participation can be difficult for students with disability if staff members are unaware of their needs.

Research highlighted that there is a myriad of problems associated with disclosure of disability and illnesses by students to access adjustments (e.g., Dowrick et al., 2005; Fossey et al., 2015; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Lightner et al., 2012). Students expressed concerns about the risk of negative impact on their reputation, which is most often associated with disclosure (Dowrick et al., 2005; Fossey et al., 2015). Limited knowledge and stigma are also reported as barriers to disclosing disability and seeking support services (Lightner et al., 2012). To address these concerns, scholars and researchers, (e.g., Fossey et al., 2015; Redpath et al., 2013; UNESCO, 1999) recommend creating institutional-level support systems, which have the potential to improve the learning experiences of all students and decrease the need for individual students to disclose their disability to enable them to benefit from disability services and support. McCarthy et al. (2018) noted that in implementing accessibility and inclusive practices, consideration need to be given to the use of the universal design for learning (UDL), an educational framework, which guides educators towards the creation of adaptable learning environments that respond to diverse learning needs of the individual learner (The Centre for Applied Special Technology, 2017).

Similarly, disability support units (DSUs) play critical roles in responding to the support needs of students with disability (e.g. Asiedu et al., 2018; Chataika, 2007; FOTIM, 2011; Lane, 2015). These roles have extensive variations in degree and sophistication, depending on the

number of years the DSU has been in existence (FOTIM, 2011). These roles and responsibilities include developing policy; raising awareness; auditing and resolving physical access issues when they arise; providing and maintaining assistive technologies, devices, and equipment; ensuring that dedicated computer rooms are offered to students with disability; converting materials into formats accessible for students with disability; offering alternative examination and assessment arrangements; assisting students in applying for government bursaries and grants; providing specialist services such as sign language interpretations, braillists, and therapists; and ensuring that students have an accessible social hub for interaction and socialising (Asiedu et al., 2018; Chataika, 2007; FOTIM, 2011; Lane, 2015).

The literature highlighted that DSU staff need better support to function effectively because they have the first or initial contact with students with disability and establish a connection between students with disability, staff, and faculty. Most often, in higher education institutions, they have expertise in disability rights (Lane, 2015) and provide proactive interventions and reorientation as institutional change agents on disability matters. In situations where DSUs lack devices and equipment, the scope and/or quality of their service delivery is impacted. DSUs are often consumed by other units, such as student careers and counselling unit. For example, disability issues are often submerged when the coordinator of the DSU would have to report through the director, careers, and counselling and then to the pro-vice-chancellor (FOTIM, 2011). It has been suggested that DSUs need to be made autonomous to remove bureaucratic bottles-necks to facilitate their smooth running (Odame & Nanor, 2016). FOTIM (2011) suggested that it is crucial to create dedicated, well-equipped, accessible, and responsive DSUs, especially in developing countries where the HEIs are not well-equipped for complete faculty integration.

Although dedicated units are appropriate at this point in time, the ultimate goal is complete faculty integration and HEIs need to aim at moving away from reasonable individual adjustments to inclusive education for all (Redpath et al., 2013). A collaborative approach to service provision makes an interrelated web of support that is anticipatory, holistic, and seamless (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). Establishing local and international collaboration and networking opportunities to deepen the experiences and also draw on practical examples of disability service delivery in HEIs is critical and indispensable for DSUs (Asiedu et al., 2018; Chataika, 2007; FOTIM, 2011). Collaboration between the student, the support staff, and the

teaching staff facilitate an effective response to the learning support needs of students with disability (Fossey et al., 2015).

Furthermore, peer mentoring and support within inclusive tertiary education programs are critical for the success of students with disability. Peer mentoring and support varied extensively regarding the focus of the support, commitment, selection and remuneration. For example, the focus of mentoring may include academic tutoring, social support, residential assistance, or job coaching; commitment relates to how often - daily, weekly, or sporadically; selection refers to volunteerism, or program requirements; and remuneration explains whether it is paid or unpaid support (Carter et al., 2019).

2.4.3.3 Assistive Technology and Equipment

According to the Department of Education and Training (DHET), Republic of South Africa (DHET Republic of South Africa, 2018), "assistive technology is an umbrella term that covers everything from pencil grips to the latest tablets and includes Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), specialised technology and assistive devices" (p. 25). Forms of assistive technology include accessible computer input, hardware and software, adapted or alternative keyboards and mouse, switches and switch access, word prediction, speech recognition, text to speech, word prediction and word banks, phonetic spell checkers, digital voice recorders, closed-circuit television (CCTV)[4], reading machines, audiobooks and audiobook players, braille embossers, screen magnifiers and readers, braille translation software with embossers, film, video, electronic documents, and e-text readers (Lord, 2017; UNICEF, 2014a).

Adaptive computer technologies such as specialised hardware and software teaching materials enable students with disability, especially those with vision impairment, to work independently on computers. The usage of these technologies as technical learning tools is one of the critical factors for improving the effectiveness of the inclusive education process for students with vision impairment because it presents computer information in an accessible format, braille tactile writing system, and/or speech form. Knowledge in these technologies enables them to work without assistance on computers with programs such as office, and MS Word and Internet

[4] The closed-circuit television (CCTV) also called, video magnifier, enlarges learning materials, including texts, diagrams, and pictures, and displays on a TV screen or monitor. This enables persons with low or partial vision to perform learning tasks such as reading, writing, and viewing diagrams (Low Vision Learning Center, 2019).

Explorer (UNESCO IITE, 2019). Thus, access to technology provides access to websites, and learning management systems, which is imperative for all students and no less so for students with disability (Evans et al., 2017).

This knowledge also helps students with disability to participate in public information exchange and equally motivates career engagements. In the present day, when every aspect of life in society is intensively computerised, a person with vision impairment needs to gain adequate knowledge in adaptive computer technologies to become competitive in the open labour market and a decent taxpayer after graduation (UNESCO IITE, 2019). UNESCO IITE maintained that knowledge in ICT is a key requirement for a professional career and society expects a modern specialist or professional to be competent in ICT. Thus, facilitating adjustments for students with disability extends beyond the classroom (Evans et al., 2017).

Article 24 of the UNCRPD indicated, among others, that persons with disability such as persons with vision impairment, hearing impairment, and deaf-blindness are to receive their education in the most appropriate modes of communication (United Nations, 2006). Specialised services such as sign language interpretation and braille transcription services and other modes of communication modifications in teaching, learning, and modes of assessment are fundamental to this provision (UNICEF, 2014c). In Singapore, for instance, the Special Education Needs (SEN) Fund for eligible tertiary students with physical and sensory impairments was introduced by the MoE in 2014. This fund assists students with disability to buy assistive technology devices to improve their learning. From April 2020, the fund was extended to include students with dyslexia and autism (Ang, 2020).

However, in developing countries, students with disability have limited access to learning equipment, ICT, software, accessible websites, and training in computer and assistive technology. Furthermore, access to course material and curricular in an accessible format is often restricted (e.g., FOTIM, 2011; Kochung, 2011; Lord, 2017; Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011; Tamrat, 2018). For example, in Egypt, Lord (2017) reported that a majority of students with vision impairment (72%) and hearing impairment (56%) mentioned barriers in obtaining course materials in an accessible format. A substantial minority of students with physical challenge (44%) contended with similar problems. These provisions are regarded as "a 'goodwill' measure, not a 'rights' measure of equal access" (p. 19). The paucity of staffing,

assistive technology, and technical know-how on modern print access accommodations prevail in HEIs (Lord & Stein, 2018).

It could be suggested that students with disability have limited access to information as a result of systemic neglect or oppression. In addition to the previously mention assistive technology, the physical location of information such as notice boards and information booths are not appropriate and easily accessible. Gillies and Dupuis (2013) contended "the most effective way of uncovering how best to share information about programs and services is by asking students with disabilities: what are the best methods for getting information into their hands" (p. 205).

2.4.3.4 Assessment and Examination

Quality inclusive education entails techniques of appraising and monitoring the progress of students. A variety of reasonable adjustments in assessment and examinations has been identified, including varying formats of assessment to meet the needs of students. For instance, typing with a computer rather than writing with hand, oral instead of written presentation, extended examination time, relocating examination venue to a quiet place to reduce distraction and support anxious students, extended assessment submission dates, changing assessment formats, providing scribes, readers and specific coloured writing papers. The accommodations reflect the various categories of the population of students and the diverse environments for which these adjustments are intended (e.g., Fossey et al., 2015; Kendall, 2016; Lord, 2017; Lord & Stein, 2018; Mosia & Phasha, 2017).

However, scholars (e.g., Ebersold & Evans, 2003; Hanafin et al., 2007; Kendall, 2016; Liasidou, 2014; UN Committee on RPD, 2016) reported difficulties relating to assessment of students with disability in HEIs. Hanafin et al. (2007) reported that the assessment of students with disability was fraught with challenges because HEIs failed to adequately conceptualise and respond to fundamental issues regarding access and assessment. Issues of inflexible examination arrangements were also reported by Budu (2016), Chataika (2010), Ebersold and Evans (2003) and Paul (2000). Liasidou (2014) argued that separating students with disability from their colleagues with no known disability to have extra time during examination is antithetical to the principles of inclusion. When students with disability are isolated, it perpetuates the assumption of difference and the notion of desperation for compensatory measures to enable them to achieve academic success (Madriaga et al., 2011). However, consideration should also be given to the performance of students with disability who are easily

distracted by crowds and anxious students could be adversely affected when they write their examination in the same room with other students (Evans et al., 2017; Fossey et al., 2015).

The high premium that is often placed on traditional modes of assessment such as examination, discriminates against students with disability (Kochung, 2011). Traditional modes of assessment, using standardised achievement test scores as the only indicator of success for both students and schools, could place students with disability in a disadvantaged situation (UN Committee on RPD, 2016). Further, Redpath et al. (2013) contended that:

> Students with disabilities face barriers to participation because they are working in an environment that was designed for non-disabled people, and any deviation from what is considered 'normal' – i.e., being able to walk, hear, see or, in the case of dyslexic students, generate high quality written work – is overlooked. This assumption of normality concerning assessment does, in itself, create a barrier. (p. 1336)

It has been suggested that the practice of providing courses and examinations in alternative formats and accessible teaching strategies for students with vision impairment is virtually unknown to university professors (Lord, 2017; Lord & Stein, 2018). Further, faculty staff are critical about conferring undue advantage in terms of assessment, which demonstrated a lack of awareness of legislative requirements and training on how to respond to diversity in learning, teaching, and assessment (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010).

It is recommended (Kendall, 2016; Lord, 2017) that HEIs reflect on future policy developments or initiatives and engagements that will consider inclusive practices relating to teaching, learning, and assessment across all schools, faculties, and departments. As previously discussed, the concept of equity means that people need differing shares of resources to have an equal chance of success. Providing the same conditions or equipment for everyone equally is likely to result in inequity (Department of Education - Tasmania, 2015). Equity involves understanding the teaching, learning, and assessment needs of students because every individual student has different needs and circumstances (Blessinger et al., 2018).

2.4.4 Counselling Services

Counselling services are an essential component of any HEI (European Association for International Education, n.d.). Wheeler and Hewitt (2004) maintained that the higher education context is one of the most established areas for providing counselling. Counselling is one of the measures aimed at ensuring success and reducing high dropout rates of underrepresented students such as persons with disability in HEIs in many countries (Curaj et al., 2018).

European Commission (2019) indicated that HEIs are to offer all students the necessary counselling services, including academic, psychological, and career counselling services, to enable them to succeed and benefit from higher education. Academic guidance relates to course guidance, using personal tutors, and skills guidance. Psychological counselling services include student mental health advice, exam concessions, and arrangements, mentoring, and peer support. Career guidance involves career advice, including graduate placements, careers fairs and further study opportunities, CV workshops, networking and/or mentoring opportunities, coaching on interview techniques, and support with job applications.

Currently, some universities integrate employability skills and compulsory career sessions into their degree courses. Many HEIs also assist students in developing the 'soft skills' such as effective communication, acting as a team player, creative or critical thinking, and problem-solving, which companies look for. Many HEIs allow students access to careers service up to three years after graduation; some permit lifelong access (European Commission, 2019).

Furthermore, higher education has been identified as providing students with disability employment opportunities and social status (Dennis, 2016; Ebersold, 2008; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011); thus, higher levels of education correlate with lower rates of unemployment and higher income (Dennis, 2016). Students with disability are motivated to pursue higher education because of its potential to culminate in rewarding careers, economic self-sufficiency, higher marketability, competitiveness, and bigger earnings (Dowrick et al., 2005; Mask & DePountis, 2018; Odame & Nanor, 2016). However, discriminatory attitudes and assumptions about the ability and workplace accommodations or adjustments for persons with disability negatively impact their higher education and workplace experiences (Dowrick et al., 2005; Hopkins, 2011). Career counselling is, therefore, critical in enhancing employment opportunities for tertiary students with disability. Thus, employment rates of some categories of persons with disability remain low despite the implementation of policy initiatives to improve their opportunities (Hiersteiner et al., 2016).

Students with disability require proactive support, advice, and guidance by careers services. Careers services need to consult with these students to establish what their needs and preferences are. This approach will provide students with disability opportunities to address any possible barriers or restrictions job search may present, and HEIs could play a vital role in ensuring difficulties are proactively dealt with to curtail drawbacks (Vickerman & Blundell,

2010). A career counsellor may provide students with disability realistic insights into the competencies and expectations of their career interests and the ability to fulfil job responsibilities and duties (Mask & DePountis, 2018). Internships and job training assist students to understand the expectations of their chosen career and are valuable supports in the transition of students with disability to work (Dowrick et al., 2005; Odame & Nanor, 2016). Critical dimensions of planning transition for students with disability include assisting students to overcome obstacles of job acquisition, training in curriculum vitae or resume preparation, and attending interviews (Dutta et al., 2009; Mask & DePountis, 2018).

Effective on-campus and off-campus practicums, attachment and placement programs provide immense benefit for both students with and without disability. Regular contact with public and private employers as well as investors and the provision of information on the benefits of employing qualified persons with disability may help in lessening obstacles to employment and inspire more students with disability to pursue higher education (Dutta et al., 2009). Career days and job readiness workshops can be organised each semester to include graduating and current students, vocational rehabilitation service providers as well as public and private employers in the community. These training activities are helpful for those who have not ever been gainfully employed and for undergraduate students (Dutta et al., 2009).

Counselling should equip students with disability with skills in handling realistic outcomes of discrimination successfully, stigmatisation and labels threaten their emerging identities as higher education students and young professionals. This understanding will allow higher education professionals and counsellors to be better prepared to ensure academic, social, and emotional development through counselling services, political support and advocacy, and referral services for students with disability (Johnson, 2006). Kahveci (2017) explained that the proactive model of school counselling encourages counsellors to broaden their horizons, thus respond not only to students who seek counselling on their own but also to reach out to all students, including students with disability to implement concrete agendas.

2.4.5 Human Resource, Training and Professional Development

Article 24(4) of the UNCRPD stated that for students with disability to realise their right to education, state parties shall ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to recruit qualified staff including teachers with disability who are experts in sign language and/or braille and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Such training shall

integrate disability awareness using apposite augmentative and alternative means, modes, formats of communication, techniques in education, and materials in supporting persons with disability (United Nations, 2006). However, despite the provisions of the UNCRPD, literature has highlighted insufficient professional staff or resource persons, such as braille transcribers, sign language interpreters, and faculty staff with expertise in special needs education as a major human resource challenge in the inclusion of persons with disability in higher education (e.g., Gelbar et al., 2015; Moriña, 2017; Moriña Díez et al., 2015; Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Murray et al., 2008; Newman & Conway, 2017; Spratt & Florian, 2015).

In addition, continuous development programs that comprise pedagogic methods for teaching and learning in higher education can equip faculty with adequate information and pedagogical skills that will remove erroneous and unsubstantiated stereotypical attitudes towards students with disability (Lane, 2015). The European Commission (2017) suggested that teaching requires a proven expertise and continuous professional development. Effective teachers, including those in tertiary education, possess a comprehensive range of teaching approaches to draw from and the capability to adapt their teaching to diverse situations and learners. Thus, even well experienced teachers need to review and update their methods and keep developing their competences. In Singapore, for example, several initiatives are implemented to enhance professional development, recognition, talent attraction and retention for special education school staff. These include postgraduate (master degree) scholarships in Special Education, tenable in local and reputable overseas universities provided by the Singapore Ministry of Education, and reasonable financial provisions for engagement in professional development activities annually (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2016b). Teachers also lack training in ways of responding to diversity in teaching, learning, and assessment (Lane, 2015 Nonis, 2006; Nonis & Jernice, 2011). Both preservice and in-service teacher education programs need reorientation and alignment to inclusive education approaches to give teachers the pedagogical capacities required to make diversity work in the classroom and congruence with reformed curricula (UNESCO, 2009).

The importance of continuous professional learning for teachers, including teachers at the tertiary level, is stated in literature. For example, Shulman (2004) contended that “one never learns to teach once and for all. It is a continuous, on-going, constantly deepening process. Thus, any school that wishes its teachers to teach well had better provide conditions for them to be learning continually” (p. 517). School leaders and teachers need to deliberate or reflect

together on their practice, approaches, techniques, and opportunities for continuous professional development (UNESCO, 2009). Further, a campus culture of inclusion is only plausible if the entire campus community receive on-going training on diversity awareness and sensitivity, and where policies and procedures are put in place to support students with disability (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013).

Faculty staff require training on how to respond to the learning needs of students with disability in their classrooms, ensuring inclusive practice as well as meeting their legal responsibilities (Kendall, 2016; Mask & DePountis, 2018; Nonis, 2006). More targeted training relating to differentiation, making reasonable adjustments in teaching practice and creating greater disability awareness among teaching staff are vital for effective inclusion (Fossey et al., 2015). Similarly, FOTIM (2011) suggested that compulsory skills-based training need to be offered in tertiary institutions for faculty staff to facilitate the application of the principles of universal design in methodologies and teaching processes. Training around disability awareness for all lecturers is a key factor in ensuring inclusive practice (Kendall, 2016). In-service training could place more emphasis on challenging negative beliefs (MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013).

2.4.6 Inclusive Pedagogy in HEIs

An inclusive pedagogy has become an issue of fundamental concern because teaching and learning are critical dimensions of successful inclusive education. Rusznyak and Walton (2017) argued that inclusivity is not only about the feeling of belongingness but also about learning and attainment of academic success. Hockings (2010) explained that:

> *Inclusive learning and teaching in higher education refer to how pedagogy, curricula, and assessment are designed and delivered to engage students in learning that is meaningful, relevant, and accessible to all. It embraces a view of the individual and individual differences as the source of diversity that can enrich the lives and learning of others.* (p. 1)

Thus, an inclusive approach to teaching acknowledges the diversity of students, allowing all students to access course content, fully partake in learning activities, and show their knowledge and strengths at assessment. Inclusive practice values the diversity of the student population as a resource that enriches the learning experience. No one-size-fits-all methodology can respond to all the diverse learning needs of a class (Department of Education - Tasmania, 2015). Teachers must be sensitive, flexible, and pedagogically-skilled to respond to the challenges inherent in inclusive education practices in the classroom (Giorcelli, 2016). Tomlinson (2001)

contended that “it’s no longer possible to look at a group of students in a classroom and pretend they are essentially alike” (p. v). Diversity is thus seen as a constructive stimulus for nurturing learning among all categories of persons and for facilitating equity (UNESCO, 2017).

Differentiated teaching techniques are crucial in supporting the needs of learners and celebrating diversity (Department of Education - Tasmania, 2015). This may involve adapting the pace of instruction to respond to the needs of learners (Tomlinson et al., 2003). Differentiation enables teachers to plan and carry-out different approaches to content, process, product, and anticipate and respond to differences in student’s readiness, interest, and profile (Shaddock et al., 2007). Whereas differentiation is considered to be reactive in responding to learner diversity, the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework is more proactive in creating flexible learning environments that are suitable for all students. The UDL framework guides educators to develop learning opportunities for increasingly diverse student populations (Rose & Meyer, 2002). UDL provides a blueprint for crafting instructional objectives, approaches, resources, and assessments that work for everyone (National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2014). Similarly, Adams and Holland (2006) maintained that UDL revitalises educational goals, materials, methods, and assessments to allow all learners to take part in the general curriculum. Scott et al. (2003) maintained UDL employs a comprehensive approach to curriculum development that promotes communities of learners and inclusive practice.

UDL enables educators to ensure that the educational setting facilitates interaction and communication among students and between students and staff; and teaching and learning experiences are designed to be accommodating, friendly and inclusive. All students are expected to achieve based on their maximum abilities. Universal Design for Learning stipulates both accessible information, and an accessible pedagogy (Rose et al., 2006). UDL assists faculty to address learner variability and develop inclusive pedagogy. It addresses the needs of all learners by removing barriers within the learning environment (Bonati, 2019). Creating a learning environment that is welcoming, respectful, and supportive to all is crucial for students’ academic success; thus, an environment where students feel connected and safe to take risks with their learning (Department of Education - Tasmania, 2015).

Program accessibility hinges upon faculty involvement, yet faculty members are often ill-prepared to teach students with disability (Walker, 1980). Literature has well-documented the

challenges students with disability contend with within classrooms such as faulty pedagogy and inappropriate use of ICT techniques (e.g., Asiedu et al., 2018; Denhart, 2008; Gelbar et al., 2015; Kochung, 2011; Konur, 2006; Moriña Díez et al., 2015; Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Murray et al., 2008; Paul, 2000; Walker, 1980). Lack of preparedness of teachers to implement an inclusive approach in schools is one of the major challenges with which developing countries contend (Sharma et al., 2013).

Inflexible and inappropriate approaches to teaching, lack of confidence in teachers, content-based teaching, rote learning, access to only minor accommodations, and prejudices of faculty members can be major threats to the positive academic experiences and success of students with disability (Gelbar et al., 2015; Kochung, 2011; Murray et al., 2008). Moriña Díez et al. (2015) reported a situation where lecturers engage in inappropriate teaching practices where tools such as PowerPoint are misused, which could be a very intimidating obstacle for students with disability. Some faculty staff read information on PowerPoint verbatim, merely going from one slide to the next with no additional explanations or clarifications. When teaching is carried out in this manner, students with vision and hearing impairment, for example, receive insufficient information and have difficulty retaining information. Improper consideration for planning the curriculum are impediments for persons with disability in most higher education institutions (Adams & Brown, 2006; Kochung, 2011; McLean et al., 2003). Mosia and Phasha (2017) contended that "lecturers' lack of commitment to support students with disabilities may also be explained by their limited understanding of how to support students living with various disabilities" (p. 11).

Academic support such as inclusive pedagogy and adjustments for students with disability in the classroom ultimately improve the learning of all students (Boyle et al., 2011; Forlin et al., 2013; FOTIM, 2011; Healey et al., 2006). Forlin et al. (2013) suggested approaches such as quality teaching, inclusive pedagogy, and adaptive curricula as good in-class practice. Lane (2015) suggested that changing faculty attitudes needs to start with an open discussion about the responsibilities associated with teaching and learning on the part of both teachers and students. Eliminating barriers to accessing the curriculum will call for a cultural change within the tertiary education system but would result in improving teaching and learning for all students (Tinklin et al., 2004a).

Further, teachers need to demonstrate excellence in teaching and an ethical and moral commitment referred to as "pedagogical imperative". Teachers feelings of ethical

responsibility ensure that the students they teach attain academic success, and this is the commitment Shulman (2003) explained as “the scholarship of teaching and learning” (p. 2). If higher education institutions (HEIs) are to be acknowledged as maximally effective for students with disability, the responsibility of teaching personnel will be critical in shaping that recognition. Thus, “support services can make it possible for the handicapped student [student with disability] to enter the postsecondary setting physically, but only faculty can provide… access to knowledge and ways of knowing” (Walker, 1980). Facilitating a barrier-free curriculum by teaching personnel is critical for the academic success of students with disability (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010).

Learning, teaching, and assessment of students with disability could be restricted if learning objectives are inappropriate, adapted equipment for practical activities are limited or non-existent, faculty staff are unable to appropriately adjust the curriculum or modify approaches to teaching and conversation about barriers to learning and assessment strategies are lacking (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010). Introducing inclusion has both cultural and pedagogical implications for teachers.

Karousou (2017) argued that “inclusive practice requires a paradigm shift in our institutional and cultural approach to ensure that all students are … included in the university classroom” (p. 40). The principles of inclusion and equity are not limited to ensuring access to education only but also incorporate providing quality learning spaces that allow students to succeed, to appreciate their realities, and to work for a more just society (UNESCO, 2017). Accessible and supportive classrooms are a rich resource for teaching and assisting students to learn about diversity and interact positively with one another. They nurture student collaboration, problem-solving, and learning and also encourage all students to experience a sense of belonging and actively participate in school (Ministry of Education New Zealand, 2015). Modifying the physical arrangement of the classroom has been recognised by Habulezi and Phasha (2012) as one of the critical elements of inclusivity. However, students with disability contend with obstacles such as inappropriate or non-adjustable and inadequate furniture within the classrooms where they learn (ADCET, 2017; Fossey et al., 2015; Lord, 2017). For example, inadequate desks or chairs obstruct students from working under appropriate conditions. Further, the challenge of, and difficulty with, navigating the learning environment when the arrangement of furniture is messy affects students’ learning (Fossey et al., 2015).

Class size has consequences for student attitudes, behaviours, and outcomes prompting faculty to adjust their teaching strategies in ways that can be detrimental to student learning (Monks & Schmidt, 2011). Other environmental features of the classroom, which are critical for student learning and achievement, include lighting, noise level, air quality, heating, sound quality, symbolic features such as objects and wall décor (Bøjer, 2018; Byers et al., 2018; Cheryan et al., 2014; Habulezi & Phasha, 2012; Imms & Byers, 2017). Inadequate lighting in the classroom can prevent students from seeing the blackboard or the screen. In particular, background noise in the classroom may distract students with hearing impairment (Fossey et al., 2015). The space in the classroom primarily affects interaction. Adequate spaces allow faculty staff to use a wide range of learning techniques and strategies (Evans et al., 2017).

Teaching staff at HEIs can stimulate or inspire the feelings of inclusion in the classroom by greeting students upon entering the classroom, providing one-on-one attention to students, adding motivating feedback to assignments that are returned to students and, in several other ways, demonstrate to students that their presence in the class matters (Evans et al., 2017). Graham-Smith and Lafayette (2004) reported that in a study, responses of students were overwhelmingly in favour of caring staff and a safe environment when they were asked which accommodation or adjustment was most beneficial to them. This finding suggests that "being cognizant of an individual's spirit is more important than structure and policy" (p. 90). Although other support services are equally essential, they need to be provided by caring staff who go beyond discerning the needs of individual student and offering required resources, to empowering students through trustful regard and encouragement (Graham-Smith & Lafayette, 2004).

The school system is expected to provide learners, including persons with disability an education that is all-embracing in perspective, nurtured by a flexible and inclusive curriculum, built on contemporary pedagogical knowledge, and reinforced by equity and social justice principles (Giorcelli, 1996). The same applies to the higher education sector. Acknowledging the variability of students in learning would engender a critical analysis of current teaching practices, partnership, and collaboration to eliminate impediments to learning (Bonati, 2019). Osman et al. (2018) argued that higher education and social justice are inherently intertwined and can be attained by adopting apposite pedagogical strategies and attitudes aimed at ensuring that universities remain places of possibility, rather than divisive spaces.

2.4.7 Disability Support Services Provided by Universities – Examples from International Context

In many developed countries, international and national legislation are articulated into institutional policies and support services. Universities have policies that support students with disability, and students can obtain an array of support services, subject to availability and appropriateness. These policy arrangements comprise disability policies; disability action plans; student access plans; discrimination and harassment policies; student grievance resolution procedures; and alternative academic arrangements for students with disability. Support services for reasonable adjustment include access to campus-based computers with assistive technology; access to handouts and lecture presentations in advance; modifications to university residential accommodation; extended library loans; one-on-one learning approaches and support; note-taker support; and, sign language interpreters (e.g., Edith Cowan University, 2016; Singapore Management University, 2019; The University of New South Wales, 2017; The University of Queensland, 2017; University of Leeds, 2014). In some universities, specialist mentors and/or personal assistants are provided to students with disability, and support is available throughout the year, not limited to university teaching terms (University of Leeds, 2014).

Available statistics indicate that there is a steady growth in the number of persons with disability who access university education in universities where provisions are available. For example, available statistics at the University of Leeds indicate that out of a total student enrolment figure of 33,028, 10.7% of students declared a disability in the 2015/2016 academic year as compared to 9.8% in 2014/2015 academic year and 9.4% in 2013/2014 academic year. (Equality Policy Unit - University of Leeds, 2017). Similarly, in ECU, the enrolment of students with disability rose steadily from 2010/2011 to 2014/2015 as follows: 1139, 1194, 1224, 1235, and 1287 representing 4.7%, 5.0%, 5.2%, 5.3%, and 5.6% respectively of the entire students' population (Edith Cowan University, 2014). The statistics demonstrate a steady increase in the number of students with disability year on year, and this could be partly resulting from the availability and accessibility of disability policies and support services available at these universities together with policies and practices that make students willing to register their disability. However, Kilpatrick et al. (2016) cautions that although the statistics of students with disability in Australian higher education institutions is increasing, reasons for this are not clear.

In Africa, the University of Cape Town (UCT), South Africa, provides an example of good practice for this region. The Disabilities Services Centre at the UCT promotes the policy of equal opportunities approved by the University Council in March 2011 (University of Cape Town, 2011). The Centre assists the university to appropriately support students with disability, the university community, and prospective students (University of Cape Town, 2017). Arrangements available in the university include counselling services and advice on academic adjustments and reasonable accommodations. The Centre also provides assistive technology, including text conversion into braille, electronic format, and reading onto tape for students with disability, facilitates extra time, and arranges other examinations accommodations for students with disability. The Centre has a resource unit that has an extensive selection of books, journals, videos, DVDs, and community-based materials (University of Cape Town, 2017).

When considering the examples above, it is evident that there is some progress in African countries, but there is additional work required to improve higher education access and participation of persons with disability. Studies conducted on challenges faced by students with disability in tertiary institutions in Africa have shown that African countries have much to learn from the exemplary programs and service provisions in western countries, such as the USA, UK, and Australia, where legislation, curriculum, and support services are provided at all levels for students with disability (e.g., Braun & Naami, 2019; Council on Higher Education Lesotho, 2012, 2014; Emong & Eron, 2016; FOTIM, 2011; Kwesiga & Ahikire, 2006; Lord, 2017; Morley & Croft, 2011; Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Mutanga, 2018; Muzemil, 2018; Obiozor et al., 2010; Tudzi et al., 2017).

2.4.8 Effectiveness of Support Systems in HEIs

Literature has highlighted that students with disability appreciate the support provided by HEIs (Evans et al., 2017; Fossey et al., 2015; FOTIM, 2011). In general, students acknowledge the willingness and responsiveness of teaching staff in responding to their learning and support needs (Fossey et al., 2015) and also value the disability support services they receive (Evans et al., 2017; Fossey et al., 2015). Similarly, FOTIM (2011) reported that students mentioned several unmet support needs but still graded the support services offered them as satisfactory and adequate. FOTIM suggested that the students reported mostly positive experiences because most students with disability are unsophisticated and assume certain things cannot change, which is not necessarily the case. Further, accountability through performance appraisals of

professional and teaching staff against the delivery on the disability agenda is minimal. However, students with less manifest disability recounted that their problems and need for reasonable adjustments appeared less well understood (Fossey et al., 2015).

Ultimately, students without disability are the principal beneficiaries of disability legislation requiring HEIs to make appropriate adjustments in advance. Most of the accommodations are purely good teaching and learning practices, which are beneficial to all students (Healey et al., 2006). The challenge for universities is to train staff to internalise inclusivity as a general guiding ethos rather than something that is added on to a disablist curriculum as a reaction to an excluded student (Hopkins, 2011). Furthermore, if universities, with their concentration of intellect, are slow in grappling with including students with disability, then it is uncertain if there is hope for other institutions and places of work (UNESCO, 1999). At the end of the day, the commitment demonstrated by the various HEIs will establish "whether or not disability inclusion remains a nice theoretical term or …becomes a reality in the lives of millions of students with disabilities wanting and expecting to study in …tertiary institutions" (FOTIM, 2011, p. 103).

2.5 Social Environment of HEIs

The social context of particular institutions plays a fundamental role in shaping the experience of impairment and disability (Riddell et al., 2004, p. 96). Universities are required to grow into the kind of "teaching and learning institutions where students with disabilities feel at home and have a sense of belonging to an intellectual and social community as a right" (UNESCO, 1999, p. 25). Scholars such as Evans et al. (2017), Gillies and Dupuis (2013), Kiuppis (2018), Mosia and Phasha (2017), and Sachs and Schreuer (2011) have acknowledged the minimal engagement of students with disability within aspects of the social environment of HEIs. Mosia and Phasha (2017) contended that barriers to inclusion and accommodation are not merely practical but also social. Students with some form of disability participate in fewer social and extra-curricular activities. The existing programs, research, support, and discussion on inclusion concentrate mainly on academic and physical accessibility and ostensibly fail to respond adequately in minimising the social gap, stigma, and isolation experienced by students with disability due to limited opportunities available to them (Sachs & Schreuer, 2011).

Meetings, consultations, or discussions with students with disability provide them with a unique opportunity to voice their needs (Claiborne et al., 2011). Riddell et al. (2005) and

Vickerman and Blundell (2010) identified consultation with, empowerment, and recognition of the views of students with disability as essential to their active participation and engagement in higher education. Varied knowledge bases, perspectives, ideas, views, and voices of stakeholders need to be valued by those at the helm of affairs and incorporated into decision-making to build resilient partnerships within institutions. Meaningful representation of the various stakeholders on committees, advisory groups, organisations, and boards is critical in building strong partnerships within the university community (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013).

Furthermore, participation in quality physical education, sports, and games activities has a positive impact on academic achievement, reduces the tendency of young persons to engage in risky behaviour, facilitates positive attitudes towards physical activity, provide a platform for a broader social inclusion, and shapes new forms of global citizenship. Thus, young persons exposed to a range of experiences are able to develop the knowledge and skills required to make the most of all opportunities (McLennan & Thompson, 2015). This is recognised in Article 30(5) of the UNCRPD, which mandated States Parties to ensure that persons with disability have equal access to participation in cultural life, leisure, recreation, and sport, including those activities in the school system. The provisions of Article 30(5) also incorporate ensuring that persons with disability have an opportunity to organise, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities and the provision of appropriate instruction, training, resources, and access to sporting and recreational facilities (United Nations, 2006).

Literature has adequately highlighted that provisions and opportunities for students with disability to engage in sports and games, recreational and leisure activities are invaluable (e.g., Barg et al., 2010; Evans et al., 2017; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Hutzler et al., 2016; Lundberg et al., 2008; McLennan & Thompson, 2015; Oliver, 1996; Stevenson, 2009; Wanderi et al., 2009). Sports and games are valuable in both “therapeutic and rehabilitative terms”; allow the maintenance of positive self-identity; and provide the opportunity to build a long-term network of social relationships (Oliver, 1996, p. 11).

In their study, Hutzler et al. (2016) found that participants without disability involved in wheelchair basketball described a bonding experience; also, the participants reported benefits such as social interaction and a sense of belonging, which were transferred beyond the practices and the games. Barg et al. (2010) reported that students with physical disability were rated

higher in perceived warmth and perceived competence in physical activities than students without disability. Several studies have variously shown that persons with disability who participate in sports increase in strength, with improved coordination and flexibility. They experienced less depression, better academic performance, more stability in behaviour and their overall social interactions (Wanderi et al., 2009). Similarly, researchers reported a significant decrease in discomfort in interaction with persons with disability after participation in a wheelchair sports program. They, therefore, suggested a possible influence of recreation programs on attitudinal change and that colleges and universities represent most suitable logical locations to implement disability awareness to enhance an expansive change in social attitudes (Lundberg et al., 2008).

Despite these immeasurable values and benefits, research has indicated that sports and game activities are an area of life in which persons with disability debatably have fewer favourable experiences than their peers without disability (Stevenson, 2009). Kiuppis (2018) argued that the challenge of how the engagement of people with disability in sporting activities can be assured "is simple: in accordance with their individual preferences, wishes, and choices" (p.16). Kiuppis explained further that individuals with disability need to select an activity on a continuum ranging from separate to modified activities designed for all. However, knowledge about the various adapted sporting activities students with disability can engage in is inadequate, and this situation also serves as a major exclusionary factor. Others are lack of knowledge about students' preferences and how to include them and lack of appropriate skills in sports for people with disability (Goldowitz et al., 2018; Kiuppis, 2018; Shields & Synnot, 2016; Vaillo et al., 2016).

Learning reaches beyond the classrooms and connects with all aspects of campus life. Opportunities for social and extra-curricular activities create conduits for socialisation, learning, and sharing among diverse categories of students with different abilities. Providing opportunities for social inclusion helps to breakdown stigmatisation, stereotypes, and misconceptions and build a new appreciation of uniqueness, diversity, and positive perception of students with disability (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). Equal participation in activities valued by society, such as physical education and sport, can represent a robust opportunity to promote respect – and also raise the standing of students with disability in the community (McLennan & Thompson, 2015).

2.5.1 Attitudes towards Students with Disability in HEIs

Attitudes depict a psychological state that predisposes a person to act in a particular manner (Triandis et al., 1984) and are motivational forces underlying beliefs. Bandura (1977) explained that behaviours, attitudes, and values are constructed through socio-cultural processes, such as observation and modelling, where family relations, peers, teachers, and significant others play vital roles. Further, Yuker (1988) contended that attitudes of the non-disabled towards persons with disability are intricate and multidimensional, and these characteristics influence behaviour towards them. Negative attitudes toward persons with disability continue to exist. These unseen or imperceptible barriers serve to restrict social interactions with persons with disability and perpetuate the reciprocity of negative attitudes (Shannon et al., 2009). Negative attitudes are built on inexperience and/or misinformation, leading to rejection of persons with disability (Jones & Guskin, 1984).

In African countries, persons with disability may be rejected, stigmatised, and treated inhumanly. For example, Amanze (2019) suggested that people treat persons with disability "as things and not human beings" (p. 127). Myth, prejudices, name-calling, teasing, and discrimination negatively impact the personality and psychological well-being of persons with disability (Bruno & Fangnwi, 2019). These negative attitudes are deep-rooted in the premise that disability is caused by sin, witchcraft, evil spirits, punishment by gods, sorcery, 'juju', and/or magic (Agbenyega, 2003; Amanze, 2019; Anthony, 2011; Naami & Hayashi, 2012). Deep-seated beliefs have a substantial impact on people's behaviour (Bandura, 1986).

Notwithstanding the increasing awareness of, and political determination to implement inclusive education in most countries, lack of understanding, discrimination, and negative attitudes toward disability persistently infiltrate education systems (UNICEF, 2014c). Further, Helena-Martins et al. (2018) maintained that even though inclusive education is high on political and educational agendas, the perception of disability as a deficit is still prevalent.

Attitude is a major determinant of successful implementation of any inclusive education policy for students with disability (Zafrir, 2016). Naami and Hayashi (2012) found that persons without disability within the university community hold strong misconceptions and are ambivalent about the characteristics of students with disability, and thus, feel uneasy interrelating with them. Agbenyega (2007) identified negative attitudes and prejudice as the most critical among all the barriers to education, in particular, for those with disability. Morley

and Croft (2011) discovered that although students with disability spoke about some positive experiences, several students reported experiences of being 'other', prejudice, sociocultural exclusion, social isolation, powerlessness, and frustration on university campuses.

There is universal agreement that attitudes are learned, and that teacher attitudes impact the behaviour of both teacher and student (Wilczenski, 1991). Thus, positive attitudes of teachers are an important factor in the academic success of students with disability placed in inclusive classrooms (Costea-Bărluţiu & Rusu, 2015; Madriaga, 2007; Main et al., 2016; Saloviita, 2018). Faculty attitudes can influence the efficiency of the accommodations or the adjustments students with disability receive and, consequently, their achievement in post-secondary education (Hong & Himmel, 2009). Negative attitudes exhibited by both teachers and peers establish a prominent barrier to inclusive education, to the extent that some teachers are unwilling to include students with disability in their classrooms (Thompson et al., 2012). Accordingly, teachers' attitudes can constrain the educational, psychological, and social adjustment of students with disability in inclusive classrooms (Wilczenski, 1991). Attitudinal barriers are, therefore, crucial stumbling blocks to including students with disability in all levels of education (Jameel, 2011).

It has been reported that most students with disability experience resistance, discrimination, and stigma from university personnel, instructors, faculty, and students without disability in their respective institutions. Students mentioned instances of derogatory treatment, rejection, and isolation, and challenges regarding the attitude of institutional management (Ebersold & Evans, 2003; FOTIM, 2011; West et al., 1993). Some felt that management is forced to embrace the inclusion of students with disability due to fear of transformation (FOTIM, 2011). The majority of student participants with disability in the Dowrick et al. (2005) study felt stigmatised with the misconception that disability equals inability. Similar findings on negative attitudes towards students with disability in HEIs were also documented by Budu (2016), Chataika (2010), Ebersold and Evans (2003), and Paul (2000). Asiedu et al. (2018) reported that all participants with physical challenge in their study indicated unfair treatment by the university authorities because of the perceived preferential treatment and attention to students with vision impairment. Asiedu et al. noted that students with vision impairment are much aware of their rights, and more relentlessly engage in advocacy for their needs to be met. However, Gilson et al. (2020) maintained that the degree to which an individual student feels

included, while navigating the same inclusive landscape might immensely differ from another individual.

Social proximity with disability is critical in determining differences in attitude towards persons with disability (Costea-Bărluţiu & Rusu, 2015; Hayashi & May, 2011; McGregor, 2003; Shannon et al., 2009; Thompson et al., 2012). Research has shown that social interaction and/or closeness to disability is a crucial factor influencing how attitudes towards persons with disability manifest themselves (Shannon et al., 2009). Similar to the influence of shared recreational activities discussed earlier, McGregor (2003) maintained that classroom interaction with students with disability has a major influence on acceptance. Becoming familiar with persons with disability, particularly through consistent exposure as friends, acquaintances, and colleagues appear the most appropriate way of increasing respect and promoting inclusion (Thompson et al., 2012). Further, Hayashi and May (2011) found that students who were taught by a professor with a disability had more positive attitudes toward disability.

The need to value, respect, and provide for diversity on university campuses has been recognised by Gillies and Dupuis (2013) and Evans et al. (2017). Diversity within a campus community needs to be visible to produce a space that is embracing, welcoming, friendly and inclusive; a visibly diverse campus community reduces feelings of "otherness and stigma" related to living with a disability (Evans et al., 2017). Peers and faculty staff are fundamental to creating inclusive spaces and enhancing social and academic opportunities on campus (Gilson et al., 2020). Leaders of educational institutions play a pivotal role in implementing an inclusive vision (Shaddock et al., 2009).

Main et al. (2016) maintained that teacher attitudes and beliefs need to be made integral components of teacher preparation, professional development, and/or in-service programs to engender positive attitudes for successful educational inclusion. Inclusion often demands a shift in people's attitudes and values. Such modifications in attitudes and values require time and entail a major re-examination of beliefs and role behaviour. Awareness creation must take into account a greater understanding of inclusive education and societies need to become more understanding and accepting (UNESCO, 2009). Individuals working with persons with disability have to be aware of their attitudes and values to avoid irrational behaviours, reactions and prejudices because negative and stereotypical attitudes may become observable in

professional behaviour (Parchomiuk, 2015). Respect, flexibility, patience, appreciation of differences, meaningful friendships, how to teach and be taught, commitment, and joy are some of the qualities, skills, and positive characteristics ideal for people working with persons with disability (Shippy, 2015).

Furthermore, institutional culture is critical, particularly in inclusive contexts. Various scholars have identified the role of the principal or head of school in building and sustaining appropriate school culture (Angelides & Ainscow, 2000; MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013; UNESCO, 2017). The culture of a school shapes its context and practices. It determines the quality of education received by students with disability in institutions. The institutional culture starts with the principal or the head and becomes visible or manifest in teachers. For most students, a distinguishing factor between positive and negative educational experiences are traceable directly to the degree to which individual principals and teachers understand the value of offering real educational experiences for every student enrolled in the institution, comprising those with disability (Angelides & Ainscow, 2000). Similarly, teacher attitudes and behaviour toward some category of students with disability can be influenced by teachers' perception of their principals' expectations. Research has established that teachers who participate in more in-service training sessions held more positive feelings, but teachers with more experience were less eager to work with such students (MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013).

The Parliament of Australia (2016) found that the major deciding and determining factor of high or poor educational attainment and outcomes for students with disability is the culture of the institution they attend. Most often, this culture originates directly from the head and the leadership as to whether the inclusive education agenda is of priority to them and/or high on the institutional agenda. The institutional leadership, particularly the head, has a key responsibility and a crucial role in building and sustaining a culture of support and an inclusive ethos in their respective schools (MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013). Leadership of universities need to demonstrate commitment to improving the educational experiences and achievements for students with disability (Slee et al., 2014).

Although attitudes of universities and schools will not change overnight (UNESCO, 1999), the understanding that disability is about rights and empowerment, not charity and pity, is pivotal for the radical modification in attitude towards disability (Bruno & Fangnwi, 2019, p. 9). Because attitudes are fluid rather than static, they can be transformed. Thus, community or

societal attitudes can undergo reformation (Thompson et al., 2012). Paradoxically, the main output of institutions of higher learning is to engender intellectual growth. The need for a shift in paradigm in the mindsets and attitudes of these institutions is critical "for their own intellectual growth to occur in disability integration" (FOTIM, 2011, pp. 83 - 84).

2.5.2 Use of Terminology

The use of inappropriate terminology has impacted persons with disability negatively (Australian Network on Disability, 2020; Back et al., 2016; Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017; Giorcelli, 2016; Osgood, 2006; Stuntzner & Hartley, 2014; Titchkosky, 2001). There is an ongoing universal debate surrounding the use of disability-first language, disability-implicit language, and people-first language. The terminology and language people employ mirrors their attitudes towards persons with disability in the society and may demonstrate the respect and/or the value placed on these individuals (Back et al., 2016). Stuntzner and Hartley (2014) contended that "language, regardless of intent, is very powerful" (p. 2). Additionally, language and recurrent use of negative and disempowering words can impact the ways individuals view themselves, particularly when such experiences are internalized. The language employed by other individuals may affect how persons with disability view themselves and experience disability.

The belief and anticipation that persons with disability are perceived and treated with dignity, equity, and respect is the motivation for efforts to eliminate terminology that ostracises and/or reduces persons with disability and replaces it with terminology that celebrates and empowers. Language and terminology have worked on multiple levels of intent and consciousness to thwart the efforts at ensuring that persons with disability enjoy a fair and equitable treatment in the school system and society (Osgood, 2006).

Conceptualisations of disability have always included those who perceive persons with disability as the 'other' (Osgood, 2006). Assumptions of sameness meant that the standard for students was 'able-bodied'. For most students with disability, there had been a long-standing experience of 'othering', resulting in social isolation of persons who do not meet the prescribed norms (Morley & Croft, 2011). Thus, students with disability are socially positioned as different (Agbenyega, 2003; Morley & Croft, 2011). Historically, these perceptions have led to exclusion and isolation in communities, institutions, schools, and classrooms, which stigmatised not only persons with disability but also the teachers and caregivers assigned to

them. Persons with disability "were subjected to a powerful reductionism: you are your condition, and your condition merits your marginalization" (Osgood, 2006, p. 142).

Titchkosky (2001) suggested word choices or a lexicon of preferred terms for disability issues, rather than using archaic or inappropriate terminologies. For example, a person with disability, mobility aid user, and visually impaired is appropriate instead of: handicapped, crippled, and blind, respectively (p. 127). Similarly, scholars (e.g., Back et al., 2016; Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017; Stuntzner & Hartley, 2014) recommended words to use, such as person with disability, greater support needs, person without disability, communicates without using words, he needs…/he uses…, she has a learning disability, and person with an intellectual, cognitive, developmental disability. Words to avoid include disabled person, low functioning, normal/healthy person, non-verbal, he has a problem, she is learning disabled, and retarded, slow, simple, moronic, defective, and special person, respectively. In the same vein, Giorcelli (2016) proposed that people-first language such as accessible parking should be used instead of handicapped parking. In addition, the Australian Network on Disability (2020) suggested that terms such as "invalid, able-bodied, wheelchair-bound, victim, crippled, defect, suffers from, handicap, a patient" need to be avoided. The use of terms which imply that persons with disability are overly courageous, for example "inspirational", are also unacceptable. When interacting with a person with disability, "you need to ask the person what works for them and respect their wishes" (para. 4).

The terminology and language adopted in the classroom and the higher education environment has the power to impact or makeover the experiences of students with disability either positively or negatively (Back et al., 2016). It is imperative to consider that persons with disability are a people first before their disability. It is, therefore, important to be aware of language usage and avoid references that can demean persons with disability Back et al., 2016; Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017; Giorcelli, 2016; Stuntzner & Hartley, 2014).

2.6 Policy Environment

Many of the aforementioned areas are laid out in policy but a brief review of the policy implementation process and the disability policy context and environment within HEIs is pivotal for understanding policy issues integral to this study. Literature explored under this section includes policy, disability policy context in HEIs, and examples of policy and provision for persons with disability in higher education from the global context.

2.6.1 Policy

Policy is an elusive concept. The term policy has been used in a variety of ways to denote an incredibly diverse set of occurrences, and there are multiple definitions and understandings of the term represented in the literature. Ball (1994), for example, stated that the term is elusive because "… it is difficult to achieve a grounded conceptual meaning" (p. 15). It is a broad term, which includes "a formal act, approved by an institutional body… and provides a consistent standard for measuring performance" (Gallagher, 1992, pp. 2 - 3). Further, policy is a scheme, a procedure of intentions which are written to impact activities, deal with public circumstances, and difficulties (Fowler, 2004). Similarly, policy can be defined as a statement by the government of what it plans to do, such as a regulation, rule, pronouncement, directive, or a hybrid of these. The non-existence of such statements might also be a tacit statement of policy (Birkland, 2011). Policy is thus "both text and action, words, and deeds; it is what is enacted as well as what is intended" (Ball, 1994, p. 10).

Educational policies are a set of rules and guidelines that direct the operation of education systems. They safeguard both curricular and co-curricular activities, regulate the instructional methodology, the content of the school curriculum, and provide guidelines and procedures for administration, and for the management of students and staff (Fulcher, 2015). They mirror the ideals, guiding principles, and regulations designed to develop and mould how education is practised. Educational policies are created within and outside educational institutions to regulate the conduct of educational activities. Vidovich (2007) maintained that in educational policy investigation, the direction has moved from a macro focus on key powers to combining a micro focus on the numerous, often inconsistent, policy practices in educational organisations. Education policy can affect and promote inclusive thinking and practices by promoting the equal right of all persons to education, and by establishing the forms of teaching, support, and leadership that set the foundation for quality education for all. Inclusion and equity are all-embracing principles that need to be fundamental to all education policies, plans, and practices (UNESCO, 2015).

The Association for Tertiary Education Management in Australasia (ATEM, 2010) explained that tertiary education policy is a particular form of text, officially accepted at the top level of the organisation by the council, academic board, the vice-chancellor, or some senior personnel at the top managerial level. A policy characteristically outlines the philosophies on which the organisation builds its methodology for an area of activity and extensive regulations that

employees are mandated to adhere to in performing their roles and responsibilities. In many institutions, however, there may also be 'policies' delineating clear steps for specific procedures, which may not have been approved at the top management level. In tertiary institutions, policies are formulated to deal with a broad range of pertinent issues. In the same vein, policies are also amended and reviewed contingent on prevailing circumstances. New government requirements or legislation, new strategic objectives of the institution, identification of a gap in the policy suite, emerging operational issues, events generally, and restructuring, may call for policy development, amendment, and review (p. 14).

Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) explained that policy implementation indicates a purposeful interaction between set-goals and actions. It incorporates a set of activities aimed at achieving the intents of policy designers (Dye, 1976). Policy is not a one-time activity; it is a process guided by frameworks and theories (Jann & Wegrich, 2017; Nowlin, 2011; Sabatier, 2007; Sabatier, 1991). A review of the policy implementation literature revealed that there are two major approaches: top-down and bottom-up. The set of ideas underlying the top-down and bottom-up models are understood to provide the most appropriate and efficient methodologies for analysing and understanding the implementation of policy (Sabatier, 2005; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975).

A top-down model commences with the policy intents, aims and standards that determine the success or failure of implementation, related to the initial plans. This method presupposes that definite plans and regulations by policy-designers will determine implementation success. Proponents of the top-down model consider policy-designers as the key players and focus on aspects that can be regulated at the critical stage of implementation. This model presumes that implementation of policy follows a linear process typified by graded and systematic procedures, which can be regulated from the centre (Cerych & Sabatier, 1986; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). The policy process is separated into successive stages, each of which is handled as substantively discrete (Christie, 2008; Sabatier, 2005). These understandings detach policy implementation from creation, signifying a division between theory and practice (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989; Sabatier, 1986).

The bottom-up approach places considerable value on the responsibility of policy implementers at the grassroots and on the individual institution that is making an effort to find a solution to the problem at hand. This approach recognises that local circumstances or conditions affect

implementation. Exponents of the bottom-up approach underscore a concentration on participants and service providers, contending that policy is created at the grassroots (Matland, 1995). Sabatier (2005) maintained that the bottom-up approach affords a means for navigating from the grassroots implementers to policy-designers at the zenith.

Policy implementation theories that synthesise top-down and bottom-up models recognise the significance of policy intents, decisions, and/or judgement of local implementers and the influences of local situations. Researchers such as Matland (1995), Cerych and Sabatier (1986), Sabatier (2005), and Elmore (1985) identified various methods of merging the two models of policy implementation. The use of any of the above approaches does not altogether eliminate the difficulties associated with policy implementation.

An extensive review of the literature revealed a convergence of important variables of education policy implementation. These variables include policy content, contextual factors, capacity to implement policy; commitment of implementing agencies; support of clients and coalitions for policy; and responsive curriculum (Stofile, 2008). Further, Stofile conducted a study into factors affecting implementation of inclusive education and reported that the major dynamics that promote or impinge on the implementation of policy included: commitment to the policy of inclusive education, subject matter of the curriculum, position on inclusive education, the ability to find solutions to the varied needs of students, the context of implementation, and networking with other sections of the education system.

A well-developed, ‘good’ education policy could fail depending on the degree to which it is loyally, dutifully, honestly, and truthfully implemented. Fidelity of implementation determines the success or outcome of an intervention (Elliott & Mihalic, 2004; Mihalic, 2004). Measures of fidelity of implementation help to examine the primary structures of programs and to assess whether all the aspects of the program follow the implementation plan. Fidelity of implementation also ensures the program is of a standard quality, following the precise order and the projected time duration. Similarly, implementation fidelity helps to safeguard strict adherence to the overall reform model or approach as intended by the policy designers (Bain, 2010). Fullan (2003) explained fidelity as ethical, thorough, prudent, loyal, and truthful implementation. Besides, implementation fidelity safeguards against the occurrence of policy drift and the disengagement of participants (Rogers, 2003). Policy drift results from shifts in strategic priorities and/or policy focus at the national level by policymakers and at the

grassroots level by street-level implementers (Fitzgerald, 2004). At the institutional level, policy drift could emanate from a gradual modification of institutional arrangements resulting from changing socioeconomic conditions (Béland, 2007). Hacker (2004) argued that policy drift might occur if blocks to institutional transformation are significant.

Blocks to policy implementation may occur when planned implementation is restrained by circumstances where projected resources are higher than those that are obtainable in real terms. Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) suggested an ineffective communication process, capability challenges, and dispositional conflicts as other reasons for implementation failure. Similarly, policy implementation can take place in an environment where resources may be inadequate, service demands become higher, and goal expectations become ambiguous and often conflicting. Organisational needs and values determine the selection of different strategies that determined the success or failure of policy (Yu, 2008). Lin (2002) argued that "policies pick up new meaning, new concerns, and new purposes that their designers might not even have considered, much less intended. What a policy actually is, therefore, is as much about context as it is about original intent" (p. 39).

Lin contended that it is crucial to fit a policy to a particular context. Thus, recognising contextual issues are critical for successful implementation. Interventions that are effective at a particular location may fail elsewhere. Furthermore, those that operate at the top and/or the pinnacle cannot be successful without understanding the conditions and occurrences at the grassroots (Hudson et al., 2019). Implementability and success are the products of interactions among policies, people, and places (Honig, 2006). Implementation, therefore, involves adapting the ideal plan to local conditions, organisational dynamics, and programmatic uncertainties (Mthethwa, 2012). Yu (2008) maintained that the research of Lin (2002) on policy implementation suggested that it is important to think about the intricate relationship between ideologies, values, aspirations, and power when we analyse implementation of policy.

Furthermore, the street-level (grassroots) has a critical role to play in influencing and determining policy outcomes. The high discretionary powers granted street-level bureaucrats results in actual policy. Their understandings, actions, and policy decisions are critical for realising policy objectives (Lipsky, 2010). Street-level work is an essential dimension of responsive and accountable organisations and a decisive moment in shaping positive policy outcomes at the grassroots. The use of discretion by frontline practitioners and their role as

policy actors is crucial for implementation success. What happens at the street level shapes policy possibilities and the ways policies eventually interact with their target groups. The street-level bureaucratic approach has underscored the very political question of what occurs when individuals meet through organisations to make policy (work) at the grassroots (Nothdurfter & Hermans, 2018).

The emphasis of policy implementation research is to establish if the implementation outcomes align with the intents of the original policy (Bolaji, 2014). Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) proposed a model in which six variables were associated with successful policy implementation: the relevance of policy standards and objectives; policy resources; inter-organisational communication and enforcement activities; the characteristics of the implementing agencies; the economic, social, and political environment affecting the implementing jurisdiction or organisation; and the disposition of implementers for carrying out policy decisions (p. 483). Van Meter and Van Horn contended that the model proffers a blueprint for the explanation and scrutiny of the policy implementation process and that it offers explanations for successes and failures of a program.

2.6.2 Disability Policy Context in HEIs

A policy indicates a course of action, and it is intended to direct and/or regulate decisions. An inclusive education system requires a clear commitment to policy, placing a high demand on resources, structures, and systems (Winzer & Mazurek, 2012). Slee et al. (2014) maintained that the UNCRPD is unambiguous in declaring that HEIs need to develop structures, programs, policies, and cultures that are inclusive for all persons. Equity policies and practices enable HEIs to achieve success in inclusion (Blessinger et al., 2018), and are critical in providing the framework within which these institutions function (FOTIM, 2011). Promoting and enforcing the implementation of disability policy and laws is crucial for successful inclusion (UNESCO, 2017) in HEIs. Institutional disability policy and practice are critical in responding to the needs of the increasing numbers of students disclosing disability (Mortimore, 2013). However, Ainscow (2005) maintained that developing inclusive education policies and practices within fast changing education systems is complex.

An institutional disability policy mirrors and strengthens institutional ethos and ideology. Thus, institutional disability policies and strategic frameworks provide standards and ensure adherence; they also function as a potential benchmark for assessing the progress of strategic

goals and determining whether these goals align with long, medium-term, and short-term objectives (FOTIM, 2011). However, some scholars have interrogated the policies and practices of HE systems, which, in many cases have negative attitudinal, academic, social and physical barriers (e.g., Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Oliver & Barnes, 2010; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011; Tinklin et al., 2004a; Tinklin et al., 2004b**).** Thus, a disconnection often exists between policy statements, and what happens in implementing disability policies in HEIs (Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011), denoting a gap between policy and practice (Tinklin et al., 2004b). Similarly, some HEIs have developed institutional disability policies and established disability support services; however, there is a gap between policy rhetoric and practice, with students receiving extemporaneous support (Tinklin et al., 2004b).

Furthermore, evidence suggests that in developing countries, the necessary resources, capacity, and skills that will ensure the design and/or enactment of disability policies in HEIs may be lacking (Mosia & Phasha, 2017). Thus, disability competencies and confidence essential for producing sound policies may be absent. Consequently, FOTIM (2011) maintained that weak practices are the products of weak policies. Consequently, institutional disability policies are lacking in most HEIs in developing countries (Emong & Eron, 2016; FOTIM, 2011; Kochung, 2011; Mosia & Phasha, 2017).

In some cases, management of HEIs lacks commitment in putting together disability policy frameworks, therefore, procedural guidelines are lacking, and approval processes are lagging in the bureaucratic system. Another challenge is that in many instances, disability policies have been designed but have taken months or years to receive formal approval through the management structures as official institutional policy. These situations demonstrate discreet resistance and a lack of prioritisation of the disability inclusion agenda by university management (FOTIM, 2011). HEIs do not exhibit a commitment to investing in eliminating barriers that obstruct physical access, academic and social engagement of students with disability (Kochung, 2011).

As a result of a lack of institutional disability policies, some faculty members are either indifferent or intolerant in accommodating student diversity (Mosia & Phasha, 2017). Where detailed policy arrangements for persons with disability are lacking, successful service delivery for persons with disability is accomplished mainly by depending on the kindness and relational skills of those directly in charge instead of combining forces to shape the additional personal

plans of students (Ebersold & Evans, 2003). Ebersold and Evans explained that experts and professional staff who accept the duty to provide services for persons with disability appear more like social workers attempting to support students with disability than trained professionals who can plan how best to tailormade practices to respond to the needs of students. At times, prominence is given to persons with disability in the mission statement and official working documents of HEIs; however, these are not often followed through.

Staff and students in most HEIs are not conversant with national and institutional disability-related statements and/or policies where they exist, and hence they are not effectively implemented (FOTIM, 2011). The European Commission (2003) maintained that "the best concept is useless when it is locked away in a closet" (p. 51). Similarly, Bandura (1986) maintained that the prerequisites for change are created by raising the knowledge and awareness of people regarding new ideas and/or programs. Transformation involves transmitting the necessary competencies of new ideas to potential adopters. Thus, the best policy will forever remain unworkable when efforts are not put in place to make it highly visible. Legislative directives are the leading cause of the upsurge in enrolment of students with disability in HEIs, and thus, faculty who demonstrate adequate knowledge of the legislation had a more positive attitude towards students with disability and issues concerning them (Rao, 2004).

It is important to also seek support and buy-in from the rank and file of the university leadership and community regarding the implementation of both national and institutional disability-related documents, statements, and policies. Ensuring effective monitoring of practical implementation, through performance management compliance at the human resource and institutional level, is also crucial (FOTIM, 2011).

2.6.3 Policy and Provision for Persons with Disability in Higher Education – Examples from the Global Context

The websites of higher education institutions, particularly in developed countries, show that there is an increase in activity toward accommodating students with disability. This section presents some of the more proactive, effective, and contemporary provisions made to increase higher education access and participation for persons with disability in selected countries.

In Australia, Healey et al. (2006) reported a growing interest in supporting the provision of students with disability in higher education. They maintained that the interest is stimulated by legislations, such as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA-AU) (1992) and the Disability Standards for Education (DSE) (2005). The DDA-AU has made it mandatory for the education authorities to identify persons with disability and provide them with an appropriate education where feasible (Australia Human Rights Commission, 1992). The DSE was formulated under paragraph 31 (1, b) of the DDA-AU (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006).

The DSE came into effect in 2005 and made it obligatory for all educational institutions to take reasonable steps to ensure that persons with disability participate in the teaching and learning on the same basis as persons without a disability. The DSE states in sections 4 to 8 how education and training are to be made accessible to students with disability. The strategies include enrolment, participation, curriculum development; accreditation and delivery; student support services; and eliminating harassment and victimisation (Commonwealth of Australia, 2006, pp. 13 - 18). The DSE was reviewed in 2015 (ADCET, 2020; Department of Education and Training-Australia, 2015) and remained unchanged. These major social, equity, and education policy initiatives and legislation have impacted the inclusion of persons with disability in Australian higher education and have strengthened the aspirations of increased number to participate in higher education over the past four decades (Hartley, 2015).

Between 2001 and 2015, the enrolment of students with disability in Australian universities nearly tripled from 21,000 to 60,000, indicating a 3.10% to 5.80% percent increase in the domestic student population (Department of Education and Training Australia, 2016). Koshy (2019) reported that the number of students with disability enrolled in undergraduate programs in Australian universities steadily increased from 33,706 in 2012 to 55,565 in 2018, representing 50% growth (p. 7). These statistics suggest that there has been a remarkable increase in enrolment figures of students with disability in Australian higher education institutions with the introduction of government legislation and policies as well as funding for disability support services and programs. The disability enrolment ratio of 5.80% for Australia in 2015 included students with disability enrolled in universities only, unlike the 6% for Ghana in 2007, which covered all post-secondary level students with disability.

In the 1990s, inclusive policies and practices were at the core of political agendas in the United Kingdom (Karousou, 2017). This situation led to the development of the Disability

Discrimination Act (DDA) (The National Archives-UK, 2002), the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) (United Kingdom Government, 2001), the Disability Equality Duty (DED) (Disability Rights Commission, 2006), and the Equality Act (UK National Archives, 2010). The Tomlinson Report of 1997 suggested the shift towards inclusive learning and the initiatives of the UK government on lifelong learning, emphasised the value of increasing higher education access and participation for persons with disability and other categories of socially disadvantaged (Adams & Brown, 2006; Riddell et al., 2005; Tomlinson, 1997). These initiatives include 'reasonable adjustments', which implies adjusting assessment and curricula to meet the diverse needs of all learners (Adams & Brown, 2006; Riddell et al., 2002). The DED called on higher education institutions to be proactive in responding to the needs of staff and students with disability and also to involve them in planning and implementation of programs to stimulate positive attitudes towards persons with disability.

Remarkable progress on the provision of support services to students with disability at universities was seen in the United Kingdom after the replacement of DDA of 1992 with the Equality Act of 2010. The Equality Act consolidated and streamlined over 116 separate pieces of legislation, including the DDA, into one single Act. The Equality Act stipulates that UK universities and colleges need to make their programs inclusive and their premises accessible to students with disability. A student with a disability must not be discriminated against in education provision: access to a benefit, facility or service; exclusion; and subjecting to other detrimental situations (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2013). These pieces of legislation are expected to put extra pressure on higher education institutions to be more forward-looking in formulating policies and strategies that ensure that students with disability access the same teaching and learning environments as their peers without disabilities (Karousou, 2017).

The statistics of students (both full-time and part-time) in UK university programs who disclosed a disability increased from 229,215 in 2013/2014, to 239,425 in 2014/2015 and 256,995 in 2015/2016 representing 9.97%, 10.57%, and 11.27% respectively of the overall students' population (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2015, 2016, 2017). According to Adams and Holland (2006), the funding initiatives and emphasis on disability programs have contributed to the upsurge in both the quality and quantity of disability services being offered in several UK higher education institutions.

Services for students with disability have long been established in universities in the United States of America (USA). Russell (2020) indicated that the USA federal law makes it mandatory for HEIs to provide appropriate and reasonable accommodations to students with disability (p. 1). The increase of support seems to have been spearheaded by the introduction of several laws such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that mandates tertiary institutions to provide equal educational opportunities for students with disability (United States of America, 1973). The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 provided the legal basis for equal opportunity and access for persons with disability and was considered by most people as the commencement of a new era in the protection, opportunities and service delivery for persons with disability (United States Department of Justice, 1990). The Act fully recognised universities from the start (Riddell et al., 2005). The ADA made it illegal for higher education institutions to discriminate against persons with disability (Mott, 2004). The anti-discrimination legislation advocated for an expansion of services to accommodate students with disability. Such initiatives have contributed to the rise in enrolment of students with disability in US higher education institutions with enrolment trends showing a continued increase over time from 1,398,000 in 2000, to 1,866,000 in 2004 and 2,076,000 in 2008 representing 9.3%, 11.20%, and 10.80% respectively of the total students' population (United States Government Accountability Office, 2009, p. 37).

The tertiary education system of South Africa offers support for persons with disability within the diversity rights framework. The national anti-discrimination legislation and policy inform specific policies that protect persons with disability. The basic values fundamental to this framework are social justice, respect for basic human rights and diversity, equity, and non-discrimination as delineated in the national constitution (Howell, 2005; Matshedisho, 2007). The commitment to these normative standards has been influential in the formulation of several important policies and pieces of legislation since the new democracy began in 1994, including policies relating to disability (Howell, 2005). The Integrated National Disability Strategy (INDS), a White Paper issued by the Government of South Africa, is a vital policy document that provided a framework to guarantee that disability matters were incorporated into the total political, economic and social functioning of the country, together with crucial areas of service (Office of the Deputy President-South Africa-TM Mbeki, 1997). In the Education White Paper 3 of 1997 (A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education), the policy moderating the public higher education system dealt with broad issues of equity and redress within this

system (Department of Education Republic of South Africa, 1997). The White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (WPRPD) was approved by the South African Cabinet in 2015. The vision of the WPRPD is to create a free and just society where all persons with disability are regarded as equal citizens (Ministry of Social Development-Republic of South Africa, 2015).

In 2018, the Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System of South Africa came into effect. It is informed by a range of international and regional conventions, treaties and protocols South Africa has ratified. This strategic policy framework addresses the inclusion of persons with disability in the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system, with an improved focus on access and success, funding, and creating enabling environment. Further, the policy intends to ensure the realisation of the goals of the White Paper on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in PSET institutions, and the implementation and monitoring of disability-related policies and guidelines (DHET Republic of South Africa, 2018). The fundamental principles underpinning the policy are equal rights, self-respect and self-sufficiency, social inclusion and mainstreaming, right to self-representation, accessibility, the right to support systems, enhanced collaboration, and equitable resource allocation (p. 21). In 2018, the Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA) was formed to promote equitable opportunities for all students with disabilities (HEDSA, 2020).

2.7 Funding Inclusive Education in HEIs

Financial considerations are critical for governments in implementing inclusive education. It may be impracticable to deliberate on approaches for promoting the implementation of inclusive education without considering sources of financing. Both well-developed and less-developed education systems experience financial challenges when implementing inclusive education (UNICEF, 2014b). Thus, adequate funding is critical in responding to national and international commitments and for realising the rights of persons with disability to quality education (Gonski et al., 2011). It is critical to identify sources of financing disability policies, and interventions since resourcing become essential for the appropriate functioning of inclusive, HE systems (Jameel, 2011). Funding is, thus, central to the debate on implementing effective educational inclusion (Ebersold & Meijer, 2016). Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) proposed that consideration need to be given to whether economic resources available within

the implementing organisation are sufficient to support successful policy implementation. Policies require available resources to facilitate their administration. These resources may include funding or other motivations in the program that might inspire or enable successful implementation. However, usually funds are inadequate.

Funding has been frequently mentioned as a primary hindrance for governments in developing effective inclusive education systems (e.g., Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019; Ebersold & Evans, 2003; Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; FOTIM, 2011; IIEP-UNESCO, 2018; Morley & Croft, 2011; Salmi & Bassett, 2014; UNICEF, 2014b). The real situation for many developing nations is that national budgets are often inadequate, and official development support is absent. As a consequence of financial challenges, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) provide immense support in implementing inclusive education in developing countries where extreme resource constraints exist (UNICEF, 2014b). For example, in Ghana, inclusive education funding accounted for only 6% of the total budgetary allocation for education in 2015. In addition, the system capacity to support implementation is not enough. Thus, the crucial building blocks of IE policy implementation, such as data and resources, need to be strengthened, but financing remains insufficient (IIEP-UNESCO, 2018).

HEIs are facing cuts in government funding both in developed and developing countries at a time of heightening demand; this situation manifests itself in an upsurge in operational cost, increased cost-sharing, hiring freeze, and large classes (Salmi & Bassett, 2014; Shrivastava & Shrivastava, 2014) affecting the provisions and support for students with disability in HEIs (Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019). Pearce et al. (2010) and Morley and Croft (2011) found that the built environment posed a challenge to students with disability, and access to the curriculum was a major difficulty for both teachers and students. Access to learning, therefore, is negatively impacted by inadequate funding. Thus, the challenges of financing have compromised equity considerations in higher education (Salmi & Bassett, 2014).

Financial arrangements have constrained the extension of plans in support of persons with disability and strengthened barriers to anti-discriminatory enterprises. Some barriers also arise from insufficient fiscal arrangements for persons with disability. Government benefit schemes, for example, continuously fail to consider the particular needs of persons with disability. A substantial financial commitment is required to retrofit building infrastructure, provide

adequate professional development and curriculum materials in the educational institutions to meet the policy demands, and also make institutions truly inclusive (Pearce et al., 2010).

Often, it is not just the level of resources that is the issue, but also the strategies and approaches to distribution and allocation of available funds (UNICEF, 2014b). In HEIs, leadership can openly show a lack of commitment and/or prioritisation of the disability agenda through a lack of dedicated funds. There are situations where budgetary allocations for the DSUs were 'swallowed up' in the budget of other divisions of the institution, and these circumstances were attributed to lack of recognition of the DSUs (FOTIM, 2011). Similarly, when departments whose activities have nothing to do with disability have oversight responsibility for the DSUs, the needs of students with disability are often ignored (Mosia & Phasha, 2017).

Furthermore, students with disability often come from low-income family backgrounds, and parents are unable to meet the direct and indirect costs of education (e.g., Chataika, 2007; Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019; Kochung, 2011; UNICEF, 2014b). For example, in Kenya, fees paid by students in HEIs are beyond the means of the ordinary citizen. The universities lack the necessary financial resources to eliminate existing barriers to modify the physical environment and also provide resources that will facilitate learning and academic success (Kochung, 2011). In Uganda, a student with hearing impairment in HEIs would have to hire private interpreters because these specialists are inadequate and, in some cases, lacking in these institutions (Emong & Eron, 2016).

Specific funding for special educational needs allows institutions to make provisions for learners and support parents in responding to the direct and indirect costs of education (Ebersold & Meijer, 2016). Literature has highlighted various forms of financial aid available for students with disability in HEIs such as bursaries and scholarships (e.g., Chataika, 2007; Ebersold & Evans, 2003; Jameel, 2011; UTS, 2017). In Australia, universities offer housing bursaries or rent assistance, scholarships, and other financial aids to students often intended to assist equity groups, including those with disability. Additionally, these financial facilities are aimed at attracting prospective students, including those from the equity groups to study at the university (Department Education Training Australia, 2018).

Equity promotion policies that combine financial assistance with strategies to eliminate non-financial obstacles and difficulties are the most effective in increasing opportunities for

disadvantaged students in higher education. Well-targeted and competently managed financial aid can be powerful in reducing financial barriers to higher education. A combination of three approaches - no or low fees; grants; and student loans help to reduce financial barriers affecting students from disadvantaged groups, including persons with disability, from accessing higher education (Salmi & Bassett, 2014).

In Ghana, two percent (2%) of the District Assemblies Common Fund (DACF) is set aside at the local government level as a common fund for persons with disability. The purpose of this common fund includes providing educational support and training for persons with disability at all levels and also supporting them in obtaining technical aids, other assistive devices, and equipment (National Council on Persons with Disability - Republic of Ghana, 2010). In 2018, the administrator of the DACF called on the local government authorities to reserve 10% of the fund, exclusively, for paying education fees for persons with disability (Business Ghana, 2018). The common fund has, thus, supported students with disability to access higher education, although accurate national data on the beneficiaries appears to be lacking (Swanzy et al., 2019). However, the disbursement of the fund is often disrupted because the central government delay in the release of DACF to the local government level (Business Ghana, 2018). In addition, at the local government level, internal processes for disbursement of funds is riddled with bureaucratic bottlenecks and red-tape denying some persons with disability the opportunity to access the common fund for higher education, thus increasing the higher education equity gap in Ghana (Swanzy et al., 2019).

Realising the goals of inclusive education for all requires countries to finance and support educational services for students with disability. Budgetary allocations for inclusive education need to be equitable, transparent, accountable, and efficient (UNICEF, 2014b). Governments need to ‘walk the talk’ by supporting their higher education systems with adequate funding or financial resources, human and physical resources such as well-trained faculty, support staff, assistive technology and equipment for effective implementation of HE inclusion for persons with disability (Pearce et al., 2010). Furthermore, HEIs need to respond proactively to challenges associated with funding inclusive higher education if they are to provide equitable opportunities for persons with disability to access, participate and succeed in higher education in a socially just education system (Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019; Ebersold & Meijer, 2016; Salmi & Bassett, 2014).

2.8 Summary of Literature Review

The first section of this chapter reviewed relevant literature to highlight fundamental systems within which successful inclusion of persons with disability occur in HEIs. The literature located increasing higher education access and participation for persons with disability within the context of developed and developing countries of the global north and south, respectively. Specifically, literature relating to provisions and support such as physical access, academic support systems, social engagement, attitudinal dimensions, and financing has been explored and synthesised to demonstrate the way a disability agenda can be engrained in the overall functioning of HEIs. The review has also focused on essential elements of successful policy implementation, with particular emphasis on institutional disability policy. A precis of good international practice of provisions and support, from selected contexts, aimed at increasing access and widening participation for persons with disability in HEIs, has also been presented. However, there is a gap in the literature relating to the policies, strategic frameworks, and provisions in Ghanaian HEIs dedicated to increasing access and participation for persons with disability. Equity and social justice considerations emerged strongly from the literature as the premise on which higher education provisions for persons with disability has been established. The next section presents the conceptual framework for this study.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

This study is underpinned by the philosophy of social justice. Social justice is a principle integral to this research because higher education inclusion is a human right that is promoted and advanced by recognition of the rights of the individual, equal access, non-discrimination, and equity of opportunities for persons with disability (Evans et al., 2017; Papa, 2019; Pugach et al., 2020; Singh, 2011; Winzer & Mazurek, 2012). Armstrong et al., (2016) contended that social justice and human rights are important principles that lie at the heart of inclusive education. The right of all persons to education is declared in many international treaties and statements and has been acknowledged by instruments that are both legally binding and non-binding (UNESCO, 2014). Sapon-Shevin (2003, p. 28) suggested that inclusive education for persons with disability should be embraced as a model of social justice; thus, educational justice is a recognition of this right and is embedded within a framework of rights and empowerment (Artiles et al., 2006; Christensen & Rizvi, 1996). The social model of disability resonates with the social justice approach to disability as it recognises social prejudices, inaccessible milieus, discriminatory work arrangements, and segregated education as disabling

some members of society (Oliver & Barnes, 1998). Theoretically and conceptually, social justice is the lens through which all of what occurs in education should be refracted (Ayers et al., 2009). The conceptual framework for this study (see Figure 2.2) depicts the relationship between levels of legislation and action within the philosophy of social justice. It connects these to the consequences for an individual or a student with disability. These levels of legislation and action include international, national, and institutional policies and arrangements. The principles distilled from the social justice literature include equality, equity, resources, rights, and participation. These principles overlap with one another.

Equality. Educational equality is a core value of social justice. This concept relates to the equal provision of educational resources and offering everyone an equal chance to develop and fulfil individual interests (Terzi, 2005). Further, fair access to higher education requires equality. Equality is established on the fairness principle that each person is entitled to the same opportunity to access and participate in higher education. From a wider perspective, everyone is entitled to be treated equally under the law (Blessinger, et al., 2018). When applied, social justice principles ensure that students with disability have equal access to learning, social, and developmental opportunities equal to other students (Evans et al., 2017).

Equity. Fundamental to all education policies, plans, and practices is the equity principle of social justice (UNESCO, 2015). A theory of justice promotes equity in learning opportunities and outcomes for all students, who are considered to be future independent participants in a free society, and also challenge educational practices, policies, labels, and assumptions that strengthen inequities (Cochran-Smith, 2010). In the social justice literature, Young (2011) maintained that providing educational opportunity entails the allocation of certain material resources including buildings, computers, books, and money. There are grounds to assume that the more resources, the wider the opportunities presented to learners in the educational system. However, education is fundamentally a process taking place in an intricate context of social relationships. Learners from diverse backgrounds often do not have equally enabling educational opportunities even when an equal amount of resources has been dedicated to educating them. An equity framework suggests that social difference is recognised so that different responses can be applied to a specific situation (Nelson & Creagh, 2013). This notion implies that individuals need different shares of resources to have an equal chance of success. Providing the same opportunities or equipment for every person equally may cause inequity (Department of Education - Tasmania, 2015). Equity involves understanding the teaching,

learning, and assessment needs of students because every individual student has different needs and circumstances (Blessinger et al., 2018). The principles of equity incorporate providing quality learning spaces that allow students to succeed, to appreciate their realities, and to work for a more just society (UNESCO, 2017).

Resources. The social justice literature refers to distributive justice as the philosophies that focus on the fair distribution of benefits and burdens in society. It relates to what is believed to be fairness in allocating valuable resources (Miller, 2017). Access to higher education can be understood as equitable access to institutional resources, including the physical environment, learning facilities, the curriculum, support services, financial support, human resource, and the culture and language of higher education by all persons (Nelson & Creagh, 2013) regardless of background.

Rights. Justice as fairness is focused on the rights of individual persons. Social justice literature highlighted that the fundamental rights of individual citizens are often established by the society (Rawls, 1999). According to Rawls, "each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override" (p. 3). Thus, the basic right of an individual citizen prevails over the welfare of the entire society. Young (2011) maintained that "rights are relationships, not things; they are institutionally defined rules specifying what people can do in relation to one another. Rights refer to doing more than having, to social relationships that enable or constrain action" (p. 25). Social justice principles are key to protecting the rights of persons with disability, and in eliminating structures that foster marginalisation and exclusionary practices in educational institutions (Evans et al., 2017). The UN Committee on RPD (2016) asserted that inclusive education is to be understood as a basic human right of all students, including persons with disability. Persons with disability have a fundamental right to access and participate in university education.

Participation. Participation is a product of equality of opportunity. A theory of justice recognises and respects the participation of all social groups by disrupting assumptions and arrangements of education that reinforce disrespect, oppression, and marginalisation of social groups (Cochran-Smith, 2010). All persons should have the right and opportunity to participate in academic and social activities, deliberation, and decision making of institutions to which their actions contribute, or which directly affect their actions. Democratic structures should regulate decision-making in all institutions of collective life, including universities. An

undemocratic decision-making structure works to replicate distributive inequality, unjust limitation, marginalisation and exploitation. Assessing social justice to determine whether people have opportunities to participate or not should include, therefore, evaluation of the structures that enable or constrain people in related circumstances (Young, 2011). Thus, contemporary conceptualisations of social justice extend beyond the distribution of material resources or fair and equal access to social goods to incorporate other forms of inequality such as respect for social group differences. Consequently, redesigning the rules, institutions, and practices that exclude, marginalise, or devalue social groups will ensure their active engagement in HEIs (Goodwin & Proctor, 2019). Creating enabling environments in universities allow persons with disability to participate in both academic and social activities. Cochran-Smith (2010) argued that the core of a socially just education is to promote students' learning and enhance their chances in life.

As indicated earlier, in this section the levels of legislation and action within the social justice framework include international, national, and institutional policies and arrangements. At the international level, widening participation for persons with disability in higher education has been reinforced by the introduction of anti-discriminatory legislation, treaties, and policy frameworks. For instance, the 2006 UNCRPD is an example of an emerging global policy framework for human rights for persons with disability (Morley & Croft, 2011). Countries that are a party to the UNCRPD are obliged to promote, protect, and ensure those rights are recognised and respected at all levels of schooling, including higher education and lifelong learning (United Nations, 2006). Article 24 (5) of the UNCRPD is unequivocal in stating that higher education institutions need to develop structures, programs, policies, and cultures that are inclusive for all entrants (Slee et al., 2014). It is, therefore, binding on public universities in Ghana to craft policies and guidelines within the framework of the national inclusive education policy to direct service provision for students with disability.

The national level involves a visible commitment to IE policy at the governmental level, which is pivotal to its success (UNESCO, 2017). Winzer and Mazurek (2012, p. 20) argued that "implementation is the concrete manifestation of policy", therefore the public universities in Ghana are mandated by law to translate the national inclusive education policy into institutional policies, arrangements, and practices that facilitate academic access and success as well as campus membership (full engagement with campus life) for persons with disability. There are different consequences and/or implications for developed and developing countries regarding

implementing IE policy. Due to the unique contexts and backgrounds of individual countries, the same set of factors may not be workable in each country. Implementation of IE policy, therefore, has several implications contingent on the context and the developmental phase of a country (Armstrong et al., 2011; Srivastava et al., 2015).

The institutional level is critical in facilitating the implementation of IE. Lin (2002) argued that disregarding the organisational characteristics of institutions guarantees policy implementation failure. Essentially, it is the needs and values of the institution that govern the selection of different implementation strategies and determine the fate of programs. Similarly, DeLeon and DeLeon (2002) suggested that there is no single best policy implementation plan. The appropriate approach is very much contextual regarding the circumstances surrounding the policy issues and the most appropriate ways of addressing them.

At the individual level, there is strong evidence in the literature that the provision of appropriate and adequate support services by higher education institutions will lead to increased access and participation for persons with disability (e.g., Couzens et al., 2015; Davies, 2017; Ganguly et al., 2015; Karousou, 2017; Moriña Díez et al., 2015; Newman & Conway, 2017; Owen et al., 2016; Plotner & May, 2017). Access is ascertained by the structures of inclusion, the practices and procedures an educational system might use to enhance the support of students to engage in both academic and non-academic activities. Further, Nelson & Creagh (2013) asserted that, if they are included, increased numbers of disadvantaged, under-represented, and traditionally excluded students, including those with disability, may participate in university activities, remain, and complete their program(s). The World Bank cautioned that widening of higher education access, participation, and the provision of equitable opportunity should not result in "a flood of students [with disability] into increasingly dysfunctional institutions" (World Bank, 2009, p. 110) and equal access to "defective" curricula and pedagogy (King, 2006, p. 337). Appropriate structures and systems must be put in place to ensure the success of persons with disability in higher education institutions. Figure 2.2 represents the relationship between levels of legislation and action within a social justice framework.

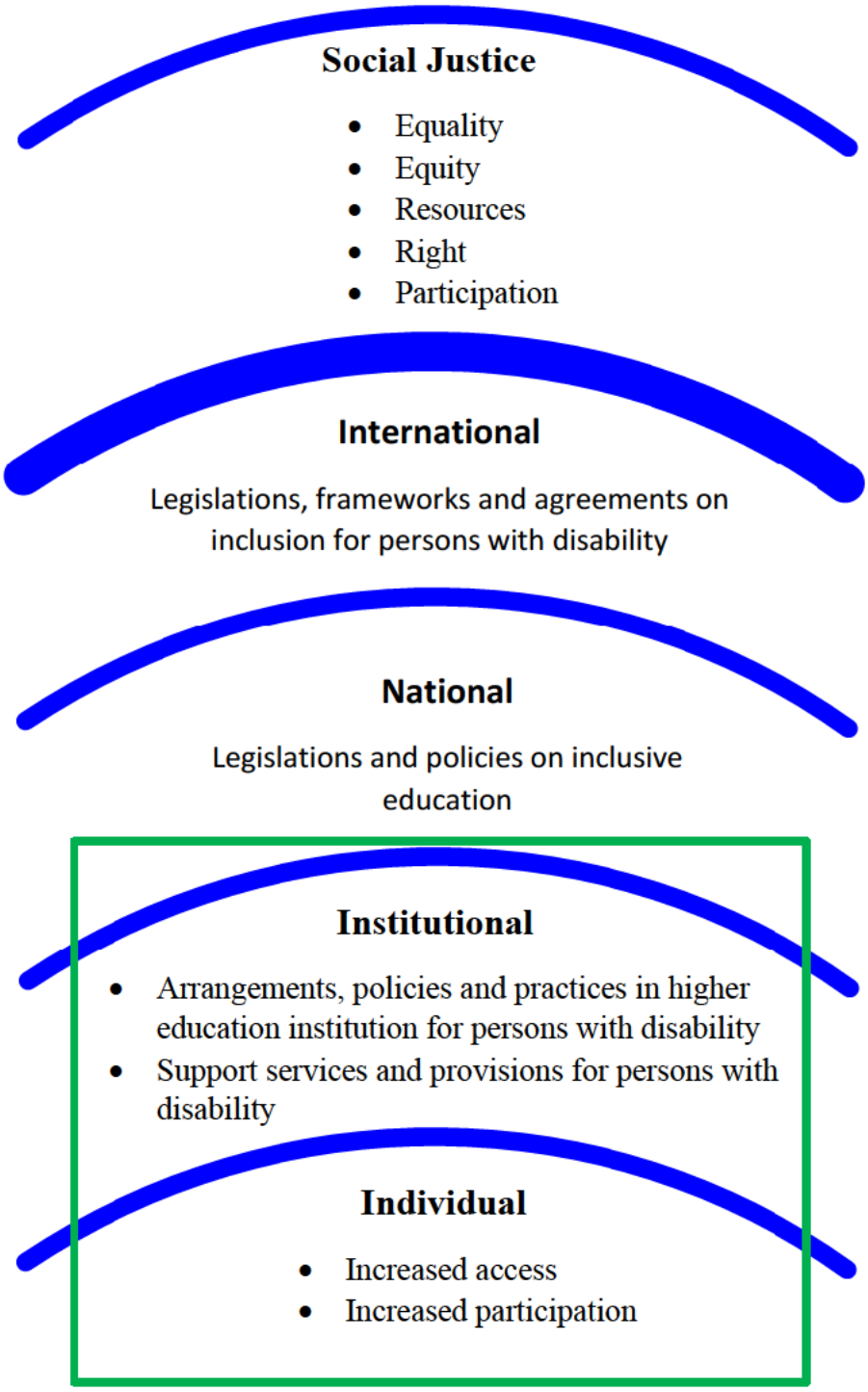

Figure 2. 2: The relationship between levels of legislation and action within a social justice philosophy

As depicted in Figure 2.2, social justice is a fundamental principle for this research as it drives and reinforces the introduction of anti-discriminatory legislative frameworks at the international level. Nations that are a party to these international protocols, frameworks,

conventions, and/or agreements are mandated to put legislative instruments in place to achieve their intended purposes, and institutions are bound by law to implement the national inclusive education policy. The focus of this study is at the institutional level (as shown by the green box in Figure 2.2) to understand the consequences of institutional action for persons with disability.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Articulating a researcher's epistemological standpoint is important because of its direct connection to methodological considerations in research. This study sought to explore how national policy on inclusive education was reflected in institutional arrangements, guidelines, or policies dedicated to the provision of support for persons with disability in selected public universities in Ghana. A qualitative approach was adopted for this study because the researcher was interested in exploring and understanding phenomena as they exist. The researcher's worldviews and values about how knowledge can be attained are consistent with an interpretivist paradigm.

This researcher shares the view of Mertens (2014) that research is a product of the values of researchers and cannot be independent of them. Researchers using the naturalistic approach perceive themselves as participants in the situations they explore and maintain that their beliefs and values are increasingly involved in selecting "what to research, how to research it, and how to represent … their findings" (Edge & Richards, 1998, p. 336). Further, values and facts are not independent or value-free; accordingly, putative facts are viewed through a 'value window'. The researcher and the researched object are interactively linked, with the values of the researcher and of 'situated others' unavoidably influencing the research. Findings are, therefore, mediated by implicit value assumptions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, pp. 110 - 107). In addition, knowledge cannot be neutral; it is influenced by the value systems and interests of human beings. Knowledge reflects the power and social relationships in society; the construction of knowledge is, thus, aimed at assisting individuals in developing society (Sweetman et al., 2010).

Further, there are multiple ways of knowing, and "knowledge is socially constructed" (Mertens, 2014, p. 18); thus, social phenomena are very much a product of social interaction. Social construction emanates from the perceptions and actions of social actors and is in a constant state of revision. Reality is context-specific (Bryman, 2012), constructed through the researcher's lens (Lichtman, 2014). Based on these tenets, the specific contexts of the selected

public Ghanaian universities, together with the perspectives of the study participants and the researcher, were key to conducting this study.

The sections that follow elaborate on the research approach, paradigm, and the methodology. This includes the research procedures, research design, data collection instruments, selection of participants, and data analysis. Issues of validity and trustworthiness, as well as ethics, are also considered.

3.2 Interpretivist Paradigm

The study aims to understand the participants' views in the context of their situations and environments; thus, an interpretivist paradigm is an appropriate choice. According to Crotty (1998), "meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (p. 43). An interpretivist paradigm seeks "culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life-world" (p. 67) and highlights that "reality is socially constructed" (Willis & Jost, 2007, p. 97). This understanding leads to the notion that meaning-making is a social process constructed by individuals who participate in it. Social realities are brought into being by interpreting and reinterpreting social phenomena (Crotty, 1998). Social phenomena are constructed from the perceptions and consequent actions of social actors within their context (Dudovskiy, 2019). In the interpretivist paradigm, researchers firmly believe that knowledge is situated in context, so they endeavour to understand the lived experiences of participants and how they define their circumstances (Ormston et al., 2014). Further, the understanding of the context in which any form of research is conducted is crucial to the interpretation of the data collected. Interpreting data in context highlights the concept of the "situatedness" of knowledge. Thus, interpretive research aims to understand a particular situation or context rather than the exploration of universal laws or rules (Willis & Jost, 2007, p. 97). Assumptions and values such as situatedness, relativism, subjectivism, and value-ladenness of facts are, thus, associated with the interpretivist paradigm (Crotty, 1998; Dean, 2018; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Scotland, 2012; Vannini, 2012; Willis & Jost, 2007).

Similarly, the interpretivist paradigm suggests that social researchers must examine and interpret the social world through the participants' and their own perspectives and that clarifications can only be given at the level of meaning (Ormston et al., 2014). This study, therefore, explored the understanding of the intentions of Ghana's IE policy by grassroots implementers in public universities, and how these translated into provisions and support for

persons with disability, describing it from the participants' perspectives. In the same vein, the study sought to understand the participants' views in the context of their situations and environments. This approach allowed the researcher to listen to and interpret the experiences, needs, and perceptions of the support offered to students with disability.

According to Scotland (2012), "the ontological position of interpretivism is relativism" (p. 11). Relativism is the understanding that reality is subjective, varied, sense mediated, individually constructed, and multiple. Central to all discussions of relativism is the claim that human experiences, claims to knowledge, and moral judgments are comprehensible only relative to something else, for example, specific languages and socio-cultural practices (Smith, 2012). Guba and Lincoln (1994) contended that "realities are apprehendable in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature … and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions" (pp. 110 – 111). There are different forms of truth and reality, contingent on perception (Edge & Richards, 1998). Social reality is seen by multiple individuals, and these multiple individuals have different interpretations for events, hence multiple perspectives of the same incidence. Interpretivists seek the realities from individuals who own their experiences from a particular culture or group (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). Realities involved shared elements among individuals and across cultures (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). These perspectives and assumptions allowed the researcher to respect the multiple, varied, and shared views expressed by participants involved in this study.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argued that interpretivists "view human action as meaningful; they evince an ethical commitment in the form of respect for and fidelity to the lifeworld…they…emphasise the contribution of human subjectivity…to knowledge without…sacrificing the objectivity of knowledge" (p. 192). Thus, it is possible to understand the subjective meaning of action, comprehending the actor's desires, beliefs, interests, among others, but doing so objectively. The meaning that the interpreter reframes or recreates is seen as the original meaning of the action. Based on this assumption, this researcher remains unbiased and impartial in understanding, interpreting, and reporting the context, the actions, views, and perspectives of the research participants and the meanings ascribed to them. Using the interpretivist paradigm allowed for multiple perspectives and data sources to be explored and used to construct the knowledge for answering the research questions that guided this study.

3.3 Qualitative Methodology

Consistent with the researcher's epistemology, a qualitative methodology was adopted for this study to understand participants' interpretations, values, and perceptions (Ormston et al., 2014) about the national inclusive education policy and the higher education provisions and support for persons with disability. A qualitative methodology emphasises 'words' rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data (Bryman, 2012), and aims to develop an in-depth understanding of human behaviour and the reasons that govern such behaviour (Newby, 2010). In a broad sense, it (qualitative methodology) refers to a naturalistic, interpretive approach that focuses on exploring phenomena (Ormston et al., 2014). Johnson and Christensen (2014, p. 34) described a qualitative methodology as a "wide-angle and deep angle lens" that examines the breadth and depth of a phenomenon. This methodology, therefore, enabled the researcher to find answers to the questions 'what, why, and how' (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 3), in this case of the implementation of the National Inclusive Education Policy (2015) in Ghanaian public universities, and how it is ultimately translated into provisions and support services for persons with disability.

This methodology allows researchers to see the world from the perspective of the participants (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). The qualitative methodology permitted this researcher to connect and interact with the research participants in a natural setting to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives, and understand participants' interpretations, values, and perceptions about the national policy and higher education provisions and support for persons with disability, and thus present their perspectives accurately.

3.4 Research Design

3.4.1 Multi-Case Design

Using a multi-case design (Lewis & Nicholls, 2014), this research aims to explore the multiple perspectives that exist on the issues at hand. A case study design is the most suitable and appropriate choice whenever research questions aim at answering the 'how and why' of a phenomenon under study (Yin, 2014). Lincoln and Guba (2002) argued that case studies "provide the information and sophistication needed to challenge the reader's current construction and enable its reconstruction … they provide vicarious experience from which the reader may learn" (p. 206).

Johnson and Christensen (2014) referred to the multi-case design as a collective case study. They maintained that the researcher could obtain greater insight into a research topic by studying multiple cases and comparing them to determine similarities and differences. Thus, the multi-case design provides a rich, vivid, detailed, and holistic description of the case and its context and was adopted for this study to allow for the exploration of multiple perspectives, using multiple data collection methods, involving multiple cases from a number of specific contexts (Lewis & Nicholls, 2014). In this present study, the case of each of the three participating public universities was first analysed. The multi-case design allowed the researcher to reconstruct the participants' realities and describe the multiple perspectives existing in the case (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

Bryman (2012) and Lewis and Nicholls (2014) contended that a comparison between cases, groups, outcomes, or other emerging issues emanating from the data is essential in qualitative research. Multiple perspectives can also emerge from varied accounts from people with different viewpoints of the phenomena under study. Stake (2013) explained the process of cross-case analysis to include studying and gaining an understanding of each case within its context or situation, identifying the main issues that are common and different manifesting across the cases, interpreting and triangulating these issues and making assertions or claims.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

It is impossible to understand the behaviour of human beings without reference to the meanings and purposes attached by human actors to their activities. Qualitative data provide contextual information eliminating the issue of context stripping. Further, qualitative data provide rich insight into human behaviour and are valuable for uncovering emic views (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Interviews, document reviews, and observations were carried-out to generate qualitative data for this study.

3.5.1 Interviews

The voices of participants are crucial to this study (Cohen et al., 2011) and are recognised through in-person interviews, which formed an integral part of the data collected. The purpose of an interview is to discover participants' perspectives about the phenomenon under study (Best & Kahn, 2006). An interview is a conversation among two or more parties with a specific purpose in mind, such as attempting to obtain further information on a social phenomenon (Herman-Kinney & Verschaeve, 2003). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) identified interviews as the

“favourite methodological tool of the qualitative researcher” (p. 353). The use of in-depth interviews to collect data for this study is consistent with a qualitative methodology that seeks to uncover and describe the understandings that participants share about a situation (Burns, 1997). Through in-depth interviews, participants shared their ideas about inclusive higher education for persons with disability, the practical application of policies, as well as their experiences.

However, despite Flyvbjerg (2012) contending that it is not desirable to summarise case studies, and that good studies should be read in their entirety as narratives, the interview data generated from these three case studies and policymakers were considerable and thus was summarised to more succinctly represent the views shared by the study participants. Nonetheless, these summaries are based on this researcher’s intimate readings of the data, and examples of interview data, which captures the general mood and understanding of the themes reported among participants in each site.

Each cohort of participants was presented with a set of similar questions via the interview guide (see Appendix C); tailored to the context. The content of the interview guide was based on literature reviewed. It contained a combination of self-designed and adapted items from FOTIM (2011), with a series of questions relating to the national inclusive education policy; institutional disability policy, provisions, guidelines, and practices; physical access; support services, participation, and engagement. Each major issue that was raised by participants is supported by evidence collected from document analysis and observational data (detailed in the observation and document review sections). These questions were emailed or personally given to each participant before the approximately 45-minute interview. The main responses that these questions elicited are presented and analysed in detail in subsequent chapters. The participant cohort included:

1) Policymakers
2) Senior Managers of the Universities – Pro-vice-chancellors and Deans of Students
3) Heads of Disability Service Support Unit and Staff
4) Deans of School/Heads of Department
5) Students with disability

Although each interview broadly covered the same range of topics, some questions were not relevant to all categories of participants. Therefore, there were some notable variations in reporting the numbers of responses in the finding chapters.

3.5.2 Document Review

Though interviews provided the core data for this study, additional data were sought from relevant university documents. Denzin (1970) noted that "document analysis is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation—the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (p. 291). Cohen et al. (2011) defined a document as a record of an event or process. They are windows into social and organisational realities (Bryman, 2012). The purpose of the document analysis was to explore how statements written in these documents support and/or contribute to inclusive practices for students with disability in the respective participating universities. The document data aims to consolidate, corroborate or otherwise the data obtained from interviews and observations to demonstrate whether inclusive policies, statements, and/or guidelines, in documents reflect actual practice (see Appendix E). In this study, the documents analysed, included the corporate strategic plans of the three case study universities, Public University A (PUA), Public University B (PUB), and Public University C (PUC), the draft institutional disability policy of PUA, and a student handbook of PUC.

3.5.3 Observations

Data from the interviews were used to corroborate and augment evidence from the documents analysed, and these were both compared with data collected through observations (Atkinson & Coffey, 2011). In this study, facilities were observed rather than people. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) contended that "social scientists are observers both of human activities and of the physical settings in which such activities take place" (p. 673). Observations provided insights that were not obtainable from other methods of data collection (Nicholls et al., 2014). This researcher was given access to academic and non-academic facilities and infrastructure in the selected Ghanaian public universities, including physical access to the campuses and lecture theaters, and observed for evidence of assistive or adaptive technology, support services, reasonable adjustments, and other facilities available for persons with disability. An observation checklist was used (see Appendix D) to explore the range of facilities, equipment, and infrastructure in the participating universities. Availability, appropriateness or suitability, adequacy, and accessibility of both academic and non-academic facilities and infrastructure were assessed. The observation data allowed the researcher to understand, confirm, or disconfirm the circumstances described during interviews and in written documents.

The observations contributed to the triangulation of the data by comparing what had been said in interviews and written documents, with the observed practice (Nicholls et al., 2014). This researcher was able to see how issues and circumstances described in the interviews and indicated in documents, and with knowledge of the inclusive education policy were enacted in actual practice.

3.6 Access to Research Sites

After receiving ethics clearance from Edith Cowan University's Human Research Ethics Committee, this researcher contacted the relevant staff at selected Ghanaian public universities by information letter, inviting them to participate (see Appendix F). This letter included an outline of the research, the purpose of the study, the time to be used for data collection, and the ethical considerations (Lichtman, 2014). The information letter helped to establish trust between the researcher and the participants and to gain access to the research site. Furthermore, permissions to observe facilities were obtained from the registrars of the participating universities and the corresponding and relevant committees in Ghana, which provided their approval for the conduct of this research in their institutions.

Researchers cannot expect access to educational institutions as a matter of right (Cohen et al., 2011); rather, access must be gained through gatekeepers; and, in some instances, gaining access to research sites can be challenging (Lichtman, 2014). This researcher followed the stages of gaining access as described by Feldman et al. (2003), which included finding informants, initial contact, obtaining permission, developing rapport, and exiting. The researcher started by finding individuals who could provide ready access and facilitate the collection of data. These individuals were registrars of the selected public universities involved in the study. In the Ghanaian higher education system, registrars are the heads of administration and, therefore, the gatekeepers. This researcher also utilised networks that supported and enhanced the process of gaining access to the designers of Ghana's (2015) inclusive education policy (Roesch-Marsh et al., 2012).

This researcher is cognisant of how accessible a research site may be in certain circumstances; however, as a member of the university community, this researcher's credibility and knowledge allowed her access through these gatekeepers. This researcher understood the procedure(s) involved in meeting the registrars of the selected Ghanaian public universities to present the case for access. In addition, this researcher's professional relationship with the Ministry of

Education (MoE) as a teacher since 1990 was utilised to gain access to some of the policymakers. The MoE has the oversight for the design and implementation of the 2015 inclusive education policy of the Republic of Ghana.

An interpretivist researcher must declare his/her position, background, class, personal, and professional experience (Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2013). Although this researcher works in the university sector as an assistant registrar and a part-time lecturer, there was no direct conflict of interest because the researcher had no direct control or influence over any participants. Moreover, the University for Development Studies (UDS), Tamale, Ghana, where the researcher works, was not selected to participate in the study. As a member of the university community, the researcher's own knowledge, presuppositions, personal expectations, and constructions were bracketed in order not to 'taint' the data (Crotty, 1998; Fischer, 2009) and influence the findings of the study. The researcher's focus was on making meaning out of, and interpreting what the data said (Fischer, 2009).

3.6.1 Selection of Research Participants

The ultimate aim of a qualitative researcher is to obtain insights into a particular social setting within a specific location (Connolly, 1998). This approach required this researcher to specifically select participants who are 'information-rich' (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002) to provide information that will maximise understanding of the phenomenon. Purposive sampling, in respect of a qualitative study, demands that research sites such as organisations and people (the unit of analysis) are selected based on their importance to the research questions (Bryman, 2012). In this study, the participating universities and participants were selected to enable the researcher to collect relevant data to answer the research questions (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Based on the above assumptions, three public universities out of the nine public universities in Ghana (National Accreditation Board Ghana, 2017, 2018a), were purposively selected for the study.

This researcher has categorised the nine public universities according to the year of establishment as old, young, and new and had purposively selected one university from each of the categories. The three public universities categorised as old included those established between 1948 and 1965. The two young universities were both established in 1992, and the four new ones were established between 2001 and 2012 (see Table 1.1) (National Accreditation Board Ghana, 2017).

The reason for categorising the universities was to understand if the respective contexts of the universities moderated the implementation of the national inclusive education policy and how this translated into the provisions available for persons with disability. For instance, the old public universities have well-established structures, resources, and more enduring procedures; in contrast, the new universities are comparatively under-resourced. The purposive sampling design was used to select one out of the total number of universities in each category to choose cases (universities) that produced information critical to the phenomena of interest (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2013). Therefore, three public universities were selected as cases for this present study, one each from these temporal categories.

Across these three case universities and education policymakers, there were 36 participants involved in this study (see Table 3.1). To obtain information-rich cases, a purposive sampling technique was also used in selecting the 17-participating staff (Creswell, 2013**;** Patton, 2002). Convenience sampling was used to select the 12 student participants who were available and willing to participate in the study (Bryman, 2016; Etikan et al., 2016; Taherdoost, 2016). Their university experiences and perspectives are central and critical for this study to determine whether institutional arrangements, provisions, and practices are robust enough to meet their needs and expectations. Snowball sampling was adopted in selecting the seven policymakers, who were drawn from a small population. The researcher contacted with one of the policymakers and used that person to establish contact with other policymakers (Bryman, 2016; Taherdoost, 2016).

Across mainly the student participants, variables such as impairment, level or year of study, and gender were considered in a bid to obtain balance and fair representation. However, only seven participants (19.4%) in total were females. Thus, only one student with disability, three university staff, and three policymakers were female participants. On the part of the university staff, the male dominance was by virtue of their designated positions in the university; concerning students, those who volunteered to participate in the study were predominantly male students. However, the proportion of females in the sample reflects the reality of the landscape of gender distribution and imbalance in both disability and in higher education.

Given a sign language interpreter was unable to be secured for this present research, university staff or students with hearing impairments were unable to participate in this study. Overall, the participants all had a range of knowledge and experience regarding the issues of concern and had the insight into, and understanding of, the subject of inquiry in this research. Table 3.2

details participants' profiles in the three selected university case studies and policymaker cohorts.

Table 3.1: Research Participants

Number of Participants		**Category interviewed between January to June 2018**
Female	**Male**	
3	4	Policy Architects[5] - They are the appropriate officials to explain the underlying philosophical assumptions of policy objectives and implementation plans. - The architects of the national inclusive education policy - on the National Steering Committee on Inclusive Education. - includes state actors and non-state actors drawn from the higher education sector; the Ghana Education Service; disability organisations/unions; international humanitarian and development agencies or development partners; and civil society organisations - had extensive knowledge, understanding, and experience about the topic of investigation
	3	Pro-vice-chancellors They are the deputy chief executives of the universities, and the institution is driven, in part, by their vision. They are directly responsible for the delivery of academic programs in the universities.
1	3	Disability Support Officers They are directly in charge of service delivery for students with disability.
	3	Dean of School oversees the school where academic activities take place.
	1	Vice-Dean of a School oversee the school where academic activities take place.
2	1	Heads of Department oversees the departments where academic activities take place.
	3	Dean of Students oversees matters affecting all students, including students with disability.
1	11	Students with disability Their university experiences are critical to this research
7	***29***	***Total Females and Males***
36		**Total Participants**

Public University A – Case Study

Thirteen participants were interviewed in Public University A (PUA), comprising seven staff members and six students with disability. Staff participants were selected from members of the

[5] In this study, policymakers and policy architects are used interchangeably.

university leadership and senior management and student participants were drawn from a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs (see Table 3.2).

Public University B - Case Study

In Public University B (PUB), a young university, the 11 interview participants were made up of six staff members and five students with disability. Staff participants were selected from the senior management of the university, heads of sections and units; student participants came from an array of undergraduate programs (see Table 3.2).

Public University C – Case Study

In Public University C (PUC), five participants comprising four staff members and one student with disability were interviewed. Staff participants were selected from key management and leadership positions of the university; one student, out of the three undergraduate students with disability enrolled in the university, participated in the study (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2: Three selected University Case Studies and Policymaker Cohorts - Participants' Profiles

University Case Study	Number of participants	Participants' Profiles			
A	13	**S/N**	**Participant identifier**	**Type of disability**	**Position Held/Year of Study**
		1	AR1	NI *	Pro-vice-chancellor
		2	AR2	NI	Dean of Students
		3	AR3	NI	Dean of Faculty
		4	AR4	NI	Vice Dean of Faculty
		5	AR5	NI	Head of Department
		6	AR6	NI	Head, Disability Support Unit
		7	AR7	NI	Deputy Head, DSU
		8	ARS1	vision impairment	Third-year student
		9	ARS2	vision impairment	Second-year PG student
		10	ARS3	vision impairment	Third-year student
		11	ARS4	vision impairment	Fourth-year student
		12	ARS5	physical disability	Fourth-year student

		13	ARS6	physical disability	Second-year student
B	11	1	BR1	NI	Pro-vice-chancellor
		2	BR2	NI	Dean of Students
		3	BR3	NI	Dean of Faculty
		4	BR4	NI	Head of Department
		5	BR5	NI	Head, Disability Support Unit
		6	BR6	NI	Deputy Head, DSU
		7	BRS1	vision impairment	Third-year
		8	BRS2	vision impairment	First-year
		9	BRS3	vision impairment	Third-year
		10	BRS4	physical disability	Third-year
		11	BRS5	physical disability	First-year
C	5	1	CR1	NI	Pro-vice-chancellor
		2	CR2	NI	Dean of Students
		3	CR3	NI	Dean of Faculty
		4	CR4	NI	Head of Department
		5	CRS1	Physical disability	Second-year
Policymakers	7	1	IPA1	NI	Representative, Development Partners (Non-State)
		2	IPA2	Vision impairment	Representative, Disability Organisations (Non-State)
		3	IPA3	NI	Representative, Higher Education Institution (State)
		4	IPA4	NI	Representative, Civil Society Organisations (Non-state)
		5	IPA5	Vision impairment	Representative, Disability Union (Non-State)
		6	IPA6	NI	Representative, Development Partners (Non-State)

		7	IPA7	NI	Representative, Ghana Education Service (State)
Total participants	**36**				

*none identified

3.7 Data Analysis

Data in qualitative research are analysed to assign meaning. Qualitative data analysis involves organising, accounting for, and explaining data (Cohen et al., 2011). According to Patton (2015), qualitative analysis is the process of transforming data into findings. The process involves making sense of massive amounts of data by reducing the volume of raw information, identifying important patterns, and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (p. 521). Although no formula or recipe exists for the transformation process, guidance is available. Ary et al. (2019) maintained that qualitative data analysis relates to efforts made in understanding the phenomenon under study, synthesising information and explaining relationships, theorising about how and why the relationships appear as they do, and connecting the new knowledge with what is already known. To reduce data from interviews, observation, and documents into findings, this researcher followed the guidelines provided by Ary et al. (2019). Their procedure involved three stages: 1) familiarising and organising 2) coding and reducing 3) interpreting and representing.

Analysing qualitative data involves familiarising and organising for easy retrieval (Ary et al., 2019). Researchers need to read through the entire data set at least once before the start of the coding process for familiarity, shaping ideas, and identifying likely patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This researcher became familiar with the interview data by repeatedly listening to digital recordings of interviews. The interview data were then transcribed from an audio file to a text file. After data transcription, this researcher read through the transcripts while listening to the audio files to ensure that the text files were consistent with the audio files. This activity was followed by reading, rereading, and reflecting on the entire data set - document data, observation data, and interview transcripts. Thus, this researcher immersed herself in the data by repeatedly and actively reading the whole data set, searching for meanings and patterns (Ary et al., 2019; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Nowell et al., 2017). Words of the participants were transcribed verbatim to maintain their meaning. No attempt was made to change words or phrases to make them grammatically correct, as this may inadvertently change the sense or meaning of what was said by research participants (Ary et al., 2019).

Member-checking was conducted after transcribing the interview data so that research participants had the opportunity to acknowledge their own words and any interpretation that the researcher had applied to these words. The interview transcripts were emailed to each participant and they were invited to verify whether the transcripts were an accurate record and a fair representation of their own interview with the option to seek clarification, correct, or add to their transcripts (Birt et al., 2016; Bryman, 2012; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; McDonnell et al., 2000). Thirty-two out of 36 participants actively participated in this task. Thus, approximately 88.89 percent (32 out of 36) participants validated the interview transcripts as an accurate record of the interview conversation. Two of the participants passed on (died) before they could validate their interview transcripts. The remaining two participants who failed to validate the transcripts indicated this was due to busy work schedules and time constraints; this was after three follow up emails, and several phone contacts were made. All the interview data collected, however, have been included in the data set.

At the next stage, the researcher organised the data by case universities and also separated student data from staff data in each case university. The data from policymakers were also organised in a separate file. During the familiarisation process, the researcher wrote notes or memos in the margins of the transcripts (reflective log) to capture thoughts and key ideas as they occurred. The essential information generated provided a preliminary step in developing a coding scheme (Ary et al., 2005). The transcripts, observation, and document data were arranged in a systemised format ready for the next stage of analysis where the coding process began (Ary et al., 2019).

Coding and reducing is a critical stage in analysing qualitative data; it includes identifying categories and themes and refining them. Coding is about developing concepts from the raw data (Ary et al., 2019; Bryman, 2016; Nowell et al., 2017). Coding allowed this researcher to reduce the raw data and concentrated on its specific features. The transcripts were kept in a word processing file and the units of meaning were highlighted using the comments function to identify the codes as suggested by Ary et al. (2019).

The coding process was approached by keeping the transcripts in a word processing file, highlighting the units of meaning using the comments function to identify the codes as suggested by Ary et al. (2019). During the stage of coding and reducing, this researcher sorted the data by looking for units of meaning – words, phrases, sentences, participants' ways of thinking, behaviour patterns, and events that appeared regularly and were important. Some of

the codes were labelled from the actual words of research participants (in vivo codes), whilst labels of other codes were created to reflect various ways an underlying concept is expressed (Ary et al., 2019). Tables were constructed for each university and policymakers showing the codes that were generated from the data, sorted, and collated to form each category, and the most interesting quotes that support the categories. Although many codes were generated from the data during the initial coding stage, these initial codes were reduced and modified later by feedback and suggestions from the researcher's thesis supervisors.

The coding allowed this researcher to develop tentative categories. These categories were refined and reconceptualised during the analysis process based on the interpretive judgement of the researcher and input from her thesis supervisors. Ary et al. (2019) contended that "in qualitative analysis, the boundaries of the categories and themes involve interpretive judgement" by the researcher (p. 458). Connected or similar categories were combined and integrated into an inductive theme. In all, six inductive and interrelated themes emerged from the data. Each of these themes was discussed later within the cross-case analysis and discussion.

In interpreting the data for this study, efforts were made to bring out the meaning of the data, tell the story on increasing access and participation for persons with disability in selected public universities, and developed plausible explanations as revealed by the data. The findings of this study are presented in a narrative form. Direct quotes from study participants are a critical constituent of the analytic narrative (Nowell et al., 2017), consequently, short quotes were incorporated in the analytic narrative to support the understanding of exact points of interpretation and prove the occurrence of the themes. More elaborate excerpts were also included in the analytic narrative to give readers the essence of the raw texts from the data and to provide evidence of validity and merit of the analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). The analytic narrative conveyed the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and perspectives of the participants and that of this researcher.

The findings of this study are presented case by case (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). Data from policymakers, who hold a sectorial perspective, are included in the cross-case analysis to validate, and confirm the data obtained from other participants. The policymakers' data provided extra evidence to support the data and results of the study. Findings were discussed in the domain of relevant literature and were also used to answer the research questions.

3.7.1 Research Validity and Trustworthiness

Morse et al. (2002) contended that: "without rigor, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility" (p. 14). Ensuring extreme rigour is critical in conducting qualitative research (Cypress, 2017). Good research provides rich and credible evidence (Scotland, 2012). Research validity refers to the "correctness or truthfulness of an inference that is made from the results of the study" (Johnson & Christensen, 2014, p. 279). Researchers clearly and accurately present the perspectives of participants recognising that multiple realities exist; Noble and Smith (2015, p. 34) refer to this phenomenon as the 'truth value'. The strategy this researcher used to ensure that the study was credible, reliable, truthful, and therefore defensible was through triangulation (Johnson & Christensen, 2014) of data obtained from multiple sources (interviews, document analysis, and observation). Descriptive validity is ensured by this researcher, who accurately reported documents, interviews, and observations data (Johnson & Christensen, 2014; Lewis & Nicholls, 2014).

Scholars such as Birt et al. (2016) argued that "the trustworthiness of results is the bedrock of high-quality qualitative research" (p. 1802). According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), trustworthiness in qualitative research poses a simple question: "can the findings … be trusted?" (p. 121). Trustworthiness, thus, refers to a set of standards for assessing the quality of qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). These standards include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), and control of bias (Ary et al., 2005):

- **Credibility** of the study was achieved by following the canons of good practice in researching so that the findings can be truthful, plausible, and represent the original view of respondents (Bryman, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Strategies such as member-checking, data triangulation, and method triangulation were used to ensure the credibility of research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Data were gathered from different categories of participants at different levels (e.g., university leadership and senior management, students with disability and policymakers); a combination of data collection methods such as interviews, observations, and document review (method triangulation) used in the study resulted in cross-checking of findings and better evidence (Ary et al., 2005; Bryman, 2016).
- **Believability** was achieved through member-checking, also called participant validation. The purpose of the activity is to validate the credibility of results. This

researcher emailed interview transcripts to participants so they could confirm they have been accurately recorded and were, therefore, valid. Participants corroborated and substantiated the accounts that the researcher has arrived at (Birt et al., 2016; Bryman, 2012; McDonnell et al., 2000). This technique (member-checking) enabled the researcher to achieve the balance between participants' perspectives and how these were represented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

- **Transferability** of the study was enhanced by providing a sufficiently rich, thick, and detailed description and interpretation of data to reveal underlying meanings and understandings. This researcher provided accurate, thorough, and complete descriptions of the context of the study, disposition of participants, which occurred during the process of the study so that readers can make decisions about similarities and, therefore, generalisability (Ary et al., 2005; Bryman, 2016; Korstjens & Moser, 2018).
- **Dependability** of the study was strengthened by ensuring that comprehensive records were kept of all stages of the research process. Methods used in the research process were clearly documented, consistent, logical, traceable, and reproducible (Ary et al., 2005; Bryman, 2016). For example, the process of data analysis was in line with the acceptable standards of qualitative study and multi-case design (Korstjens & Moser, 2018).
- **Confirmability** was safeguarded by this researcher, who acted in good faith by clearly demonstrating that personal values or philosophical leanings do not influence the conduct of the research and its findings (Bryman, 2012; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For example, the researcher ensured that interpretation was grounded in the data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Further, confirmability was ensured by using an audit trail. The raw data gathered for this study was well organised and stored in a retrievable form so as to be available for review by other parties. Interviews conducted and tape-recordings were well documented (Ary et al., 2005; Korstjens & Moser, 2018). See section 4.8.1 on data management, security, and storage.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations arise for all research involving human subjects (Yin, 2014). In this study, ethical procedures were adhered to from the beginning of the study and during the data collection, analysis, and reporting (Creswell, 2013). Before commencing this study, ethics

approval was sought and granted from the Human Research Ethics Committee at Edith Cowan University (ECU), Australia where this researcher was enrolled as a PhD Candidate. Ethics procedures were followed based on the Australian National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (Commonwealth of Australia, 2015). The information letter sent to potential participants contained information on the nature and purpose of the research, risks, benefits associated with the study, rights to participate including that participation was voluntary and participants had the right to withdraw at any time, explanation of the methods of data collection, and information on confidentiality and anonymity of participants (Feldman et al., 2003). Fieldwork in Ghana was approved by the relevant authorities and the local ethics committee of participating universities. However, as stated in the overall ethics application, to retain the privacy of these participating universities, their staff, and students, these approved documents were not included in the appendices. These approval letters from the participating universities were duly submitted to the research ethics office at ECU.

3.8.1 Data Management, Security and Storage

It is prudent to protect the research data collected to prevent data loss (Patton, 2015) and leakage. The interviews were recorded using tape recorders and stored securely as per the requirements of the Human Research Ethics Committee of Edith Cowan University. A master or original copy of the data obtained from participants was stored on password-protected digital files. The data were kept as encrypted and secured in computer files as well as backed up on an external hard drive. Access to data was restricted to only supervisors and the researcher; no field assistants were used for the data collection. A backup copy was locked in a cabinet in this researcher's postgraduate workspace/room in ECU for safekeeping as required by ECU regulations. At the end of the study, the electronic data will be kept on the online data management system for five years after the research has concluded, then it will be destroyed in accordance with the State Records Act 2000 (Western Australia, 2017), and the Western Australian University Sector Disposal Authority (WAUSDA, 2013). The names and codes are stored separately to the data.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents how this research was conducted. It articulated the researcher's epistemological position and methodological considerations. Adopting the naturalistic approach, the qualitative methodology and an interpretivist paradigm, the researcher explored the participants' views within the context of their situations. A multi-case design was

employed, allowing the use of multiple methods of data collection. The chapter also delineates how access to research sites was gained and the techniques used in selecting research participants. Further, it outlined how data collected were analysed including techniques of ensuring validity and trustworthiness. This chapter has explained the ethical considerations needed to ensure the participants in this study were respected and that the study met the requirements of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. It also includes how data collected were managed, secured, and stored. Chapters four, five, and six present these data, one case per chapter, to explore the research questions and answers. Chapter seven presents the supporting data obtained from the architects of the IE policy. Comparisons were made in a cross-case analysis (Chapter eight) to identify any similar patterns or differences in inclusive practices and policy implementation.

CHAPTER FOUR
PUBLIC UNIVERSITY A

4.1 Introduction

This study sought to explore how national policy on inclusive education was translated into institutional arrangements, guidelines, or policies dedicated to the provision and support to increase access and participation for persons with disability in selected public universities in Ghana. The study also explored the effect of these institutional policies and arrangements on access and participation for persons with disability. Chapter five presents the data of Public University A (PUA).

Thirteen participants were interviewed in PUA – seven staff members and six students with disability. Staff participants were members of the University leadership and senior management and student participants drawn from a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs (see Table 4.1). The participants had a range of knowledge and experience regarding the issues of concern. The interview guide includes questions about policy; access; participation; attitudes; and challenges (see Appendix C).

A description of the background and context of PUA is presented, followed by the analytic narrative constructed from the data. Two main themes emerged from the interviews: policy context and student experience. The two aspects of policy context were: policy expectations and enactment by Ghanaian public universities; and institutional policy and guidelines on disability. Participants' views on students' experiences highlighted three aspects: physical environment, support services, and social inclusion. The analytic narrative is interspersed or embedded with both short and elaborate quotes from the raw data to support findings and give readers the flavour of the raw text (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). The observation and document data of PUA are presented along with the interview data. (See Appendix D for observation checklist).

Table 4.1: Participant Profile PUA

S/N	Participant identifier	Type of disability	Position Held/Year of Study
1	AR1	NI *	Pro-vice-chancellor
2	AR2	NI	Dean of Students

3	AR3	NI	Dean of Faculty
4	AR4	NI	Vice Dean of Faculty
5	AR5	NI	Head of Department
6	AR6	NI	Head, Disability Support Unit
7	AR7	NI	Staff, Disability Support Unit
8	ARS1	vision impairment	Third year student
9	ARS2	vision impairment	Second year postgraduate student
10	ARS3	vision impairment	Third year student
11	ARS4	vision impairment	Fourth year student
12	ARS5	physical disability	Fourth year student
13	ARS6	physical disability	Second year student

*****none identified

4.2 Background and Context of PUA

PUA is an old public university in Ghana, established after the country obtained its independence in 1957 to meet the increasing demand for higher education and the accelerated development plan of the time. Like most public universities in Ghana, PUA is located in a suburban environment. PUA obtained university status by an Act of Parliament in 1971, enabling it to award certificates, diplomas, bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees. PUA has been accredited by the National Accreditation Board (NAB). From this beginning, PUA has grown exponentially and today offers over 210 study programs at diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels in almost all academic disciplines including: education, social sciences, law, business, applied sciences and medicine. It, therefore, provides middle and high-level manpower to most of the ministries. PUA is now one of the reputable universities attracting potential students from Ghana, other countries in Africa, and beyond. Some of its academic programs are offered in distance learning and sandwich modes.

4.3 Policy Context

This section presents participants' perspectives on the expectations of the national inclusive education (IE) policy and institutional policy/guidelines on inclusive practices.

4.3.1 Policy Expectations and Enactment by Ghanaian Public Universities

The seven staff participants in PUA shared a range of perspectives on the expectations of the national inclusive education (IE). These perspectives included creating access; designing university focused policy; removing all forms of barriers; professional development of teachers to handle inclusive classrooms; procuring modern equipment, ICT facilities and assistive devices; supportive and friendly learning and physical environment; and institutional structures.

The seven staff participants indicated that the national IE policy stipulates that higher education institutions consider the issue of creating and increasing access for those with special needs or disability; ensuring that they have equal rights to education. Another expectation identified by two participants was the design of a university-wide or university focused policy that ensures all students with disability who enter the university are given equal opportunities. Thus, all barriers to students moving forward in their educational endeavour must be eliminated. Three staff participants further noted that the policy also indicated that public universities should prepare their environment and staff so that there would not be any barrier created intentionally to block any student from receiving university education. Staff participant AR6 stated that universal principles of effective practice of inclusive higher education must apply equally to all Ghanaian universities.

In addition, three staff participants also emphasised the need for professional development of teachers. They explained that the policy stated that higher education institutions, especially, those that train teachers, should be able to train people to teach using inclusive approaches. Thus, teacher trainees need pedagogical skills to be able to respond, manage and/or teach children with special needs or disability in their classrooms, using child-centred approaches to learning.

Two staff participants also noted that, according to the policy, institutions must put in substantial preparation to ensure that students with special needs are assisted when they enrol. Some participants also referred to the procurement of state-of-the-art ICT and assistive devices to help students learn effectively in the university. For example, modern assistive devices that can convert braille into printed material for assessment, would prevent the issue of mistakes in braille transcription, which can occur due to human error.

Similarly, the seven staff participants indicated that higher education institutions are also expected to ensure that their learning environment, physical environment and structures are friendly and can accommodate students with disability. The structures should offer the necessary support that these students will need, and the required training so that they will also be able to contribute to the development of the nation. Conditions, in terms of infrastructure and delivery, should not disadvantage any student participant. The following quotations from staff participants illustrate these factors:

> *The universities should make sure they restructure all their facilities so that person with disabilities who would come to the institution would have a normal stay, normal access to facilities. If I say facilities it is all-embracing - human resource, teaching, accommodations, recreational facilities, and everything.* (AR7)

> *We should be able to include all individuals who have deviated from the norm, all people with disability. It shouldn't be only the visually impaired. So, we're aiming at expanding the scope to admit all categories of individuals who deviate from the norm…* (AR2)

Another issue that was evident in the data was the awareness of the IE policy. In PUA, three out of seven staff participants (AR2, AR5, AR6) demonstrated awareness of the IE policy and knowledge of its content; however, the remaining four staff participants (AR1, AR3, AR4, AR7) only heard about its existence.

4.3.2 Institutional Policy and Guidelines on Disability

This section focuses on institutional policy, guidelines and/or arrangements, which delineates service provision for students with disability in PUA. The responses drawn from the seven staff participants indicated that the university had drafted its institutional disability policy based on the university's context. The institutional disability policy purportedly gives direction to handling and addressing issues concerning persons with disability. However, participants attested to the fact that the Disability Policy of PUA does not receive any official authorisation from the Academic Board for its provisions to be fully implemented. Participants referred to the institutional disability policy as illustrated by the following comment from AR2:

> *…we have [PUA] disability policy. It's from the national one. … so, that one pertains to only PUA. That will help us to know what exactly we need to do for these individuals. …that's what we call 'situational analysis'. We looked at our*

> *situation, and we've been able to come out with PUA policy on disability, and it's helping us a lot. …* (AR2)

Student participant ARS2 referred to the challenge of full implementation of the institutional disability policy and indicated that: "…of course, we have a disability policy at the university. I think the university too can ensure that all the things that are stated there are done, or they are made to work not just on paper".

The strategic plan states that PUA intended to strengthen policies for students with special needs by instituting mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of policies by the end of 2020 (p. 15); however, the institutional disability policy of PUA is still in draft form and yet to receive approval.

Participants mentioned the University's Corporate Strategic Plan. Six out of the seven staff participants indicated that equity, non-discrimination and disability are a primary focus of the University's Corporate Strategic Plan. Participant AR1 stated that the University's Corporate Strategic Plan is strict on equal opportunity and therefore equity and equal opportunities are key and are its key thrusts. AR4 confirmed this emphasis and illustrated the views of other participants in stating that:

> *… One of the thrusts is equality of access to all, opportunity and services to all. That is equal opportunity and utilisation of services. So, the university tries to provide access and quality education and services to all categories of individuals regardless of race, creed, gender, disability and all forms of social status.*

A review of the strategic plan indicates that PUA is an equal opportunity institution that provides access to quality education and services to all categories of persons, regardless of their background, including those with physical disability (p. 5).

Participant AR5, however, indicated the need to enlighten or sensitise staff on issues concerning disability equity and integration so that they can act and/or respond appropriately and independently, without any prompting, when the need arises. Specifically:

> *We haven't been given any education whatsoever on this issue of equity and integration. None at all, even though we have disability policy. The disability policy is there, but I think we have to be educated on these issues so that they know. Being in the area, we make sure that we're not partial. We treat all students equally.* (AR5)

The participants identified policy development; increasing access and enrolment; improving physical access; removing barriers; professional preparation of teachers; providing assistive technology, ICT and learning facilities as the expectations of the IE policy. The primary document that drives provisions and support for students with disability in PUA is the draft institutional policy on disability.

4.4 Student Experience

From the experiences reported by participants, three key areas emerged: physical environment, academic provisions and social inclusion.

4.4.1 Physical Environment

Some of the emerging concepts from the data relating to the physical environment include concerns for mobility; accessibility of the physical environment for students with disability; and on-campus transport. Comments relevant to this topic were further grouped into four components – the architecture; terrain; residential accommodation; and inter-campus shuttle services. The architecture included buildings such as lecture theatres, administration block, conference rooms, lifts, and handrails. The terrain comprised of the grounds and parking, gutters, pavements, roads, and signage among others. Residential accommodation explored the on-campus housing arrangements available for students with disability; and transportation focused on inter-campus shuttle services.

There were differences in the narratives from staff and students of this institution. The seven staff participants interviewed indicated that the old buildings in the university were not accessible to the students with disability because they had no lifts. The old buildings were designed and built more than 50 years ago, without consideration for the circumstances of students with disability. Observation of the buildings confirmed that the university campuses had many high-rise buildings that were inaccessible, some of which housed lecture theatres. Most of these buildings had numerous staircases; in some cases, these stairs were not ramped, and handrails were visibly absent. The offices of the vice-chancellor, the pro-vice-chancellor, the registrar, and the director of academic affairs, for example, were located at the top of the administration block, one of the oldest buildings at the university, and some of its staircases were very narrow and steep. Furthermore, it was observed that no customised toilet facilities existed for students with disability; they shared the same facilities as students without disability.

Some of the doorways of these toilets were too narrow for wheelchair and other mobility aid users to access or to move in and out of freely.

According to the participants, the university is conscious of the physical access needs of students with disability, so handrails were being fixed on some of the old buildings to guide and facilitate the movement of these students. The university is ensuring that the new buildings were disability-friendly; for example, inclined planes for wheelchair users were being provided. The seven staff participants referred to this as illustrated by the following:

> *…if you take our infrastructure; for instance, the university started in 1962, the buildings were put up without making provisions for people who, excuse me, are physically challenged … And so, what currently we are trying to do now is to provide facilities that will cater for such people.* (ARI)

> *…I think most of the buildings are ancient or old buildings. But the new ones have avenues for them [are more accessible]. … The person with a wheelchair, they have to use a wheelchair to climb the staircase. If you're starting a lecture, you need to wait for that person to get in before you start the lecture… The design of the lecture rooms does not often-times give them access… At least for the visually impaired, it's okay, but for the physically challenged there is an issue.* (AR3)

While staff duly acknowledged the existence of access and mobility challenges, they were quick to add that these challenges were being addressed. However, the student participants saw these matters to be highly problematic and demonstrated how these conditions have negative consequences on their social and academic engagements on campus. Thus, the thirteen staff and student participants agreed that accessing and navigating the physical environment pose challenges to students with disability but differ on their perception of degree and impact of the limited access and mobility.

Regarding the architecture, the student participants explained that most lecture theatres were not easily accessible because they were in high rise buildings with no lifts. Conference halls where social functions were held were not accessible because, apart from the height of the multi-storey buildings, there was no proper signage and direction to such locations. As a result of the height of the buildings coupled with the absence of, or faulty lifts and numerous stairs, some students with disability were unable to attend some seminars, training sessions, social gatherings and functions unless friends supported them. Wheelchair users "crawled like babies" (ARS5) on their knees or had to be carried by their peers without disability to the lecture

theatres for lectures, quizzes, and examinations. The six student participants unanimously refer to this issue as illustrated by:

> *… some lecture theatres are very dangerous for us. … Accessing them is difficult for us, especially the physically challenged. So, when it happens that way, then someone has to carry them. Because when they have their lecture upstairs maybe at the third floor or the fourth floor of the lecture theatre, and most of our lecture theatres we don't have the lift over there, so, it becomes problematic for them.* (ARS3)

> *And there are still some facilities or some buildings within the university, which have not yet met the conditions that were set in ACT 715, which was passed in 2006. That is talking about making buildings more accessible to persons with disability. I think a much typical example would be that the Administration Block, which is at the old site is quite unfriendly. …if they ramp some of the staircases there it will be okay, and also providing elevators … it will be a bit better...* (AR4)

Confirming the student participants' view, staff participants AR2, AR4 and AR5 reported that some students can only access some of the lecture halls by crawling or being carried by their peers. AR5 explained that most of the lecture theatres are only accessible by stairs and, even when available, the lifts do not work. This participant bemoaned the non-compliance with the Persons with Disability Act, Act 715 of 2006. Specifically:

> *When you go to the new site, there is only one building that has like a walkway … so, in that wise accessibility is a bit of a problem. For those with VI [vision impairment] they normally get guides. Their fellow mates serve as guides for them. They hold their hands and take them. For those with physical impairments, occasionally you see them actually crawling up the stairs … so accessibility is a problem. Even though the disability acts spelt out that accessibility issues should be addressed, years after its promulgation in 2007, as at now we're yet to see.* (AR5)

Participant AR4 corroborated this view adding that, "I remember some time ago they were carrying one student to the lecture hall. It is quite awkward, but that is the only thing we can do at that moment". In line with other participants, staff participant AR2 explained that some students with physical challenges were using wheelchairs that were being pushed by other students instead of being powered by electricity. This situation limited the freedom of mobility of such students. The participant gave an example of an older building, which is not disability -friendly, explaining that students with physical challenges had to be pushed and supported by colleagues to climb upstairs.

Figure 4.1: Access routes to some academic facilities in PUA

Furthermore, student participant ARS6 shared the difficulties he goes through in navigating the environment and accessing lecture theatres anytime he attends lectures at the old site. Specifically, the participant explained:

> *Sometimes you hear your friends saying: this guy is trying. Oh, he is suffering … They are thinking that you are suffering... Under normal circumstances, you must not crawl on the ground when it rains, but sometimes you have to [crawl] because there is no means when it rains. For instance, at old-site, I don't send my wheelchair there, so when it rains, by all means, you have to [crawl on the ground]. I can't send the wheelchair because when you get to the university …, there is a hill there I can't climb…* (ARS6)

Challenges with the terrain revealed instances of students with vision impairment falling into open drains; students with vision impairment falling – on the road, in the toilet and bath; students with disability competing with vehicles on the road and haphazard parking of vehicles affecting their movement; and some wheelchair users missing out lectures because there is nobody to push them.

Student participants noted that there were uneven paths, cars parked haphazardly, and some even on sidewalks because there was no proper demarcation of parking spaces. These conditions made movement difficult and unsafe. Student participant ARS1 indicated that "it is not the very best; some gutters are not covered. The university should be able to support [students with disability] by ensuring that the mobility or environment is safe so that someone with vision impairment can independently walk". The six student participants unanimously referred to the issue of mobility as illustrated by:

> *… mobility on campus. Yes, we have uncovered gutters on campus, so, even if you are using your white cane and you are not careful, you will fall into them. And we have numerous issues - cases where most of our colleagues have fallen into the gutters. We have numerous places on campus which are not favourable for persons with disability. … We have pavements that there are a whole lot of broken bricks. So, it makes our movement very difficult on campus.* (ARS3)

> *…there are certain portions of the main roads that do not have pavements and sometimes, it makes movement quite difficult because you may have to compete with vehicles for the same space. Even though you may be on the extreme side [of the road], but you can't tell what can happen [a vehicle can knock you down].* (ARS4)

Staff participant AR6 also confirmed the assertions of students by giving an instance where a student with vision impairment fell into an open drain between the library and one of the hostels. The place was subsequently named after the student, though the student did not die.

Observations revealed narrow roads, potholes, uneven and rugged walkways, open drains, ditches, obstacles left unattended on pavements, and broken and damaged pavements limited the movement of students with disability on campus. Pavements, curb cuts or curb ramps were visibly missing in some cases. Traffic lights on campus did not have any form of assistive traffic control devices or push bells that would enable students with vision impairment to regulate vehicular flow and cross the road safely when they reach a crossing point. Speeding vehicles were very evident around campus with no signage indicating the presence of students with disability. A few hawkers were sighted plying their trade on pavements, further adding to the inaccessibility of these pavements.

Additionally, participant ARS6, who is a wheelchair user expressed concerns about the difficulties and/or experiences students with vision impairment often go through on campus. He related an instance regarding the campus experiences of a friend with vision impairment in

his hall of residence who did not acquire adequate mobility and orientation skills. "…when we go to my hall … I have one friend there, Matthew. He is not sensitive [familiar with his environment] that 'this is where I pass, so I have to pass there always'". Because he is not aware of the nature of his environment, he falls everywhere – toilet, bathroom, and even more frequently on his way to lectures (ARS6). According to the participant (ARS6), the lecture theatre is quite far from their hall of residence, and the distance between the two facilities is quite demanding for any person with vision impairment.

Figure 4.2: Obstacles on walkways in PUA

The review of the draft disability policy revealed that environmental access plans and timelines will be instituted by the university to ensure that appropriate accommodations are considered to create a physically accessible campus for all persons with disability in keeping with the Disability Act of 2006, Act 715, and the guidelines established by International Standards of Accessibility. Despite these physical access provisions in the draft policy and efforts by the university to improve the physical and the built environment, major challenges still exist.

From the perspectives of both staff and student participants, it appears that physical access to buildings and teaching spaces, and navigating the terrain, remains a significant challenge for

persons with disability. However, the university has taken some steps to resolve some of the issues. Some staff respondents noted that open drains and gutters on campus were being covered so that students with disability could move around safely. Car parks were being demarcated so that these students could access facilities without obstacles. This researcher's observation confirmed the perspectives of both staff and student participants regarding the inaccessible nature of the physical and the built environment of the university.

4.4.1.1 Residential Accommodation

This sub-section explores the provisions made by the university to ensure accessible and suitable residential accommodation for students with disability. Residential accommodation in this study refers to university buildings dedicated to housing students including on-campus accommodation or halls of residence.

Eleven out of the twelve participants – six staff and five students - express similar views on the issue of on-campus accommodation for students with disability. According to the six staff participants, the university has a residential accommodation policy where all commencing students pursuing a four-year bachelor's degree program are accepted into the university halls of residence. After their first year of study, they must arrange for private accommodation for the remaining three years. This policy is termed the 'in-out-out-out' accommodation policy – meaning one year in the university halls of residence and three years outside. However, students with disability are offered the opportunity to stay in the university halls of residence throughout their period of study, and this is referred to by the participants as 'in-in-in-in' arrangement for students with disability. Though the 'in-out-out-out' policy is binding on all students apart from those with disability, the 'in-in-in-in' arrangement is not obligatory for students with disability - those who wish can opt out. Students with disability pay residential facility-user fees just like any other student but the university ensures that the ground floor is always allocated to them for easy access to their respective rooms. Students with disability can make their own choice of accommodation and a staff member is designated to follow-up and certifies that good and accessible rooms are allocated to them. Students are also allowed to select their roommates and the number of roommates is reduced. Participant AR2 noted that "Because in [PUA] we have a policy on accommodation. … We're trying to help them with accommodation. They will pay, but they'll have accommodation on campus throughout their program".

Five of the six student participants held a view consistent with the reports of the staff participants confirming the 'in-in-in-in' accommodation arrangement was in place for them as students with disability. ARS2 stated that "… every year for a person with disability on campus, you know that your accommodation is assured, having a room is assured. So, we don't go through the policy - the 'in-out-out-out'. We don't experience that. …". The students also confirmed the payment of residential accommodation fees and the accessible nature of the rooms (ARS5). Five out of six student participants refer to this as illustrated by:

> *The University is trying to solve the problem of going out to look for accommodation after your first year. They have made it a privilege for us to be able to stay within the various halls for our period of study. And so, for example, I've been here for four years. From Level 100 [first year] up to now, I've been staying in my hall of affiliation. So, it is something that is available for every person with disability.* (ARS4)

One student participant, ARS6, had a contrary experience with on-campus accommodation. The participant narrated that during the previous semester he had to struggle to get a room in the hall of residence. He complained to the hall administrator who indicated that there was no longer such provision for persons with disability. He reported the hall administrator said: "oh that is what the vice-chancellor told them from the administration" (ARS6). The participant added that when they came in the first year, they were told certain rooms were designated for two students – a student who is a wheelchair user and another student who volunteered to offer assistance. Eventually, these rooms were allocated to four students. The room became so crowded that some roommates had to vacate. The participant called the administrator who said: "oh that is what they were instructed from the administration to do" (ARS6). … The participant, therefore, believed that "those things are on paper" (ARS6).

Paradoxically, a revelation by student participant ARS5 had shown that the opportunity, which was given to students with disability to select their roommates, sometimes comes with its consequences. Sometimes, the sighted roommates nominated by students with disability turn against them – mistreating them. Sighted roommates take, without express consent (pilfer), items belonging to their roommates who are students with vision impairment, thinking that because they are blind, they will not realise. Specifically, the participant said:

> *And sometimes, some of them, they behave as if they are angels. They will help you, so you will think they are good. … And when you come together, that's when they will start showing their character. They will lock you outside and take the key away. … And sometimes, if a colleague of mine, who is visually*

> *impaired, when she cooks down [prepares food] the able students' take the food. …they always take their things with the sense that they can't see. But if they put something somewhere, they know the place where they have put it.* (ARS5)

The draft disability policy makes provision for accessible and disability-friendly residential accommodations to students with disability including adequate manoeuvering space for wheelchair users, quiet rooms with no more than one roommate for vision-impaired students to listen to their assistive devices, and priority placement for persons with disability. While students are allocated to rooms on the ground floor, but other provisions such as adequate space and number of roommates are yet to be implemented.

The perspectives of eleven of the twelve participants illustrate the university's commitment to providing accessible and suitable on-campus residential accommodation for persons with disability. That said, some students with disability may be denied this provision under certain circumstances. In the instance of ARS6, it was over enrolment. This situation manifested in differing experiences of students with a similar type of disability. Generally, it appears that students with disability are sometimes not treated with much respect and dignity by their non-disabled roommates.

4.4.1.2 Transportation

PUA provides inter-campus transport service for students including those with disability. While some staff see the shuttle buses as delivering excellent service to students with disability and therefore enabling their full participation, the students highlighted that the features of the buses and their mode of operations are inappropriate for specific categories of disability. Some staff participants indicated that the busing services available for students on campus served as a motivation for students with disability because they were exempted from paying bus fare. However, the bus fare is being deducted at source for the entire student body including those with disability, hence students with disability do pay bus fares. Staff participant AR6 received a complaint from students with disability, which implied that though the busing services are available, students with disability had difficulties accessing its services because of the manner it operates. Specifically, the participant said:

> *Quite recently some of them came and complained to me. You know the university, the SRC has a bus running and other things. Sometimes when the bus gets to a spot when it's taking students, they rush, struggle and get in, and these people [students with disability] are always at a disadvantage…* (AR6)

Student participants corroborated the account of staff participant AR6. They described the way their colleagues without disability tussled for the buses because of the large numbers; the lack of arrangements for boarding the buses; and the unsuitability of the buses – no adaptations had been made to make them disability-friendly. During rush hours, students with vision impairment found it difficult to get peers who would willingly guide them to enter the bus. When these students eventually entered the bus, they had to stand because the seats were full, and apparently few people offer their seats to persons with disability. These perspectives are illustrated by the following comments:

> *Free buses? … If you want to enter the bus because your friends are running helter-skelter to enter, so, you don't have any space. Most at times I take a taxi before I go for lectures at the old site. I don't usually join the free bus. … there is no provision made [for people with disability] to enter first before others. It's a rush. …how do we join that? You have to leave them to enter; then you stay there for some number of times before you get the bus. That's when you are favored by somebody who will allow you to enter before he does.* (ARS6)

> *Now the shuttle that we have is giving us a lot of headaches … especially, when we close [from lectures] like that and the number is very huge. Those people who are blind, somebody has to lead them before they can be able to get inside the bus. And at the point that everybody is struggling, nobody is willing to help ... And those of us who are also physically challenged … you can't access it [the bus] unless you wait for the able students to enter first before you also get in.* (ARS5)

The researcher's observations confirmed that the shuttle buses on campus were not disability-friendly; no special places and seats were reserved for persons with disability. Students with disability were observed struggling to board the bus and find seats on the bus. There were no special features, such as lifts or ramps fitted on the buses, which could aid wheelchair users and users of other mobility devices to board the buses without harm. Although the shuttle buses had only a few stops, there were no audio or verbal announcements for students with vision impairment to help them alight independently at the correct stops. The situations revealed by both the interview and the observation data exist despite the provisions in the draft disability policy, which states that on-campus mobility assistance (shuttle services) to and from university courses and related educational activities shall be provided. Transportation for non-academic activities shall be considered based on availability.

The students with disability suggested ways of addressing some of the challenges such as providing a code of conduct for inter-campus transport services; giving priority to students with disability; and making the buses disability-friendly by introducing features that will aid students with physical challenges who have lower limbs problems. Student participant ARS6 emphasised that there should be provisions in place for students with disability concerning accessing the free shuttle bus to make commuting between campuses a little bit easier for them. These views are illustrated by:

> *I also think that the university would do us a lot of good if they try to bring some kind of regulations into … the shuttle system. There is a particular area on those buses where they can lower to create a kind of level at the back side of the bus which our colleagues who have problems with their legs would be able to enter it easily. … it will reduce the difficulties that come with boarding the bus and its related issues.* (ARS4)

> *They have to provide measures for us, especially, those of us who stay far away from campus …. Sometimes, when we have dawn quizzes... you need to come from the old site to over here [new site] to come and write the quiz. … I can't walk. So, I normally wake up very early to go and stand at a point waiting for a taxi. And you can spend about one hour over there waiting for just a car. Before you get to the centre, they are distributing the question papers; or sometimes, they will start work ... And sometimes due to the stress everything becomes confused in your mind. And sometimes at the end, we don't perform very well.* (ARS5)

Participant ARS5 concludes with the suggestion that "… at least, they can reserve, at least, four seats for students with disability" and if the bus is full and any of those seats are not occupied, other students could fill them.

The perspectives of participants have shown that the inter-campus shuttle service being run by the university is plagued with issues that affect students with disability. For instance, the make of the buses, access, stress, pressure, and tension. When these students struggle to get to the lecture or examination halls, sometimes late, their learning and academic output may be affected. As ARS5 reported – they get to the examinations centre late by which time the examinations had already started. Due to the stress, they become confused and it impacts on their academic performance.

4.4.2 Support Services

Academic provision relates to academic support and all matters relating to the academic experiences of students with disability in PUA. These issues include admission and enrolment

into the university; orientation program for new students; academic support; career counselling; teaching and learning; human resources; funding; and their quality and effectiveness.

4.4.2.1 Admission and Enrolment

This section looks at the steps taken by the University to open access and ensure that an increasing number of students with disability are admitted, and subsequently enrolled in the university. The main strategies put in place are to implement the institutional policy of inclusiveness; increase effort to recruit students with disability; and adjust admission requirements. Participant AR1 noted that the university ensures that people, including persons with disability, are not discriminated against in terms of admissions because the university's policy of inclusiveness is framed within the national policy, derived from the national constitution. Participant AR3 added that "in terms of admission … the university has a policy; over the years, the university has been admitting students or persons with disability". Additionally, participants AR2 and AR6 explained that the relevant staff of the university go to, for example, Schools for the Blind, to educate students on the facilities available in the university, how the university can support them to obtain degrees despite their challenges, and the benefits students with disability stand to derive from higher education and higher degrees. Specifically:

> *… They go round to talk about admission … in these inclusive secondary schools. They educate the visually impaired about the facilities that we have. They have some flyers when they go, they give them out to educate the individuals. Some … parents think that education is costly. They are ignorant about the free nature of it. But here it is not entirely free. We subsidised with the disability scholarship. Sometimes too from the Dean's Office, we get some financial assistance.* (AR2)

Also, admission requirements are adjusted for the vision impaired. Participant AR2 indicated that prior to the implementation of the inclusive education policy, students with vision impairment were admitted with credit passes in six subjects - two cores and four electives - though they did not study Mathematics and Science at the secondary school level[6]. They (students with vision impairment) had to obtain credit passes in all six subjects in their final external examinations conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) to qualify for admission into the university. However, their counterparts without disability studied

[6] The secondary school system in Ghana is not equipped with resources to allow students with vision impairment to study Science and Mathematics.

eight subjects, out of which six credit passes - three core and three electives qualified them for admission. With the advent of the inclusive education policy, the entry requirements were reviewed so that students with vision impairment could enter the university with five credit passes - two cores and three electives - to increase access for them. These admission schemes resonate with the assertion in the draft disability policy of PUA indicating that the university cannot reach its maximum potential if certain persons or groups, including persons with disability are actively or tacitly excluded from accessing university education. The draft policy indicates that the university seeks to take steps to ensure their equal participation. This was evident in the visits by the disability support unit staff to the senior high schools for students with disability to carry out enrolment drives.

The data indicate that PUA implements strategies such as the policy of non-discrimination and inclusiveness; school visits; and adjustment in entry requirements to increase admission and enrolment rates of persons with disability.

4.4.2.2 Orientation Program for New Students

Orientation programs are organised for students with disability by the Disability Support Unit (DSU) of PUA. Student participant ARS4 reported that the DSU organises orientation program for commencing students with disability upon arrival in the university. This orientation program gives them awareness and understanding of the university norms, regulations, culture and standards of behaviour. This insight exposes them to university life and gives them the needed impetus to actively engage not only in academic pursuits but also in social enterprise and activities. Specifically:

> *They [the DSU] give you some kind of insight as to how the University is a community. Like, what you should do, what you shouldn't do, how you should participate. And so that has given most of us the greater motivation to participate in social activities and other things that might be happening in the university campus apart from the academic aspect*. (ARS4)

Staff participants AR2 and AR4 added the element of mobility by explaining that students with disability are provided orientation and mobility services in addition to the university-wide orientation. The mobility and orientation service allow them to locate and familiarise themselves with the essential services and key facilities available on campus. Specifically:

> *… we do orientation and mobility to help them to move to essential places in the university – the halls, and all those places. So that's what we do to assist*

them. So, when they become conversant with the place, with the proper use of the white cane, they are able to move freely. (AR2)

The review of the draft disability policy stipulates the organisation of adjunct (additional) student orientation including mobility training for students with vision impairment.

However, student participant ARS1 observed that the orientation program for new students, both with and without disability, regarding disability issues is not detailed and exhaustive; this situation becomes a challenge to building relationships. The participant observed that "… the orientation of, especially, the fresh students who come to the university is very, very low. As they lack such orientation, they find it very difficult to relate with persons with disability" and, thus, ARS1 described the orientation program as "normal five minutes talk-talk, which you will not even be listening". This participant advocated for "heart to heart" orientation program for both students with and without disability since both categories of students are going to do everything together.

The responses to interview questions suggest that an orientation program is organised for all new students at the university level as well as an additional one for students with disability, which is organised by the DSU. Staff indicated an awareness of the programs but did not offer evaluation. However, student participants indicated that these orientation programs are relatively short, students do not pay attention; the coverage in terms of disability issues are inadequate and therefore, they do not promote an inclusive culture at the university.

4.4.2.3 Academic support

PUA have instituted systems, policies and programs aimed at providing academic support to students with disability. This subsection presents the perspectives of participants as regards the various forms of academic support for persons with disability, which cluster into four main areas: learning equipment and facilities; learning supports; examination arrangements/support; and ICT training.

4.4.2.3.1 Learning equipment

The thirteen participants were aware of the existence of a disability support unit where students with vision impairment receive support. They also indicated that separate laboratories are available for the vision impaired and physically challenged students. It was observed that the university had two information and communication technology (ICT) laboratories within the library building solely for students with disability. One of the ICT laboratories was for students

with vision impairment, and the other for the students with physical challenge. Other equipment and devices mentioned included desktop and laptop computers with software installed on them; braille embossers; Perkins braillers; scanners; hand frames with stylus; magnifiers; closed-circuit televisions (CCTV); and free digital sound recorders for each student, which are sent home after completion of the program. Software such as Job Access With Speech (JAWS)[7]; text to speech; and narrators are available. Provision is also made to supply braille sheets for quizzes and examinations. Participant AR6 noted that some of the computers were donated by the World Bank, indicating the university was active in seeking support. The thirteen participants referred to the range of support including ARS1:

> …*They support every first-year visually-challenged student with a recorder. And we have computers with speech software installed on them so that we can independently use them to type anything we want to, which are also connected to the internet so that if you're going to do any research, you do it. We also have machines, though it is inadequate. One machine is serving almost thirty (30) visually impaired students. This machine is called the braille embosser. And we are provided with braille sheets during quizzes and exams.* (ARS1)

Student participant ARS4 indicated that the digital sound recorders are of immense help to them (students with vision impairment) as they can record whatever is taught at lectures and, afterward, can listen and prepare study notes.

It was observed that students with vision impairment had access to another section of the library where equipment such as Perkins braillers, braille embossers, scanners, hand frames, desktop, and laptop computers and printers were available. In this section of the library the researcher sighted faulty equipment such as computers and printers waiting for repair. The appearance of these pieces of equipment indicated that they had been waiting for a repair for quite a long time.

4.4.2.3.2 Learning support

Learning support is provided via structures and practices designed to allow for academic engagement of the majority of students and support their full participation and learning. This differs from learning equipment. This section explores the learning support available in PUA and their effect on students' learning. Learning supports described by participants in PUA included brailing documents such as handouts, lecture notes, books and other learning

[7] JAWS is a screen reader developed for persons with vision impairment to enable them to see the content of the computer screen and also use the computer independently.

materials; recording learning materials into audio forms; and providing soft copies of study materials to students who can read with the screen reader software. Learning support provided at and/or during lectures was described in terms of preferential seating at lectures where students with vision impairment are allowed to sit in the front row to enable them to get clear recordings of the lectures. These learning supports have been primarily expressed in terms of services, which are provided by the disability support unit and support offered during lectures.

Figure 4.3: A cross section of the disability support unit in PUA

Specifically, a student participant said of the DSU that "… they emboss or they braille, they transcribe, they record, and they send our quiz papers and other scripts to our various lecturers. So, those are the main things they do" (ARS2). Confirming this view, staff participant AR6 said "for instance, if a lecturer wants to have a quiz, he/she gives a copy of the questions to our Centre there. We use the embossers to turn it into braille for our students".

Student participant ARS4 explained that students had options for the way the material is made accessible to them. The participant noted that "… sometimes, if you don't need the brailled copy you … get a soft copy, which you can read with your screen reader software. And I think

it is another laudable thing that's going on here". Despite the support from the DSU, library resources posed challenges to students. The student participants expressed concern that course materials in the library are not in readable format. In addition, students with physical challenges, for example wheelchair users, reported difficulties in gaining access to library materials because of the height of the bookshelves and had to rely on friends or peers. Student participants referred to this as illustrated by this excerpt:

> *Books in the library - most of them are not in braille. I can say all of them. Well, we have some of them in braille, but they are not based on our courses. Yes, and when we talk of, maybe encyclopedias, dictionary and what have you. But when we talk of the courses that we read; we don't have books that are in braille for us to use them.* (ARS3)

This researcher's observation confirmed that the only reading materials in braille at the library were encyclopaedias: no course or textbooks were in braille and audiobooks were not available. The shelves at the library were high, so students with some physical challenges could not independently access the books that were on the top shelves.

4.4.2.3.3 Examination arrangement

Another academic provision available for students with vision impairment in PUA is the arrangement for examination. Students with vision impairment are given extended time for examinations and they also register and write their examinations in the DSU. They are given additional time to allow them to complete the examination since some of them are very slow in brailing. Participant AR2 explained that the literature supports the policy of giving additional time for examination to students with vision impairment:

> *One thing we're doing for them too is the extension of time during exams. You can increase the time, and the literature supports that. If the sighted are using two hours, for the visually impaired, you can do it up to a maximum of four hours. It can be doubled or one and half of the time. (AR2)*

Staff participants AR2 and AR7 noted that anytime there is quiz, assessment, or examination students with disability are supposed to register with the DSU. It is the responsibility of the DSU staff to ensure that the necessary arrangements are made, such as access and conversion of the examination questions into a readable format for students with vision impairment and invigilation of the examination. After the examination is written, the DSU staff ensure that the lecturers concerned receive the students' examinations scripts in the format that they can read. This researcher observed that a section of the library accommodated the disability unit staff. This section also served as the examinations centre for students with vision impairment. During

one of the visits, some students with vision impairment were observed writing their examinations using the braille machines.

The two students with physical challenge interviewed, however, explained that apart from the computer laboratory, which they also used as a learning space, they received no other academic support. They reported that no examination provision and variations were in place for students with physical challenge, even if they were sick or were admitted at the hospital. If the examination venue was in a high-rise building, they had to manage to access it. As a result of some of these examples, both students with physical challenge had the perception that the university was giving students with vision impairment preferential treatment by providing them with a centre that had more resources than their centre. The views of the two students with physical challenge is illustrated as follows:

> *Those who are visually impaired are those that are well recognised on campus … And most times, the university doesn't make provision for the physically challenged. … And if something disturbs you and you report, most times, they don't do anything about it.* (ARS5)

Three staff and four student participants raised concerns about mishandling and misplacement of students' quizzes/examination scripts. Participant AR7 reported that "… some lecturers would just dump the students' scripts somewhere unattended". When the affected students got incomplete results, then "they would ask the students to come and re-write the quiz or the assignment. …". The complaint of mishandling and misplacement of students' scripts were confirmed by staff participants AR2, AR5 and AR6. Participant AR6 concluded that, although most lecturers teach students with disability, it could be that they lack awareness coupled with attitudinal problems. The four student participants ARS1, ARS2, ARS3 and ARS4, confirmed these occurrences and added further dimensions such as delay in marking and assessment. These assertions are illustrated by AR6 and AR5:

> *There was an occasion, a time a student wrote an end of semester exams; it was transcribed and packaged and sent to the department to be given to the lecturer to mark. When the lecturer got it ... He literally threw it away, and so the guy had 'incomplete' [results]. And they were moving up and down to look for what caused the 'incomplete results'. Finally, the lecturer was saying that he did not take part in the examination. He has no records. But you know, we also have records when they write we indicate it. Later it came out that when he took the scripts, he signed. So, he went back to his room and checked and*

> *brought the parcel. He has not even opened it, let alone marked it. It was then that he marked and submitted the results, and the boy had his grade.* (AR6)

> *The only thing that I remember I heard some time ago was they were complaining about their scripts not being returned to them on time, and sometimes too their marked scripts got missing. I remember that was what caught my ears some time ago. That they are not happy about it. That immediately they finish their quiz, and they marked, their fellow sighted students get their scripts. But with theirs, they have to wait for a long time and sometimes they even got missing.* (AR5)

Student participant ARS2 explained that when their scripts are misplaced, they are awarded a grade randomly. Primacy is not given to the quizzes and examinations scripts of students with disability. The participant gave an instance where all students with vision impairment who wrote examinations obtained the same grade - a situation that the participant considered as an impossibility.

Student participant ARS4 added another dimension by indicating the fact that their abilities to excel academically are underestimated, influencing the assessment of their assignments, quizzes and examination scripts. This situation, according to the participant, could be interpreted to mean that some lecturers do not pay attention to assessing the scripts of students with vision impairment. The issue of assessment has, therefore, become a source of worry to some students with vision impairment. Precisely:

> *Because, if you believe that I cannot do what is expected, then automatically you are not going to judge my script based on its merit. It means you are not even going to have time to look at it. And so, it really creates a big problem for some of us. … And just as I said earlier on too, that's the problem of our exam papers and quiz papers. Another huge problem sometimes leads us to 'Incomplete Assessment' and all those things. I think these are some negative things that are going on here.* (ARS4)

4.4.2.3.4 ICT Training

To ensure students with vision impairment derive maximum benefit from the equipment, assistive devices and software available, they were given ICT training to acquire computer and ICT skills. Students with vision impairment are trained to be "well equipped in ICT, Microsoft Word and all the components in ICT" (ARS3). This training allowed them to search for information online and also type their assignments independently. Both staff and student participants spoke about how relevant and beneficial this training was to the students' academic

engagement, achievement, and success. According to participants AR6 and ARS4, with regards to students with vision impairment, computers make completing assignments easier than using braille and the students are excited about it. The participants' perspectives are illustrated by the following statements by ARS4 and AR6:

> *And the university … is also giving us ICT training. So, it's a very great thing that the university is doing, which has actually gone a long way to help us. And I think that in this current world, it is very difficult for you to live without ICT. …the services of the [DSU] make it possible for you to get the soft copy to read. So, it makes things a little bit easier in terms of transcription and in terms of how you would be able to present it in an easier and free way.* (ARS4)

> *We're beginning to see, especially, those who are vision impaired… that things are done better and easier when they use computers rather than the braille and other things. And they are even interested. We want to give them some training so that they will be more versed in the use of computers and other things.* (AR6)

Participant AR2 confirmed these views: *"with the visually impaired we have our own computer lab. They have employed two people who oversee the computer lab. They assist them in learning to make them computer literates".* The participant added that the inclusion of a two-week free vacation ICT class for students with vision impairment can assist to make them more computer literate. The university solicits funds to organise the workshop and also supports the students by providing meals during the training. The workshop is, therefore, free in all respects. In addition, ICT training and support in using assistive technology is provided during the semester. During the researcher's period of observation, the ICT laboratories were filled with students with disability busily engaging in their learning activities. In the case of students with vision impairment, some students were using computers for activities such as information search, reading, and typing. The ICT staff were available and helped if needed. This is consistent with the draft disability policy that made provisions for information access to include identified priorities such as alternative media, web accessibility per international standards, intensive computer training, training in assistive technology, and procurement of assistive technology.

The systems, policies and programs in place to provide academic support for students with disability in PUA are the establishment of the DSU and computer laboratories, provision of assistive technology, devices and learning equipment; learning support in the form of alternative media and in-class support; examination arrangement; and ICT training and/or

computer literacy programs. While students with vision impairment benefit from all these academic support systems, students with physical challenge are provided with a computer laboratory and digital tape recorders only. Students with physical challenge are, therefore, of the view that students with vision impairment are preferred and are treated differently.

Figure 4.4: A section of the disability support unit in PUA (left)
A section of the ICT training room in PUA (right)

4.4.2.4 Career Counselling Services

Career counselling is vital for prospective, current, and graduating students with disability. This aspect of counselling enables them to choose the right program of study; gain the requisite knowledge, skills, and expertise; and increase their chances of gaining employment; and stay in employment and excel. The interview data below elucidates the situation of career counselling for prospective, current, and graduating students in PUA.

Participant AR7 noted that "in fact, though we have the counselling centre here, apart from when our students come, during orientation [and] we introduce them to the various facilities available, we have actually not planned career counselling services categorically for them [students with disability]". Participant AR6 reported that one of the financial institutions come around yearly to organise a workshop for current and graduating students with disability on the preparation of curriculum vitae and job search. Specifically, the participant said:

> *We are fortunate UNIBANK or is it Standard Chartered Bank? … they came and organised some workshop for them at the [Goodwill] Centre for two or three days on how to write CVs, how to search for jobs and other things. So that one, I'm aware, that included both the current and the graduating students.* (AR6)

Participant AR7 reported that it is difficult for students with disability to gain employment after graduation. Some of them graduate with First Class and Second Class Upper but sit in the house for more than three years without employment. Similarly, AR3 noted that offering persons with disability employment should not be an act of generosity but a responsibility if they have the requisite skills. AR3 added that "we should see it as a responsibility to employ them and to assist them to have a decent living".

While PUA provides support for prospective, current, and graduating students in career development, this is no targeted support for students with disability.

4.4.2.5 Human Resources

This section describes the views of participants regarding the availability and adequacy of human resource. Participants believed that though the university has recruited specialists and professionals with the right knowledge and expertise to work with students with disability in the university, these professionals and specialists are insufficient in number. Some participants expressed the view that students with disability need specific support and attention; for example, students with vision impairment need braille experts and those with hearing impairment require the services of sign language interpreters, but the university does not have many lecturers in these areas. As participant AR1 explained, the situation "becomes a challenge [because] getting money to train experts in the area is not an easy thing". Participant AR2 reinforced the views of ARI by asking and answering a rhetorical question: "now how many resource persons do we have? They are not many. So that's a challenge. Personnel". These views may indicate the willingness on the part of the university's senior leaders to have more personnel but there are difficulties finding qualified staff. Other participants also made reference to issues relating to human resource as illustrated by (AR6):

> *… If the educational needs of all categories of these people are to be catered for then what is relevant is that we should also have people who are trained in various areas. And that will require a huge capital outlay that will come from the university. But if there is that commitment … we can improve…*

Although, the draft policy of PUA indicates that an adequate and qualified pool of specialists and professionals such as oral and sign language interpreters, readers, note-takers, scribes for courses and academic activities, readers, lab assistants, and similar support service personnel shall be recruited to ensure effective service delivery, these professionals and specialists are either inadequate or not available.

Two participants – one staff and one student - also described the qualities that are expected from resource persons, specialists and professionals. They noted qualities and characteristics such as in-depth knowledge, tolerance, acceptance, dedication, selflessness, passion and loyalty. Participant AR2 emphasised "… Special Education, you need to have patience". … Participant ARS2 had this to add:

> *…well-trained resource persons who will understand, be ready to sacrifice and who are prepared to work with persons with disability. You know it's not anybody who can just come and say I want to work with persons with disability. It's someone who is very devoted. Someone who has the commitment and [is] ready to sacrifice. If we lack some of these key individuals in our lives, they will hinder the kind of enjoyment we want to have on campus.* (ASR1)

To deal with the human resource challenges, participants suggested the need to engage additional staff; build the capacity of existing staff through further and continuing education, exchange programs and in-service training; and, recognise staff effort. Participant AR5 emphasised that "sometimes the pressure during an examination… They have to transcribe a whole lot of scripts. They are a bit under-staffed". Similarly, participant AR4 indicated that "… the improvement can come when the capacity of the personnel is built to the fullest so that the place is resourced with personnel and everybody knows what to do". Participant AR3 concurred and added:

> **…** *we have some doing their PhDs. Probably, so we need to continue sharpening their skills through continuous professional development programs. … And we need to ensure that some in-service programs are given to them to assist them [DSU staff] to be efficient in the use of those machines [modern equipment and state-of-the-art-devices].* (AR3)

Participant AR7 brought up the issue of the demanding nature of the job of the disability support staff and the need for various forms of staff motivation programs as follows:

> *…and then incentives for the staff because the work is so much demanding. Sometimes, you come very early. A quiz is organised at 5:30 am, 6:30 am,*

> *staff would have to come [and conduct the quiz] … And there can be exchange programs. The University can sponsor a staff to go outside and then work in one facility like that and then come with more experience to come and build on the Centre. …* (AR7)

The interview and the document data reveal that though the university employed trained professionals, specialists and experts to provide specialised services for students with disability, these trained professionals are inadequate in number. The need for developing the skills of staff through continuous professional development programs and staff motivation have been identified. The participants alluded to the enormous investment that may go into the training of professionals in the field. In addition, people with the right professional and personal qualities must be willing to avail themselves of training and must be committed to working with students with disability.

4.4.2.6 Teaching and Learning

The use of appropriate teaching methodologies is essential for the academic achievements of students with disability in higher education. The learning success of students with disability in higher education also requires making adequate provision for teaching.

Participants reported that some lecturers employ every acceptable teaching technique and adaptation to ensure that students with vision impairment grasped the important concepts being taught, and also encourage students to disclose their exceptional learning needs so they can provide the required attention and assistance. However, some other lecturers show PowerPoint slides and do calculations without explanations. Some lecturers do not have the knowledge and skills for handling and/or supporting students with disability in their classrooms. While some lecturers duly recognised the presence of, and paid attention to students with disability in their class; some others were unmindful of their attendance. As staff participant AR4 put it "…some lecturers also teach in a manner that indicates that they are oblivious of students with disability in their class". Participants made reference to issues relating to teaching and learning as illustrated by:

> *The lecturers, I don't know the various adaptations they use. But for example, if you're in my class I make sure that I don't talk fast, I talk audibly. If I'm writing, I write legibly for the students to see. Always I make sure the students understand that if they have any concern or if they don't understand anything… If I deliver about 20 minutes, I give 10 or 15 minutes to them to ask questions for clarifications. And I also tell them that if you have any unique need, you let me know so that I know how to help you. …* (AR5)

> *Universal Design for Learning, I would say yes and no. …in the sense that from my interactions with some of the students, I mean the visually impaired, they have their own challenges … from various lectures they do attend. Some, they say, a particular lecturer would try all modalities in order for them to have good information. Some will teach and it looks as if their focus is on the supposedly normal students. … generally, we haven't yet got there where … the teaching staff all know what it takes to help somebody who is disabled in their class. So, with this particular UDL thing, we haven't got there yet.* (AR7)

Participant AR7 provided another example of exclusionary teaching practice when noting that some lecturers write words on the board and point at them forgetting to say them in the hearing of students with vision impairment. The participant, therefore, concluded that because of these reports from students, it is essential to educate the teaching staff to make them aware and well-informed on issues relating to teaching students with disability, particularly, students with vision impairment.

Student participant ARS4 added that attendance at some lectures was merely showing your physical presence; no knowledge whatsoever is acquired, which affects their academic achievements. Specifically, the participant said:

> *…in respect to academics, there are some courses that when you attend the lecture, … it's as if you are only there; you are not getting anything at all because of the nature of the courses. Actually, you cannot blame the lecturer, you cannot blame anyone for that... For example, a course which I took in Level 200 [second year], Educational Statistics. When you go, sometimes they are only calculating data and drawing tables on [a] maker-board. It looks as if you are just in the class because you are supposed to be there, and you are not getting anything at all. Some of those few things too disturb our academic progress sometimes.* (ARS4)

Staff participant AR6 explained that, when new lecturers are recruited orientation workshops are organised for them in university teaching, assessment and many other related pertinent matters; however, these workshops do not capture issues regarding students with disability. Though efforts are being made to include disability issues in these workshops, it is yet to materialise. As a result, some of the lecturers are unaware of how to support students with disability through their teaching and assessment practices. A review of the strategic plan of PUA revealed the intention to provide training programs on teaching and learning skills for faculty staff to enable them to adequately respond to the needs of students, including those with special needs (p. 12).

Student participant ARS3 indicated that some lecturers have no knowledge of special educational needs education and issues concerning students with disability and this influences their methods of delivery in class. Specifically:

> *So, when we talk of academics, some lecturers, they don't know anything about special education ... So, when you're in their lecture theatre, if you don't draw their attention that you are there… so whenever, he is writing something on the board or he is projecting something, [and] he should say it for you to take note of it or record, they will not do it.* (ARS3)

Both AR7 and ARS3 proposed that lecturers teaching students with disability, particularly students with vision impairment should receive training in how to support these students. Specifically:

> *I think there can be something like a workshop for all the lecturers who take us in most of our courses. We don't do all the programs here, so they can't do it for all the lecturers. But especially the programs we do here, they can organise workshops for our lecturers so that they know how to handle us if we take their courses.* (ARS3)

A staff participant also reported indifference towards, and lack of interest in, issues concerning students with disability from students without disability and lecturers. As a result, these lecturers are unaware of what goes on in the disability support unit and the facilities and services that the unit offers. Specifically:

> *One funny aspect is one time when we're writing exams; I decided to go and collect the questions for the visually impaired. You know, we collect it and braille it for them. One lecturer, funny enough, asked me "you're now asking for the question, when will you sent it to Akropong?" (You know, Akropong School for the Blind). So, I said, Sir, we have all the facilities here. Ignorance! So, he said "oh I see, that's fine. I'll come and visit you". But he never came. These are some of the things.* (AR2)

From the above responses, it is evident that, there are gaps in appropriate teaching strategies for students with disability even though some lecturers adopt the right approaches to ensure students' learning. The barriers to including students with disability include lecturers' attitudes, approaches to teaching, and teacher knowledge. Some participants, therefore, suggested the need for orientation programs, workshops and training for the teaching staff on teaching, assessment and other related issues, particularly for lecturers without any background in special needs education and related fields.

4.4.2.7 Funding

Another important issue that emerged from the data is levels of funding. Participants explained the various areas where finances are required to ensure success and, therefore, identified insufficient money as a major challenge to successful inclusion. They explained that money is required for retrofitting old buildings and other facilities to make them disability-friendly; to procure state-of-the-art equipment, materials, software and assistive devices; and provide training for teaching staff so that they can ensure students' success in the learning environment. Some participants referred to these financial challenges that are illustrated by the following responses:

> *And then finance. We need money to get a whole lot of equipment and materials for them. The computers have been there for some time. We need money to get new ones for them - modern and sophisticated ones … The software, new ones have come, but we need money to buy them. Money too is a hindrance to a full implementation or successful implementation of the IE policy. … But the old buildings too we need money if we want to make them disability-friendly. That's why I talked about funds. We need money. …* (AR2)

> *…infrastructure in our university didn't take into consideration the physically challenged ... So, it requires money to renovate existing facilities to cater for the disabled people like students. So, one challenge is getting money to renovate [and] provide facilities for them. And getting money to train experts in the area is not an easy thing. That aside, we also need … braille and other … specialist materials that will help them. We also need space. …if you want to establish any clinic that will, especially, focus on helping disabled students to learn well, to enable them to enjoy social life among themselves, we need space and that all boils down to also money. (*AR1)

Other participants indicated the need for the university to show commitment to investing in the education of students with disability and to be proactive in providing for their educational needs. They also noted the lack of budgetary allocation, duty vehicle [official vehicle allocated to the DSU] and office imprest[8] for the disability support unit. The disability office staff would have to use their own money for transportation from one campus to another to make calls in their effort to locate examination/quiz venues, and to collect question papers for students with disability waiting to write their examination at the Centre. Five out of the seven staff participants referred to funding and financial issues in line with this comment by AR6:

[8] Office imprest is a fund meant to pay for small items and routine expenditures.

> *What I'm saying is that if the university will make an allowance for the fact that the Centre needs such a financial push… all those things that they need to ensure that they have … there must be financial provision for that. … they must make sure that the centre is well positioned to take care of all these differences. … And also, to make sure that this Centre is well-resourced. And we can expand the scope by bringing in those who are hearing impaired, those who have other problems… Because all these will have cost implications.*

Participant AR6 explained a situation where equipment such as printers and braille embossers were faulty and because of lack of funds or budgetary allocation to the Centre, this equipment could not be repaired. Some of the equipment were not serviced since they were procured and when they became faulty, financial arrangements were not in place for them to be repaired. On the day of this interview, there was no printer in working condition – all the printers at the DSU were faulty. Specifically, AR6 noted:

> *The problem has to do with the setup, the university system. … The equipment there since they bought them, if they are faulty, they will tell you to go and call the university workers. If they come, they will walk around and go away. As at now, we don't have printers. All the printers are faulty. ... A Centre like that should have a budget; should have imprest to run the place.* (AR6)

> *The truth is most of us are financially not sound. Probably your family may not really believe and have the trust that they can invest in you to become a better person. So, the commitment wouldn't be there. The Ghanaian society… the Ghanaian perception towards persons with disability... Now if you are willing to come to the university and there are no funds, it becomes difficult. So, if the university subsidises the fees to 50%, it will motivate a lot of students who qualify, and are sitting at home to come.* (ARS1)

The draft disability policy of PUA indicates that a fund specifically dedicated to scholarships for students with disability shall be established; however, it was evident that PUA had not yet established a scholarship fund solely dedicated to students with disability.

The perspectives of participants revealed that funds limit the university in its efforts to adequately provide for students with disability. It appears financial challenges stand in the way of retrofitting old buildings, which are not disability-friendly; further education and professional training of existing staff; and procurement of adequate and appropriate equipment, teaching and learning materials. Financial constraints hinder access and participation of persons with disability in higher education.

4.4.2.8 Quality and Effectiveness of Academic Support Services

Participants' perspective on the effectiveness of academic support services was sought primarily within the efficacy of the support offered by the DSU and how this might enhance the academic achievements of students with disability. The six staff participants who shared their views noted that the DSU is equipped with both human and material resources to provide for the needs of students with disability to the greatest extent possible. Some of the staff participants were quick to add that because it is a human institution, the available support cannot be 'one hundred percent' – they are constrained by staff capacity, equipment, and resources. Undefined administrative structure or unclear lines of reporting and lack of commitment of senior management were also identified as problematic. Participant AR6 concurred and added that: "… they don't have serious problems with the support services that they have. … What they have is accessible to them. They [students with disability] have problems, but at least they're making do with the little they have". Additionally, two other staff participants referred to service quality:

> *If you look at the facilities that the university is able to provide for them, I think we're doing well, but there's more room for improvement. We want to do our best. Like the modern ones and the sophisticated machines, I referred to so that the dependency will reduce.* (AR2)

> *Well, I really can't tell how effective because I've not really done any evaluation. … Because to be able to come chest out to say that, I have to really do some research to find out what is happening on the ground. But from the little I see; the students say they're very helpful; they are able to braille their materials for them. The only thing is that the number of staff that they have is not enough so sometimes, there is a little delay in transcribing the scripts and the scripts getting to the lecturers because of their staff strength. But relatively I can say that they are doing a good job.* (AR5)

Participant AR6 explained that the challenges associated with the operation of the DSU and the support services it delivered to students with disability emanated from issues such as an unclear line of reporting and channel of communication and the lukewarm attitude or indifference of management. It is not clear which section of the university exercises direct oversight responsibility for the DSU and the division it should directly report to. The participant also has some reservations with staffing because most of the staff are personnel from the library and only three are captured under the Faculty of Education. Specifically, the participant said:

> *It's only every year the Vice-Chancellor will write to the Dean through the Provost to get somebody whose academic background is related to that thing [disability] so that the person could be appointed as the coordinator. So, on paper that unit or the centre, we don't even know whether it is under the Faculty of Education or the College of Education or it is under the library. In terms of space, we're with the library. .... There is everything wrong with the setup, the way things are.* (AR6)

The following incident reported by AR6 highlighted the university senior management's lack of commitment towards issues concerning the DSU and students with disability.

> *It's like the woman [the former coordinator] wrote a disability policy, to make it [the DSU] a directorate. When I took over, I saw it in the files and read it, and I say 'whoa' this is very good, so I tried to follow it up with the VC [vice-chancellor]. … So, when I went there, the secretary told me that there is a copy, and the VC is still considering it. … that was last year [August 2017]… I booked an appointment, and they wrote and said that she [the secretary] was going to check for a date that the man [the VC] will be available so that I could meet him. … So, after two weeks, she said the man did not give her any date. Another two weeks I went there, it was after about two months I went there and met her. Immediately she saw me outside there waiting, sitting at the entrance of the VC's office, she said: "Sir, the man [the VC] said he would call you that he has your number". If tomorrow that he will call me, I'm still waiting. That really put me off.* (AR6)

Student participants ascribed various levels of effectiveness to the services that they receive from the DSU. These levels of effectiveness ranged from good to average with an expression of dissatisfaction in most of the responses. These dissatisfactions are primarily due to inadequate facilities, equipment, and materials; inadequate specialists, professionals, or resource persons; and lack of adequate supervision and monitoring to ensure appropriate behaviour in the ICT laboratory allocated to the students with physical challenge. Most of these views are in line with those shared by staff participants. Student participants views are illustrated by ARS6:

> *It's very good, but there is something that I can say about that place. Other people who are not physically-challenge or have no form of disability come there to disturb. They won't come there to learn; they come there to watch movies or do discussions with their girlfriends or something of that sort.*

Students unanimously indicated that the support services provided by the DSU enhance their academic pursuits in the university though they are insufficient. Participant ARS1 noted that

"…as a law student I'm always with the computer. I'm always with the internet, and the Centre has some computers which are connected to the internet, so I'm able to access information, read…". Similarly, participant ARS3 indicated that the support and the services of the DSU enable them "… to also partake in the curriculum of the school". Likewise, participant ARS2 submitted that "… it facilitates our academic work, and it also gives us the opportunity to be able to study and compete with our colleagues". ARS4 stated that "… ICT training, for instance, has helped me to be able to use some basic research tools on the internet, so as to look for information that would help me in doing all my assignments …". Participant ARS5 mentioned the situation where you are allowed to bring a friend to the ICT laboratory to assist you with your assignment. ARS6 observed that "sometimes you come there and do some kind of research using computers, so it helps".

Although the draft disability policy of PUA indicates that reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures shall be made when appropriate to prevent discrimination, it places a caveat on this, viz, except when the Advisory Board has demonstrated that intended accommodations, services, or modifications would not lead to fundamental changes and create undue administrative and financial pressures. This provision in the draft policy might overshadow the extent and effectiveness of support services being provided so as to avoid undue administrative and financial pressures. The draft disability policy made adequate provisions for persons with disability; however, some were achieved, and others were not.

The perspectives of participants demonstrated that the support services delivered by the DSU in PUA are limited by issues such as inadequate human and material resources; and weak monitoring and supervision of students' activities in the ICT laboratory dedicated to students with physical challenge, thus, the varied opinions of service effectiveness. In addition, the senior management of the university put less premium on handling issues concerning students with disability. This situation was demonstrated, for instance, by the VC's hesitation to have a discussion with AR6 regarding the draft disability policy of PUA, and the undefined administrative structure of the DSU. Student participants also reported that the support services they receive from the DSU positively impact their academic attainments, even though these services are not up to the standard expected.

4.4.3 Social Inclusion

The section explores how students with disability are blended into the social milieu of the university. It also includes the thoughts and behaviours of the university community towards students with disability and issues concerning them. The section reports how the university community frames disability. The section, therefore, focuses on social engagement, attitudes and social construction of disability.

4.4.3.1 Social Engagement

This sub-section looks at the engagement of students with disability in social activities. Participants described the various ways students with disability were involved in social activities, the opportunities and the provisions available and factors that hinder their participation. The issues participants talked about included sports and games; SRC week activities and hall week celebrations; and student politics.

4.4.3.1.1 Sports and Games

Staff participants reported that students with disability actively participate in inter-halls and inter-university sports and games activities, for example, Ghana University Sports Association (GUSA) games. The GUSA games make provision for students with disability to be involved in inter-university games. Students with disability fully participate in training and camping activities. The students truly delighted and appreciated both the social, physical and other benefits associated with the sports and games activities. Three out of the seven staff participants referred to this opportunity with AR2's response being representative of their thoughts:

> *…we have disability sports mostly for the visually impaired. They are part of it, and they feel happy. They enjoy a lot when they're doing camping. When the students go on vacation, they will be retained [stay on campus for training], and they enjoy a lot because they will get some few coins [allowance] and then the pleasure because they are engaging in sporting activities in the university.* (AR2)

Contrary to this view, student participants explained that their participation in sports and games was ineffective because participation was limited to only one sporting activity, which is called goalball. The facilities needed to play goalball were not available in PUA and had to be borrowed from another sister university. Other sporting and games facilities and equipment that would have allowed them to engage in additional sporting activities are also not available. In addition, students with disability were not part of the annual university games, even involvement in the GUSA games was just a recent development. Student participants,

therefore, noted that to fully engage in sporting and games activities the university would have to provide the required equipment and facilities. Four out of six student participants shared similar views as illustrated by excerpts from ARS3's transcripts:

> *… Yes, for games, we do participate in games, but it is not effective. Currently, we have only one sporting discipline that we do participate, and that's the goalball. …now we are having a court that we can play the goalball, but even the ball, we don't have them. So, how can we train? ... We do borrow them from our sister schools. Like the University…, they have the facilities. … So, I think they have to provide us with the facilities that can aid us to participate in the sporting disciplines.*

4.4.3.1.2 SRC Activities and Hall Week Celebrations

Four staff participants noted that students are fully engaged in SRC and Hall Week celebration activities. During Hall Week celebrations, some students with disability are fully dressed in the paraphernalia of their respective halls of affiliation and involve themselves in whatever event is taking place. Four out of the six student participants confirmed this report by narrating how they have engaged in SRC activities such as hall week celebrations and other SRC programs. A student participant further noted that the SRC has recently organised a program called 'Touching Lives' exclusively for students with disability on campus to showcase their abilities, talents and endowments after which there "was some small celebration" (ARS5). Eight out of the thirteen participants made reference to students' involvement in these activities as illustrated by:

> *They are involved in hall week celebrations. When they are having their hall week, you see some of them clad in whatever dress they want to go with at the hall level. So, I will say that one too is good. They are not left out.* (AR7)

> *Yeah, I've been participating. … I participate with friends. We go out there, we just walk around, just take a few strolls. A few gossips. A bit of gossip... Talk, talk, talk. Maybe get some drinks. Yeah, and no one hinders you. It's about interest. It is about participating in activities.* (ARS2)

Student participant ARS2 added a new dimension by narrating how he even competed for and won laurels for the hall of affiliation and the university throughout his four-year undergraduate study. The participant explained that he represented his hall of affiliation in inter-hall quiz competitions and the university at the inter-tertiary level and his two-member team won the ultimate prize for the university. "There was a program known as 'Knowing Africa'. It was an inter-tertiary quiz competition, and I represented the University. We were two, and we won

at the final. [PUA] won!" The participant also reported participating in 'What Do You Know' programs. At the hall level, his two-member team won the first prize on three occasions and was a runner up once. "Yeah, there was only one occasion that we were second, the rest we have been first, first, first". He noted that, though there are obstructions such as some persons attempting to talk you out of participation, the university is prepared to give inspiration and support.

Student participant ARS4 reported that the drive and/or enthusiasm to participate in social activities was generated when the DSU organised orientation program for commencing students on issues relating to life on campus. They were sensitised to participate in the social life of the university without concentrating on their academic work only. Specifically:

> *… They give you some kind of insight as to how the University is a community. Like, what you should do, what you shouldn't do, how you should participate. And so that has given most of us the greater motivation to participate in social activities and other things that might be happening in the university campus apart from the academic aspect. For example, participating in various activities of our associations, talking of SRC, talking of the various groups on campus, talking of hall activities and faculty gatherings and a lot of other activities. …Like the SRC week celebration. …Yes, going to witness debate and other things; going for conferences and talks. And I participate in all those ones.* (ARS4)

Nevertheless, the remaining two student participants expressed reservations and dissatisfaction regarding the opportunities available for students with disability to meaningfully engage and participate in social activities. They described their social engagement as non-existent. They reasoned that students with disability were not involved in the planning process of these programs and those who planned the program of activities failed to consider the peculiar needs of these individuals. As a result, they are unable to participate in the activities lined up for the celebrations. These views are illustrated by:

> *It is zero. It is zero. I mean you can infer all these things. The things I've spoken about no way affect hall week. Hall week, everything will be drawn by the halls, and they won't factor persons with disabilities in it. So, the activities you are unable to participate. Cooking competition you are not part. They will bring an artist, and you can't go and stand there and be dancing with such people. Somebody will push you somewhere. … a lot of activities we are not factored in. The centre as it stands now is equipped and geared towards academics, education — nothing more, nothing less. So, with social, it is zero.* (ARS1)

On the issue of SRC positions, participant ARS3 stated "well, SRC positions, since I came to this school, I have seen only one visually impaired going for the SRC position. … No, he didn't win".

An interesting narrative from student participant ARS3 demonstrated that students with disability had to insist to be able to show their ability. Hence, ARS3, suggested the need for resource persons to work out opportunities for students with disability by introducing them at programs to gain acceptance and opportunity to fully participate in these activities. These platforms can be used to exhibit their numerous talents. Specifically:

> *Well, when it comes to social … they have to work towards that. Because, since I came to this school … we don't usually partake in these programs. I once attended a program. It was a hall week celebration. So, they were doing a rapping competition. So, they are supposed to select ten people for the competition; I told them I could do it, but they were doubting. "Oh no. How can somebody with disability do this?" So, they decided to add me, making eleven, so I will be a surplus to the list. …if I am not able to do the thing, then they will use the 10 participants. So, I proved to them despite my challenge I can do it, and in fact, I did well. ... So, many people don't know this: socially, we have numerous talents that we can showcase, but they don't believe that we can do it.* (ARS3)

4.4.3.1.3 Student Politics

Participants ARS2 and ARS6 described how they occupied SRC and university-wide positions by either election or appointment, which is primarily based on personal interest and/or desire and individual's personality. These views are illustrated by ARS2 and ARS6:

> *But, apart from that for contesting election … we have a few of us who have occupied certain positions before. Well, I was part of the SRC, I was one of the Judiciary Board members of the SRC. I went for vetting, and I was picked, and some of us too have occupied certain positions like SRC rep.* (ARS2)

> *In general, personally, I could also say that my people that I move with see me as able person. Because if you look at the SRC level, I was the Secretary for the Library Committee and currently at the Editorial Board, I am the secretary too. Meaning for the university SRC magazine 2017/2018 we are going to make sure that magazine is out. I was appointed by the SRC president. So, I don't really see that they see me as somebody who is physically challenged… they take me as a normal being.* (ARS6)

The draft disability policy of PUA acknowledges the direct involvement of persons with disability in the decision-making process, particularly participation in formulating policies that directly affect them. Although two students were members of student boards and one was also a secretary to a committee, there was no other evidence of this involvement.

The discourses above indicated that experiences for individual students with disability differ tremendously. While some were fully engaged based on interest and personality type, others needed support and opportunities to be created for them to participate and engage. Also, facilities and equipment that will enable the engagement of students in certain activities, for example, sports and games are either woefully inadequate or non-available.

4.4.3.2 Attitudes

Participants described various forms of positive and negative attitudes towards students with disability. The cases of positive attitudes explained by few participants comprised acceptance, support and respect for difference and the university's policy of equal opportunity. The various forms of negative attitude participants described can be grouped into three categories as mindsets and preconceptions; offensive comments and remarks; and unacceptable actions and behaviours.

4.4.3.2.1 Positive attitudes

Staff participants described how peers support students with disability. The forms of peer support referred to include: reading books for students with vision impairment to record; and guiding students with vision impairment to move around and access facilities, such as climbing stairs. The peer support also includes pushing wheel-chair users and also helping them to access high rise buildings. Participant AR7 reported that "attitudes of the regular students; sometimes, I would say is more positive than the negative. … because, truly speaking in [PUA], many regular students give them positive support, their attitudes are not too bad". A staff participant, AR2, explained the positive attitude towards students with disability in terms of staff adherence to the university policy of non-discrimination. The preferential treatment given to them during registration by staff was also alluded to AR2. This privilege can take the form of promptly attending to students with disability instead of requiring them to join a long queue. The draft disability policy of PUA indicates that students with disability shall be given priority in course registration and AR2 reported that this aspect of the policy was enacted. However, the response suggest compliance rather than a genuine desire to support students with disability:

> *Oh staff, no. There's no way you can discriminate against them if you're staff. Because if you're reported, the laws will deal with you. You cannot discriminate against them. They welcome them. When it comes to registration of courses and these things, they do theirs first. When you move in with your wheelchair and the white cane, they call you and do it for you, and you go. They are considered. Somebody said the white cane doesn't join queues.* (AR2)

Another participant observed that the positive attitude of staff emanates from the values upheld by the university, respect for difference and knowledge in Special Education, which is offered as a program in one of the faculties. The staff of the faculty is aware that students have diverse needs that must be respected.

> *I mean the University as an inclusive university recognises everybody's ability, so it does it's best to ensure that they are assisted. Within the faculty, because of the existence of the Special Education program, my staff know that these are people who have special needs so they must be assisted. So, we have tried to assist them in every way. So, I think that it's quite positive than negative in terms of the education given. Regarding the negative, I'm yet to come across it. It is yet to be reported to me.* (AR3)

One student participant reported experiencing a relationship characterised by respect and recognition of abilities from most colleagues and lecturers. The positive attitudes shown by peers and colleagues may stem from the positions held by the student with disability in the university. The participant stated that "I don't experience any negative attitude. Most of my lecturers, they love me, and I also love them. … In general, … I could also say that my people that I move with see me as an able person" (ARS6).

4.4.3.2.2 Negative Attitudes

As stated earlier, negative attitudes reported by participants are grouped into three categories: mindsets and preconceptions; offensive comments and remarks and unacceptable actions and behaviours.

4.4.3.2.2.1 Mindsets and preconceptions

Mindsets and preconceptions include stereotypes, negative perceptions, and thoughts, weird assertions, which are deep-rooted in the Ghanaian culture (ARS2 & ARS4). A staff participant observed that the university is a human organisation made up of diverse categories of people; therefore, the demonstration of certain unacceptable behaviours towards certain groups or class of individuals is inevitable (AR6). Basically, these behaviours originate from our beliefs and

value systems that are transferred from the larger society into the university system. These include rebuffs, uncertainties and misgivings regarding the competencies, abilities and skills of individuals, particularly, students with disability.

A student participant also said that some individuals in the university community have never interacted with persons with vision impairment, and this engender negative perceptions towards persons with disability. "You know some people… this is the first time they've come into contact with persons with vision impairment so, sometimes they have their own stereotypes, they have their own thoughts" (ARS2). The participant also believed that because of these misconceptions, some lecturers see students with disability as creating additional work for them in the classroom. "… Some of the lecturers when they see you in class, maybe that's their first time … they have their own thinking. They think that you are just coming to be a burden to them". When some of these lecturers give out certain learning materials to the class and students with vision impairment also follow-up to collect theirs, they react as if students with vision impairment are "a bother, and you are worrying them" (ARS2).

Five out of the six student participants reported that in their experience, the general perception is that people with disability are useless and are societal burdens undeserving of any form of assistance. Participant ARS4, therefore, observed that though it appears society is making efforts to avert stigmatisation and stereotyping of individuals with disability, these behaviours are still entrenched, even in the university system. Five of the six student participants referred to this situation as illustrated by a quote from ARS4:

> *We have some lecturers … who hold the notion that as a person with disability, you cannot do what is required. …sometimes, they tend to sympathise or tend to ignore ... I think that is really very dangerous. …And it's like the stigma or that kind of social stereotypes we are all trying to prevent is never ending anytime soon. … And some of them also have some weird assertions. And we all know that in the Ghanaian society, there is this problem of how society views people with disability in general. … Some of them still think: "after all, what are you doing here [in the university]?" They do not see the need for you to be here. And so, they will not give you that worth as it is supposed to be.*

Participants discussed the perception that students with disability are persistently discontented and the influence this has on how they are sometimes received by office staff.

> *Sometimes when you have a disability, you go to an office the perception is: "you guys you are always complaining about everything". People see us to*

> *always be in need of something so when you sometimes go the welcoming isn't there. … Some of the offices you enter, and the reception is bad.* (ARS1)

Staff participant AR7 confirmed this view by adding that "so, some petty, petty attitudes are there. Sometimes, they will go to a particular office, and the reception wouldn't be good".

4.4.3.2.2.2 Offensive comments and remarks

Offensive comments and remarks refer to negative statements that people made, or views directed towards students with disability on campus. Participants reported unfounded generalisations; complaints of inquisitiveness; over curiosity; and lecturers showing disrespect in the way they talk to students with disability.

Staff participant AR4 explained that people make unpleasant remarks with respect to matters regarding disability. They undermine the capabilities of students with disability to reach self-actualisation and succeed in life. The participant gave an example of an offensive comment made by a lecturer:

> *People express, you know, sympathy instead of empathy. They make comments that are quite offensive on disability issues and so on. …Example, there was one lecturer, who said that for individuals with disability, there is no way that they can progress in life. You see. It's a very unfortunate comment he made. But I don't know whether he was joking or not.* (AR4)

Student participants also said people, including their colleagues without disability, "try to be so inquisitive by asking … all manner of questions. Funny, funny questions" (ARS2) when they see students with disability. Some of these pointless and irrelevant questions have to do with undermining the ability of students with disability to attend lectures, study and access facilities on campus. Three out of the six student participants referred to these types of questions including ARS3:

> *…one can be when we are going for lectures, some will tell you: Ei, how can you learn? So, when the lecturer is talking, how can you listen? But, talking we listen with our ears, right. So, you have to take note. So, they ask certain questions which need no answer. Rhetorical questions! So, there are a lot. Maybe when we talk of mobility on campus: Ei, how can you go to the lecture theatre, how can you go to your hostel? How can you…? A whole lot.*

ARS3 noted that "…some people... I think are adamant. They don't want to enquire to know more. So, they always draw their conclusion: oh, this person is visually impaired so; therefore, he can't learn with me; he can't walk with me …". In support of this view, Participant AR2

gave an instance where, unlike sighted students, if one student with disability behaves in a particular manner, they generalise it to include all students with disability. These views are illustrated by:

> *… That generalisation is wrong. "As for the blind, they are inquisitive." Why not say, Kwame [name of a male born on Saturday] is inquisitive? So, if you have a sighted who is being inquisitive, do you say: "the sighted are inquisitive?" You will not say that; you'll mention the person's name. So, they are also human beings. It is one person who has done that. So, call that person's name and say he is inquisitive. Don't generalise.* (AR2)

Participant AR7 reported that some lecturers show disrespect in the manner in which they communicate with persons with disability. The participant said "**…** and sometimes, even some lecturers, the way [how] they talk to them [students with disability] …" (AR7). The statement depicted the unacceptable manner some lecturers talk to students with disability, which can be frustrating. These utterances sometimes serve as a demotivation and discouragement and stop students with disability from participating in certain activities (ARS2).

4.4.3.2.2.3 Actions and Behaviours

This third category of attitudes is demonstrated via inappropriate ways people act or behave towards students with disability on campus. Participants reported some lecturers' impatience in dealing with students with disability; insensitivity to wheelchair users' inability to access high rise lecture theatres; delay in returning marked scripts; and indifference towards the affairs of students with disability. Participants also described behaviours such as avoidance, isolation or disassociation; offering support under duress; teasing; and being physical - struggling with students with disability for classroom space and seats. Other issues raised were the general office staff's refusal or unwillingness to take custody of braille scripts of students with vision impairment; reluctance of some drivers to exercise restraint for students with vision impairment to cross the roads on campus; unacceptable treatments received from some workers at the halls of residence; and poor relational skills and abilities of traders and taxi drivers on campus.

Staff participants described how some students without disability seek to avoid students with disability – not wanting to study together and/or share residential accommodation. For instance, staff participant AR2 stated that "… Some will not even want to mingle with the disabled. Maybe they don't want to be in the same study group. Some may not even want to be in the same room with these people". Similarly, participant AR4 indicated that:

> *I heard one student saying: "As for me I will not go near him. If you go near, the student will tell you to help him". You understand it? That means he is avoiding that student so that he will not ask him to assist him. And then, others also try to avoid the company of such individuals. Some students will not like to offer help, so they will try to avoid such individuals.* (AR4)

Student participant ARS4 confirmed these assertions and added that demonstrating their talents, skills, abilities and so on does not convince most of their colleagues without disability to establish relationship with them. Because their peers sometimes provide support under compulsion and/or coercion, they sometimes get wounded in the process. Specifically:

> *As a person with visual impairment, sometimes, you are moving, and maybe you get off the right road, and you are not able to follow the lane very well. Someone would see you but … would not wish to come to help or something but they will rather prefer to stand aside and say someone rather helps. And that is a big problem. Sometimes, you may even have some coming to your aid, but because it is not their pleasure, they may just do anything at all, and you may get hurt in the process.* (ARS4)

Participant ARS1 was of the view that taxi drivers and traders on campus have considerable difficulty relating to students with disability. "There is a major problem in relating to such people, taxi drivers, traders when you go to the market. Some are mainly as a result of the level of illiteracy. They don't know how to relate to persons with disability" (ARS1). The participant ascribed relational problems on the part of students without disability to an ineffective orientation of students when they first reported to the university as commencing students.

Student participant ARS5 explained that some lecturers are insensitive when it becomes critical to relocate the venues of lectures so that wheelchair users can attend and also benefit. The participant narrated an incident where a physically challenged student, who could not climb the stairs to attend lectures, was waiting near the stairs on the ground floor when he saw the lecturer who was going to deliver/teach at the lecture he was supposed to attend passing by. Though he explained to the lecturer his problem of inability to access the lecture hall because of his physical disability, the lecturer replied that the venue of the lecture could not be relocated because of him alone. However, the draft policy indicates that if the university is not able to provide access to a building, measures shall be implemented to change classroom location, and schedules, provide temporary ramps, and/or alternate routing. Some lecturers seemed not to implement this provision.

Another form of insensitivity and uncaring behaviours on the part of students without disability is manifested in pushing and/or struggling with students who are physically challenged for access to, and seating in, the lecture halls. According to participant ARS5, she had been pushed, walked over and struggled to get up, at least three times. This incidence usually occurs when students are struggling to access the lecture hall and secure a place. This behaviour is narrated by participant ARS5 as follows:

> *The most annoying part and the difficult part is those of us who are challenged… In this university, we have a few facilities, especially the lecture theatres. … We have to wait for them outside to close before we enter. So, as they close [finish the lecture] and we are rushing to enter, those of us that are physically challenged, they turn to push us, and we fall down, and they run on you and go and sit down. I'm a victim. Sometimes, some of our friends will try to secure a place for you to come and sit down but the able students will decide to come and take the place from you, and you have no other option, either to stand or those who have a seat will allow you to pair with them.*

The student participant explained further that the entrance to the lecture theatre is not big and because her lower limbs are not strong, she will be pushed over. And "in the process of struggling, your leg could also be trapped by other students' legs and you fall down. Because getting up becomes hard, all the seats might have been already occupied before you rise from the ground".

The review of the draft disability policy revealed provisions for mandatory sensitisation training on disability for all newly recruited faculty, administrative and professional staff of the university, including hospital, clinic, police, fire service personnel, and other members of the university community. In addition, training was to be provided to all current staff of the university community. However, this mandatory training was not evident in the data.

The discourses have shown that positive attitudes are minimal; however, the negative ones are quite extensive and pervasive. Reported instances of negative attitudes towards students with disability cut across the whole university community, coming from students without disability, lecturers, professionals, resource persons, administrators and office staff, and workers at the halls of residence, drivers and traders on campus. These attitudes are widespread ranging from mindsets, offensive verbal utterances to bad treatments and behaviours. Some negative attitudes are disability specific. The data presented in this section has provided evidence of

people's attitudes to disability, but this is also evident in the way that people constructed disability.

4.4.3.3 Construction of Disability

This sub-section explores participants' framing of disability. Knowing participants' perspectives and understanding of disability is fundamental to data analysis and interpretation. The meaning they construct may shape their perceptions, thoughts, actions and attitudes towards students with disability, and may also influence issues regarding creating access and opportunities for persons with disability to participate effectively in higher education.

Eleven out of the 13 participants in PUA conceived disability in terms of a person's inability to function and perform because of impairment; permanent reduction in function of an organ, structure or part of the human body; deviation from the norm; any physical, psychological or mental defect, which prevents the individual from operating as a normal person; loss of ability; physical and/or psychological challenge; inability to engage with the environment; and physical or sensory condition. The twelfth participant, a student, understood disability as an impairment due to social barriers. The thirteenth participant, a staff, explained disability in terms of both social and psychological barriers that prevent an individual in performing the functions or activities of everyday life and reduced function due to impairment; this means that the person's organ or any part of the body is either damaged or loses its function. Thus, 11 participants conceptualised disability solely as a medical condition; one participant saw it as exclusively originating from barriers in society and the last person conceived it as both social barriers and a medical condition. Specifically, 11 out of the 13 participants referred to disability as a medical condition as articulated by AR5:

> *… When we talk about disability, we're looking at deviation. Deviation either physically, neurologically, or sensory. And that deviation results in a reduction in function or can be as a result of damage or loss of a body part, its system or its organs. And that does not enable the person to engage or perform certain tasks in the same way as other people of the same age can do. … Basically, it is as a result of an impairment. That is the loss or damage of a body part, its system, organs, or its function.*

In contrast, student participant ARS2 understands disability from a solely social perspective. The participant indicated that the incidence of disability is as a result of numerous barriers constructed by society; social stereotypes and misconceptions are reflected in the design of public buildings, and environments that are inaccessible to persons with disability. These

misapprehensions also affect job opportunities available for persons with disability to the extent that when persons with disability go out to seek employment, employers focus on their disabilities rather their knowledge, skills, abilities, and capabilities. Specifically, the participant said:

> *Okay, to me, disability, I will say, it is an impairment that happens as a result of barriers in society. There are certain societal changes that have not been done. As a result, a person is unable to function in a particular way. So, in that case, the person is disabled.*
>
> *When I say social impairment, what I mean is that, the society, I mean in our Ghanaian context, certain socio-cultural barriers affect disability. Our traditional society holds various beliefs. In fact, in time past, when persons with disability [were born], we were thrown away in the forest and all that. Of course, apart from that, there are other environmental barriers in society.* … (ARS2)

Participant AR4 described disability from both a medical and a social perspective and gave the following example: … "An individual who cannot see something that is written on the board is disabled because it has been written on the board in a manner that cannot match his vision...".

Participants' perceptions indicated that the majority, 11 out of the 13, participants in PUA construct the meaning of disability within the medical or deficit model where disability is regarded as a problem owned by an individual, an impairment, deviation or difference, which could primarily be treated, cured or remedied. One student participant understood disability from the social model perspective where disability is seen as emanating from how society is structured, ordered and/or organised. The 13th participant, a staff member, perceived disability as both health condition(s) and barriers constructed by the society's failure to recognise human diversity. This perspective represents a combination of both models.

4.4.3.4 Use of Inappropriate Language

Evident in the data of PUA was the use of inappropriate language such as visually impaired, visually challenged, hearing impaired, disabled people, and disabled students. Inappropriate terminology such as 'the blind' and 'the crippled' were also used to refer to persons with vision impairment and persons with physically challenged, respectively. Similarly, some of the quotes from the interview transcripts revealed the repeated use of 'them' when referring to persons with disability. This situation represented the treatment of people with disability as

‘the other’ denoting a difference, ‘them’ and ‘us’. The use of this language is inherently discriminatory; it has the propensity to engender the feeling of ‘otherness’.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the analysed data set collected from PUA made up of interviews, document and observations. Findings have shown that knowledge of the national IE policy is minimal; however, the participants value inclusion, and are accurate in their perception of what such a policy would expect from universities as well as what the universities should do to include persons with disability successfully. Although the institutional disability policy made adequate provisions for students with disability, it cannot be fully implemented because of the lack of official approval and appropriate funding. Although the strategic plan of the university is explicit on issues of equal opportunity for all, the extent of its realisation is unclear.

From the participants’ perspective, it appears physical access posed a substantial difficulty for persons with disability, though the university has taken steps to address some of these issues. The data show that the university strives to meet the residential accommodation needs of students with disability; however, the experiences of students differ. Commuting within and between campuses is difficult for students with disability because the transport system is not disability-friendly.

PUA implements some arrangements and strategies aimed at increasing entry or admission and enrolment for persons with disability. The academic support systems in place to support students with disability once they achieve admission is somewhat commendable; still, some categories of students with disability receive minimal support in terms of access to assistive technology and examination arrangements, for example. Counselling services, particularly career counselling services, appear inadequate. Human resource issues, particularly professionals in special needs, remain a challenge and faculty members’ knowledge in dealing with disability issues is limited. These situations negatively impact the teaching and learning of students with disability.

Students reported mixed experiences of the opportunity to engage and participate – overall student engagement and participation is minimal. Negative attitudes far outweigh the positive ones affecting student’s engagement and participation. The prevalence of these negative

attitudes could emanate from the fact that the majority of the participants conceptualised disability as a deficit.

It is evident from the analysis that PUA has taken some steps to increase access and participation for persons with disability but at a slow pace. Challenges associated with physical access, academic support systems, opportunities for social engagement and attitudes revealed a disjoint between policy rhetoric and practice. Management's commitment to equity is uncertain in a situation where the institutional disability policy cannot be fully operationalised as the necessary approval through management structures is not forthcoming.

CHAPTER FIVE
PUBLIC UNIVERSITY B

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and presents the findings from the second participating university, Public University B (PUB), a young university. Eleven participants made up of six staff members and five students with disability were interviewed in this University. Staff participants were selected from the senior management of the university, heads of sections and units; student participants come from an array of undergraduate programs (see Table 5.1). The participants, therefore, had the insight into and understanding of the subject of inquiry.

Data analysis and presentation followed a similar procedure and pattern as in PUA and PUB. Two main themes emerged from the interview data. These were policy context and student experience. Perceptions on policy expectations and enactment by Ghanaian public universities and institutional policy and guidelines on disability were evident in the data as the two key ideas relating to policy. Analysis of data relating to student experience generated physical environment; support services; and social inclusion as the key subheadings. Data obtained from observation and document were also presented along with the interview data.

Table 5.1: Participant Profile PUB

S/N	Participant identifier	Type of disability	Position held/Year of study
1	BR1	NI*	Pro-vice-chancellor
2	BR2	NI	Dean of Students
3	BR3	NI	Dean of Faculty
4	BR4	NI	Head of Department
5	BR5	NI	Head, Disability Support Unit
6	BR6	NI	Staff, Disability Support Unit
7	BRS1	vision impairment	Third year
8	BRS2	vision impairment	First year
9	BRS3	vision impairment	Third year

10	BRS4	physical disability	Third year
11	BRS5	physical disability	First year

*none identified

5.2 Background and Context of PUB

PUB had its origin in teacher education at diploma level. It was established as a multi-campus public university college, with some of the campuses located in other administrative regions of Ghana, and was affiliated with an older university in the country. It became an independent public university 12 years after its establishment by an Act of Parliament and, since gaining autonomy as an accredited university, confers its own certificates, diplomas, undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.

PUB currently offers approximately 148 certificate, diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate programs in education and its related areas; such as, basic education, special and early childhood education, specific disciplines (e.g. Mathematics, Science, Languages, Social Sciences), technical, agriculture, health, fashion and hospitality education. The university uses regular, sandwich, distance learning and evening classes as modes of program delivery to service its local and international students from neighbouring countries and beyond.

PUB provides an opportunity for, at least, five categories of persons with disability to access higher education: persons with vision impairment, hearing impairment, physically challenged, cerebral palsy, and deaf-blindness.

5.3 Policy Context

This section presents data on participants' views regarding the expectations of the national inclusive education policy for public universities in Ghana and institutional policy and/or guidelines, which direct issues concerning students with disability in PUB.

5.3.1 Policy Expectations and Enactment by Ghanaian Public Universities

Data relating to what participants perceived to be the expectations of the national inclusive education policy from public universities in Ghana is presented in this section. Four staff participants from PUB expressed their views on these expectations. Evident from the data were issues in meeting policy expectations such as creating access; removing barriers; knowledge of university staff in handling students with special needs; and training and graduating teachers with expertise in inclusive education.

Participant BR3 reported that the main focus of the national IE policy was on primary and senior high schools; however, it also took into consideration the higher education institutions, which is why it is called the 'inclusive education policy' (BR3). BR3 added that the IE policy includes all learners at all levels of education and everything that is expected of basic institutions is also expected of higher education institutions. Therefore, BR3 asserted that if the policy says, "every child should go to school, then any youth who has the capability to access higher education should have the support to have access to the higher educational institution". However, this participant identified some barriers higher education institutions have to eliminate to embrace diversity and equality in the system. Specifically:

> *… we expect all higher education institutions to break down barriers which will enable individuals who don't have the means and who cannot access and who are excluded to come in and have higher education. The breaking down of barriers takes so many forms... …there can be bursaries or financial support... Then we have [institutional] policies for those with disabilities. … Barriers can be so many - even the attitudes of staff; the attitudes of students. Even access to information can be a barrier. Then we have physical barriers. Barriers to inclusion are so many.* (BR3)

Participant BR3 also added that the policy indicates that staff in the HEIs should have knowledge, skills and expertise, which will enable them to support students with special needs when they enter into the higher education system.

Participant BR6 indicated that PUB produces special educators, and inclusive education cannot work without special educators. As such, the nation will be relying on the university to produce more competent and qualified teachers who will work to promote the vision and objectives of the policy. Similarly, participants BR1 and BR5 commented that, as a teaching university, the institution should train teachers who will be able to teach and/or support students at all levels of education, from kindergarten to university. The products of the university should be equipped with knowledge, skills and expertise that will enable them to teach learners with diverse capabilities and/or backgrounds in their class. They should be able to teach and support inclusive classes effectively. The participants see the training of graduate teachers in special needs education as a reflection of the University's alignment with the IE policy.

Whereas participant BR3 indicated that the national IE policy was sufficient to cover all levels of education, student participant BRS1 observed that there should be a national policy on

disability in higher education and the government should ensure that this policy is duly implemented. Specifically:

> *There should be government policy for persons with disability in higher education. Not just government policy but the policy should be implemented. There should be a check on it to find out whether the higher education institutions are implementing it the way they should do daily, what is expected of them. Because if it is not checked, they will do their own will.* (BRS1)

Furthermore, the staff participants shared their views on their conversance with the national IE policy. In PUB, three staff participants (BR1, BR2, BR4) were unaware that Ghana has an IE policy. BR5 and BR6 were aware that the IE policy exists but was unable to demonstrate knowledge of its content. BR3 is a member of the steering committee of the national inclusive education policy.

The interview conversations revealed participant awareness of issues such as elimination of barriers to access, including physical, attitudinal and information barriers; and, availability of, knowledge and expertise of specialists, experts and professionals, in achieving policy expectations. Despite this, most of the staff participants have limited or no knowledge about the IE policy and its content.

5.3.2 Institutional Policy and Guidelines on Disability

This section focuses on data on institutional policy and guidelines for students with disability in PUB. Five staff participants and one student participant shared their perspectives on this matter. Issues emerging from the data encompassed attempts at designing institutional disability policy and guidelines; teaching and learning support; university residential accommodation procedures; and enhancing issues of disability in the university's new corporate strategic plan.

According to participant BR1, the university is working on its institutional disability policy, and this policy issue was mentioned in one of the Academic Board meetings. The participant noted that the university intends that its institutional disability policy will conform with the framework of the national inclusive education policy. This decision will enable the university to carry out the mandates and the intents of the national policy.

Two staff participants, BR1 and BR3, indicated that the university has institutional guidelines that regulate and/or direct disability issues. Participant BR3 observed that these institutional guidelines define support packages and/or services available for students with disability to

make their life easier and ensure their success in the university. The participant noted that the situation is not perfect, but at least they [students with disability] see that their needs are recognised. Participant BR3 described these guidelines to include:

> *Admissions, we give them a quota. That is why admissions, we take off certain subjects. For the blind, we look at Math and Science. For the deaf, we look at language. It is a university-wide policy. Then when they come in, we have a special orientation for them, and we have a unit that provides them services. We have a system they register so that they can get their bursaries from the government. … Then we have how lecturers should handle them and what must happen to them when they go to the halls [of residence]. …* (BR3)

When asked if these guidelines are written down, participant BR1 stated that "I can't say yes or no because I don't have any [written guidelines] unless I call to know whether there is any available". On the same issue, participant BR3 noted that these policies and guidelines are all documented but in splintered forms and are obtainable from the various sections or units mandated to implement them. Specifically, the participant noted: "you have to get them [policies and guidelines] from the areas that I have mentioned. …if you want the hall of residence; it is either the Students Affairs or the Hall Manager. If it's on admission, it is from Academic Affairs". Similarly, participant BR6 noted that he is not aware of any written institutional policy and/or guidelines that direct support for students with disability in the university. The participant said that admission for prospective students with disability requires a letter written to the admission office explaining issues to them, then the students are admitted to the university.

Four staff participants referred to the university's corporate strategic plan as a document that made provisions for students with disability in PUB. Participant BR1 explained that issues of disability are part of the strategic plan of the university because every department designs its strategic plan and it gets incorporated into the university's. For example, the Department of Special Education crafted its plan to spearhead inclusive education and this has been incorporated into the university's strategic plan. Similarly, participant BR4 explained that one of the objectives of the corporative strategic plan refers to expanding access for the underprivileged, the marginalised, persons living with disability and persons from less endowed schools. The department, therefore, developed its strategy to increase access to admission for persons with disability from that portion of the corporate strategic plan.

In the same vein, participant BR3 indicated that the five-year corporate strategic plan of the university, which ended in 2018 had some aspects that catered for disability and other inclusive education issues but suggested that they were not enough. The participant said he had been appointed as the chairman of a committee constituted to develop a new strategic plan. The participant noted, that: "we will ensure that we have introduced or enhanced issues concerning disability and inclusion in the strategic plan so that it will be a whole university policy … not just a policy for a particular faculty or department" (BR3). Participant BR2 expressed the view that it is not enough for issues relating to disability to be captured in the strategic plan; they should be duly implemented. Specifically, the participant said: "the strategic plan, I think that like all the other laws… rules and regulations, we pay lip service. Sometimes we don't find the proper execution of some of these" (BR2).

The discourses revealed that PUB does not have an institutional disability policy. Institutional guidelines and practices that direct issues concerning students with disability were reported; however, it is not clear whether these guidelines are written. It also came to light that the existing corporate strategic plan has portions on disability and the new strategic plan will seek to enhance these issues.

5.4 Student Experience

This section describes the experience of students with disability at PUB. Participants' comments related to these experiences were in the categories of physical environment, support services and Social Inclusion.

5.4.1 Physical Environment

Data related to the physical environment is classified as: built environment, terrain, residential accommodation, and transport.

5.4.1.1 Built Environment

The built environment refers to the buildings and physical facilities/infrastructure on campus. Participants spoke about issues including inaccessible building infrastructure; lack of, or faulty elevators; necessity of assistance from other students to access lecture halls in high rise buildings; hazards for students with vision impairment; lack of opportunity by experts in special education to interact with the builders on issues relating to universal design; and, inadequate resource room space.

The six staff participants reported that students with vision impairment and physical challenge have difficulties accessing lecture halls in high rise buildings because there were no elevators in some of these buildings. Where there were elevators, they were often faulty and had not been repaired. Computer laboratories were not accessible mainly because of their location in inaccessible buildings; students with physical challenge, for instance, had difficulties accessing the facilities. Specifically, BR5 indicated that the lecture halls, library, and computer labs are "all not disability-friendly". Furthermore, participant BR6 observed that "I know they are facing challenges. For example, a physically disabled person climbing up when the elevator is not working; it is a challenge". The staff participants acknowledged the fact that though the university had been making efforts to fix handrails on buildings, more needed to be done. Six staff participants referred to this and BRI related that:

> *…some time ago, it was pathetic one disabled person is being carried by his friends on the staircase because the lecture hall is up. I wasn't too happy. So, I called the lecturers and told them anytime there is a disabled person in their class the lectures should be organised on the ground floor.*

Six staff participants indicated that, when necessary, lecturers relocate lecture venues to the ground floor to facilitate access to persons with disability; however, staff participant BR6 explained that because students with disability could be found in almost all the departments all lectures would need to be held on the ground floor and the top floors would be unused. The best option, according to the participant, is to ensure that in addition to the rails and ramps, elevators in all buildings should be in good working condition.

Staff participants BR3 and BR4 explained that the challenge with the built environment of PUB emanated from the original mandate for establishing the university, which excluded training individuals with disability and other conditions. As a result, the old buildings were not suitable for persons with disability. Participant BR3 explained further that the new buildings on campus were also not disability-friendly because the architects and/or the builders lacked the required expertise in universal design. Specifically:

> *Even the new ones [buildings], we have situations where architects that are coming still don't know anything about the universal design so that they will put up buildings and facilities that are disability-friendly. And those of us who are experts don't have the chance to interact with these architects and the builders. So, by the time they have finished the structure, they have still put up structures that are not disability-friendly. And you have to go round and*

discuss how to modify this kind of structures to make them disability-friendly. (BR3]

Student participants concurred with the reports of staff participants regarding inaccessibility of the built environment and how it impacted their engagement in academic and social activities, and also their health and safety on campus. The student participants explained that students with vision impairment and physical challenge are unable to participate in certain activities because these activities are most often organised at inaccessible places where they cannot go unless they are supported and accompanied by colleagues. BRS3 reported that "sometimes we're compelled to go upstairs to attend lectures. Attending the lectures upstairs too can create problems". BRS1 affirmed the report and further observed that "most of the lecture halls are at the second and the third floor, but a lift is not provided to take them up, so that hinders them from partaking in certain lectures". BRS5 also observed that "school buildings and other facilities on campus should be made accessible to persons with disability. Most of the facilities, individual persons with disability using wheelchairs cannot access them at all". Student participant BRS3 illustrated the specific difficulties he experienced with inaccessibility:

> *The infrastructure is another problem. The accessing it… How to climb to the upstairs to learn is also a problem for us. Because sometimes they will take the lecture up to the last floor. Because your colleagues with sight can access the stairs but you with visual impairment you find it difficult. Even if you make a mistake and you fall… I even fell last year, even twice. I climbed a stair, and I fell, and I had nearly broken my joint, so that is one of the problems.*

Participant BRS4 explained that it is ideal for arrangements to be in place for students who are physically challenged and, therefore, cannot access the lecture halls in high rise buildings to study. The participant said that it is a struggle to climb the stairs to the second floor and he is compelled to take medicine to relieve the pain, particularly during the first week of reopening. The participant added:

> *… Anytime I'm ascending or descending; my friends hold the crutches for me. Because my movement is not like others who move one leg at a time, I move the two legs at a time. I can ascend and descend, but if I missed a stair, it would be a disaster for me. We can have class on the down floor, but the down floor rooms are not spacious, and for the sake of others, you have to move to the top. So, if there will not be elevators for the top, spacious rooms should be provided on the ground floor*. (BRS4)

In the same vein, student participant BRSI, who is a student with vision impairment, shared the view that "they should be able to make the environment conducive for me to be able to attend

lectures. The venue for lectures and lecture periods, I should be made known. I should not struggle to look for the venue before I know the lecture time has expired".

Observations by this researcher revealed challenges within the physical and the built environment of the university, which corroborate those reported by the participants. These access challenges include inaccessible newly constructed high-rise buildings housing lecture theatres with faulty and unreliable lifts due to frequent electricity power outages. There were no automatic door reflexes or sensors fitted on buildings. Door labels in braille, which would allow students with vision impairment to locate essential facilities such as lecture theatres and offices, were non-existent. No disability-friendly washroom exists for students with disability in the university.

The strategic plan did make provisions for an accessible physical environment – built environment, learning infrastructure, and facilities for students with disability. For example, the strategic plan indicated that ramps, escalators, and accessible washrooms are to be provided where appropriate. Open drains are to be covered and walkways provided along all streets and lanes on all campuses. Yet, access to the physical and the built environment remains a major challenge for some categories of students with disability.

5.4.1.2 Terrain

Participants comments relevant to campus terrain included references to the ground; gutters; potholes; access ways; and roads within the campus. The participants spoke about mobility hazards on campus and how they impact students' movement, health, and safety. Staff participants noted that there are no access ways for students with disability; they share the same road. Because there are open gutters, potholes and other mobility hazards in the university environment, students with vision impairment are given cane techniques so that, even without the sighted guide, they can use their cane to negotiate the environment. While some gutters were being covered, others were not, which poses a threat to students with disability, especially those with vision impairment. Specifically:

> *Most often, the students engage the sighted guide techniques because of the open gutters. …. I am sure the students are aware that the environment is not very friendly, so they are cautious with their movement. Most of them do not fall. On a few occasions, last year, for instance, we registered two people fallen - one in ICT class and the other on his way to the hospital. I think there was a vehicle coming.* (BR5)

Participant BR5 reported that, as the student fell into a gutter because of an oncoming taxi, taxi drivers on campus needed education and sensitisation. “At times they [taxi drivers] toot horns without knowing that there are hearing impaired students on campus” expecting that after tooting the horns, pedestrians should give way. “For the blind, they can easily see them with their cane, but the hearing impaired, ‘pipipi’ [tooting horns] means nothing to them”. BR5 explained that there were plans to organise a seminar for taxi drivers to address issues concerning the movement of their vehicles on campus.

Student participants noted that the university needed to provide an enabling environment where students with disability can navigate freely and independently without harm. The gutters and uneven surfaces pose mobility hazards to students with disability on campus, thereby preventing them from enjoying freedom of movement. Student participants referred to this situation as illustrated by BRS3:

> *… like around the hostel where we are staying, we have gutters all around without cross[ings] where we can walk on top of them. You realise that you have to go and then cross a gutter before you get to the other side, and that is ... very bad. We have a lot of gutters.*

Participant BRS4 added that even when there are ramps, the surface of some of these ramps on campus is smooth so when students with physical challenge are accessing such places, they need to be vigilant in order not to slip and fall. Observation revealed obstructed and discontinued walkways and wheelchair access. Ditches, open gutters, and damaged and bushy pavements on campus restricted mobility and limited access to essential facilities and services.

Conversations with both staff and student participants revealed that access restrictions and/or limitations and mobility hazards exist in PUB. These situations impact on students’ independent movement, health, and safety on campus. The views shared by participants regarding the physical and the built environment were supported by this researcher’s observation.

5.4.1.3 Residential Accommodation

Residential accommodation, also called university halls of residence, refers to university buildings dedicated to providing housing facilities to students. These facilities are, in most cases, positioned within the vicinity of the university. This subsection focuses on the accommodation or housing arrangements in place for students with disability in PUB.

Staff participants spoke about the accommodation arrangements the university put in place for students with disability such as room reservations; allocation to the ground floor; preferential treatment; and, the opportunity to engage in choosing a room. A staff participant reported that the staff at the halls of residence "have been given specific instructions" to make allocations for persons with disability (BR3). Rooms on the ground floor are, primarily, reserved for students with disability to ease their movement in and out of their rooms (BR2; BR3; BR4; BR6). Although, some of the students with vision impairment reportedly went to the hall manager and told him that they wanted to go to the second and the third floors because they are allowed to indicate their choices and/or preferences (BR3). This may be the consequence of a place in a particular hall of residence, which has been earmarked for female students with vision impairment, becoming a problem to the students "because it is the ground floor, other people enter there, sometimes, to steal their things and they do other things" (BR4).

Participant BR6 explained the DSU ensure that students with disability get accommodation in the university halls of residence by generating a list of continuing students, which is submitted to the managers of the respective halls for room allocation. The hall managers do well to allocate rooms to all the names presented by the DSU. However, the DSU is not always able to meet the accommodation needs of all commencing students with disability because the unit is not sure about the number that will enroll. Participant BR3 explained:

> *So, students are even allowed to engage in deciding where they want to stay. But they are given special treatment when it comes to the allocation of rooms. In actual sense, we tell all of them that they will have rooms from the first year until they complete. It's only when you decide that "oh, no, I don't want to live on campus" then you live outside the campus.*

Additionally, participant BR3 explained that when there is any difficulty, for instance if there is water shortage and students in the university's halls of residence do not have water, they allow students with disability to go out with their friends to search for water. Thus, if there is a minor fault and the taps in a particular university hall of residence are not running, students with disability can go out with their colleagues to other halls of residence or sections of the university and its environs to fetch water. However, when there is a crisis, the halls make sure that they have water reserved for students with disability. Water crises may denote a situation where the whole university, or a section of the town including the university and its environs, run out of water due to a major fault, which may take weeks to resolve by the Ghana Water

Company. Students in residence have to go out of campus to search for water. In such circumstances, the hall managers ensure that students with disability access water.

In contrast to the situation described by university staff, student participants noted that PUB has limited residential accommodation and there is no comprehensive arrangement to ensure that all students with disability, who want to stay in the hall, have access. As such, students report being unable to get places in the university halls. A student participant noted that students who are not accommodated in the university halls of residence stay "in the 'diaspora' [privately owned hostels]. Because landlords use that as a means of making money, sometimes you pay higher fees as compared with your school fees" (BRS1). Likewise, BRS5 observed that "this accommodation issue is also a problem because I am not staying close to the school, sometimes coming to lectures is quite a problem".

Student participant BRS5 was of the view that "the halls are not designed to suit persons with disability". In support of this view, participant BRS4 explained that, in one of the university halls of residence he stayed in the previous years (when he first entered the university), the restroom was not disability-friendly. Both students with and without disability were falling in the restroom. Specifically, the participant said:

> *They are very slippery. The tiles that are supposed to be in the room, that's what they made in the bathhouse. Even those without disability are falling. One guy even fell and had to go to the hospital for doctors to treat him. … If my memory set me right, my first semester, I fell five times in the bathroom. … Because that place is full of water and soap, and the place is smooth, it wasn't easy*. (BRS5)

BRS4 continued that even in his current hall of residence, a wheelchair user cannot access the parts of the building. Because of the stairs to the bathhouse, he cannot access the restroom. "I have to go and pass the back" [use the back door] and, even before getting to the bathhouse, there are two staircases. If you're using a wheelchair, there's no way [you can enter the bathroom with it]. Then every day you have to use your knees to crawl. … I think, as time goes on, they must put things in order". Students with disability use the same restroom facilities as students without disability on campus and in the university halls of residence. Student participant BRS4 reported that anytime the tap is not flowing, some students use the water closet (WC) without flushing the excreta away. The 'WC' also called 'flushing toilet' uses

Figure 5.1: Stairs leading to a bathroom in a university hall of residence in PUB (left)
A walkway with hazards in PUB (right)

Figure 5.2: Walkways with broken and dislodged bricks in PUB

water to flush or get rid of the human excreta through the drainage system. Thus, it becomes difficult to flush away the human excreta when the taps are not flowing. Specifically:

> *Those with visual impairment they have to go with extra toilet roll to clean the edges of the water closet before they sit on it. Sometimes, I pity those with visual impairment. When they get there, they may think they clean the place, but still, there will be something [urine and/or particles of fecal matter left on the water closet].* (BRS4)

The student participant expressed the view that anytime the tap is not running, somebody would have to accompany a student with vision impairment to the restroom to check the water closet is clean before they use it.

Additional issues for students with disability include other students preventing them from listening to their lecture recordings in the halls of residence. BRS3 explained that, because students with vision impairment record lectures and textbooks and other learning materials, they need to listen to these recordings and also prepare their study materials. The participant stated that "because we are using recorders in the dormitory. …they feel like they read their books and you will be disturbing them". Students without disability reportedly retaliate by playing loud music everywhere in the hall. As loud music is going on, students with vision impairment cannot listen to their recordings effectively, "so you can't learn" (BRS3).

From the discourse, it is apparent the university has arrangements in place for students with disability to get accommodation in the university's halls of residence; however, students with disability reported that inadequate and unsuitable facilities constrain this effort. Participants also raised issues such as stealing and health-related matters in the accommodation that was provided.

5.4.1.4 Transportation

During the interview, participants made comment on transportation issues in PUB. Issues raised included lack of accessibility features of the buses and vehicles procured by the university management; no priority seat reservation; mode of operation; and the effect these had on the movement of students with disability.

In their interview conversation, four out of the 11 participants (one staff and three students) referred to the issue of difficulties and frustrations involved in commuting within and between campuses and the inappropriate design of buses. Students with disability struggle with those

without disability to access the vehicles, sometimes resulting in students with disability not gaining access to the vehicle. Even when they do gain entry to the vehicle, participant BRS3 reported that no priority seats were reserved for students with disability in the bus. The participant noted that this situation arises because the university did not dedicate or assign any bus or means of transport to convey students with disability in and out of lectures and also for their movement on campus to facilitate their studies. Participants' views are illustrated by BRS5:

> *Sometimes commuting between campuses is also a problem because my second area is on the south campus. Sometimes, you have a lecture here [north campus], your next lecture is at another campus, the south campus. Moving back and forth between campuses is also another problem.*

Participant BRS4 indicated that "there are buses on campus here, the writings on them signify that they are for this very institution, but they are very hard to access [board]" by students with physical challenge, in particular. These buses do not have wheelchair ramps and assistance rails to allow easy access for wheelchair and mobility aid users to get in and out of independently. If a bus has disability-friendly features such as boarding platforms "even if you're crawling on the floor, you can access it [board it independently]". Further, the participant explained that in 2017, the university introduced a metro mass transit, popularly known in Ghana as 'Kuffour bus' (belonging to the government) to operate on campus, but it was difficult for students with physical challenge who use mobility aids such as crutches and wheelchairs to board because of its height off the ground; "If you're using a wheelchair, you have to be carried into the bus when you're going for [field/educational] trips". In support of BRS4's perspective, BR3 observed that:

> *Why is it that we [the university management] buy cars, buses but we don't think of a bus that is disability-friendly? It is the negative attitude, stemming from the fact that we don't appreciate their [students with disability] needs. But if we do, we will order the buses and make sure that at least one of them can serve the purpose of these people with disability.* (BR3)

Some student participants stated that some of the lecturers are considerate and caring enough to offer students with disability a lift or pick them in their private vehicles to attend lectures when they see them waiting at the roadside.

Observations carried out by this researcher confirmed that buses on campus were not disability-friendly; the situation on this campus was very much like that of the campus described earlier.

The buses and vehicles that ply between campuses have no adaptive features. In addition to the missing features identified by participants, there were no reader boards on the buses to help students with hearing impairment to access information. The few verbal announcements were not sufficient to alert students with vision impairment to alight independently at their designated locations. These circumstances deprived some students with disability, particularly wheelchair and mobility aid users, from functioning independently with equity and dignity.

5.4.2 Support Services

The views of participants on experiences of students with disability regarding the support services are highlighted in this section. Participants' views on academic provisions include access and admission; orientation program for new students; academic support; counselling services; pedagogy or teaching and learning; human resources; financing; and, quality and effectiveness of support services.

5.4.2.1 Access and Admission into the University

During the interview, participants shared their perspectives on provisions that allow students with disability to gain access and admission into the university. Participants' views relevant to this matter include adjusting entry requirements; accepting diversity; provisions in the university's corporate strategic plan; program inquiry; access to a DSU contact line; and follow-up by the DSU. Six staff and one student participant shared views on these provisions.

The six staff participants reported that the standard admission requirements are adjusted for prospective students with disability in a bid to increase their enrolment rates. The waiver for applicants with vision impairment in terms of mathematics and science, and English Language for those with hearing impairment is explained by BR3:

> *…So, in terms of admissions, we create a means of bringing in those with disability by looking at what they can do and what they cannot do. We know that the deaf, for instance, has [sic] a problem with language. So, when you're talking about admission, you say they should all have credit in language. You look at the deaf and say because you have difficulty with language, your language will be replaced with mathematics. So, they will not necessarily be qualified and admitted with the English Language but with other subjects.*

Participant BR4 identified one of the objectives of the university's corporate strategic plan as provision for easy access to the underprivileged, the marginalised, persons living with disability and persons from less endowed schools. This provision informed the department's

strategy of providing easy access to admission for persons with disability. The second strategy is a reduction in admission cut-off points for persons with disability. Thus, if the admission cut-off point is aggregate 21, it will be set at aggregate 22 for persons with disability who indicate it on their respective admission forms. That provision is available for gender and disability to ensure increasing number of women and people with disability are admitted. The participant went on to say:

> *Because of that [provision] this year, 2017/2018 academic year, we have so many of them [students with disability], more than 20. This is something remarkable. Previously, we used to get 5 or 6, but now the number has risen to 20 to 25.* (BR4)

Staff participant BR6 explained that the DSU support prospective students with disability by making a case for them to ensure that the admissions officer gives them admission. If a prospective student with disability applies but does not gain entry, the applicant could contact the DSU and the DSU will then consult with the admission office about the reason the application was not successful. If it is an issue that can be resolved for the applicant to gain admission, then the DSU facilitates that. Student participant BRS1 concurred that this occurred and added the dimension of support for inquiries of prospective students regarding programs that are offered in PUB:

> *As a person with disability, before you come to the school, you are allowed to pick a contact number from the DU and contact them, and they will give you education on what things are done in the school here and how to go about it. And if you apply, you can call them and ask them: "can you please go and check on the status of my admission for me" and they do that for you.* (BRS1)

Participant BR3 reported that PUB welcomes all manner of prospective students with disability if they meet the specialised admission criteria. Consequently, most identifiable categories of persons with disability in Ghana are admitted into the university. Specifically, the participant said:

> *…our university has opened its doors, and today, we have a student who has multiple disabilities, deaf-blindness; then you begin to appreciate how far we have gone. In actual sense, we have the highest number of students with disability if we put all the universities together. It is on record that we have more than 80 students with visual impairment alone and a number of hearing-impaired students. … The university in a way has done so much, but we still have so much to do in terms of ensuring access to information, in terms of*

removing physical barriers, in terms of doing so many other things. But we have made a mark. (BR3)

The review of the corporate strategic plan for PUB confirmed the views shared by participants regarding increasing admission and enrolment of students with disability. A focus of the corporate strategic plan (objective 10) states the intent of expanding access for the underprivileged, marginalised, persons with disability and those from less endowed schools. PUB has demonstrated the achievement of this objective by admitting diverse categories of persons with disability. Strategies for increasing access for persons with disability include providing suitable on-campus residential accommodation for persons with disability, which PUB has provided.

5.4.2.2 Orientation Program for Commencing Students

Orientation programs allow commencing students to transit smoothly from senior high school to university. It is critical in ensuring that commencing students are familiar with the essential facilities and services present in the University and also adapt to the university community and prevailing institutional culture. Orientation programs are, therefore, critical for commencing students with disability.

This section presents data on orientation services and activities available for students with disability in PUB. Two staff and two student participants referred to the issue of orientation during the interview. Participants reported special orientation for students with disability; the nature of orientation; continuous advocacy after orientation; and, orientation and mobility, including cane techniques for students with vision impairment and sighted guides.

Staff participant BR3 stated that a special orientation is organised for commencing students with disability and student participant BRS1 explained that this involved providing an orientation on how to study and get good grades. BRS1 added that during orientation, they are educated to understand their rights, know university policies, and learn how to channel their grievances. Specifically, the participant said:

> *Apart from academic achievements, they tell us: "you, being a person with disability/visually impaired paying for sporting activities and you have been denied [an opportunity to participate in sports]. Don't you think your right is being infringed upon"? I will also think about it and see that it's true. So… that made me write the letter I was referring to. … I also know that I can also*

> *stand and be voted for and be elected as a leader of any of the portfolios. Socially, it also helps a lot to communicate with colleagues...* (BRS1)

In parallel with the views of student participant BRS1 on knowledge to engage, staff participant BR3 submitted that when students understand their rights, they know the policies and how to channel their grievances, they will always engage. "So, it is all about education and information, knowing" (BR3).

Participant BR5 reported that orientation and mobility training is offered to commencing students with vision impairment. "Orientation - because you have to know where you are in the environment before you can move". The participant explained that most of the university's buildings have no elevators, so students with vision impairment need to navigate using sighted guides. Besides, the orientation and mobility training equipped the sighted guides with the knowledge and skills to appropriately guide the students with disability. Students with vision impairment are educated on how to hold the rails fitted on the building and negotiate to the next level. There are challenges, though. The best method is for the 'blind person' to hold the elbow of the sighted person; however, at times, the sighted guides hold them as if they are pulling them (BR5) so instruction on how to guide is important. According to participant BR5, students with vision impairment are given cane techniques to enable them to negotiate the open gutters and potholes in the environment independently, without sighted guides. Also, those with low vision try to help the totally blind. Student participant BRS3 agreed with the above submission and added that:

> *One policy is that you don't move without the white cane… but that you should get somebody to support you anytime you are moving. They train the sighted persons how to hold the visually impaired while you move. … Also, how to access a classroom, when you enter a classroom or when you enter anywhere and you're moving. … They train in mobility, that is how to move in the environment in order not to wound yourself.* (BRS3).

Student participant BRS1 described the need for the university to organise a separate orientation on persons with disability for both students without disability and lecturers as this will create awareness and educate them on how disability occurs. They should also be given orientation on the support services that students with disability will need to be successful in the university environment. The participant noted that if these two issues are addressed through orientation, it will reduce the challenges. The participant further explained:

> *There are some people, they have never come across disability. And even if they come across, they do not bother to know what causes it. And in our Ghanaian context too, we just think that disability is a curse from the gods and we just take it like that. So, as people who are in education, education can be given that disability can be genetic, disability can occur through accident and disability can occur in one's life anytime and anyhow. … They will know … it is through no fault of theirs that they are disabled.* (BRS1)

Similarly, student participant BRS5 observed that issues concerning students with disability are only discussed during orientation, after which these issues become almost unacknowledged. Because students without disability do not have sufficient information on disability-related issues, it influences their behaviour towards their colleagues with disability. Specifically:

> *Advocacy for persons with disability in the university is not pronounced. Even though there was a lot of discussion about disability-related issues during orientation, after the orientation, that's all. It should be more pronounced even after orientation. Other colleagues will hear it, but they need to know how to help persons with disability in an appropriate manner.* (BRS5)

The data have shown that orientation programs and services are available for students with disability in PUB. However, the program is not comprehensive enough to equip students without disability and lecturers on disability issues.

5.4.2.3 Academic Support

This subsection presents participants' views on the academic support available for students with disability in PUB. Academic support refers to all the constituents that facilitate student learning, academic achievement, and success. Issues emerging from participants' interview comments have been grouped into the following four categories based on data: learning equipment and resources; learning support; examinations as well as information and communications technology (ICT).

5.4.2.3.1 Learning Equipment and Resources

Participants identified learning equipment and resources to include: computerised braille embossers; scanners; Perkins braillers; hand frames and stylus; computers; printers; library resources and learning materials. Furthermore, it was indicated that hearing aids donated to the university/DSU are given free of charge to students who are hard of hearing (BR6). In addition, it was reported that a non-governmental organisation (NGO) from the Netherlands donated four CCTVs to the university, two of which were allocated to the library, to assist those with residual or low vision to read printed material. Both staff and student participants observed that

the learning equipment in the DSU is inadequate or not functioning due to overuse and lack of maintenance.

Staff participant BR5 reported that students with vision impairment are most impacted by the poor state of this learning equipment because they need transcription services to facilitate their learning. Students with vision impairment are taught to read braille but there are limited braille resources. They require support and training in braille reading and writing because they enter the university with basic or elementary braille skills. The participant continued that in the university, students with vision impairment need more than the basic or elementary braille skills, so training sections are organised for them to acquire advance brailling skills (BR5). However, students and the braille experts had to contend with inadequate braille resources. Participants explained:

> *Some [equipment] are there, but they are inadequate. Let me start from Perkins braillers. Perkins braillers help to write braille very fast. But when you come to this school, we have about 15, but some of them are broken down. … We need those repaired, and we need additional ones, and that will be able to help us in writing. Then talking about the embosser, the embosser works slowly, and they have a problem with the scanner. So, we need machines such as the embosser and the scanner. The embosser should not only be one; we need two or three because as you are using it, there can be pressure on it and it will break down. …* (BRS1)

> *We are in a technological era, but it is sad to note that we fall short in that area. … we had about ten braille machines, even around 15. … we are now left with 3; two are broken down, so we are left with only one functioning, that's the Perkins Brailler. Fortunately, I contacted the Director of Perkins for the African Region, and she brought us one Perkins Smart Brailler, which can work equivalent to about 15 old Perkins machines because it is computerised. … We have some computerised braille embossers before I left [for further studies]. I came back to meet only one; they said the other is broken down. …so we do not overuse the only embosser we have. If it is broken down, we will be very hot during the examination period.* (BR5)

BRS3 also shared similar views on the issue of inadequate and ineffective Perkins braillers. Similarly, staff participant BR5 submitted that students with vision impairment need to write with braille machines and hand frames, but there are no machines at the resource centre for them, and students do not have their own braille machines because they are expensive or not available on the market. As most of the students with vision impairment come without the

braille machines and braille sheets, the limited resources in the DSU become a problem when students have assignments to complete. Those who have no braille machines are encouraged to use hand frames. Even braille sheets or writing sheets are often in short supply because they are imported. Similarly, the white cane for students with vision impairment is imported but when an aluminium company in Ghana was contacted to manufacture them locally, they declined with the excuse that "the market is not profitable" (BR5).

The researcher observed that the disability unit had two braille embossers, but only one of the embossers was in good working condition during the time of her visit. Other learning equipment, which was seen in the disability support unit, were two desktop computers – one for disability unit staff and the other for students with disability. There was also equipment such as a scanner, a printer, a few hand frames with a stylus, and two Perkins braillers. There were additional pieces of faulty equipment, such as one braille embosser, computers, and printers that needed repair.

When discussing library resources, participants BRS2, BR5 and BR6 noted that the books in the library are in an inaccessible format for students with vision impairment and the researcher's observation also confirmed there were no braille or audiobooks in the library. BRS2 and BRS1 observed that:

> *To me, the most important way … both the university and the disability unit can support me is to make textbooks available for persons with visual impairment in braille … Because if you are visually impaired and a textbook is in print, how will you be able to read and write? You can't read unless you get somebody to read it for you. So, if that person is too busy doing something, you can't get anything from the book. Maybe you will have the book, but you can't access the book. So, if all the books are in braille form … if there is somebody or there is nobody, you can read unless you are lazy, you don't want to read. …you can read and gain understanding.* (BRS2)

> *... When you get to the school library, talking about students with visual impairment, there is no single braille book or audiobook you can pick and read. Meanwhile, the survival of your academic goals in this university depends largely on the school library and yet we don't have access to it.* (BRS1)

The strategic plan states that accessible workstations shall be created in the library on each campus of the university for persons with disability. Teaching-learning or course materials are

expected to be provided in alternative formats such as Braille, audiobooks, and electronic texts for students with vision impairment. This plan had not been achieved.

In parallel with the above submissions, staff participant BR6 pointed out that inaccessibility of library materials limit the breadth and depth of knowledge students with vision impairment acquire because they depend solely on the number of textbooks the DSU can emboss. BR5 reported that the library is "planning to acquire some embossers" but currently:

> *... The centre [DSU] tries to emboss some of these materials for them, but it is unfortunate we are not able to emboss the majority. This restricts the amount of information they get because if the centre can emboss two books for them, that is what they will read. But there might be other writers who have written on the same topic. But because we are unable to emboss them, they are not able to read those other books. Because they cannot access them, they cannot get the information.*

Similarly, participant BRS1 observed that because students with vision impairment do not have access to library resources, it limits their source of knowledge to their field of study; as a consequence students with disability cannot engage in inter-hall and inter-university quiz competitions, which need an extensive knowledge across several subjects and issues.

Staff participant BR4 explained that they (teaching staff) had been asked to develop some course content modules in education; however, these modules are online and students with vision impairment do not have access to screen reader software. Moreover, these modules are not converted into braille and/or audio format, so students with vision impairment are not able to access them in these formats. The means devised in assisting students with vision impairment to access reading materials is by encouraging them to buy recommended textbooks in their area of study out of which selected topics (from these textbooks) are embossed for them by the resource centre (BR5).

Some lecturers make available their lecture notes and PowerPoint to students with disability, and these are also embossed for students with vision impairment. BR4 noted that "on two occasions, students with vision impairment requested for my lecture slides and I gave it to them". Soft copies of these learning materials are made available to students with vision impairment who can use screen reader software or enlarged print (BR5, BR6). Consequently, a lot of students with disability also depend on audio, like lecture recordings, and softcopies of

lecture notes (BR5). However, participant BRS3 explained that persistent listening to audio recordings of learning materials sometimes impede their comprehension. Specifically:

> *… Any time at all, any lecture you go in for, you have to get a soft copy to read like listening to the audio... It is not always easy to get the understanding, but if it is the hard copy of the braille book, in particular, you will take your time and read and understand better. But when the machine is moving, it is going unless you pause, but the speed may be above your understanding. If we have brailled books in the library like this, you can also do your own studies. We don't have them. They are not there for us.* (BRS3)

However, it was submitted that some lecturers do not allow students with vision impairment to record their lectures. The DSU would have to appeal to these lecturers indicating the difficulties these students encounter in accessing learning materials (BR5).

Insufficient space was elaborated on by staff participant BR5. This participant noted that the small space given to the DSU is used as a storeroom, examination centre, ICT lab and the office for staff and the students on internship. The same space is also used as a resource centre for 84 students with vision impairment, one student each with deaf-blindness, cerebral palsy and physical challenge. According to the participant, students with physical challenge are many, but only one declared his disability status and registered with the centre. There are about 54 students with hearing impairment, but they have another resource centre. The participant said that whenever the Dean of Faculty sees some of the students sitting on the rails, he complains. This participant, therefore, told the Dean:

> *… Look at the room. Where do you want them to sit? How do you do remedial work? How do we braille? … I told him [the Dean] I'm putting in a memo for the Ag. Vice-Chancellor. He said he would support me. … We need more embossers, but where do you keep them?*

Likewise, student participant BRS1 concurred with the challenge of limited space and indicated:

> *The university should also provide persons with disability a very big resource centre because the existing one is not spacious enough. If we could also have all the machines, that would aid us in our academic life, I don't think the room will be spacious for all those machines. I think we need a very big and general resource centre which will contain all categories of people with visual impairment and other disabilities.* (BR3)

This researcher observed that the office space appeared too small for its operational activities. The office housed the disability unit staff, national service persons who were working in the disability support unit, and equipment, including the pieces that were out of use. Two CCTV units were not mounted due to lack of space. Students with disability were using the same space for studies, remedial work, and other forms of support.

The data revealed that, despite recommendations in the strategic plan, the learning equipment and resources available in PUB were inadequate.

5.4.3.2 Learning Support

This section focuses on participants' views regarding the learning support available to facilitate and ensure students' academic success in PUB. Participants reported that the learning support available for students with disability include front seat reservation at lectures; recording and brailling during lectures; sign language interpretation; and, frequent updates on lecture timetables by DSU staff. Challenges communicated by participants consist of irregular note-taking support and sign language interpretation for students with hearing impairment who attend lectures without notetaker or interpreter support.

Five staff participants explained that students with vision impairment are allowed to sit in the front during lectures because they record. Those with short sightedness and long sightedness sit at places suitable for them. Apart from students with vision impairment doing their own lecture recordings, the resource centre also does recordings for them (BR6). They are also given the opportunity to braille during lectures and, even though their brailling machines make noise, this is accepted by other students and lecturers (BR4). It was reported that even if students with disability are late to class, students without disability are made to reserve or leave the front seats for them (BR4). Students with hearing impairment are also allowed to occupy the front seats so that the sign language interpreters can communicate with them. Similarly, BR2 and BR3 observed that:

> *The students, I don't know who tuned their mind to that and it is very positive. When they see a visually impaired, quickly, they get up and offer their seats to them. … If the seats are not there, they go round and look for a seat from other lecture halls*. (BR2)
>
> *What we do, particularly, those of us in special needs [education], we know some of the strategies we have to use. And those who are not in special needs [education], we have the staff who are supporting. Let's say those that are*

> *hearing impaired they have sign language interpreters who go with them. And these interpreters, when they go [to lectures] the university staff is aware. So, they make arrangement and position them in such a way that the interpreters can have easy communication with them. Some of the lecturers know that they have to organise something for the interpreters to give to the students as a guide …* (BR3)

However, sign language support for students with hearing impairment comes with some challenges. Student participant BRS1 reported difficulties resulting from a communication gap existing between the key players. These situations cause students with hearing impairment to lose out on learning at lectures. Specifically, the participant said:

> *And those suffering from hearing impairment, sometimes they will come and sit, and there is nobody who informs the sign language experts we have lectures at this time. So, they come and sit, expecting the sign language expert to come and sign to them. But because the sign language experts are also not aware of the lecture at that time, they will not come. And they [students with hearing impairment] cannot have access to the lecture at that time.* (BRS1)

In order not to miss out on lecturers, the DSU staff regularly update students with vision impairment on any changes that may occur on the lecture timetable. This information is essential because there is no braille version of the lecture timetable that students with vision impairment can access independently (BR3).

5.4.3.3 Examination Arrangement

Participants shared their views on examination arrangement and support available for persons with disability in PUB. These arrangements included writing quizzes and examinations at the resource centre; transcribing quizzes and examination questions into braille for students with vision impairment; extra time for examination; modification of examination questions, particularly for students with vision impairment; braille sheets for examinations; and interpretation of time in sign language for students with hearing impairment. Challenges included missing examination scripts and print-only versions of examination policy and examination timetable.

Participants reported that some categories of students with disability write their quizzes and examinations at the DSU. These categories included students with vision impairment, cerebral palsy, deaf-blindness and one student with physical challenge. The participants provided illustrations of this support:

> *For the support it is there, especially when it is examination. With my accessibility problem, I do write with the visually impaired at the resource centre because before I get to the lecture hall, if it's not on the ground floor before I get there, you'll see me sweating as you saw me when I entered the office. So, they made the provision that when it is examination, I should write at the resource centre with the visually impaired. Since then, everything is okay.* (BRS4)

> *Those who are physically challenged when the examination is on the 3rd floor, where they cannot have access to that place, they give them the opportunity to come to the resource centre and write. Students with visual impairment too, we also write at the resource centre. That is one of the considerations as well.* (BRS1)

Staff participant BR2 explained that before quizzes or examinations, questions are sent to the resource centre to be embossed into braille. After the examinations, the braille experts convert the students' answers into a format that lecturers can read and submit to the relevant lecturers for marking.

Eight out of the 11 participants indicated that students with vision impairment and cerebral palsy are given extended time for examinations. BR3 explained that, if sighted students are using two hours, students with vision impairment and cerebral palsy are allowed an extended time of three hours. Thus, an additional half of the time for the examination paper is added (BR3). Similarly, student participant BRS5 explained that, in addition to the extra time, writing support is offered to enable him to complete his learning and assessment tasks. The participant noted:

> *They give me extra time to complete my assignments, quizzes, and examinations and I get access to a computer to write my examinations. … They help a lot. Academically, I can learn and do other things but the time to complete my work is a problem. So, so far, whenever I am writing examinations, because the time is very adequate for me, I feel satisfied that what I want to write, I will complete it. Because I have the computer to type my examinations, I don't have a problem with handwriting.* (BRS5)

Participant BR3 pointed out that quizzes and examination questions are modified to respond to the specific needs of students with vision impairment. Specifically, the participant said:

> *… and we ask lecturers to modify questions to make them suitable. So, if it is a question that is demanding students looking at a diagram, writing or listing*

> *the parts, they will just ask the student to describe, and they won't list. Because, when the students do not have access to the picture and cannot see it, they cannot list. But once you have told him or you give the student a replica of that equipment, and he has examined it, he can describe and write something about it.* … (BR3)

Furthermore, the resource persons also read questions in print to students with disability during examinations if the braille embosser is out of order. "…at times, if the questions are in print, they read the questions for us … If there's a problem about the embosser, they [resource persons] come in and read the questions to us" (BRS2).

However, student participant BRS3 commented that resource persons are impatient with them when they write quizzes and examinations. They mount undue pressure on students with vision impairment even if the time allotted to the paper is not up. They are unwilling to add the extra half of the time due them. Instead, they pressurize the students and make them feel uneasy and/or confused and this behaviour negatively impacts their performance in the examination.

The DSU staff also identified some of the challenges they face, including when lecturers from other departments are late to release examinations questions to the resource centre to be brailled for students with vision impairment. BR5 reported that this reluctance stems from the lack of trust and concern that the examination questions may leak if released earlier. BR5 commented that: "lecturers will seek to the welfare of 'able-bodied' students before the disabled. They (the lecturers) at times even forget so we have to go and prompt them". The DSU staff are also subject to pressure from the students with disability who say: "you are discriminating against us; you don't provide for us" (BR5).

Student participants with vision impairment reported that the university's examination regulations for students and end-of-semester examination timetable are in an inaccessible format and, as a result, their access to examination-related information is restricted. BR4 acknowledged that if there is a change in the time allotted to an examination paper and there is no sign language interpreter to interpret it for students with hearing impairment, it affects them. BRS1 said: "it is only that when we are going to write exams, then the resource persons will come and tell us ... for instance, because you are coming to write exam, you have to leave your phone in the hall, etc." (BR1). A quote from participant BRS3 illustrates this view:

> *They provide … [the students' handbook on examination] but it's always in print. …like if they want to alert you when you will write an exam, they paste*

> *it on the notice board, so they don't write it in braille for you to read and understand. It's a colleague who will come and say it. But it would have always been good they write in braille and then paste it so that we also read and understand when and where we are going to write every paper.* (BRS3)

Participant BR5 also described the issue of missing examination scripts of students with vision impairment. The participant explained that sometimes the DSU would transcribe examination scripts for lecturers, but the lecturers will misplace the scripts and complain that they did not receive them. The DSU, therefore, put a mechanism in place where lecturers sign whenever scripts of students with vision impairment are handed over to them. The participant added that:

> *We have a case on hand at the Psychology Department, so some of the students came complaining that they have '1C' [incomplete results]. I went to the lecturer, he was saying he took delivery, but those scripts were not among. Only yesterday, one of the Examination Officers came and said they found the scripts.* (BR5)

Concurring with staff participant BR5 on the issue of missing quizzes and examination scripts of students with vision impairment, student participants BRS1 and BRS3 commented:

> *At times you write exams and then submitted the paper and later they will come to you as a visually impaired and tell you that your paper has got missing and you will ask yourself, why? How have they handled that of your sighted colleagues, that theirs did not get missing, and it is only a person with visual impairment that had the paper missing? And these are some of the hindrances. Sometimes, if it's a quiz you must rewrite the quiz and if it is an exam you have to re-sit the exam.* (BRS1)

> *Another example is the idea of this: their way of handling our materials. When we give them scripts… Sometimes you will realise that the scripts cannot be found. I don't know, either it is in the hands of the resource centre, the lecturers, or your course representatives. Because you will give them this thing [the scripts]to mark, and sometimes we will not get the scripts, and at the long run you will be given an 'IC' (Incomplete) and you will be compelled to rewrite. That is another negative thing.* (BRS3)

The issue of missing examination scripts is handled through consultation and dialogue using the signature collected during delivery as proof. The DSU act on students reports anytime the issue of 'incomplete results' (IC) is reported (BR5). Specifically, the participant narrated the following case as an example:

> *Last week, for instance, I had to meet with the Head of the Department of Psychology. I said, "Dr, you have signed this, and the students' have come to*

complain that they have 'incomplete results'. He replied: "Dr. Yusif, you know there are so many things on hand, so you give me some time. I asked, so, what if you don't find them? He said: "we shall solve them". I told him, look, some of the students are very bright. One of them came to me and said: "even those I taught had [grade] 'A' so if a lecturer will just sit somewhere and give him grade C or D that will be unfair". So, he said he would go round [he will investigate] the whole issue. (BR5)

Participant BR5 added that he was happy when the exams officer indicated the that the missing scripts were found and the person who took delivery of the scripts has said he will set up a committee to investigate the issue. I said I am happy you said you found the scripts of 'my students', because they refer to them as 'my students (BR5).

5.4.2.3.3 Information and Communication Technology

This section presents the data on issues relating to ICT in PUB. Participants reported issues with: an inaccessible ICT laboratory; a lack of computer applications and software; procuring state of the art ICT facilities; establishing a modern computer laboratory; building the computer literacy levels of students with disability.

Although there is a computer laboratory, it is not accessible to some categories of students with disability. Students with physical challenges, in particular, have difficulties going to the computer laboratory due to its location. When students with vision impairment go to the computer laboratory, the computer software and applications that will enable them to participate are often not available to them. Thus, students with vision problems, for instance, have little access to computers (BR3). BR6 explained that the inaccessibility problem emanated from the fact that students with and without disability use the same ICT facilities.

Participant BR5 described the efforts made to procure modern assistive technology devices for students with disability in PUB. The participant noted that he had a meeting with the senior management of the university - "the Vice-Chancellor, the Procurement Officer, the University Librarian, the Former Registrar, and the Finance Officer; we brainstormed on this assistive technology, and they agreed that I should put in the request". The participant and the University Librarian then visited two sister universities to familiarise themselves with the equipment, assistive technology and devices available for students with disability. After which "I put in a tall list of the state-of-the-art devices that we needed …involving about 15 laptops, about 15 braille machines, special synthesizers and speech software… to help them read".

Although the senior management had agreed in principle to procure these facilities, BR5 reported that the cost was beyond the threshold permitted by the procurement laws of the country. Plans were underway to purchase these facilities through the overseas office of the university, but there was a major legal issue involving some members of senior management, which stalled the whole process. According to the participant, during the previous week, he called the Acting Procurement Officer "who said 'it is receiving attention', but that used to be their 'national anthem'".

Staff participant BR3 affirmed the plan to establish an accessible state-of-the-art computer centre for students with disability. The participant indicated that the university has plans of building a more sophisticated ICT laboratory that will have the necessary equipment and personnel who will be available and willing at any time to support students who have special educational needs. According to the participant, a project has been initiated to build the computer literacy levels of students with disability. The project involved developing a tool that will be used to assess and establish the baseline computing skills or computer literacy levels of all commencing students with disability. This information will be used to determine the level of ICT training individual students with disability will require to function independently. The participant went further to say:

> … *We will build their [students with disability] capacity in using the computer so that the issue of brailling and the rest will be put to rest. Students with visual problems, from day one, will start using the computer to do their assignments. When it is an examination, they will use the computer to do it, so that the lecturers can mark easily. The students can go to the internet and get information and do their assignments and the rest. We want to empower them. Yes, the centre, we want it to grow and have the requisite technology and the rest which will enable students with disability in the university to have greater access to information and do whatever they need to participate fully in academic and social life. (*BR3)

Similarly, the strategic plan also indicates providing increased access to assistive technologies for students with disability. It indicates activities such as organising regular training sessions and workshops in the use of assistive technologies and devices to support students with disability. Faculty, administrative professionals and resource persons (support staff) are also expected to receive training in assistive technologies, at least once a year, to enhance the inclusion of persons with disability. ICT experts are to be hired to promote the use of ICT by students with special needs.

In spite of this provision in PUB's strategic plan, as at the time of data collection, the researcher observed that the university had no ICT laboratory dedicated to students with disability who had to share the main ICT laboratory with the students without disability. In addition, no software was installed on these computers to make them user-friendly for students with disability. Participant BR5 explained that until these provisions are in place, sighted students and internship[9] students assist students with vision impairment to search for information online. The participant did report some existing support for computer literacy skills training. For example, training for the student with cerebral palsy to take him through keyboarding because he uses the computer to type assignments, quizzes and examinations (BR5).

The discourses above demonstrated that academic support in place for students with disability included access to some learning equipment and resources; learning support; and examination support. While some learning facilities are available, they are outdated, obsolete and inadequate. In spite of the fact that plans are underway to procure modern ICT equipment and assistive devices, they are yet to be ordered.

5.4.2.4 Counselling Services

The data revealed that counselling services are offered to students with disability to explore educational options; discover and establish their likely career pathways; handle issues concerning learning; and make personal adjustments.

Two staff and three student participants shared their views on this matter. Staff participant BR5 reported that the psychology department of the university has a counselling unit, which counsel students from time to time regarding employment. According to the participant, career counselling services are seen as essential because the university want its graduates to be gainfully employed. According to BR5, employment for students with disability after graduation is not always as difficult as people think. The participant narrated an incident where he directed some students with disability to the Director of the Special Education Division of the Ghana Education Service, and she (the Director) received their applications and promised to send them to the Director General's Office for discussion. BR5 noted that the students sent

[9] Students who excel in braille and sign language and do practical attachment in the disability support unit.

their applications to the Director even though there was an embargo on employment. However, he did not indicate whether the students were offered the employment.

Staff participant BR6 noted that prospective students with disability, who contact the DSU, are educated on the career prospects of the programs offered by the university. The participant was of the view that PUB is a teaching university so once an individual is enrolled, that individual is on a career pathway to teaching. Current students are also enlightened on the career prospects of the programs they are pursuing, though these counselling activities are not formal.

Student participant BRS1 commented that a resource person who was also a lecturer is supposed to give a talk on how to prepare for the job market but was unable to attend. However, career education is provided. Concurring with this perspective, student participant BRS3 reported that:

> *We have been receiving guidance on those things. Last semester, Mr Issaka gave us such lectures - entrepreneurship. He taught us entrepreneurship. He taught us how to write a CV, the application for job opportunities. That if you want to be employed after your education here, there are ways you should follow. There are steps you should follow in writing a CV for employment. ... Dr. Imoro also taught us how to get a job and maintain it as a disabled person.* (BRS3)

BRS3 also described how they were counselled to explore which skills and/or expertise are required in the job sector given acquiring skills that are in high demand increases their chances of employment. For instance, braille and sign language experts are in high demand because lecturers and teachers are in short supply in those fields. The counsellors often meet with the students with disability and enquire about their problems or challenges that confront them. The participant gave the following example about lecture times:

> *Another one is, let me say our department …probably some problems are hindering us; probably there are some problems that we are facing. The counsellors will call us together, and then they will ask us, and we just bring out our problems, and they will solve the problems for us. For example, if it [is] lectures, when do we have this lecture? Is it possible for us to always attend it at that time? If it is not possible, they will enquire from us. This is what they normally do. They will inquire from us; then we will decide on the time to attend that lecture.* (BRS3)

Student participant BRS3 also submitted that when the semester begins, lecturers in the special education department call them together to talk to them on how they should live life on campus.

The lecturers advise them on issues such as lecture attendance; what to do when taken ill; and, making sighted friends. Specifically:

> *If you fail to attend a lecture, you are targeting to fail that paper. Secondly, if you are sick and you don't report to the school, meaning they may not know that you are sick and before you realise you will die. That is why they advise us to have sighted friends that will be visiting us now and then. In case you are facing a problem, the person will be able to voice out to the hearing of the school and the student body. … We have sighted friends, yes. …* (BRS3)

Students with vision impairment were also advised to forge a good relationship with everyone on campus to avert discrimination. In parallel with these submissions, student participant BRS4 indicated that: "they give us motivational words that will encourage us to be here. They said we have potential. We can do things that persons without disability cannot do. With those motivational words, [students with] disabilities are performing well" (BRS4).

The data revealed that students with disability have the opportunity to benefit from counselling services such as career, academic and social.

5.4.2.5 Human Resource

Relevant and adequate human resource is critical for successful inclusion of students with disability in higher education. This section presents data on participants' perspectives regarding the adequacy of special education professionals and/or resource persons in PUB. All six staff and one student participant alluded to the issue of human resource. Issues emerging from the data include too few sign language interpreters and braille experts; and use of national service students on internship.

Participant BR5 explained that the staff in the DSU are inadequate in number and the work is overwhelming as the university employs only two permanent staff at the vision impaired section. Student participant BRS3 also expressed the view that there are inadequate numbers of people to teach braille and sign language and, as such, their studies in these areas do not run smoothly. Specifically:

> *… We don't have enough special teachers. Let me say if one is not around, you have to wait until he returns before he will take you through the course or the subject you are doing again. Yes, that is another challenge. … They teach us… Braille is one. … Another one is doing sign language. These are some of the subjects that they teach us. Most people hardly learn how to teach these*

subjects, so we find it difficult to come by the teachers. Because there haven't been enough special teachers for those two subjects... (BRS3)

Staff participant BR4 observed that, as the number of students with vision impairment keeps increasing it comes with challenges. After examinations, the resource persons have to transcribe the examinations scripts for lecturers to mark. This activity can be delayed due to the number of people in the resource centre. The increase in enrolment, therefore, should reflect an increase in personnel, particularly braille experts who transcribe the writing of students with vision impairment. Similarly, participant BR1 indicated that:

> *We don't have enough [personnel]. We don't have enough! I am not sure those who are doing it [braille transcription] they are employed people. It's like students when they get to their upper levels, use it in the form of internship or practical training. It is only a few lecturers they have who train them, and the students are being used to carry out this activity. …*

BR5 confirmed students were being used to alleviate the burden of the university employing braillists. Explaining that, when the final year students are going out for internship or teaching practice, those who are good in braille and are interested, are retained at the resource centre and they do the internship there. They help with the transcription, recording and all the services provided by the DSU. According to the participant, this practice has been helpful because the internship students help to do a lot of work and they are up to the task.

Conversely, BR2 suggested that the use of internship students in the transcription of students' assignments, quizzes and examinations comes with challenges:

> *… You see, any time you are marking the transcribed scripts or whatever from the braille; you will see that some of the sentences don't connect... Sometimes the things they have written are meaningless. Over the period I have gathered that it's because of the resource persons there. They always use students on internship or students on national service. I think that these are students who are not well trained, who are not very qualified to do that. So, inadequate personnel. If we can employ personnel, with the status of very competent lecturers who can help in that direction... Other than that, the use of students is always creating lots of problems.*

BR6 observed the need to employ more lecturers and resource persons in the area of disability and also ensure that professional training is available. According to this participant, students with hearing impairment need sign language interpreters to access information during lectures; however, there are not enough sign language interpreters. Specifically:

> *Because you go to a class and the lecture is about three credit hours, and the deaf students are about five and one person (resource person) will be signing and get tired, and these affect their performance. But if they are enough and they have two to a lecture hall if one is tired the other will take over.* (BR6)

Similarly, note-taking for students with hearing impairment is not regular because "we don't have enough human resource to do that always" (BR6). Expressing views on parallel concerns, staff participant BR3 observed that: "a lot will depend on a lot of in-service training and staff development. … And it is about convincing management to understand the needs of persons with disability. It is about empowering persons with disability to demand quality services".

The strategic plan also made provision for recruiting more professionals and specialist staff in special needs education. For example, more sign language interpreters, braille experts, and orientation and mobility experts for students with vision impairment are expected to be recruited. However, the participants reported that the number of professionals is inadequate for student demand.

5.4.2.6 Teaching and Learning

The data presented in this section focuses on the teaching strategies and approaches used by lecturers, during the process of teaching, to meet the learning needs of students with disability and to ensure that learning takes place. Seven out of the eleven participants - five staff and two students - raised this issue during the interviews.

Issues described by the participants include the adjustment in teaching methods, techniques, and/or strategies and differentiation in teaching. Some participants described instances of challenges associated with knowledge, pedagogical skills and approaches to teaching adopted by some lecturers; for example, inaudible voice; and, lack of recognition of the presence and contributions of students with vision impairment.

Five staff participants indicated that approaches to teaching are adjusted to meet the needs of students with disability during delivery, particularly those with vision and hearing impairment. With the advent of technology, most of the lecturers, especially those who are experts in the field of special needs education, are moving away from the conventional methods of delivering lectures. They are incorporating technology, such as PowerPoint, as well as strategies and approaches to teaching to ensure differentiated learning (BR5). Similarly, participant BR3 reported that lecturers who are experts in special needs education adopt the appropriate approaches and strategies during the teaching-learning process. When lecturers lack knowledge

and skills in teaching students with vision and hearing impairment, they receive assistance from resource persons in the DSU. Participant BR1 indicated that he taught a "deaf and dumb" student mathematics with the assistance of a sign language interpreter from the Special Education Department and the student passed very well. Other participants also commented on the importance of understanding how to cater for students with special needs:

> *When we are teaching, we take into consideration those with disability that are present, and … you give them also chance even to ask questions from what they learned. And when we finish, we give them also the notes to send to the centre to be turned into braille for them. … Yes, we do a lot of differentiation here - differentiation in terms of teaching... And we make students learn in different ways because we have different learning styles* (BR3)

> *… another support is … the lecturers, let me say, special teachers [professionals in special needs education] … they try all they can to help us understand anything at all that they are teaching because they are special teachers. If we don't understand, they will take their time to explain things for us to understand. (BRS3)*

Participant BR4 explained that, in her department, due to a large number of students, the lectures are mostly teacher-centred. On a few occasions, the discussion method is used. "When it is ordinary lectures, we call for questions, and some of them ask a lot of questions. …there is one visually impaired who completed last year. He did very well. He was always asking questions in class" (BR4). For mid-semester assessment, especially, the students do group work and group presentations and the students with disability also participate actively in all these activities. When it comes to group presentations, students with disability join their colleagues to stand in front of the class to present. When questions are posed to the group, they also answer (BR4).

Staff participant BR3 submitted that strategies for differentiation are applied when lecturing, giving an assignment, and in assessment and marking. For instance, consideration is given to the language acquisition level of students with hearing impairment and their scripts are marked according to their level. The intention is not to reduce that academic rigour but to ensure that they make sense in what they are presenting.

However, staff participant BR4 expressed the view that "some of the lecturers …need much education on how to deal with the visually impaired [students]". According to the participant, although most of the lecturers did special education it was only a semester, and this was not enough to develop adequate knowledge in dealing with students with disability. The participant

illustrated by explaining that it was only a year ago that she realised students with hearing impairment write differently. Previously, when she saw 'deaf' written in the back of the examination script, she marked them the same way she marked others. The participant added:

> *It was when I got to know that they have their own way of writing then I pay attention to them [their scripts]. …I learned with the subject-verb agreement they have a way of expressing themselves. So, from that time when I take the paper [examination script], and I see 'deaf' behind I take my time to find meaning out of it. Most lecturers do not get the opportunity that I got; they are not privy to that. They are not familiar with that.* (BR4)

Staff participant BR5 reported that some students complain that the teaching strategies and methods employed by some lecturers are not inclusive, which was supported by BR6. BR5 described an instance where the only two students with vision impairment who do ICT as their major program came to report that the mode of delivery does not help them. The participant indicated:

> *I asked, why? They said the lecturer said:*
> *"Do you see this? Look at the PowerPoint etc." but they cannot see.*
> *Other instances are:*
> *"Look at the board/screen…"*
> *"Go to page 40 and look at…"*
> *"Do you see what I'm pointing to on the slide 2 of the PowerPoint? ..."*
> *Meanwhile, the blind person cannot see.* (BR5)

The participant said he went to discuss the challenge with the head of the ICT unit who reassigned the two students with vision impairment to a teaching assistant who only attends to them. According to the participant, the head of the ICT unit agreed that because the students are many, sometimes they forget about students with vision impairment. The participant continued that he requested the ICT course outline, to ensure it had been adapted to suit the needs of these students.

Similarly, participant BRS1 described the difficulties students with vision impairment sometimes experience in lectures due to teaching strategies adopted by some lecturers. Specifically:

> *…knowing that we are persons with disability, specifically, visual impairment, they can be lecturing, and they will write things on the board, and they will say: "If you take this, this will give you this; this will do this." Meanwhile, a person with visual impairment cannot visualise what it is and identify it, but they still do this.* (BRS1)

Staff participant BR6 described other complaints received from students concerning challenges during the teaching and learning process such as lack of audible voices because the lecture halls are big and there is no microphone. Some lecturers also move around as they lecture. These situations affect the lecture recordings of students with vision impairment.

Student participant BRS3 reported that it is frustrating when some lecturers are teaching, and they contribute to the topic being treated and they are ignored by the lecturer. Next time they do not feel like raising their hand to contribute in class. The participant further said:

> *It is embarrassing you raise your hand amid people to answer questions and nobody listens to you. …if even it is because it is said at the university level no answer is wrong… Even if you answer a question… the lecturer will not mind you at all. He says nothing concerning what you have said; you may not be able to tell whether what you have said is right or is wrong.* (BRS3)

The discourse revealed that although some lecturers employ appropriate teaching and learning methods, others adopt pedagogical approaches that may negatively impact on the learning success of students with disability.

5.4.2.7 Financing

This section presents data on participants' perspectives on financial issues. All five students and two staff participants referred to this issue. Matters alluded to included financial challenges in respect of retrofitting existing infrastructure; scholarships; government bursaries; reduction in fees; and financial support for students with disability. Staff participant BR1 identified the considerable financial cost as a constraint to modifying existing physical infrastructure, including providing elevators to existing high rise buildings to make them accessible.

Participant BR4 indicated that she was aware that the university has scholarships for students. She noted that, in January 2018, she received a letter that three students with vision impairment should go and collect their scholarship money. In support of this submission, student participant BRS1 indicated that: "I heard the Vice-Chancellor established scholarship and some of the persons with disability also benefited. So, that is the financial support that I may say it's there" (BRS1). On the issue of government bursary and scholarships available for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and with high academic achievement, student participant BRS4 said:

> *Others benefited last year. I am in Level 200, so I am hoping to receive it this year. When the forms come out, I will also apply. We have the bursary as well. We have bursary for students with disability. When you're in Level 100 [first year], you'll fill the form. So, this semester, they will be bringing the money. … but I want them to beef it up so that … they will give us some money to support our daily activities, it should be a little bit higher.* (BRS4)

All five student participants alluded to the financial challenges that confront them in one way or the other. Student participant BRS3 noted that financial problems prevent students with disability from reporting back to school on time when the semester reopens. They have to look for funds to pay for their accommodation and academic facility user fees. Sometimes after making a lot of efforts, they still have difficulty because the fee is above what they can afford to educate themselves. Consequently, some owed the university residential facility user fees. The participant, therefore, advocated for a reduction in fees for students with disability. A student participant stated: "last year I came to the school late because of financial problems. This year too, I'm coming late because of the same problem" (BRS2). A student participant suggested:

> *Persons with disability should be encouraged with scholarships to make us participate effectively. Being a person with disability is a [higher] cost than being without disability. You go to the hospital; you pay medical bills. Sometimes it is difficult for your parents to afford. So, a scholarship will help us meet some of our educational needs and participate effectively. The person may come to the university alright, but participation may be a problem due to some financial problems.* (BRS5)

> *…when school reopens, and they are supposed to pay their fees, they stay home for one month, which can affect their academic performance. …some students with disability are suffering financially in accessing education, and I am one of such people.* (BRS1)

Participant BR1 observed that "elsewhere, such a university department (DSU) would have been fully funded by the government or some donors". This participant believed that, unlike in Ghana and other developing countries, students with disability in other parts of the world would have scholarships and there would be adequate resource people and professionals to train them to graduate successfully. According to BR1: "they are to pay [fees] like the normal people and at the same time too what they need to learn too is not adequate".

Evident in the contributions of the participants was the belief that lack of funds impedes not only the provisions of accessible infrastructure for students with disability but also hinders their ability to participate effectively.

5.4.2.8 Quality and Effectiveness of Support Services

This section focuses on data relating to participants' perspective on service quality and effectiveness within the framework and confines of the services provided by the DSU. Participant BR1 reported that as per his observation, the equipment available at the DSU is inadequate and outdated because of a lack of maintenance culture and replacement of expired products. Another participant added:

> *… But there are so many other things that the centre is unable to do now, even though they are trying. I know they are doing their best. Something like recording for the students, I don't think they are on top of it. As for the brailling they are doing their best, but still, students complain that they are not receiving the best of services. So yes, they are doing something, but it is not the best. … The problem is not from the staff as such, but it is systemic. It is the system. We need to factor it into the corporate strategic plan, and then we will ask ourselves: in the next five years, how do we want to see the centre [DSU] like? You know that equipment and those kinds of services for persons with disability are very expensive so if you don't put it into the strategic plan, and do a proper budget for it, you can never meet their needs. … but I think we can do better if we include it in the strategic plan and have a substantial budget for it.* (BR3)

Similarly, student participant BRS2 indicated that he would award the DSU 50% for effectiveness "but to go higher maybe 100% no, no". The basis of his decision, according to the participant, is that: "… I don't know much. I don't see much [of how the DSU perform or function]" (BRS2). According to staff participant BR5, the quality and efficacy of the services provided by the DSU would improve "if the university will respond or purchase all that we are requiring and then give us the space to operate". Staff participant BR4 concurred with the need to improve upon the effectiveness of some of the services offered to students with disability.

Contrary to the views shared above, student participant BRS5 indicated that services provided by the DSU "help a lot" in enhancing his academic achievement. Staff participant BR4 pointed to the fact that, as a result of these services, the performance of students with vision and hearing impairment in examinations is good. Student participants BRS1 made similar observations. Specifically:

> *They play a lot of roles in our academic achievement because if I do not get the soft copy of a handout, textbook or lecture notes a lecturer has given out I will not be able to read and pass my examinations and quizzes as well. I think it is very important, without those support services we cannot be here, and our academic survival cannot be ensured. So, they are very, very relevant to our staying here*. (BRS1)

The discussions in this section revealed that issues such as obsolescent, faulty and insufficient equipment; inadequate lecturers and professional staff; inaccessible physical facilities; and systemic problems marred service quality and effectiveness. Students with disability indicated that the services they receive enhanced their academic achievement. It is evident that there are numerous challenges that impact support and provisions.

5.4.3 Social Inclusion

This section presents data relevant to the experiences of students with disability regarding their involvement in the social life of the university. Subheadings emerging from participants' data are social engagement; attitudes; and, construction of disability.

5.4.3.1 Social Engagement

This section presents data obtained from participants concerning social engagement and participation of students with disability in PUB. Eight out of the eleven participants shared their views regarding this issue. Concerns were raised about engagement and participation in sports and games activities; Students Representative Council (SRC) activities and Hall Week celebrations; student politics; and, empowering students with disability with the knowledge to engage, participate and socialise, were evident in the data.

5.4.3.1.1 Sports and Games

Staff participants BR2, BR3 and BR5 reported that students with disability have participated in the GUSA (Ghana University Students Association) games. However, student participant BRS1 was of the view that the ad hoc measures applied to enable students with vision impairment to play or compete in goalball during the GUSA games were usually unfavourable to success. Specifically:

> *… There is no opportunity for us. It is only that we have something they called GUSA games. When it gets to that time, that is when some of our colleagues will be taken there. They go to other schools and borrow goalball and give [it] to them. But they don't have access to it in the school here, so when they go to compete, they perform abysmally.* (BRS1)

Participant BR5 indicated that most students with disability do not participate in sports and games activities because they are not interested. Staff participant BR2, however, observed that due to the "peculiar problems" of students with disability, their participation in sports and games activities is very minimal. Thus, this participant perceived that the nature of their disability prevented them from participating actively. The participant further explained that mobility challenges might hinder students with vision impairment because sporting activities go into the night and returning to their respective halls of residence in the dark may pose challenges to them. Staff participant BR3 expressed the view that: "they are allowed to participate, but we are saying the environment is still not very friendly. They go but getting involved becomes a problem because of the restrictive nature of the environment" (BR3).

Staff participant BR6 explained that wheelchair users go to the field, but they require support, even when they access the facility, and they are unable to participate. In addition, the visually impaired students need adapted sporting facilities, but these are not available. Staff participant BR4 was of the view that although students with disability are not intentionally excluded from recreational and other extra-curricular activities, provisions have not been made for them to access facilities, equipment and materials that will allow their participation. The participant explained further that from personal observations, students with disability, particularly those with vision impairment, do not patronise recreational and other extra-curricular activities. She commented:

> *Because if they will come there [to the field] and they will not benefit [from the sports and games activities], then they won't come. If … they will not participate in whatever is going on, then it is a waste of time. As an institution, I think we have to find out what the problems are. And also find out what makes them participate so that they will also participate…* (BR4)

In agreement with the views shared by staff participant BR4, student participant BRS1 indicated that since students with vision impairment have no access to sporting equipment and materials necessary for their participation, it prevented them from going to the field. According to the participant: "going there [to the field], I see it as not relevant. The fact that I will go there and cannot part take… I cannot do that" (BRS1). The participant was of the view that provisions should be made for students with disability to participate in all activities on campus. The participant further added:

> *We say: "a sound mind lives in a healthy body". If there are sporting activities, things must be made easy for me to participate in those sporting activities as well for me to also have a sound mind to study in the environment. In this school, though we all pay the same fees, it will get to recreational activities, and they will tell you that the equipment for your sporting activities are not in this school and, therefore, you cannot participate. It was just this morning that I had drafted a letter giving them prior notice that if this thing continues, I will place injunction on the sporting activities.* (BRS1)

Furthermore, student participant BRS1 explained that he has realised that his rights to participate in sports and games activities are being ignored. Specifically, the participant noted: "because I have seen that it is a violation of human rights because you cannot bill me, I will pay full fees, and I will not enjoy it [sports and games]". He reiterated that students with disability are enlightened to understand and exercise their rights.

5.4.3.1.2 SRC Activities and Hall Week Celebrations

There were mixed responses to participation in social activities. Student participant BRS4 indicated that students with disability are not prevented from attending and participating in activities outlined for SRC Week and Departmental Week celebrations. The participant added:

> *Our colleagues on campus who are not disabled, when it's time for church activities, they come to our halls, they pick us up and go with us. With the practicing of inclusive education here [in this university], they get to understand that disability is for everyone and it is at your doorstep.* (BRS4)

Staff participant BR5 reported that students with disability do express concerns about non-participation and lack of opportunity to engage in extra-curricular or recreational activities such as Hall Week celebrations, SRC Week celebrations, association activities and church activities. However, this participant reported that students with disability are excluded due to safety concerns. Specifically, the participant said:

> *But to be very honest with you … the students with disability used to complain. …they desire to participate in Hall Week Celebrations or SRC Celebrations, but their sighted colleagues are afraid that perhaps if they go on a float or follow them to parade in town, they may get hurt, so they do not involve them. Those apprehensions may be genuine. But I think they are left out in most of their activities, which is not the best.* (BR5)

Concerning the views shared by staff participant BR5 on safety concerns, student participant BRS1 described why students with disability excluded themselves:

> *For example, they can say they are organising hall week; you will not see a single person with disability among them. Because the fear is that they are not having proper monitoring for you to be safe, so to be on the safer side, you will not engage yourself in that. …* (BRS1)

5.4.3.1.3 Student Politics

Student participant BRS1 observed that the sensitisation and education received from the lecturers and personnel in special needs education have made him understand that: "I can also stand and be voted for and be elected as a leader of any of the [student leadership portfolios]" (BRS1). Student participant BRS1 also expressed the view that at least one student with disability should represent (students with disability) at meetings organised by the student leadership. Additionally, one student with disability could be appointed to the prefectorial board when appointments are being made. This person would represent the voice of students with disability in terms of physical access, information access, and many other things. However, none of that is done and students with disability are not represented on any student leadership committees and/or boards of the university. BRS1 suggested that to facilitate engagement:

> *When they are deliberating on issues a person with disability can say: "we have physically challenged among us so… if you take it to the fourth floor the person with physical challenge cannot climb there so let's bring it to the ground floor. …we have visually impaired among us so … let's braille the program so that they can read and understand what we are doing''.*

5.4.3.1.4 Empowering Students with Disability with Knowledge to Engage and Participate

Staff participant BR3 submitted that "when you talk about equity … you're not looking at equal opportunity". BR3 indicated that PUB has several mechanisms for ensuring that students with disability can participate and the university valued this participation:

> *It is participation, not necessarily equality, but participating according to one's ability. …because, we are not making them compete with others but compete with themselves; they are able to integrate. They see themselves as progressing. People who are doing what they are supposed to do... They can feel a sense of belonging because we don't do anything to discriminate against them. We make sure they are given the opportunity, and their contributions are recognised*. (BR3)

Staff participant BR5 indicated that, to ensure participation and engagement of all students, when conducting university-wide activities in the auditorium or conference halls and providing information to students, sign language interpreters for students with hearing impairment are employed.

It is evident from the data that while there is the intention to empower students to engage and participate, opportunities are not created for students with disability to engage in recreational and co-curricular activities. Equipment and materials that will allow students with disability to actively engage in sports and games activities in PUB are not available. Further, students with disability have no representation on any of the student leadership committees or prefectorial boards; as a consequence, their voices are not heard, and they have no opportunity to express their concerns through student leadership.

5.4.3.2 Attitudes

This section presents data from participants on attitudes of the university community towards students with disability. Ten out of the eleven participants shared their views regarding these attitudes during the interview. Attitudes reported by these participants can be grouped into two categories: positive and negative attitudes. While positive attitudes are minimal; negative attitudes are more evident and come mainly from students without disability and the staff of PUB.

5.4.*3.2.1 Positive Attitudes*

Positive attitudes, which emerged from the data included peer and staff support; good interpersonal relationship; preferential treatment; sensitising students with and without disability to be friendly and be interested in the welfare of one another; and, attention received on campus. Some students without disability provide mobility support to their peers with disability. Staff participant BR2 reported that the “normal students” support students with disability a lot. They hold the hands of students with vision impairment to lead them from their halls of residence to the lecture halls and assist them with seats. Then, at the close of lectures, they guide them to the halls of residence. This support has become standard practice at the university. “So, all of us have been supporting them; sometimes I do hold their hands when I see that they are in need and almost everyone does that” (BR2).

Similarly, student participant BRS2 indicated that his colleagues who are studying the same program guide him to and from lectures and around campus. This participant indicated that, although some students have negative attitudes such as discrimination towards students with disability, others are helpful. The participants provided the following illustration:

> *… I don't know … because they are mature students. They are rather prepared to help the visually impaired [and] the hearing impaired. Because we offer it [special education] as a program here… So, we are familiar with the things that are necessary for them. … Sometimes, you'll be in this office and students will knock. If you check, they are bringing a visually impaired student. He doesn't even know the student anywhere; he just sees him and feels like assisting him. … as for student-student relationship and others, I think it's very good.* (BR4)

Student participant BRS2 explained that some sighted students volunteer to read all the textbooks to students with vision impairment so that they can also prepare for, and write, quizzes and examinations successfully. Staff BR2 confirmed this stating that "I'm told that even with their studies, they also support them".

Participant BR6 reported that students with disability generally commended the administrative staff for promptly attending to their needs, but noted: "yes, we may have one or two people [administrators] who may not treat them well because naturally, we have differences" (BR6). Elaborating on this, staff participant BR4 described how students with disability are given an advantage over other students by the general office staff.

> *Even in my office, they always attend to them first. … In the general office, for instance, when they come to do their registration, they sometimes ask them to leave their records behind and it's done for them. Sometimes they will attend to them immediately despite other students' documents. So normally, they give them preferential treatment. … There is no negative attitude towards students with disability.* (BR4)

Nevertheless, staff participant BR4 conceded that "maybe there are subtle discriminatory things I will not be able to talk about because I've not witnessed it myself".

Participant BRS4 explained that the first day he attended lectures in the university, one of the lecturers in special needs education told the whole class that PUB is an inclusive institution so anytime student without disability realise that students with disability are in need, they should provide them with the necessary support within their remit. The participant added:

> *So, there is nothing like discrimination, no negative attitude, no negative comment. We're living here with no parents, no wife, brothers, and sisters, but we live comfortably. So, some of us, we feel like staying on campus after vacation. Because, the attention here [in PUB], some people don't get it at home.* (BRS4)

In the same vein, student participant BRS3 reported that students with vision impairment had sighted friends who are interested in their welfare and demonstrated this concern by regular visits to check on their general well-being. In case of sickness or any other eventuality, these friends inform the relevant people and officials about it. The participant added that students with vision impairment are advised by lecturers in special needs to forge a good relationship with everyone on campus. They, therefore, respect everyone on campus. Likewise, student participant BRS4 also mentioned the names of some lecturers in special needs education who he said give students with disability lifts in their private cars when they see any of them at the roadside waiting for a vehicle.

5.4.3.2.2 Negative Attitudes

Although, there was evidence of negative attitudes within the university community, they are less prevalent among staff and students whose area of study was in special needs education. Negative attitudes pointed out by participants included stereotypes based on societal beliefs and the backgrounds of an individual resulting in delays in addressing the needs of students with disability; negative comments; lack of appreciation for diversity; avoidance; unfriendly and difficult behaviour by some DSU staff; disturbances in the dormitory; mockery; and lack of advocacy. These negative attitudes are categorised into three factors: mindsets and misconceptions; offensive comments; and actions.

5.4.3.2.2.1 Mindsets and Preconceptions

This category of negative attitudes described beliefs, mentalities, prejudices and presumptions people harboured towards persons with disability. Student participant BRS5 observed that: "…in Ghana, we still live in a society where people have negative perceptions about individuals with disability" (BRS5). These opinions are carried over into the university system and impact people's behaviors towards students with disability. Equivalently, staff participant BR3 noted that:

> *I will not say there are no negative attitudes, but I will also not say everything is smooth for them [students with disability]. So yes, there are. Because people*

come from different backgrounds and people have their own beliefs, and so there are [negative attitude towards students with disability]. (BR3)

Student participant BRS5 reported that some people have the misconception that people with disability are weak and cannot do anything: "when you want to do something, you'll tell yourself: people think I'm weak. People's perceptions influence your action and reaction towards certain things. Sometimes they do not bother to find out what and how you wanted to do it" (BRS5).

Student participant BRS2 explained that some people have the conviction that disability is contagious and think that if they get close to you, they will contract those conditions and become like you. As a consequence, such people avoid persons with disability, particularly students with hearing and vision impairment. The participant was of the view that those in higher education institutions are expected to know better, but some of them also think the same way. The participant expressed the opinion that the university, particularly the DSU, should organise a forum to educate students without disability that disability is not contagious so that they can be informed.

Staff participant BR3 submitted that people are hesitant in responding to issues affecting students with disability because of certain misconceptions. Specifically:

> *Our attitude towards persons with disability is such that we think disability sits somewhere from human beings and people are earmarked to have disability, and some people will never have disability. But if you get your foot swollen one day and you're unable to walk properly for about one week when they tell you to remove obstacles so that those with disability can walk and can access places, you will do it. And I will say we have to pray that everybody experiences some form of disability and so that it will inform us. It will make us change our negative attitudes. Seriously!* (BR3)

5.4.3.2.2.2 Offensive Comments and Remarks

This category of negative attitudes focused on unacceptable comments and remarks directed towards students with disability. Student participant BRSI observed that some students without disability pass comments about students with disability and "if you hear some of those comments you would ask yourself, 'whoa', is it higher education institution where we are learning, and people are still making such comments?" For example:

> *You can just be passing, and someone will tell you: "human being is here". So directly or indirectly, the person is telling you that you the one coming you*

> *don't have features of being a human being. This is an example of such comments.* (BRS1)

Similarly, student participant BRS3 commented that sometimes they are ridiculed by students without disability because of their condition. The participant further explained that sometimes, instead of assisting you, they wait for the opportunity to ridicule you. Specifically:

> *Sometimes the mockery. The students they mock at you because you are disabled. Like if you … cannot identify your way, you see that they don't even make an attempt to say probably you should do this and that before you hit your leg. You just crash the wall [and] that is the time they will turn to laugh at you. (BRS3)*

5.4.3.2.2.3 Actions and Behaviors

Actions and behaviours denote unacceptable ways people act and/behave towards students with disability. Staff participant BR5 described a situation where sighted students no longer wanted to be in the same study group with students with disability. According to the participant, both categories of students formed study groups where they contribute to assignments and also read books to students with vision impairment. After two semesters, the sighted students realised that students with vision impairment obtained higher marks and better grades. "They became envious" and, as a consequence, they neither allowed them in their study groups nor read textbooks to them (BR5). Staff participant BR6 shared a similar view and also said that students without disability harbour discriminatory tendencies towards students with disability in organising group activities in the sense that they do not invite them to participate in these group activities.

Staff participant BR3 explained that people's attitude towards students with disability manifest in addressing the challenges confronting them. According to this participant, people procrastinate and delay when it comes to resolving issues concerning students with disability. Most of the challenges students with disability go through emanate from the negative attitudes that "we have as a people" (BR3). BR3 suggested that whenever the students with disability have challenges and these challenges are not addressed, they are not addressed because of negative attitudes. Because people do not appreciate the needs of students with disability, they do not see the importance of addressing them. But where positive attitude exists, people understand the challenges of these individuals and try to find solutions to them. The participant gave some instances:

> *If for instance, we have many open gutters, and you tell people we need to cover these gutters because we have people with visual problems and they can easily become victims, and the person tells you they have no money. … When somebody tells you, we don't have the money to do this; it is not the money. The person is thinking: "why must we spend all this money on these people? Why is it that we buy cars, buses but we don't think of a bus that is disability-friendly? … You are putting up a building, and we tell you "let the building be disability-friendly" then you don't do it. It isn't that you don't know, but because you think there is no need for it, so it is a negative attitude.* (BR3)

Staff participant BR5 reported incidences of discrimination and bad treatment meted out to students with disability. The participant referred to instances where sighted students refused to consider students with vision impairment to occupy the bottom bunk of bunk beds in the students' halls of residence. On the same subject of discriminatory acts, student participant BRS1 narrated an incident where a student with hearing impairment failed to report back to school for the second semester; he stopped his university education because of a perceived discriminatory behaviour towards students with hearing impairment by lecturers during teaching. Specifically:

> *He said lecturers would be lecturing, and they will look at them and focus on them and talk and they will not hear what they said, and the sign language expert will not sign to them …as to what has been said about them. What I told you now [as I speak now] He is in the house; he has not come to the school at all again [He has dropped out of the university]. So that is a very big hindrance.* (BRS1)

Student participant BRS2 reported that some staff of the DSU are also not friendly "at times … they are a bit difficult". Even though they work in the DSU their behavior towards students with disability and the way they handle issues concerning them prevents these students from getting close to them. The participant noted: "their attitude towards persons with disability …they have to work on themselves" (BRS2).

In direct contraction to the views shared by staff participant BR2 and BR4 on voluntary support, student participant BRS5 reported the reluctance of some people in the university community to assist students with disability. Participant BRS5 indicated that the university is "more of talking about inclusiveness, yet some individuals and colleagues sometimes do not put up the right attitude. It is not all that rampant. Sometimes, they do it, and you feel bad when you see it" (BRS5). The participant provided the following example:

> *Sometimes, they feel you're a burden when you need some help, but they cannot actually say it aloud. And that makes the person seeking that help uncomfortable. What I also mean by that is, for instance, if I need you to carry a chair for me to the class. You may not refuse, but your reaction will say everything. Next time, I will not feel comfortable to tell you to help me with this thing. So, I'm talking about the unwillingness of, especially, students to help individuals with disability.* (BRS5)

Student participant BRS5 is of the view that there should be enough advocacy for persons with disability and how they can relate with students who are not specialising in Special Education and its associated areas. This participant reported that "we have a lot of people on campus whose actions and reactions should consider persons with disability so that the environment should be more convenient for students with disability" (BRS5).

The analysis of data has revealed both positive and negative attitudes. The positive attitudes come across in peer support and preferential treatment, whereas the negative attitudes manifest in various forms including stigmatisation, stereotypes, derogatory remarks, avoidance, helping under compulsion, procrastination and delay in resolving issues affecting students with disability.

5.4.3.3 Construction of Disability

This discussion presents data on participants' conceptualisation of disability. The meanings created by participants influence their understanding of issues concerning increasing higher education access and participation for persons with disability. All the 11 participants from PUB described how they framed disability.

Ten out of the11 participants variously described disability to include impairment; the inability to perform as expected by our society because of malfunctioning, absence or lack of body parts; dysfunction of the mental, behavioural and physical ability of an individual due to accident or genetic factors; deformation of body part; deviation from the norm; and problems associated with psychological or emotional functioning. A participant stated that "a person is considered to have disability if he or she has restrictions or lack the ability to perform an activity in a manner considered normal of a human being" (BR2). According to staff participant BR6, "disability is any restriction that is imposed on someone by virtue of an impairment or psychological condition". The participant's view is illustrated by this statement by BRS3:

> *Disability to me, it means a loss of function of any part of the body. This simply means that if you have a sight problem like I am a visually impaired person without the sight, that is why I am disabled. Somebody maybe amputated. There is one who is having a hearing problem, hearing impairment that is a disability. Some may be people who are crippled, and we* call *them physically challenged people. They are all disabled people.*

According to staff participant BR5, some disabilities are visible, but some are not. Vision impairment, for example, is visible and, therefore, it receives public sympathy, unlike hearing impairment, which is not visible most of the time.

Only one out the 11 participants described disability both as a presence of impairment and societal impediment. The participant explained disability in terms of any condition that makes it impossible for an individual to participate successfully in any of life's activity. According to the participant, disability may be in the form of impairment or impediments that we have in society. Specifically:

> *In the strictest of senses, we are looking at the presence of impairment that will limit individual's ability. So, for instance, if you have a problem with your vision and it comes to writing and doing all sorts of things and because you cannot see properly, you are disabled or have a disability. Then you can be trained to overcome that disability, so you can also participate in life.* (BR3)

The interview discourse demonstrated that ten out of 11 participants described disability as impairment; thus, from the deficit perspective. Conversely, one staff participant viewed disability as both the presence of impairment and social barriers that obstruct the functioning of individuals - a combination of the medical model and social model perspectives.

5.4.3.4 Use of Inappropriate Terminology

The analysis of PUB data revealed instances where inappropriate terminologies such as disabled persons, visually impaired and hearing impaired were used. Inappropriate terminology such as deaf and dumb were also used in referring to persons with hearing impairment.

5.5 Chapter Summary

Participants demonstrated awareness of some of the structures the universities are expected to establish to enact the IE policy successfully. However, some of them are not aware of the existence of the national IE policy. Although PUB does not have an institutional disability policy, it has guidelines and practices directing the inclusion of persons with disability. Some of these guidelines are within the corporate strategic plan of the university.

Physical access and mobility are restricted by inaccessible physical structures, hazards within the environment, and lack of disability-friendly transportation systems and arrangements. Orientation programs for staff and students without disability are lacking, and this situation limits their knowledge regarding disability issues. PUB is barely managing with operational space for the DSU, and old, and inadequate learning facilities available for students with disability. Assistive technology, ICT facilities, and software for students with disability are virtually non-existent. Learning materials in the university library are not in an accessible format for students with vision impairment. Only a limited number of professionals and resource persons with the requisite expertise is available to provide support services for students with disability. Because some faculty have limited knowledge in handling students with disability in the lecture halls, the inappropriate pedagogical strategies they adopt tend to obstruct students learning and achievement. Some faculty are unaware of the right of students with disability to receive examination accommodations.

Financial challenges limit the provisions and support available for persons with disability in HEIs and hinder their access, academic, and social engagement, thus impacting on effective inclusion of people with disability. However, the few who enrolled said the little support available enhances their academic achievement because they cannot do without it. Financial constraints also impact access and engagement of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Findings also revealed that negative attitudes are widespread in PUB, where all but one study participant perceived disability from the medical model perspective. Although counselling services are offered, some students with disability do not avail themselves.

PUB is making efforts to increase access and participation for persons with disability in higher education and this is partly demonstrated by the various categories and the high number of persons with disability it admits and enrolled. However, these efforts are compromised with under-resourcing, human and material, constraining policy implementation.

CHAPTER SIX

PUBLIC UNIVERSITY C

6.1 Introduction

This section presents and analyses findings from Public University C (PUC). Five participants comprising four staff members and one student with disability were interviewed in PUC. Staff participants were selected from key management and leadership positions of the university; one student, out of the three undergraduate students with disability enrolled in the university, participated in the study (see Table 6.1). The participants, therefore, had the ambit and/or range of experiences and thoughts requisite for this research investigation.

Data analysis and presentation followed a similar procedure and pattern as in PUA and PUB. Two main themes emerged from the interview data. These were policy context and student experience. Perceptions on policy expectations and enactment by Ghanaian public universities; and institutional policy and guidelines on disability were evident in the data as the two key ideas relating to policy. Analysis of data relating to student experience generated physical environment; support services; and social inclusion as the key subheadings. Data obtained from observation and document review were also presented along with the interview data.

Table 6.1: Participant Profile PUC

S/N	Participant identifier	Type of disability	Position held/Year of study
1	CR1	NI*	Pro-vice-chancellor
2	CR2	NI	Dean of Students
3	CR3	NI	Dean of Faculty
4	CR4	NI	Head of Department
5	CRS1	Physical disability	Second year

*none identified

6.2 Context and Background of Public University C

PUC is a public-funded university founded through the initiatives of the third president of the fourth republic of Ghana by an Act of Parliament. It is a multi-campus and autonomous university. The University was established at a time when the government sought to create a university in each region of the country where no public university existed. PUC has a mandate to provide leadership and management of energy and natural resources in Ghana and beyond.

To achieve this, PUC offers more than 30 undergraduate and postgraduate masters, but no doctoral programs. It has been accredited by the NAB and, as such, can confer its diplomas and degrees. PUC admits international students from the subregion and beyond.

6.3 Policy Context

This section presents data on participants' understanding of the demands of the national inclusive education (IE) policy on public universities in Ghana; and institutional policy and guidelines on disability.

6.3.1 Policy Expectations and Enactment by Ghanaian Public Universities

Participants from PUC shared their views regarding their understanding of the mandate of the national IE policy in the Ghanaian public universities; these views are presented in this section. Participants' views and comments relating to policy include providing inclusive facilities; designing accessible physical infrastructure, which caters for everyone irrespective of disability; awareness creation; providing an enabling environment; crafting institutional disability policy to give direction as to what should be done; providing the required software applications, assistive devices and/or technology and equipment; requisite human resource; conducive teaching and learning environment; appropriate classroom arrangement; modes of assessment; making the policy of inclusive education visible; and a welcoming institutional culture. Staff participant CR2 submitted that IT infrastructure, recruiting, and training the requisite human resources are key to effective implementation of the national IE policy. The participant explained that these resources would cater for the learning needs of students with disability in the university system. The following views of two participants are representative of all participants:

> *…also the awareness. We have to make the students, the community, in our homes, our families aware that we have these people with challenges. … And also, the culture… we create the environment so that they can also feel comfortable and confident to be part… All the facilities that would make our universities inclusive must be provided. So, that would include access to the buildings and any other facilities that would make sure that we can include everybody. It is important. At the moment, as I told you, we don't have facilities for the blind, and we don't have facilities for the deaf people.* (CR1)

> *It's a holistic sort of approach… So, for instance, I'm talking of infrastructure, access to the classroom. If somebody …is not able to walk well, you should be able to provide that access. That is a policy direction. We should also be able to provide the necessary tools that will enable them to learn. We should be able*

> *to facilitate … in the classroom settings how the arrangement could be and the rest. Also …exams. How can we make sure that they [lecturers] are able to assess them? The mode of assessment probably might not be the same as the regular students. Which mode of assessment will be ideal for such people and even thesis presentations, etc.? (CR3)*

Furthermore, staff participant CR3 shared a view on making the policy of inclusive education visible. The participant noted that, instead of a bulky document, key issues should be extracted to make it accessible and easily understood. These excerpts could be conspicuously available in every sector. Despite sharing their views on the expectation of the national IE policy, all four staff participants in PUC (CR1, CR2, CR3, CR4) reported that they were not aware that Ghana has an IE policy.

6.3.2 Institutional Policy and Guidelines on Disability

This section presents respondents' views on the availability of institutional policy and/or guidelines on disability. The four staff participants shared dissimilar and diverse views regarding the availability of institutional policy on disability and also on whether issues regarding disability has been captured in the university's corporate strategic plan.

With regard to the issue of the availability of institutional disability policy, staff participant CR2 stated that "we don't have any policy for persons with disability. If there is a policy on disability, it will direct the university as to what needs to be done in terms of access, physical infrastructure, and provisions in the lecture room". Staff participant CR4 noted that he did not know of any university policy on disability and indicated the need to develop an institutional disability policy. Specifically:

> *There needs to be a university policy on it [disability]. At the moment, because we are just a new university, we are putting a lot of those policies in place. But there has to be a policy that will cover people with disability. And even if it's not a policy on its own, it has to be captured in one of our policies that we have for students. …we have to make provision for people with disability*. (CR2)

> *…maybe, we need to have a disability policy in place. I've seen all the policy documents that we have on sexual harassment and all that, but I've not seen anything on disability. We might raise that issue since it is coming up, that we would need to develop a disability policy, just as we did for other policies.* (CR4)

Staff participant CR1 indicated that he would have to confirm whether disability issues were in the student handbook. The participant noted that the student handbook talks about

inclusiveness on issues such as politics and religion, and disability is sometimes stated as part of that inclusiveness. In addition, the participant explained that he has not gone through the strategic plan entirely, because it was done about two years ago, but expected that issues concerning disability might be captured in there. "I have to confirm it" (CR1). However, staff participant CR3 also indicated, "I'm sure issues of disability form part of the strategic plan". Staff respondent CR4 stated that he has not read the university's corporate strategic plan in full to know whether disability-related issues are stated in it or otherwise. Staff respondent CR2 submitted that:

> *To be honest with you [disability issues] are not captured in our strategic plan. The strategic plan is just a small document. Because you know in Ghana, we have schools that deal with those challenges but not at the higher education level. …But I don't know whether any university has any special thing [provisions] in place for the visually impaired. Because I've seen some who have PhDs and they are visually impaired. I've seen somebody who is a minister and is visually impaired. I guess the person studied from somewhere [studied abroad]. The strategic plan… we have short term, medium-term, and long term. It doesn't matter whether it is in the long term. If it's something that we are really looking up to then it's something that we should implement now. … So, as far as I'm aware, there is nothing like that. … At the moment, even if the person [with disability] is admitted, there will be no opportunity [no support for learning] … They can have it [access higher education] in other universities if it exists.*

According to CR2, culture and cultural issues could militate against including persons with disability in higher education. The participant noted that despite the perceived challenges, there should be provision for including persons with disability. CR2 continued that "it's something that ideally should be done. I think it should be done. But as for the strategy to get it done, I'm not privy to that". Further, participants CR2 and CR1 both expressed the view that research into the current policy on disability practice in Ghana is necessary. Participant CR2 highlighted that "for me, I think this is a very good research, and it will prompt us about maybe what we are not doing right". Similarly, participant CR1 emphasised that "…this sort of studies is needed because sometimes we ignore some of these and then by the time we realised, it becomes a problem…".

The participants stated four key messages. Issues such as availability of requisite human resource; disability-friendly infrastructure; learning resources; and conducive physical and learning environment were alluded to as some of the demands of the national IE policy.

Furthermore, the second key issue, which emerged from the data, revealed that there is neither institutional policy nor guidelines on disability available in PUC. The review of the strategic plan of PUC revealed that it did not make any mention of disability issues. While some participants expressed the need to design such a policy and guidelines, others were unaware that persons with disability access higher education in Ghana. Finally, staff in key leadership positions in PUC acknowledged the relevance of research into disability inclusion in higher education in Ghana as necessary for developing suitable institutional policy.

6.4 Student Experience

Experiences of students with disability in the university relates to the physical environment, support services, and social inclusion. These experiences are presented in this section.

6.4.1 Physical Environment

Students' experiences concerning the built environment, terrain, and student accommodation facilities are reported in this section. The built environment refers to the physical infrastructure and architecture; the terrain refers to the physical features of the grounds; and residential accommodation describe the residential accommodation facilities in place for students with disability.

6.4.1.1 The Built Environment

The built environment includes buildings, such as lecture halls and the administration block, as well as features such as handrails, and elevators. Participants described challenges relating to accessibility that include: old one-storey buildings without rails and ramps; using crutches to access storey buildings; lecture venues on inaccessible level; procrastination in resolving issues relating to accessibility of the built environment.

Staff participant CR1 reported that all the university buildings would have to be disability-friendly because, as the student population is increasing, the number of students with physical challenge will also increase. The participant noted, for instance, that one of the classroom blocks is supposed to be fitted with rails to make it accessible for students with physical challenge because there is no lift. CR1 reported, "they made the provision for the iron rod and everything, but it has not been done. I think along the line, we have to push and get it in place".

Staff participant CR3 noted that the buildings that were put up more recently, such as the administration block, are quite disability-friendly; however, the old structures are not

disability-friendly. The participant explained that contractors are required by the national policy to make all new buildings accessible to persons with disability and retrofit existing ones to make them disability-friendly. If the lecture room is located at a place where a student cannot climb, and a complaint has been made, it will be relocated to the ground floor. "But those that we have now use the crutches to climb. It's one storey. Our buildings are not very tall. And it's a new university, so we are now evolving" (CR3).

Staff participant CR4 noted that, because it is upstairs, the only means of getting access to the computer laboratory would be using crutches: "infrastructures have to be disability-friendly. Because, if the infrastructures are not disability-friendly, that means you have already cut them out, so they cannot fully participate" (CR4). Student participant CRS1 confirmed that he climbed the storey building with crutches, but that is not a major problem for him because of his upbringing and his experiences in life. The participant added that the hostel building is a bit high, but currently, he does not stay in the university hostel due to financial constraints. The following quotations from a staff respondent illustrate these issues:

> *As I said, to some extent, our infrastructure, for instance entering the administration, you can walk in even if you are disabled. But then, we don't have a lift to the first floor, so that could be a challenge if somebody wants to see the VC or want to see myself Pro-VC. …we have the same challenge in our library, which is not completed. …because it is a new building; something could be done, maybe provide some lifts. But some of the buildings are not disability-friendly; …some of the buildings were old buildings that we inherited. They were built in the 1960s, and so basically, if a person is disabled … they may not be able to access the building. …when, we have such students, we make sure their classes are on the ground floor so that they can have access.* (CR1)

Staff participant CR2 indicated the need to deal with infrastructure challenges so that persons with disability can get access. The participant explained that depending on the contractual agreement, the new campus of the university may provide modern facilities, appropriate environment, and infrastructure for students with disability, if there is a policy that supports disability provisions. Besides, the participant commented that the government must enforce the national IE policy as this will make it imperative for universities to put the necessary infrastructure in place, as directed by the policy. The participant said:

> *… But if the law is there and as the Dean of Students, I'm not aware of the law, and nobody is prompting me, then it becomes a challenge. Because I'm an*

> *engineer, I've seen and worked with a lot of Acts that have been passed in terms of renewable energy and things like that. They are nicely written in the books, and nobody is enforcing them. In that case, you wouldn't get the university to do what it is supposed to do even though they are nicely written in the books. That is what I think. So, if that inclusive thing [policy] came in 2015 and if it is really there, I will find it and read it. Then somebody has to enforce it to be implemented in the universities.* … (CR2)

This researcher observed that PUC has a relatively small campus, which the researcher understood was a temporary facility. Only a few buildings have access ways and some of these accessways were discontinued. The buildings were mainly one-storey and had stairs without handrails or lifts. It was only the main administration block that had railings and an elevator. There was wheelchair access at the entrance of the administration block and one other new faculty building. There were no automatic door reflexes and sensors fitted on buildings. No disability-friendly washroom was available in the university at time of data collection.

Figure 6.2: Stairs with handrails at the new administration block in PUC

The analysis of the data revealed that there are difficulties associated with accessing the built environment of the university and on-campus residential facilities for students with disability that were confirmed by the researcher's observations. While there were some aspects of the physical environment that supported persons with disability, such as these handrails, in the main, there is still much to be done.

6.4.1.2 Terrain

The terrain includes facilities such as grounds, gutters, parking, and pavements. Only one staff participant alluded to the issue of gutters and drains during the interview. The participant reported that most of the gutters and drains within the university environment are covered, and some of them are shallow. Specifically, the participant noted, "you can see that we don't have much of those gutters here if you go around" (CR3).

6.4.1.3 Residential Accommodation

This section presents data on accommodation arrangements available to students with disability. Issues reported by participants included: implementation of the "in-out-out-out" accommodation policy; accommodation reservations based on need; and, preferential treatment.

Staff participant CR1 indicated that though the university implements the "in-out-out-out" accommodation policy, it makes some reservations for need or special situations. If there is anybody who has a disability, the university authorities would consider the person for room allocation in the university's hall of residence. The participant further explained that consideration is already in place for students with disability because, at the beginning of the 2017/2018 academic year, the first-year intake was about two thousand students with five hundred accommodated in the university hostel. The five hundred included those with disability who needed residential accommodation support. Participants explained:

> *…they [students with disability] are given special attention. Even though the first years are given residential accommodation and others stay outside, people with disability are given special concession to stay in the hostel and the places which are convenient to them. ...* (CR3)
>
> *But for us, I think we are doing our best, what we can, given our circumstances, to help people with disability and almost everybody in the university. … Some cases come to me, people who are… I don't know whether you classify them as having some kind of disability, but they have some challenges. Some have a*

> *sickle cell [disease]… For them, we give them some preferential treatment in terms of the hostel where they will sleep.* (CR2)

However, student participant CRS1 explained that currently, he is a non-residential student. He stays in town and takes a taxi twice a day to get to campus for lectures. He would have wished to stay in the university hostel or close to the university; however, because of financial difficulties, he was unable to do so. The participant stated, "sometimes I have to miss lectures because I'm late. I don't get a taxi early to come to campus". Accommodation is one of the main supports he thought the university would offer him, but that is not the case. He reported that the hostel belongs to the university, a Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFund) Hostel, hence his expectation that he would be accommodated. The participant indicated that currently, where he stays, "there is no electricity in the house" (CRSI). When he reported these accommodation difficulties to the Student Representative Council (SRC), he was told rooms were not available, even for some SRC executives. He also informed his supervisor about the same challenges, but his supervisor was unable to help resolve it. Being accommodated outside the university also created difficulties when lecturers scheduled additional classes.

> *…it can happen that a lecturer will call our class rep that he should put it on the group page that we have an impromptu class. And right now, I'm staying far, but then my colleagues too are all staying at the hostel or close to the campus here. And, by the time I'll pick a taxi from my place to campus here for lectures, by then they've already started and gotten to somewhere. …* (CRS1)

According to the PUC student handbook, some categories of students, including those with health and disability issues, are eligible for residential accommodation in the university's halls of residence throughout their period of study. Continuing students without disability are required to look for residential accommodation off-campus. However, student participant CRS1 reported that he was not provided accommodation in the university's hall of residence. Although participants did not comment on transport around the campus, observations revealed that the shuttle buses on campus have no disability-friendly features and there were no reserved seats for students with disability.

The data revealed that physical access to academic facilities and residential accommodation issues presents challenges for the few students with disability in PUC.

6.4.2 Support Services

Support Services refer to all the support that are expected to facilitate access, teaching and learning for persons with disability in the university. These systems include admission and enrolment; academic support; counselling services; and financing.

6.4.2.1 Admission and Enrolment

Staff participants CR2, CR3, and CR4 all reported that there is no adjustment in entry requirements for any category of student. Admission is strictly based on an applicant's ability to meet the standard entry requirements. Staff participant CR2 explained that the university does "not specifically provide for or give that preferential treatment during admissions". During admission, the only thing that is considered is the aggregate obtained by an individual at the SSSCE level. Participants' views are illustrated by CR4:

> *As far as our university is concerned, I know we don't discriminate when it comes to admitting students. What we look at is: does the student meet the basic requirements? Once the student meets the basic requirements, then he is given admission. So, we don't discriminate whether you are disabled or able.*

Staff participant CR3 reported that due to the lack of requisite human and learning resources, any applicant seeking admission is asked to indicate whether he/she has any disability. This information is critical in ensuring that the university prepares adequately for prospective students with disability. Some categories of persons with disability may not be able to gain admission due to lack of the necessary human and material resources. However, once the applicant has been admitted, it means the university is fully prepared to facilitate the education of that individual.

It is evident from the data that no admission adjustments or provisions are in place for prospective students with special needs – the underprivileged, the disadvantaged and particularly, persons with disability in PUC.

6.4.2.2 Academic Support

Participants shared their views concerning the provision of academic support to students with disability; these data are presented in this section. Areas discussed by participants included learning facilities and equipment and learning support.

6.4.2.2.1 Learning Facilities and Equipment

Participants were of the view that the university is new but with time the basic structures and facilities would be developed to support and cater for the academic and learning needs of persons with disability. Staff participant CR1 indicated that it is possible to provide facilities for students with vision impairment and even those with hearing impairment because "now technology is making things available as quickly as possible" (CR1). Staff participant CR2 noted that there are lawyers and doctoral degree holders who are persons with vision impairment and; therefore, modern facilities could be provided at the new campus of the university to meet the challenges that come with educating persons with disability.

Participants also expressed their views on the possibility of creating a disability support unit or office that will help students with disability to cope with challenges as these students increase in number. According to CR1, the establishment of a disability support unit would help strengthen support for students with disability because it would have a research division where investigations and inquiries would be carried out on how to improve support services. Participants reported that although support services are not in place for students with disability, their specific complaints are addressed. Respondents shared these views:

> *…disability support unit, its creation comes with a cost. So, probably, there wouldn't be a direct unit for disability support, but there would be obviously a unit responsible for that activity, and that activity could be channeled to the counselling unit to play such a role. And you may not have the name disability support unit, but the university will do the activities that they are supposed to do by a particular unit designated to carry out such function.* (CR3)
>
> *Of course, there will be a need to establish disability support systems. Maybe, for now, we just have one or two disabled students; that is why it is of no concern to the authorities. … We are a young university, and I believe as we go forward, policies would be developed for the disabled, and the necessary structures would be put in place to support the disabled students.* (CR4)

It was observed that the ICT laboratory, which was meant for all students, had no adaptations for persons with disability. Assistive devices and software were non-existent. The same situation applied to the library where books and other reading and learning materials were not in an alternative format.

It is evident from the data that the university has no specialised learning facilities, equipment, and assistive technology dedicated to supporting students with disability. However, the

participants were confident the institution intends to make these provisions available in due course, as the student number grows, in spite of the knowledge that creating a disability support unit and the support systems requires a substantial investment of resources.

6.4.2.3 Teaching and Learning

Staff participants CR3 and CR4 reported that students with disability in PUC access academic content in the same way as any other student because their type of disability does not require any differentiation in presenting learning material. CR3 was of the view that "for instance, if somebody is having a problem with the leg, he is not challenged to be able to access a lecture in the same way the regular or other students do". The participant further explained that the lecturers use the same approaches for all students because, if there is only one student with disability in a class, the lecturer cannot design a special teaching technique "for just one person" (CR3). Similarly, student participant CRS1 indicated that he does not need any support for learning because he sees learning as teamwork. "I think it is teamwork. I and my colleagues have to do group studies".

The following quotation from a staff participant, which illustrates these issues indicates that lecturers do make accommodations on the basis of students' need:

> *… But as to the technique for integrating individual depends on the individual lecturer and the skills and at what time. Some will say: "because of your disability, come to the front of the class". Maybe the person cannot see well, but if he's closer, he may be able to see well. So that one will depend on the ingenuity of the individual lecturers to be able to identify them and bring them closer.* (CR3)

However, student participant CRS1 indicated that there is no arrangement or policy in place to reserve lecture hall seats for students with disability. He explained that sometimes you go to the lecture hall and all the tables and chairs have been occupied by students without disability, "so I have to stress myself going around looking for a chair to come and sit down". The participant expressed the need for seat reservations for students with disability so that they "can just go straightaway and sit down without stressing "themselves (CRS1).

The discourses revealed that currently, the university has no formal academic and learning support services in place for students with disability. This situation, according to the participants, is a result of the category of students with disability in the university. The university does not admit certain categories of students with disability and, therefore, does not

have to make provisions for them. These categories consist of two students with physical challenge and the third with unidentified disability.

6.4.2.4 Counselling Services

The four staff participants indicated that the university has a counselling unit that provides counselling services for all students, including those with disability. Staff participant CR3 noted that the counselling unit is one of the channels that address the problems of students. Apart from the counselling unit, students can go to the Dean of Students or the Dean of Academic Affairs to make them aware of their problems, and these will be addressed. Students with disability also receive help from all these units. Students with disability do not receive additional support, but with time, there will be a need for specific attention for those students (CR3).

Staff participant CR4 expressed the view that, in the interim, the counselling unit can meet the counselling needs of students with disability as one of their duties if they are not doing that already. He suggested that the counselling unit could advise commencing students with disability on issues such as the selection of new programs. This advice may be based on physical health and other conditions of an individual student with disability. The participant gave an instance of a student with physical challenge who is reading petroleum engineering but may be unable to engage in certain practical activities required by the program. Specifically:

> *… if I had met him in his first year, maybe I would even advise that maybe petroleum [engineering] cannot be the right this thing [program] for him. Because you would go on the 'rig'. As a disabled person, how would you go on a rig if it's offshore? How would you manage such a thing? So, I was even telling him that I would have recommended a different program for him instead of petroleum engineering. So maybe these are some of the things that if the support service is in place should do to students like that. …* (CR4)

The data revealed that at PUC, support is only available from the counselling unit established for all students.

6.4.2.5 Financing

Issues raised by participants included perceived financial constraints associated with providing university education to prospective students with disability and instances of financial challenges, which may be experienced by students with disability. Staff participant CR3 observed that: high costs; lack of trained and skilled personnel and lecturers in special

needs education; and, infrastructure challenges, due to financial difficulties, might restrain the inclusion of students with disability in the university.

Similarly, staff participant CR2 identified funding as one of the major perceived challenges of the implementation of the IE policy in PUC. The participant explained that providing the essential learning equipment and facilities for the training of students with disability requires funding. Elaborating that it will be difficult for these students to go through the traditional lecture system "since the person cannot see or the person cannot hear" and need support from specialised professionals. He reiterated that the university would have to be supported with funding "to be able to carry out or offer people with disability that education they deserve" and adapt learning activities to allow students with disability to participate effectively. Specifically:

> *… the people who are visually impaired will need to be given some…[support]. Based on where I sit, I don't see how such a person can be integrated into the normal engineering program or in the normal petroleum engineering program where they have to go and do a lot of practical, where they have to go and swim and things like that. It will be very difficult. So, some special avenues will have to be created, and that will require some funding.* (CR2)

Furthermore, staff participant CR2 expressed the view that for people with disability to have access to higher education, the government should ensure that "all the provisions in the Act are enforced or implemented". Since public universities are government-funded, the government would have to give the universities assistance in terms of funding for buildings and infrastructure so that they can carry on their mandate of successful implementation of the IE policy and the 2006 Disability Act. The participants said:

> *… Other than that, they can sit in Accra and write those things. Because I can tell you the challenges we are facing are quite huge as compared to the people with disability you are talking about. … There is no money for labs; there is no money for classrooms. … And there is no inclusiveness than providing for that. If you cannot take care of 'those who are okay' and can access education, you cannot come and enforce these things on any university. …the people you need to interview are those in the ministries and try to find out how they are enforcing these laws and policies.* (CR2)

Staff participant CR1 reported that, currently, no scholarship facility or financial support had been defined for students with disability. The university itself has no scholarships at the moment. The only scholarship which was available in 2018 was from the Ghana National

Petroleum Company (GNPC). According to the respondent, should any scholarship be available, its recipients would be considered on a case by case basis. If a student reported a financial need, management would have to consider it and decide.

As a consequence of the perceived uncertainties and doubts surrounding the government's ability to financially provide support for successful implementation of the IE policy in public universities, staff participant CR2 expressed the view that the government should instead consider the financially disadvantaged in society who qualify but cannot access university education due to poverty.

> *… But also, in the Ghanaian context, I think that there are a lot of, I mean, low hanging fruits that we are not even accessing. I mean, people qualify they are not physically impaired in any way, but they can still not access education at a higher level because of … funding. …then we, at least, have to provide for people who are poor in society who can do well at higher education level to have access. That is my concern* (CR2).

Staff participant CR2 indicated that the municipal assemblies are supposed to provide financial support to persons with disability and that a student with physical challenge has been receiving financial assistance in the form of scholarship from them. On the contrary, student participant CRS1 reported that, when he had admission into the university, he consulted the then Coordinating Director at the municipal assembly, who agreed that the assembly would support him from its common fund. When he was in the first year, the municipal assembly duly paid the fees. However, in the subsequent year, when he went to the assembly, the Coordinating Director and other officials had been transferred to different locations due to a change in government. The new officials reneged on the agreement. The student participant explained:

> *…And those who took over told me it wasn't stated in the letter that every year they will be paying the school fees for me. And because of that, they can't do anything about it. …that day I was just crying all over because that was my only hope that I was thinking that I will get money to fund my school fees and now it has blocked... And later on, I came back to inform the MCE [Municipal Chief Executive] herself, and the MCE also told me the same thing… And then also [said], the municipal assembly too doesn't give scholarships to students. So, based on that, she can't do anything about it.* (CRS1)

Subsequently, the Municipal Coordinating Director reported the issue to the Social Welfare Director, who agreed to pay the fees. However, the social welfare department paid less than 20% of the fees from its coffers. As a result of the non-payment of the full fees, the student

had difficulties completing his semester course registration. He had to report the problem to the SRC, who took him to the Dean of Students. The Dean made him write a letter and copied the HoD. That letter was forwarded to the Pro-VC before he could register. The participant indicated that:

> *When we were to write exams, my name wasn't part of the class list. So, I went and informed the SRC and then the Accounts Office about it and finally they gave me a form to fill that by the end of this month I will be able to make the payments. So, I filled that form - it's like a promise. …*

Given these experiences, the student participant observed that financial impediments are fundamental obstructions militating against his efforts to receive a university education. Specifically:

> *…my school fees. …that's my biggest problem that I'm facing on campus here. … I'm struggling to get money to pay for the school fees not to talk of accommodation. … I was thinking that once I enter the school, the school will support me financially. But since I entered the school, I haven't seen anything like that.* (CRS1)

The interview data revealed that financial difficulties might impede the institution's intention to increase access and make provisions for students with disability. In addition, financial issues appear to be the major impediment of some individuals with disability in accessing higher education.

6.4.3 Social Inclusion

This section presents data on opportunities available for students with disability to participate and engage within the university community. The section also presents participants' conceptualisation of disability. Explicitly, the sections focus on data regarding social engagement; attitudes; and construction of disability.

6.4.3.1 Social Engagement

Interview data on the involvement of students with disability in social activities in the university community relate to sports and games activities and accessibility of the area of play. Only one staff participant, CR3, alluded to the issue of sports and games. The participant reported that the university has basketball and football pitches, and these are all accessible to students with disability. The participant explained, for example, that if there is an inter-faculty football match and a student with disability wanted to play, he/she would not be prevented. He noted: "for instance, the one [student with disability] we have now if he wants to play football,

play basketball or be part of it unless his condition does not permit him - nobody will prevent him from doing so". The participant indicated that if a student with disability is a football enthusiast "and the person is part of [those] shouting or playing 'samabo' [activities of supporters] they won't say don't clap because you are not one of us and you cannot perform to perfection" (CR3).

The data revealed that students with disability are not prevented from engaging in sports and games activities. However, the lack of adapted sporting activities and facilities could restrict participation.

6.4.3.2 Attitudes

Participants described both negative and positive attitudes. Positive attitudes identified include acceptance and respect; conducive social environment; and non-discrimination. Negative attitudes include the demonstration of uncaring behaviours. Some of the discourses indicated ableist views as well as a lack of knowledge about inclusion. Some staff participants had the perception that students with disability can access and participate in higher education without any adjustment.

6.4.3.2.1 Positive Attitudes

Staff participant CR3 reported that generally, the university community understands that students with disability should not be treated differently, and the goodwill demonstrated towards them will motivate them to participate, engage and integrate seamlessly within the university community. CR3 continued that "as a university policy, we frown on discrimination… so, every lecturer has that in mind". The participant explained that he is not privy to student-student relationships and how they feel, but he has never seen any kind of discrimination against any student with disability, "and it's probably coming from our background as Christians and the need to help people in society". The participant shared the view that the social, physical, and learning environment of the University is conducive to including students with disability; the only challenge will be the physical conditions of students.

Similarly, student participant CRS1 indicated that he has not experienced any negative attitude or received any adverse comments from his colleagues because "maybe our class we are matured enough, and we are very few in the university, so they don't [discriminate]" (CRS1). Likewise, participant CR4 said:

> *I don't know of any negative attitude towards them. Not any that I know. … Of course, we don't discriminate among our students, whether you are disabled or able. We offer the same level of service to each and every one of them, irrespective of whether you are disabled or not. …no discrimination or whatsoever.* (CR4)

6.4.3.2.2 Negative Attitudes

Student participant CRS1 did report what could be described as a demonstration of uncaring or unconcerned behaviour by the top management and the key leadership of the university. The participant indicated that the university authorities had not shown any interest in finding out the challenges that confront students with disability to proffer solutions to these issues and/or identify ways of supporting them. He reported:

> *…like I'm just there to learn. They don't ask me about the challenges I'm facing and other things. And I think … it's not helpful to me. Like as I'm disabled on campus, I think they should turn to me and see to it that the challenges that I'm facing if they can support me or help me. …they shouldn't turn away from us. They should consult us and see to our challenges that we are facing on campus. And if there is any support that they can help us, then they help us.* (CRS1)

The data have shown that both positive and negative attitudes towards students with disability exist in the university. While staff participants reported that there were only positive attitudes towards people with disability, the student participant described instances of both positive and negative attitudes**.**

6.4.3.3 Construction of Disability

This section presents data on participants' understanding of disability. This is important for this study because it impacts perspectives on including persons with disability in higher education as well as the provisions and support that will facilitate academic and social achievements.

The five participants described disability as: physical and mental challenges; impairment; a condition that restricts an individual from achieving his or her potential; deformity; and non-functioning of a body part. The participants agreed on the understanding that these conditions restrict an individual's in engagement in life's activities unless the person receives assistance. The participants used some pejorative terms when describing disability such as: *'cripple'*, *'mentally retarded'* as well as more appropriate terminology including *'difficulty in walking'*, *'blind or visually impaired'*, *'deaf' or 'hearing problem'* (CR1; CR4; CR3; CR5). The

following quotation from a staff participant illustrates the general consensus on what disability means:

> *To me, it means someone who has a challenge, either physical or mental. A person who cannot do the things that we do every day and will need some kind of assistance. Examples are somebody who is visually impaired or maybe has some challenges when it comes to walking.* (CR2)

The data revealed that all the five participants had conceptualised disability within the deficit model where disability is seen principally as a health condition, which may be cured through the application of medical solutions. This model sees persons with disability as objects of charity and undermines their ability to receive any form of education and training to become socially and economically independent.

6.4.3.4 Use of Inappropriate Language

In PUC, study participants used disability-first language such as the visually impaired and deaf people. Inappropriate terminology used to refer to persons with disability include cripple and the mentally retarded. Further, if persons without disability are referred to as 'those who are okay' it implies that persons with disability are not okay.

6.5 Chapter Summary

The study participants in PUC were not aware of the existence of the national IE policy and there was no institutional policy and arrangements for persons with disability. However, they indicated awareness of the facilities, arrangements, and policies universities need to put in place to enrol persons with disability. PUC had no adjustment in admission requirements to increase access for students with special needs, particularly for those with disability. Specialised learning equipment, assistive technology and devices, support and adjustments were lacking because the university did not have the capacity at the moment to admit students with disability. The data have revealed that as a new university, financial challenges are overwhelmingly affecting infrastructure development and provision of equipment and other facilities for the entire student population. From this perspective, it appears making provisions for persons with disability to gain admission and effectively participate in academic and social activities are seen as an added cost the university cannot currently afford. Some participants candidly indicated that providing for students with disability required a huge capital outlay and would need to be included in the university's short and long-term plan before it can occur. Similarly, participants indicated that financial difficulties are overwhelming, frustrating, and impeding

the efforts of students with disability in accessing and participating effectively in university education. All the participants, even the student, located disability within the deficit model, and this perspective is likely to influence their attitudes and response towards issues concerning persons with disability.

CHAPTER SEVEN
ARCHITECTS OF GHANA'S INCLUSIVE EDUCATION POLICY

7.1 Introduction

In order to ascertain how national policy on inclusive education is reflected in institutional arrangements and policies dedicated to the provision and support for persons with disability in selected public universities in the broader context in Ghana, seven policymakers on the National Steering Committee on Inclusive Education were interviewed. The number included state actors and non-state actors drawn from the higher education sector; the Ghana Education Service (GES); disability organisations; international humanitarian and development agencies, and civil society organisations (see Table 7.1). The participants, therefore, had extensive knowledge, understanding, and experience about the topic of investigation. The data collected from the architects of the national inclusive (IE) policy are presented in this chapter.

Data analysis and presentation followed a similar process and pattern as in the case study universities, PUA, PUB, and PUC. The interview data generated policy context and student experience as the two main themes. Policy expectations and enactment by Ghanaian public universities originated as an aspect of the policy context. Student experience highlighted three key aspects: physical environment, support systems, and social inclusion.

Table 7.1: Participant Profile Policymakers

S/N	Participant identifier	Type of disability	Position of Policy Architects
1	IPA1	NI*	Non-state actor Representative, development partners
2	IPA2	Vision impairment	Non-state actor Representative, disability organisations
3	IPA3	NI	State actor Representative, higher education institutions
4	IPA4	NI	Non-state actor Representative, civil society organisations
5	IPA5	Vision impairment	Non-state actor Representative, disability union
6	IPA6	NI	Non-state actor Representative, development partners
7	IPA7	NI	State actor Representative, Ghana education service

***** none identified

7.2. Policy Context

The policy environment influences how policy decisions are implemented (Echt, 2017). Issues such as knowledge and understanding of policy and its objectives by grassroots implementers, available resources within the implementation jurisdiction (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975), and the interaction between stakeholders (Echt, 2017) are pivotal to ensuring implementation success. Thus, a particular policy should be adapted to suit a specific context to achieve its intended objectives (DeLeon & DeLeon, 2002; Lin, 2002).

7.2.1 Policy Expectation and Enactment by Ghanaian Public Universities

This section presents data on the views of policymakers regarding the expectation and enactment of the IE policy in public universities in Ghana. Views shared by the policymakers include raising awareness of the IE policy framework; improving physical access, increasing admission and enrolment; pedagogy; assistive technology and devices; human resource development, and attitudinal change.

Four policymakers (IPAI, IPA2, IPA3, IPA5) shared views relating to raising awareness of the IE policy among the university community, officials of the relevant government ministries, and the society, to understand and support its implementation. On the issue of awareness creation, IPA2 indicated that "we must use this policy to do a lot of sensitisation activities through the university authorities so that they will understand the policy …". Similarly, participant IPA1 reported that it was expected that the leadership team of the public universities are informed to be abreast of inclusive education issues to support the policy framework. Specifically, the following quote illustrates concerns regarding inadequate knowledge of inclusive education and policy among top government officials in the relevant ministries:

> *… And then also the knowledge of inclusive education even among the duty bearers. I'm saying this because I was on a radio program some time ago and we were talking about inclusive education and the host called in somebody from the Ministry of Education, and he didn't know… He didn't have a clue about inclusive education, and he kept on saying that "it is not possible, it is not that" and this is an official from the Ministry of Education and not a junior official, a senior official. …* (IPA5)

These data revealed that from the perspective of the policymakers, knowledge of the IE policy among some of the major stakeholders is low.

With regard to access creation and resourcing, six of the policymakers (IPA1, IPA2, IPA4, IPA5, IPA6, IPA7) observed that institutions of higher education need to open up their systems by providing the necessary human and physical resources and establishing disability-friendly environments in their universities to improve access and educational success for persons with disability. These views were demonstrated by a quote from IPA6:

> *… that every year at our institutions, we want to allocate 10% or 20% for persons with disability …we also need to make sure that we have a safe environment for them to be able to learn when they come to school. And then also, we're providing them with the appropriate teaching and learning materials; we're building the capacity of lecturers to be able to manage them and we're sensitising the students so that when these children or students come they will accept them as their peers, learn with them and do everything with them, so that they will also be happy and achieve their potential at the end of the day.*

7.3 Student Experience

From their own reported experience as policymakers[10] and their knowledge from the evidence they have from students about their student experience, three key areas emerged from the data analysis: physical environment, support systems, and social inclusion.

7.3.1 Physical Environment

This section presents the policymakers' views on the physical environment of the public universities. Five out of seven participants described perceived challenges associated with the physical environment of the universities including inaccessible high-rise buildings, narrow gates and offices with small entrances, inadequate space, open gutters, and lack of customised toilets for students with disability. IPA4, IPA5, and IPA7 expressed the view that the public universities were coming from a background where provisions were made for students without disability. As a consequence, lecture halls were allocated in high-rise buildings without lifts and handrails making it difficult for students with disability to access. IPA7 observed, for instance, that it is difficult for a wheelchair user to enter an office with a small entrance "unless you carry him/her, which is humiliating". And that retrofitting these structures, as stipulated by

[10] Some of the policymakers are university professors, so they know some of the things that go on in the lecture halls and in the university where they work. Further, officials of disability organisations visit higher education institutions to have meetings with students with disability, where students with disability share their university experiences. In addition, during their time on campus they familiarise themselves with the university environment.

the IE policy, can be expensive. Similarly, participant IPA5 indicated that preparing the physical environment of some of the campuses may also be a challenge, because "sometimes the environment is huge, and a lot of work might be done on the environment to make it accessible and friendly for students with disability" (IPA5). Furthermore, participant IPA2 added that:

> *If you have a wheelchair user on the university campus and the lecture hall is up there, and there are no ramps... How can he go there? You have to carry him. If there are gutters all over the place and the visually impaired student is walking about, he is going to fall into it and get hurt. If there is a toilet facility that a student with disability cannot access, a wheelchair user cannot access and sit on it comfortably, there is a problem there.* (IPA2)

Concerning disability-friendly infrastructure development, IPA2 and IPA4 shared the view that when it comes to constructing learning infrastructures such as lecture halls, libraries, and laboratories, the layout should be designed appropriately to be able to accommodate people who have mobility problems or other sensory issues. IPA6 explained that the IE policy is not a stand-alone document, it is accompanied with standards and guidelines, which give specifications such as how ramps should be built and how doors and door frames should be designed. According to the participant, this document is intended to guide the stakeholders in terms of establishing appropriate structures for successful inclusion. According to IPA5:

> *…if a child or a learner is in a wheelchair and he has to write an exam, he doesn't have to get to the bottom of the stairs and has to be carried to the top, it should be such that he can also write the exam in comfort… (IPA5)*

7.3.2 Support Systems

In this section, views expressed by policymakers concerning support systems are presented. Issues such as entry requirements, learning equipment and assistive technology, learning support, pedagogy, examination, human resource, employment opportunities, and funding emerged from the analysis of policymakers' data.

7.3.2.1 Admission and Enrolment

Issues emerging from the policymakers' data relating to admission and enrolment include unwillingness to admit students with disability and adjustment in entry requirements. IPA3 observed that some higher education institutions were hesitant and unwilling to enrol persons with disability because they lacked specialised facilities and staff with the required expertise.

Participant IPA5 reported that one of the constraints associated with higher education access for potential students with vision impairment is credit passes in mathematics and science as part of the entry requirements. However, meetings and negotiations with the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) yielded positive results where that entry criterion was ceded for students with vision impairment. Specifically:

> *And you know in our present system, blind students do not have the opportunity to learn math and science, so, at a point, the institutions were requesting that. Fortunately, we met the tertiary council, and they gave an official waiver of that criterion for the training colleges, at least. But you know my thinking is that blind persons and for that matter, anybody should have the opportunity to learn math and science, so it shouldn't become an issue in the future.* (IPA5)

7.3.2.2 Learning Equipment, Assistive Technology, and Learning Support

This section presents issues identified by the policymakers including inadequate learning equipment and assistive technology; limited learning support; and lack of information in an accessible format for students with disability. Participant IPA5 reported that he attended one of the pioneer universities in Ghana, where he pursued undergraduate, masters, and PhD programs at different periods. According to the participant, he went into the university in a situation where it was not inclusive. "It was an attempt at integration because the system was there, and we as blind students, we were challenged to take part in the system, so we had to find ways of adapting or accessing the system". The participant further explained:

> *So, I would say that in that case, the system did not really make room to accommodate our special needs; instead, we had to strategise to be able to fit into the system as it was. So, the system was not designed for persons with special needs. … I mean that we had resource people. But apart from the resource people, there was no support at that time because we had to struggle to get reading materials. Reading material was not in an accessible format. We had to do our assignments; we had to look for even the material to write with on our own. We had to look for the equipment to write. So, the system was not designed for us. I am speaking specifically about [one of the pioneer public universities in Ghana].* (IPA5)

Three participants (IPA7, IPA2, IPA3) referred to the challenges of learning equipment and materials. Participants IPA7 and IPA2 reported that the universities need assistive technology that persons with disability can use to enhance their academic work. However, participant IPA2 stated that "there are no textbooks in braille" for students with vision impairment. The

participant noted that students with low vision need large print, but he expressed doubt that some of these learning materials are there for these students. Similarly, IPA5 observed that a student with vision impairment should be able to access the books in the libraries of the universities and access the same information such as any other student. This quote from a participant illustrates this view:

> *Then… You see, I'm looking at logistics or equipment that we need. Because, without the equipment or assistive device, it becomes difficult for the persons with disability even to achieve. Take, for instance, the blind. …some of them would have to use braille and cannot use the print. If the braille is not there or if the materials that they will need to work are not there, then you disadvantaged them. It becomes a big challenge.* (IPA3)

With the issue of learning equipment and assistive technology, IPA5 reported that some of the universities might see the provision of certain facilities as expensive. For example, providing automated copiers, transcription of books into accessible formats, acquiring specialised equipment, assistive technology, and computer software. However, it was suggested it is not always right to focus on cost; it is also important to begin to focus on value. Thus, the universities should begin to see the value of providing education to marginalised groups such as persons with disability.

Five policymakers (IPA1, IPA2, IPA3, IPA5, IPA7) reported that the IE policy required HEIs to establish resource centres or units where students, not only those with disability, can receive support. Further, such resource centres are to be established at the district and the regional capitals to provide support for persons with special educational needs, but these centres are lacking and most of those available are ill-equipped and under-resourced.

7.3.2.3 Human Resource

Six out of seven policymakers (IPA1, IPA2, IPA3, IPA4, IPA6, IPA7) shared the view that inadequate human resources posed a challenge to the successful inclusion of persons with disability in the universities. IPA3 and IPA7 reported that professionals, specialists, and well-trained resource persons are too few to take care of students with disability in higher education institutions. IPA3 added:

> *…you see the personnel is where we have a challenge. …when you look at the hearing impaired, they will need interpreters. But looking at the number of courses they would have to take, and the number of times they would have to attend lectures, can we have enough? And are they even trained, or are they*

> *there at all? The unfortunate thing is that they are not there. So, when you look at the blind, those with visual impairment, you need people who can transcribe the braille. Until you have people who are trained to braille or to transcribe, then it becomes difficult. So, the personnel, I'm talking about qualified or trained personnel who will be able to support them…*

7.3.2.4 Pedagogy

Policymakers' data revealed difficulties that may be associated with acceptance of diversity in the classroom; lecturer resistance; lecturer expertise; curriculum adaptation; and large class size. IPA1 and IPA4 reported issues relating to lack of lecturer expertise, resistance, and acceptance of diversity in the lecture hall. The participants believed that most lecturers see it as burdensome trying to support students with disability because of the belief that it is additional work trying to diversify instruction to meet the learning needs of students with disability. The expertise and pedagogical knowledge of lecturers is inadequate to be able to understand the learning characteristics of students with disability and respond to learner diversity. During delivery, the lecturer may not take into consideration the presence of students with disability and thereby employing the teaching strategies and the pace that can disadvantage them (IPA3). IPA1 indicated that lecturer resistance in terms of supporting learners with disability is also another "big issue" of the implementation of the IE policy.

Another issue reported by IPA3, IPA5, and IPA6 related to the adaptation and appropriate delivery of the curriculum. IPA6 noted that the curriculum should be adapted to suit persons with disability. In addition, IPA3 explained that some lecturers do not understand the curriculum needs of students with disability, and this "becomes a big, big challenge". These views are illustrated by this quote:

> *We expect that the lecturers, the teachers will accommodate the special needs in their service delivery. … If, for example, a blind child is in an economics class and a teacher is writing a graph on the blackboard, he should be able to describe and let the child know that this is what I am doing. …the institutions of higher learning should develop a system whereby the learners with special needs are able to access education at the same level as their sighted peers.* (IPA5)

IPA3 shared the view that class size is an important issue in the academic achievement of students with disability in inclusive education settings. Small class sizes facilitate effective teaching and learning and allow lecturers, for instance, to be able to give students with

disability individualised attention. Where the class size is too large, it becomes difficult for lecturers to accommodate and meet the needs of students with disability (IPA3).

7.3.2.5 Examination

This section presents views emerging from the data of policymakers relating to examination and assessment of students with disability. These issues include access to computers to write examinations and some lecturers' refusal to give extra time to students with disability during an examination. Two policymakers, IPA2 and IPA3 shared these views. IPA2 reported that currently, reasonable provisions have been made for students with disability in terms of accessing information and writing examination. He added: "I heard this time they are allowed to use their computers to write their examinations. Hitherto, it was not like that".

IPA3 reported that some lecturers have difficulty giving extra time to students with disability to write examinations because they do not understand that some categories of students with disability are not able to work or write as fast as those without disability. The participant explained that there were situations where lecturers insisted on allocating the same time to an examination paper for both students with and without disability, and this had disadvantaged the latter.

7.3.2.6 Unemployment after Graduation

The issue of unemployment of persons with disability after graduating from the university emerged from the policymakers' data. IPA5 reported that many students with disability struggle through the higher education system and then remain unemployed after graduation. This situation demotivates some potential students with disability from accessing higher education with the perception that they, attending university could be a waste of their time in terms of future employment. According to the participant, even though the disability policy states that organisations that employ persons with disability should be given tax rebates, it is difficult for them to gain employment after completion of higher education. The participant noted:

> *…people finish higher education, where do they go? I know blind persons who have struggled and sweated through the system, they finished university, and there is no job you see. And for a person with disability to go through such a difficult situation and yet sit at home, then we don't encourage the others. They don't see the use of going through that problem, so there should be a system. There should be a placement attached to their education.* (IPA5)

7.3.2.7 Funding

The views shared by policymakers regarding funding for policy implementation are presented in this section. Issues emerging from the data include sources of funding and the financial challenges associated with implementing the policy due to inadequate funding. From the data, sources of funding that emerged include: the central government; the MoE and the GES; metropolitan, municipal, and district assemblies; development partners, donor agencies; non-governmental organisations; faith-based organisations; philanthropists; communities; and educational institutions.

Five policymakers described funding as a major constraint of policy implementation. Participant IPA1 observed that the implementation plan has been costed and that areas of the policy relating to university education require universities to write proposals to mobilise funds for implementation. Similarly, IPA6 explained that the policy has a costed comprehensive implementation plan delineating strategies and objectives, and that potential partners and stakeholders could support the different cost elements depending on their area of interest.

According to IPA1, in every nation, if there is such a policy, it is the central government that should provide funds for its implementation. However, IPA2, IPA3, and IPA4 expressed concern about inadequate funds made available by the government, the MoE, and the GES for implementing the policy. IPA1 suggested that the MoE and the GES should increase the IE budget to provide the required infrastructure, assistive devices, teaching and learning materials, and disability-friendly learning environment. IPA2 and IPA3 also suggested the need for development partners and donor agencies to invest in the implementation of the IE policy. IPA3 reported that UNICEF is assisting with about 20 districts out of 200 districts in the country and the schools included in the UNICEF pilot project are doing well in terms of accommodating and accepting persons with disability, the belief system, the value system, and celebrating successes. The following quote from IPA2 illustrated the importance of providing adequate financial resources for successful policy implementation.

> *Personally, my concern is that, as a disabled person myself, if we do not implement this nice policy effectively or properly, then the children are going to lose out. Because if you don't put these children in the classroom …, you don't provide the necessary facilities, you don't provide the required materials; you don't train the teachers well to cater for them… All these things depend upon the availability of resources. So, we need human resources; we need material resources. And all these things depend on funding.*

Furthermore, two policymakers (IPA2, 1PA4) reported that objective four of the IE policy dealt with policy sustainability, which aimed at ensuring increased and sustained access, equity, and quality education for persons with disability. However, policy implementation cannot be sustainable by over-dependence on development partners because these donor agencies can pull out.

IPA3 reported that although a percentage of the District Assembly Common Fund is allocated to support the development of persons with disability up to the tertiary education level, financial challenges still exist. IPA6 reported that although the 2017 Education Sector Analysis (ESA)[11] report indicated that Ghana has a good IE policy, there are gaps when it comes to implementation due to poor financing and collection of inaccurate data. In relation to cost and financing, Ghana is one of the few countries in the ECOWAS sub-region with a high allocation into education. But recurrent expenditure on inclusive education is only 0.6% of the overall education budget, which is negligible. IPA6 explained further that there are discrepancies in the data recorded in schools by Education Management Information System (EMIS), Ghana Statistical Service (GSS), and UNICEF on disability. The participant emphasised the need to build the capacity of data collectors to collect very accurate or near accurate data on persons with disability so that the government can plan and make informed decisions in resource allocation (IPA6).

7.3.3 Social Inclusion

Issues relating to creating opportunities for students with disability to blend seamlessly into the social environment of the university are explored in this section. Issues emerging from the policymakers' data include engagement in campus activities, attitudes, and construction of disability.

7.3.3.1 Participation in Co-curricular Activities

IPA2 reported that students with disability lack the opportunity to participate fully in university-wide activities due to discrimination. The participant was of the view that opportunities need to be created for students with disability to participate in any activity on campus. He explained, for example, that students with disability should be allowed to vie for

[11] Education Sector Analysis (ESA) is an extensive examination of the entire education system using an empirical and statistical approach to determine efficiency in terms of the capacity of the education system to translate inputs into outputs with reference to factors such as access, equity, quality and competence (Bernard, 2016).

Student Representative Council (SRC) elected positions that they are interested in. IPA2 added that the appropriate social environment should be created such that any student with disability who is interested in the position of the SRC president can stand and campaign for votes.

> *…They should not mock at him or her. He or she should be encouraged to participate fully in it. The regular students must be sensitised to understand that even though they have disability, they can do it, so if it comes to holding positions, etc., etc., they should take them on board.* (IPA2)

7.3.3.2 Attitudes

This section focuses on negative attitudes emerging from the policymakers' data. Five out of seven policymakers shared their views regarding the various forms of negative attitudes towards students with disability in higher education. The data revealed issues such as discrimination, prejudiced mindsets, and denial of opportunities to pursue preferred programs. These negative attitudes, according to the participants, come from lecturers, students, and other members of the university community.

Participant IPA3 indicated that the implementation of the national IE policy entails attitudinal change because they believe that most people have negative attitudes towards persons with disability. Inclusive education calls for people to have a positive attitude towards diversity. The participant explained further that a positive attitude towards persons with disability improves their self-confidence to pursue education and achieve successful outcomes. According to the participant, negative "social attitude is so pervasive that, although this is a university, you still have some situations where some individuals still have negative attitudes towards persons with disability". Similarly, IPA2 shared the view that "even though we said we're going forward, you can see some of the evidence of these [discriminatory] activities", which discourage students with disability and "put them off". The participant added that negative attitudes towards students with disability could affect their ego, self-confidence, and positive self-image. These negative attitudes could also prevent them from active participation and involvement in teamwork and group activities, and learning together with their peers without disability. These unacceptable attitudes, according to the participant, should be adequately addressed.

In the same vein, participant IPA5 described the "mindset" of some of the university lecturers as another perceived difficulty in policy implementation. Some university lecturers have the perception that students with disability cannot pursue certain programs. Specifically, the participant said:

> *…Some [university lecturers] may turn to be very conservative. I remember we had a case where a blind person wanted to do psychology, and the professor kept on saying that because there are some pictures involved, a blind person will not be able to do it. You see, but those are all mindsets because blind persons do psychology elsewhere. I even remember during my time; it was a struggle for blind persons to do law, but nowadays, that hurdle has been jumped over. Now, there are many blind persons doing law, so you know sometimes it's the conservative nature of some of the university lecturers. Some of them are too set in their old ways and not ready to bend.* (IPA5)

Furthermore, IPA5 indicated that there are naughty university students who try to put impediments in the way of some students with disability having a bit of fun. However, the participant is of the view that despite all these obstructions, "the value [of providing higher education for persons with disability] exceeds any of these obstacles".

7.3.3.3 Construction of Disability

This section presents data regarding how the policymakers framed their understanding of disability. This understanding is essential because these conceptualisations may influence participants' perspectives regarding the extent of policy provisions for persons with disability.

Five out of the seven policymakers conceptualised disability within the medical model perspective. They, therefore, described disability to include impairment; a long-term malfunctioning of a component of the body; a physical condition or a loss of body part, which prevents individuals from functioning properly; an impairment in the body organ, which limits a person's performance, activities and movement; a physical and mental condition that limits a person's mobility and cognition or reasoning – the sense of touch, smell, hearing, and vision; any physical or sensory defect or deformity that prevents a person from full participation in activities; and the Washington Group's six indicators of disability – difficulty seeing; difficulty hearing; difficulty remembering or concentrating; difficulty with self-care, and difficulty communicating. They, therefore, described disability to include a long-term sensory or physical impairment; a physical or mental condition or a loss of body part, deformity, sensory defect which limits a person's functioning and performance of daily activities such as mobility, seeing, hearing, communicating, self-care, remembering, concentration, and cognition. This quote from IPA2 illustrates this perspective:

> *…a physical condition or a loss of any part of the body that does not allow you to function adequately to the maximum. So, in short, it is a physical condition*

> *or a loss of part of the body, which prevent you from functioning properly or effectively to achieve your goal. That, for me, is disability.*

One participant described disability within the medical and social model, and one participant looked at disability solely from the social model perspective. Thus, two participants, IPA3 and IPA5, constructed their understanding of disability within the social model perspective. They saw disability as societal impediments such as failure to put in place appropriate structures. IPA5 offered a detailed view about how he conceptualised disability:

> *Disability is an omnibus expression. Let me give you a little etymology, a little background, so we understand what a disability actually means. If somebody has guns, we say he is an armed man, and if we take away the guns, we say he has been disarmed. If you hide something and you cover it up, and somebody is able to find it, we say he has discovered it. When somebody is in a comfort zone, and you move the comfort, we say he is in a state of discomfort. So, when someone has an ability, and maybe the society or social situations are such that that ability is taken away from him, then we say that he has a disability. So, for me, disability means that there's been a situation that is not allowing my ability to function the way it should function.*
>
> *… I can read, but if you put it in a particular format, then you are taking away my ability to read. Excuse me for saying this, for you sitting there, if I give you a brailed book and you cannot read it, then I have taken away your ability to read and that becomes your disability. So, if my society can make sure that the things I can read are given to me, then there is no disability. So, it is a state where my abilities are not able to function as they should.*

The data revealed that majority of the policymakers located disability within the medical model, one view disability within both the medical and the social models and the seventh, solely within the social model.

7.3.3.4 Use of Inappropriate Terminology

The use of inappropriate terminology was evident in the policymakers' data. These include using phrases like visually impaired students, hearing impaired, physically challenged, disabled person, disabled students, the disabled, blind people, deaf people, special people, blind student, and the blind.

7.4 Chapter Summary

The policymakers identified raising awareness about the IE policy among the university community and the management team, duty bearers, and the entire society as critical for

successful implementation. This will ensure that people are informed to enable them to support the implementation of the policy framework. Other issues acknowledged by the policy architects regarding the enactment of the policy in the public universities related to the removal of entry and enrolment barriers, physical access barriers, learning barriers, and social barriers.

The analysis of the policymakers' data also revealed that the limited budgetary allocation by the government and the MoE, and the current state of human, financial, and physical resources in the public universities cannot support the successful implementation of the policy. For example, learning equipment, assistive technology, and university staff with inadequate professional and specialised knowledge impact negatively on access and participation of students with disability. Limited awareness and pedagogical knowledge of the faculty staff in responding to the learning and assessment needs of persons with disability were also identified by the policymakers. Another important issue evident in the policymakers' data is their perspective on the pervasiveness of negative attitudes transferred from society into the university where people are expected to be more enlightened. These negative attitudes manifest in discrimination against students with disability and obstructs their social engagement within the university.

Most of the policymakers, five out of seven, located disability within the deficit model, which may affect their perception about the provision and support that should be available for students with disability within the education system, particularly higher education. Using inappropriate terminology was also prevalent in the speech of the policymakers. The evidence from the policymakers' data adds to the overall understanding of the issues militating against increasing access and participation for persons with disability in Ghanaian public universities, despite the existence of the IE policy framework.

CHAPTER EIGHT
CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

8.1 Introduction

This study explored the extent to which the intents of Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy (2015) were reflected in institutional policy, guidelines, arrangements and practices in three public universities in Ghana, and how these translated into provisions and support for persons with disability. Further, the study examined the robustness of these provisions to ascertain whether they meet the expectations and needs of persons with disability.

This chapter presents the cross-case analysis and discussion of findings. The chapter compares and contrasts the findings for the three participating universities, along with the findings from policymakers who hold a sectorial view. The process of cross-case analysis includes studying and gaining an understanding of each case within its context or situation, identifying the main issues that are common and different across the cases, interpreting and triangulating these issues and making claims (Stake, 2013).

The key themes revealed by the analysis of interview, observation, and document data were interpreted and triangulated to develop assertions about higher education access and participation for persons with disability. These themes are: understanding the expectations of the national inclusive education policy; institutional policy and guidelines on disability service provision; access to the physical environment; access to support systems within the universities; engaging with the social environment of the university; and, attitudinal dimensions of higher education inclusion. The chapter concludes with financial implications for access and participation of students with disability in higher education. The three cases are Public University A (PUA), Public University B (PUB), and Public University C (PUC).

8.2 Understanding the Expectations of the National Inclusive Education Policy

Legislation is a critical element in ensuring the fundamental rights of persons with disability and creating an inclusive and equitable system of education (UNESCO, 2017; United Nations, 2006, 2015b). Ghana has signed and ratified the UNCRPD and, thus, has clear commitments to persons with disability regarding higher education (United Nations, 2006). Consequently, Ghana has crafted the IE policy, which made access to education for persons with disability at all levels of education mandatory. National policies on inclusion and support systems create

the context for educational inclusion (UNESCO, 2014); however, ensuring the implementation of disability policy and laws is necessary to promote successful inclusion (UNESCO, 2017).

Understanding the expectations of the national inclusive education policy is a major factor in its successful implementation. Thus, the implementers of the policy need to be conversant with the policy demands. This understanding may emanate from the interpretations generated around the policy objectives. Each of the four main objectives of the IE policy has several strategies for enactment that should be adopted and adapted, based on contextual factors, to achieve the set objectives or policy intents (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015, pp. 9 - 13). Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) contended that the implementers' understanding of the general intent, the specific standards and policy objectives is important for successful implementation. Generally, the understanding of expectations articulated by the case study universities around the policy intentions corresponds with those stated in the policy. However, some of the case participants appeared to allude to these expectations out of personal experience rather than specific knowledge of the content of the IE policy. In PUA and PUB, some of the participants noted that, though they were aware of the existence of the policy, they were yet to see the policy document. Even the university management team in both PUA and PUB had only heard about the policy document. In PUC, all the case participants indicated that they were unaware of the existence of the national IE policy. Yet, they were able to outline some of the policy intents and strategies for enactment, which might be based on general knowledge and/or experience. Specifically, out of a total of 17 staff participants, only four demonstrated adequate knowledge of policy and its contents. Six of them only heard about, or are aware of, its existence; the remaining seven are unaware that Ghana has an IE policy. The policymakers' data revealed similar findings in that they report understanding of inclusive education is limited, and awareness of the IE policy is lacking within the university community, and among the high office holders (state actors) representing the government at the Ministry of Education.

Precise, explicit, and detailed knowledge of policy and its expectations by the cross-section of grassroots implementers is critical to successful implementation (European Commission, 2003; Lipsky, 2010) since this knowledge will allow them to strategise and also rally around the necessary resources for successful enactment. Lipsky (2010) contended that the understandings, actions, and policy decisions of the street-level bureaucrats (the grassroots implementers) are critical for realising policy objectives. Thus, it is essential to make the

national IE policy more visible through awareness creation and communication so that the grassroots implementers can identify with it, buy into it, and demonstrate a genuine commitment to making it work. According to European Commission (2003), the finest concept is worthless, when it is not made public; in like manner, the best policy could be useless when conscious measures are not put in place to promote its ideals and make it highly visible.

The next section presents the efforts made by the case universities to translate the national policy into institutional provisions and policy guidelines and/or practices aimed at increasing access and participation for persons with disability.

8.3 Institutional Policy and Guidelines on Disability Service Provision

Institutional policy on disability and disability practice are important in meeting the needs of the growing numbers of students disclosing disability (Mortimore, 2013). Article 24 (5) of the UNCRPD is unequivocal in stating that higher education institutions need to develop structures, programs, policies and cultures that are inclusive for all entrants (Slee et al., 2014). It is binding by law on public universities in Ghana to craft policies and guidelines within the framework of the national inclusive education policy to direct service provision for students with disability (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015). Successful policy implementation hinges on adapting strategies outlined for policy enactment to suit institutional characteristics, needs and values (Hudson et al., 2019; Lin, 2002). The main issues revealed by the data are differences in attempts by the case universities to formulate institutional policy and guidelines on disability service provision. PUA has a draft institutional disability policy waiting to receive approval from the Academic Board; PUB is making efforts to put a draft institutional policy together; whereas, PUC has no disability policy and no efforts are underway to develop one, though case participants from PUC acknowledged its importance for the future as the number of students with disability grows. The unique contexts, characteristics, and backgrounds of the three case universities may have impacted their efforts in formulating policy guidelines for implementation; hence, the variations in levels of implementation. This situation has been described and expanded in the following paragraphs.

PUA stated in its corporate strategic plan, the intent to strengthen policies for students with special needs. In spite of this statement, PUA's institutional policy on disability is still in draft and has not been officially authorised to become an approved disability working document for the university. Consequently, neither the university nor its duty bearers can be held responsible

if the dictates of the policy are not strictly adhered to. The university has no mandate or obligation to implement the draft institutional disability policy (Kochung, 2011). This seeming lack of commitment and zeal towards providing legal backing to the draft institutional disability policy may considerably affect the university's commitment and the primacy given to issues affecting students with disability. Situations where institutional disability policies take several months or years to receive formal approval, or remain in draft format, are a sign of discreet resistance and lack of prioritisation and/or commitment to the disability inclusion agenda by the institutional leadership (FOTIM, 2011).

Without institutional disability policy it is left to the corporate strategic plans of PUA and PUB to set guidelines for disability provisions. PUA's espoused core values of equal opportunity and access to quality education and services to all categories of persons indicated key thrusts and targets for the provisions and support of students with special educational needs. Likewise, at PUB, one of the objectives dwelt extensively on expanding access for the underprivileged, marginalised, persons living with disability, and persons from less endowed schools. The strategies to be adopted in achieving the set objectives, activities, expected output, and those who have the responsibility for achieving the objective, were outlined. However, it is difficult to ascertain the priority given to the realisation of disability policy statements set out in the strategic plans of these institutions. Thus, the extent of implementation is unclear and, therefore, it is hard to assess. This situation denotes a gap that often exists between policy and practice (Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Mullins & Preyde, 2013; Riddell et al., 2005; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). Where there is a gap between policy rhetoric and practice, students receive extemporaneous support (Riddell et al., 2005).

In PUC, one of the case participants alluded to the fact that disability issues may be stated in the students' handbook as part of inclusiveness, a search through the handbook revealed that there is nothing on disability, except for university residential accommodation considerations. The strategic plan of the university also did not include any reference to disability. This situation suggested that, apart from on-campus accommodation provisions, PUC has no written policy or guidelines on disability. In PUC it would appear that Ebersold and Evans (2003) assertion, that the fundamental forces regulating the admission of and support for students with disability are often compromised if HEIs have not designed disability policies and clearly stipulated how they will be implemented, is accurate.

Findings revealed that certain unwritten institutional arrangements and practices have been observed over time and become an institutional culture of disability practice in these universities. Whereas these unwritten institutional arrangements and practices are ingrained and predominant in both PUA and PUB, the extent of these practices is limited in PUC. This situation, in part, might be due to the limited number of students with disability in PUC and the relative age of the university culminating in limited practices. PUC has not made deliberate efforts to offer access for persons with disability. These findings concur with claims in the literature that institutional disability policy mirrors and reinforces institutional ethos and ideology; it shapes the design of approaches, procedures and guidelines for enacting the delivery of disability service (FOTIM, 2011).

Despite the lack of dedicated institutional policy on disability, the old and the new university made some provisions for students with disability in their institutional strategic plans, thus demonstrating evidence of inclusive practice and valuing inclusiveness. The sections that follow examine how this situation impacts and shapes the experiences of students with disability within the physical, academic, and social environment of these universities.

8.4 Access to the Physical Environment

The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET, 2017) suggested that accessible physical environment of HEIs are inclusive and welcoming to students, staff and visitors living with disability. Ensuring physical access and mobility in institutions of higher learning is key to showing respect for difference, diversity, and inclusivity. Students with a disability have the right to physical access to university building facilities and mobility-friendly environments (ADCET, 2017; ECESA, 2003; ISO 21542, 2011). When students with disability are not able to navigate the campus and access critical physical and learning facilities, they are effectively denied higher education (UNESCO, 1999). An accessible physical environment promotes academic achievement, retention, and social inclusion of students with disability in HEIs (Evans et al., 2017). Negotiating the physical environment became evident as a major issue of concern in the three case universities. Key issues revealed by the data analysis, regarding the physical environment, related to the built environment, the terrain, residential accommodation arrangement, and transportation.

At PUA, PUB, and PUC, accessing the built environment remains a significant challenge. Most students with certain forms of disability cannot access the built environment independently,

which restricts their movement. Some of these situations could be embarrassing and frustrating; for example, a fully-grown man being carried on someone's back to allow access to a lecture hall upstairs can be humiliating. This finding supports previous research that persons with disability are often exposed to insecure or uncomfortable environments, which limits their inclusion and participation within the campus (Budu, 2016; Ebersold & Evans, 2003; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Paul, 2000). It is, therefore, necessary for the built environment to be suitable, appropriate, and accessible for all learners within a university (e.g., Brabazon, 2015; Equality Challenge Unit, 2009; Evans et al., 2017; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; UNICEF, 2014a).

In both PUA and PUB, some attention is being given to the built environment by constructing ramps for wheelchair access and providing handrails in old buildings, but participants reported this effort was inadequate, and most of the buildings remain inaccessible. Some of the lifts fitted in the new buildings were out of order and needed immediate attention to facilitate access. Even some of the newest buildings in PUA, PUB, and PUC are not disability-friendly because the builders have inadequate knowledge about universal design (UD) principles, either UD principles were not part of the initial contractual agreement and/or UD principles were overlooked due to financial considerations.

Further, in PUA, PUB, and PUC, the old buildings, which in most cases were inherited, are not disability-friendly. In PUB, it was reported that the initial mandate of establishing the university did not include students with disability, so the design of these buildings does not have students with disability in mind. The data gathered through observation confirmed that in both PUA and PUB there are old buildings with numerous staircases and high-rise buildings with malfunctioning lifts. Old buildings may be difficult to retrofit and could involve a lot of expenditure and architectural barriers, particularly in old universities, that could appear insurmountable (e.g., Ebersold & Evans, 2003; Newman & Conway, 2017). This may explain why PUA and PUB have not commissioned these renovations. However, Brabazon (2015) maintained that retrofitting the campus-built-environment is an obligation though it is not cost effective in financial terms. The condition of buildings is similar in the three universities cases.

Issues relating to the suitability of the terrain were also revealed by the data analysis. In PUA and PUB there are many mobility hazards, particularly for students with vision impairment and mobility aid users. These hazards relate to health and security. Health issues could emanate from situations where students fall on staircases or into open drains. There were reported

vehicular accidents on campus involving students with disability, specifically concerning students with hearing impairment who could not hear the horns of taxi drivers. The observation data confirmed that, in PUC, the challenges associated with terrain are minimal because of the size of the campus and the topography of the university. However, in PUA and PUB there was visual proof of challenges such as damaged and obstructed pavements and the absence or discontinuity of curb cuts and curb ramps. Similar findings emerged from a study conducted by Asiedu et al. (2018); Braun and Naami (2019); Odame (2017) and Tudzi et al. (2017) in some public universities in Ghana where perennial physical access issues encountered by students with physical impairment, in particular, were consistently ignored.

An inclusive approach in providing residential accommodation for university students with disability is critical to their wellbeing and access to the university. The three case study universities have shown a level of commitment to putting accommodation arrangements in place for students with disability, allowing these students to stay in the university halls of residence throughout their period of study. However, students in PUA, PUB, and PUC have differing experiences in actually accessing accommodation in the university halls of residence. Although arrangements for accommodation are in place, it appears the processes are not clear to those in charge of allocating the rooms, resulting in the needs and expectations of students with disability not being met.

Evidence suggested that in all the case universities, PUA, PUB, and PUC, students with disability who are accommodated in the halls of residence are still required to pay the same residential facility user fees as other students. However, it appears this payment could deny some of them the opportunity to benefit from this arrangement. For example, in PUC, though a student with physical challenge was willing to stay in the university hall of residence, the inability to pay the residential facility user fee deprived the student of this opportunity. In both PUA and PUB, students with disability have the opportunity to select their roommates and negotiate which level or floor of the high-rise buildings they would like to occupy. However, in PUA students reported that some staff in the halls of residence are seemingly inflexible in accepting requests made by students. In PUA, PUB, and PUC some students might be willing to stay in the university halls of residence but, due to limited places, they are not considered. These students will, therefore, have to stay in private hostels, some of which are quite far from campus and are expensive. This situation is more prevalent in PUB, with reportedly the highest

number of students with disability admitted, where the university's residential facilities are quite limited.

Unacceptable behaviours towards students with disability in the university halls of residence was reported in both PUA and PUB; for example, incidences of stealing items belonging to students with disability. Other instances include, in PUA, quarrelling with roommates without disability and, in PUB, playing loud music in retaliation for students with vision impairment listening to their recorded learning materials in the halls. This finding is consistent with that of Boakye-Yiadom and Mensah (2019) also reported that students with disability encounter several challenges in university halls of residence relating to theft or loss of items, safety and security and fear.

Access, health, and safety concerns regarding the restrooms of the university halls of residence were reported in both PUA and PUB. Students with and without disability use the same restroom facilities but some of the restroom facilities of these universities are inaccessible to students with disability. Observations revealed that there are no customised disability-friendly toilet and bathroom facilities in any of the three case universities and Asiedu et al. (2018) and Tudzi et al. (2017) reported similar findings in another two public universities in Ghana. However, the situation appears to be more prevalent in PUB than in PUA. For example, in PUB a mobility aid user would have to crawl on the ground to access the toilet and the bathroom, which implies that, after bathing, the person would have to crawl on the ground back to their room. Further, there were reported cases of some students messing up water closets in the restrooms during water crises resulting in students with vision impairment sitting on this mess (faeces) unknowingly. Slippery bathrooms have also caused both students with and without disability to fall and be severely hurt in the process of using the facility. Evans et al. (2017) contended that slip-resistant, smooth, and secure floor coverings and walking surfaces are to be provided both inside and outside buildings to prevent accidents; accessible, clean, and safe restrooms facilities are a prerequisite on university campuses.

Literature highlighted that the physical and the built environment of HEIs should have overt or covert disability-friendly features (e.g., raise tactile or braille signage) to facilitate ease of use by students with disability (ADCET, 2017; Curtin University, 2019; Ebersold & Evans, 2003; University of Canberra, 2015; University of Pennsylvania, 2019). Clear signage posted on buildings showing building numbers, titles, and functions are paramount to an inclusive

environment and yet observation data revealed that in all the case universities, there is no signage or door label in braille. The lack of automatic reflex door on any of the campuses and the height of notice boards can deprive wheelchair users, for example, independent access to buildings and information.

Ensuring that campus transport is accessible to all students, including those with disability, is crucial in guaranteeing uninterrupted mobility (Lord, 2017) and, therefore, access to the learning environment. In both PUA and PUB, students have challenges with the transportation available on campus; whereby, it is difficult to commute within and between campuses. In both universities, the buses are not fitted with disability-friendly features; consequently, students with vision impairment, wheelchair, and mobility aid users cannot access these buses independently and with dignity. There were no seats reserved for students with disability, and drivers did not seem to police these arrangements. In PUB, during educational tours, for instance, mobility aid users would have to be carried in and out of the buses. Similarly, in PUC, the buses are not disability-friendly, and no special arrangement was in place for students with disability. PUA, PUB and PUC are in contravention of Section 29 of the Persons with Disability Act, Act 715, 2006 by failing to ensure that seats are reserved in the shuttle buses on campus for students with disability (Republic of Ghana, 2006).

In all the three case universities, PUA, PUB, and PUC, the data obtained using observation corroborated the fact that buses available on the campuses are not suitable for students with disability. Challenges associated with the transportation system can restrain students with mobility difficulties from commuting between multi-campuses. This situation is inevitable because the public transportation system in Ghana is not disability-friendly (Naami, 2014). Similarly, this finding corroborates that of Odame (2017) and Tudzi et al. (2017) who reported that lack of accessible vehicles on university campuses in Ghana poses a lot of mobility challenges to students with disability who commute between multiple campuses to access learning. Consistent with the results from the case study universities, the policymakers' finding provides evidence of the inaccessibility of the physical environment of the public universities with negative consequences on the academic and social engagement of students with disability. The policymakers' findings indicated that the IE policy has an implementation plan and standards and guidelines for practice, which give specifications as to how to design accessible and friendly services for students with disability. This suggests if HEIs have knowledge about the policy, they will be aware of its resources.

From the cross-case analysis and discussion, it becomes apparent that though issues relating to the physical environment of the case universities have received some attention, these efforts are not adequate to meet the needs and expectations of students with disability. The physical and the built environment of the case universities remains largely inaccessible. This situation is in contravention with the provisions of Ghana's IE policy (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015) and the tenets of distributive justice, which focuses on fair distribution of resources (Evans et al., 2017; Miller, 2017; Nelson & Creagh, 2013).

8.5 Access to Support Systems Within the Universities

Support systems relate to existing arrangements, structures and procedures in the case universities, which enable students with disability to gain access to, participate, and succeed in their studies. These systems are intended to increase access to higher education and reduce the impact of disability on learning (McCarthy et al., 2018). The limits of the support systems within the universities became evident as one of the major themes from the analysis of data.

Admissions and enrolment

Article 24 (1 and 5) of the UNCRPD stated the importance of recognition of the right of persons with disability to education at all levels, including tertiary level education (United Nations, 2006). Universities in countries such as Australia, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, and New Zealand, have various structures, policies, and special admission schemes to provide equitable access for students with disability (e.g., University of Cambridge, 2019; University of Oxford, 2019; UTS, 2017). It is mandatory for HEIs to adjust their entry requirements to increase enrolment for prospective students with disability and also reform the curriculum to ensure that these students have positive academic and social experiences (Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Waetjen, 2006).

It was evident from the analysis of findings that both PUA and PUB devised special admission schemes, programs, arrangements, and/or strategies to increase enrolment numbers of students with disability in their respective universities. Both PUA and PUB implement the policy of adjusting entry requirements of students with disability, with contextual and disability-related issues partly informing this criterion. For example, in the Ghanaian education system, students with vision impairment do not write Math and Science in WASSCE. As a consequence, including those two subjects in the admission criterion for students with vision impairment will

deny them access to higher education. Further, for specific disability-related reasons, PUB has a waiver for WASSCE credit passes in the English Language for students with hearing impairment. The policymakers' finding confirmed the issue of constraints associated with tertiary education admission for potential students with vision impairment. However, this entry criterion has been ceded as a result of negotiations with NCTE. Consequently, students with vision impairment get more access in terms of admission into HEIs. The importance of adjusting admission requirements in increasing the enrolment of students with disability has also been reported by the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA, 2019), which stated that flexibility in admission increases higher education access for persons with disability. Therefore, the finding from the current research concurs with the literature and strengthens the importance of reasonable accommodations in admission schemes in improving enrolment numbers of persons with disability in tertiary institutions. Evidence from the data analysis suggest that this issue needs to be addressed; in future, provisions should be made for students with vision impairment to study maths and science.

Implementing these special admission schemes is a demonstration of pre-eminence given to issues relating to context, specific type of disability and equity of access. Educational inclusion policies revolve around equitable opportunities for the disadvantaged groups. According to Blessinger et al. (2018), every individual is entitled to equitable opportunity to access and participate in higher education as a matter of human right and social justice. Equity is about ensuring that there is a concern with fairness, such that the education of all persons is seen as possessing the same value (UNESCO, 2017). Harvey and Brett (2016) argued that admissions system can only be improved if the value of student equity is recognised.

Furthermore, in congruence with the university's core value of equal opportunity, PUA has a policy of non-discrimination and inclusiveness, and this has, in part, manifested in its sustained effort at carrying-out admission recruitment drives in some secondary schools that prepare students with vision impairment for admission into the higher education system. Likewise, in line with enacting disability-related provisions in the university's corporate strategic plan, PUB also provides some level of opportunity for prospective students with disability to access additional information about enrolment choices, the support services available, and guidance during the enrolment application process through the DSU. Policies and practices with equity orientation support HEIs to attain greater levels of inclusion of people with disability (Blessinger et al., 2018).

Both PUA and PUB welcomed and accepted diversity by admitting diverse categories of students with special educational needs, even before the IE policy came into effect in 2015. However, PUB enrols students with more diverse needs than PUA, including students with cerebral palsy and deaf-blindness, whereas PUA has not enrolled any students with these categories of disability. In addition, PUB has enrolled approximately 50 students with hearing impairment in its regular degree programs, but PUA alluded to only two students with hearing impairment being offered postgraduate sandwich and undergraduate distance programs. PUC enrolled three students with disability.

Contrary to the prevailing conditions in PUA and PUB, PUC had no special admission schemes in place. The university strictly adheres to the basic national entry requirement set by the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) and the National Accreditation Board (NAB) in admitting its students; thus, there is no waiver or adjustments in admission points or criteria for students with disability. This positioning could be one of the reasons for PUC's enrolment of only two students with physical challenge and the third with a disability that was identified but presented with no specific characteristics. Tertiary education institutions have autonomy over their admissions policies (TEQSA, 2019); hence their entry requirements, particularly for students with disability, is most often contingent on their specific approach to policy (Ebersold & Evans, 2003). However, international and national protocols, particularly the UNCRPD and the national IE policy, require that provisions are made for all persons to access higher education as a matter of right. Where institutional disability policy is lacking, admission of students with disability is done more as a random act of charity than an educational obligation (Ebersold & Evans, 2003). In some African countries, HEIs are often not prepared to admit students with disability because they lack policy on inclusive education (Kochung, 2011). Findings suggest that there is no provision for the full range of students with disability (for example, learning disability, autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder - ADHD, and mental health issues) in any of the three campuses. The equity principle of social justice suggests that social difference is recognised so that different strategies can be applied in response to specific needs (Nelson & Creagh, 2013; Young, 2011). In keeping with this principle, higher educational institutions, particularly the public ones, can implement strategies aimed at expanding access and including other categories of prospective students with disability.

Orientation for commencing students with disability

Another support program referred to by the participants was orientation for commencing students. Orientation programs prepare commencing students, including those with disability, to adapt to university life and gain information regarding the resources available. Thus, the occasion provides a unique opportunity for students to discover valuable information about important locations on campus, their program of study, learning facilities, and support services available within the university. It also provides an opportunity to meet lecturers and colleagues, socialise, and network (e.g., Barr, 2010; Cayton, 2017; Edith Cowan College, 2019; Mack, 2010; Mann et al., 2010; Vickerman & Blundell, 2010; Williams, 2007) and, according to (Barr, 2010) investing in quality orientation programs is money well spent by a tertiary education institution. Mack (2010) and Williams (2007) suggested that orientation programs shape students' academic and behavioural expectations, increase their perseverance, persistence and success in higher education.

According to Wilson and Dannells (2010), orientation programs assist commencing students with disability to become familiar with the support services available to them and how to access these services. Findings in both PUA and PUB suggest that orientation programs are organised for commencing students at the university level to acquaint them with the resources, rules and regulations, norms, and culture, thus university life in general. In addition to the general university-wide orientation, PUA and PUB organised separate orientation programs for students with disability. Some student participants reported that this orientation exposes them to the learning facilities and support services available at the DSU and gives them drive and stimulation to engage in both the academic and social activities of their respective universities. Article 24 (3, a) of the UNCRPD obliged HEIs to train students with vision impairment and deaf-blindness to acquire skills in orientation and mobility (United Nations, 2006). Orientation and mobility services offer students with vision impairment and deaf-blindness skills and conceptualisations to move safely within the campus environment (Office of Students with Disability Gallaudet University, n.d.). In both PUA and PUB, orientation and mobility training for students with vision impairment and their sighted guides enable them to safely and efficiently navigate the physical environment and access learning facilities independently with confidence.

Some findings relating to the orientation of commencing students in both PUA and PUB suggest dissenting views from some student participants. In PUA, it was reported that

orientation programs are not intensive and thorough enough to build, entrench, and sustain inclusive culture within the university community. Similarly, in PUB, it was found that lecturers and students without disability are not given enough orientation to become responsive to disability-related issues, and this impacts their attitudes towards students with disability. Furthermore, in PUB it was reported that, after orientation, advocacy for disability-related issues is not strengthened and/or deepened within the university, and this serves as an impediment in ingraining the tenets and values of inclusivity. In PUC, no orientation program is organised for the few commencing students with disability apart from the university-wide one for all commencing students. Orientation, thus, entails detailed planning and implementation while considering the nuances of a particular institution (Mack, 2010).

Academic support services

The overall purpose of academic support is to improve the learning outcomes and achievements of learners with disability. Any adaptations and modifications to the academic environment should offer students with disability the best opportunity to succeed in their studies. Article 24 (c, d) of the UNCRPD stipulated that students with disability be provided with reasonable adjustments and the necessary supports that will facilitate their success in the education system (United Nations, 2006). Forms of academic support mentioned by participants are learning equipment and assistive technology; learning support; examination arrangement; and ICT training.

Learning equipment and assistive technology. In both PUA and PUB, disability support units (DSUs) were created to provide support services for students with disability. In PUB, there are two DSUs, one for students with hearing impairment and one for students with vision impairment, deaf-blindness, cerebral palsy, and physical challenge. Observation suggests that both PUA and PUB need bigger DSU spaces for their operational activities. However, the challenge with space is more manifest and profound in PUB than in PUA. In addition, the DSU for students with hearing impairment in PUB also lacks adequate space. In PUC, there was no DSU at the time of data collection. The policymakers' data suggested that the HEIs are expected to establish resource centres or units where students, not only those with disability, can receive support. However, there was no evidence in this research that this provision is being implemented in most HEIs. Despite the roles of disability support units (DSUs) being essential in meeting the support needs of students with disability (Asiedu et al., 2018; Chataika, 2007;

FOTIM, 2011; Lane, 2015) the services of DSUs were limited in PUA and PUB and non-existent in PUC. FOTIM (2011) suggested that the establishment of dedicated, well-equipped, accessible and responsive DSUs is key, especially in many developing countries where the tertiary education sectors are not well-equipped for total faculty integration.

In both PUA and PUB, learning equipment are inadequate, but the situation is more pronounced in PUB than in PUA. In both PUA and PUB, in addition to the inadequacy of the learning equipment available in the DSUs, some of these are broken and in need of repairs. These situations are bound to impact negatively on the academic success of students with disability (FOTIM, 2011; Kochung, 2011; Slee et al, 2014; Tamrat, 2018). With the current situation, it will be difficult for the DSUs to carry out some of their commitments and mandates adequately. The IE policy stipulated that HEIs facilitate equal access to adaptive learning equipment and facilities to enhance students' learning (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015). Students with vision and physical challenge in PUA benefit from free digital sound recorders; in PUB, only students with hearing impairment occasionally receive free hearing aids donated to the university and, in PUC, there are no such facilities for students with physical challenge. Although all the three case universities, PUA, PUB, and PUC, are public universities, therefore state-funded, the experiences of students with disability differ considerably due to contextual factors.

In PUA, in addition to adaptive equipment, some assistive technology and devices are available for students with disability. Computers had specialised software installed on them and were connected to the internet. Free vacation ICT training classes were available for students with vision impairment to enhance their skills and knowledge in ICT and Microsoft word. However, in PUB, assistive technology, devices and software applications were not available. Both students with and without disability use the same computer laboratories and facilities, which were not physically accessible to students with mobility difficulties. Although plans were underway to establish a computer laboratory, state-of-the-art assistive devices, and provide training in ICT skills to all categories of students with disability, the procurement process was marred with difficulties. Research highlighted that, in developing countries, students with disability have limited access to learning equipment, ICT, assistive technology, software applications, accessible websites, and training in computer and assistive technology. Knowledge and usage of adaptive computer technologies as technical learning tools are key factors for improving the effectiveness of the inclusive education experiences for students with

vision impairment. This is because it presents computer information in an accessible format to enable students with vision impairment to succeed in their academic and social life. This knowledge also helps them to participate in public information exchange and equally provides motivation for career engagements and competitiveness in the open labour market after graduation (UNESCO IITE, 2019).

There are a lot of ways learning materials can be presented in an accessible format for students with disability, particularly those with vision and hearing impairment. These formats include braille, audiobooks, large print, e-text readers, electronic documents, film, video, communication hardware, and software (UNICEF, 2014a). Accessible information is one of the provisions of Article 24 (2) of the UNCRPD and the 2015 IE policy (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015; United Nations, 2006). However, the situation in both PUA and PUB libraries are a far cry from the internationally accepted practice. Apart from encyclopedias and dictionaries in braille format in PUA library, there are no braille textbooks, course reference books and/or audiobooks in the libraries of both PUA and PUB. Additionally, access to course material and curricular in an accessible format is often restricted (e.g., Lord, 2017; Lord & Stein, 2018; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011; Tamrat, 2018). In PUC, information in accessible formats was lacking; this might be because the students enrolled did not require information in an alternative format.

Similarly, the policymakers identified that the libraries of the universities lack learning and reading material in accessible format for students with vision impairment. Lack of, or inadequate, learning equipment and materials for students with disability in most of the HEIs remain a major obstacle (UNICEF, 2014a). Even after the IE policy came into effect, the situation still persists with just a little improvement in most of the universities. The policymakers' data suggested that inadequate learning resources present a challenge to the IE policy implementation, where students with disability in HEIs are disadvantaged by lack of access to equipment, information, and support for learning.

Learning Support. Lecture support is available for students with disability in both PUA and PUB. During lectures, this support takes the form of brailing, recording, sign language interpretation, and special seating arrangements. In both PUA and PUB, students with vision impairment benefit from brailling and transcription services where textbooks, lecture notes and/or slides and other learning materials are converted into braille by the DSU resource

persons. Dedicated DSUs play important roles in meeting the learning support needs of students with disability (Asiedu et al., 2018; Chataika, 2007; FOTIM, 2011; Lane, 2015).

In PUA, some students collect the soft copies of lecture notes, slides and other reading materials to read with computer screen reader software due to the knowledge acquired through ICT training, but this opportunity is limited in PUB due to lack of ICT training, which impacts the ICT knowledge base of students with disability. This finding is an excellent example of the benefits of knowledge of adaptive computer technologies and skills in facilitating students learning, particularly those with vision impairment (UNESCO IITE, 2019).

In both PUA and PUB, students with vision impairment receive reading support from their peers who read them textbooks and other learning resources, which were not available in braille. Peer support is one of the features of inclusive education practice and building the culture of inclusion (Carter et al., 2019). Although literature has shown that some peer mentors provide paid support (Carter et al., 2019), the support in PUA and PUB is purely voluntary.

In PUA and PUB special seating arrangements are in place for students with vision impairment so that they sit in a convenient location according to the nature and type of the vision impairment (for example, short-sightedness or long-sightedness), even if they are late for lectures. Furthermore, in PUB, students with hearing impairment are allowed to sit in front where they can see the sign language interpreters. This finding showed an example of good practice. In PUA, students with physical challenge do not benefit from any seating arrangement; they struggle for seats where the class size is large, and the furniture is inadequate. As a result, some case participants with a physical challenge in PUA contended that students with vision impairment are advantaged.

In PUC, there is no form of learning support for students with disability; therefore, any assistance given to any student during the teaching and learning process hinges on the ingenuity of the lecturer. For example, because support for preferential seating is not available, students with physical challenge would have to go from one classroom to another, looking for empty chairs to convey to the lecture hall for use if all the lecture hall furniture is occupied. Because this support is lacking, the student participant from PUC reported that searching for an empty chair puts stress on him and negatively impacts his participation in the teaching and the learning process. Literature highlighted that exploring the learning environment is restricted and

students' learning is affected when the furniture is unsuitable or non-adjustable, inadequate, and messy (ADCET, 2017; Fossey et al., 2015; Lord, 2017). Similarly, the social justice principles of equity incorporate providing quality learning spaces that allow students to succeed in their learning (UNESCO, 2017).

Although there are provisions, case participants conveyed some difficulties regarding learning support. Some lecturers are not prepared to release their PowerPoint slides or lecture notes voluntarily to be embossed for students with disability. Students would have to request them, and, in other instances, the DSU staff would have to pressure some lecturers to release these slides or lecture notes. Furthermore, some lecturers do not allow students with disability to record their lectures. Difficulties in accessing learning support in HEIs is well-documented in literature (e.g., Dowrick et al., 2005; Kendall, 2016; Moriña Díez et al., 2015; Redpath et al., 2013; Riddell et al., 2005). Furthermore, lecturers may be unaware of legislative requirements, which made support for students with disability mandatory (Dowrick et al., 2005; FOTIM, 2011; Lane, 2015). Mosia and Phasha (2017) contended that lecturers' lack of commitment to support students with disability can also be explained by their inadequate understanding of how to support students with diverse categories of disability. Furthermore, this finding has shown that the learning support practices in the universities are not consistent with the core of a socially just education. That is, education that ensures the provision of equitable learning opportunities to promote students' learning and enhance their opportunities in life (Cochran-Smith, 2010).

In PUB, students with hearing impairment sometimes attend lectures without any sign language interpreter available to interpret for them. This situation reportedly results from a communication breakdown between the lecturers, the sign language interpreters and the DSU. Literature highlighted that collaboration among the student, the support staff and the teaching staff facilitates an effective response to the learning support needs of students with disability (Fossey et al., 2015). Similarly, Gillies and Dupuis (2013) maintained that a collaborative approach to providing services for students with disability results in anticipatory, holistic, seamless, and interrelated web of support. Inadequate sign language interpreters could also be a potential cause of this challenge. Paucity of sign language interpreters prevails in HEIs in some African countries (Lord & Stein, 2018).

Assessment and examination

Quality inclusive education entails techniques of appraising and monitoring the progress of students. Varied forms of reasonable adjustments in examination and assessment for students with disability are highlighted in literature (e.g., Asiedu et al., 2018; Fossey et al., 2015; FOTIM, 2011; Kendall, 2016). These adjustments are implemented to allow equitable opportunities for students with disability. Findings have shown that examination arrangements or some reasonable adjustments are in place for some categories of students with disability in both PUA and PUB. These include writing their examinations in the DSU and being given an additional 50% of the time allotted to the paper. Further, examination questions are modified for students with vision impairment. Students also benefit from extended assessment submission dates. However, the policymakers' data suggest that the performance of students with disability in assessment and examination is impacted negatively when some lecturers refuse or are unwilling to give these students additional time as stipulated by the IE policy.

Although both PUA and PUB implement this differentiation, there are some slight variations. PUC had none of these arrangements in place. In PUA, only students with vision impairment benefit from this arrangement, but PUB has extended it to include a student with cerebral palsy and another with physical challenge. At least one student in PUB benefits from typing with the computer instead of writing by hand. It is important to indicate that in PUB, the student participant with physical challenge writes his examination in the DSU because of accessibility difficulties but does not benefit from the extra time arrangement. In PUA, students with physical challenge do not benefit from the same arrangement even though some of them have difficulty accessing their examination centres. This situation implies that, in PUA, these arrangements may not be extensive enough to include all students with disability who might be eligible. Scholars (e.g., Fuller, Healey, et al., 2004; Hanafin et al., 2007; Liasidou, 2014; Lord, 2017; Lord & Stein, 2018; Mutanga, 2018; UN Committee on RPD, 2016) indicated challenges regarding assessment of students with disability in HEIs. For example, Hanafin et al. (2007) reported that the assessment of students with disability was fraught with problems because HEIs have limited understanding in handling key issues relating to assessment.

In both PUA and PUB, cases concerning the delay in releasing examination questions to the DSU to be embossed for students with vision impairment due to apprehensions of question leakages, were shared by participants. In PUB, for example, this situation led the students to raise the issue of discrimination. This situation could arise, in part, from lecturers' lack of

awareness that the questions would have to be converted into braille for students with vision impairment before they could read and respond. This indicates inadequate knowledge of the procedures involved in making assessment accessible to some categories of students with disability. Lord (2017) and Lord and Stein (2018) suggested that presenting examination in accessible format is almost unknown to some university professors. Similarly, some faculty staff are critical about giving undue advantage in terms of assessment that portrays a lack of awareness of legislation and training in responding to diversity in assessment (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010).

A major assessment related challenge in PUA and PUB is the mishandling, missing and/or misplacing quizzes and examination scripts of students with vision impairment, in particular. Both staff and student participants in PUA and PUB reported instances where quizzes and examination scripts of students with vision impairment went missing resulting in their being awarded 'IC', incomplete results, and having to rewrite the quiz or resit the examination. Rewriting quizzes and assignments and resitting examinations through no fault of their own could put these students through mental, psychological, and physical stress. In some cases, due to the missing scripts, they were awarded grades that the students expressed reservations about. In PUA, for example, all students with vision impairment who wrote a particular paper obtained the same grade. These situations could be best described as grave academic omissions. These occurrences appeared to be attitudinal and may be emanating from the values placed on the scripts of these students, coupled with lack of communication, cooperation or awareness.

There was reportedly limited access to examination information in PUB where, for instance, examinations timetable and examination regulations for students are not in an accessible format for students with vision impairment to access independently. They had to rely on colleagues and resource persons for information concerning any change in examination timetable and/or examination regulations. Similarly, it was observed that in PUA, there was no brailled notice on any notice board and the examination policy for students is not in braille format. This finding revealed that the assessment practices. These findings suggested that assessment and examination policies and practices in the universities act to strengthen inequity (Cochran-Smith, 2010), which is an affront to the equity principle of social justice. Thus, the equity principle involves understanding the assessment needs of students, particularly those with disability because every individual student has different needs and circumstances (Blessinger et al., 2017).

Human resource

One of the fundamental constituents defining quality and successful inclusive education practice is the availability of qualified, competent, well-trained, committed, and skillful human resources. Article 24 (4) of the UNCRPD stipulated that member states should employ teachers, including teachers with disability, who are qualified in sign language and/or Braille, and to train professionals and staff who work at all levels of education. Provisions in the 2015 IE policy of Ghana also resonate with this requirement (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015; United Nations, 2006). The data analysis indicates that in PUC, no specialists and professionals are available to support students with disability if they are admitted into the university. Although both PUA and PUB employed professionals and resource persons to provide support services for students with disability, these personnel were not adequate in number. The challenge of understaffing appears more prominent in PUB, where the two permanent staff employed in the DSU were expected to provide support services for 84 students with vision impairment. It became evident that it was difficult finding and recruiting qualified staff, particularly braille experts, and sign language interpreters. For example, even in the taught courses, the number of lecturers in special needs education in PUB were inadequate to teach these courses.

Another reported instance emanating from the inadequacy of professionals and resource personnel came from PUB where students on internship are used to assist in providing braille transcription services to reduce the workload on the low number of DSU staff. It was reported that there were difficulties reading some transcribed quizzes and examinations scripts, which was blamed on the skill level of internship students used for the transcription. The challenge of inadequate human resources was also revealed in the policymakers' data. According to policymakers, well-trained and qualified resource persons and personnel, such as braille experts and sign language interpreters, were too few to take care of students with disability in HEIs. Literature has shown that inadequate specialists and professional staff, including braille and sign language experts, and faculty staff with training in special needs education, is a major human resource issue in higher education inclusion for persons with disability (e.g., FOTIM, 2011; Gelbar et al., 2015; Kochung, 2011; Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Newman & Conway, 2017; Spratt & Florian, 2015).

The issue of recruiting high calibre resource, specialist and professional staff also became evident from the analysis of data. Some participants in PUA suggested the need to consider the

competencies and qualities such as understanding, patience, commitment, and selflessness when recruiting personnel to work with students with disability. Parchomiuk (2015) maintained that people working with persons with disability would have to be mindful of their attitudes and values to circumvent unreasonable behaviours and preconceptions. These attitudes and values may manifest in inappropriate behaviour. Similarly, Shippy (2015) delineated respect, flexibility, patience, appreciation of differences, meaningful friendships, and commitment as some of the qualities, and positive characteristics ideal for people working with persons with disability.

Teaching and Learning

HEIs have a responsibility to facilitate quality teaching and learning (Equality Challenge Unit, 2013), ensuring that their teaching staff possess the knowledge, skills, and confidence to deliver the core curriculum in a manner that nurtures high standards of achievement among diverse groups (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015). Teaching strategies adopted by teachers are core to learning outcomes of students with disability in higher education (Department of Education - Tasmania, 2015; Hockings, 2010; Shaddock et al., 2007). Teachers in inclusive educational settings must understand and employ teaching methodologies that meet the needs of diverse categories of learners, including students with disability. Pedagogical knowledge and skills of teachers are pivotal to the academic outcomes of all students in higher education (Evans et al., 2017; Moriña, 2017; Moriña Díez et al., 2015; Spratt & Florian, 2015).

Findings emanating from the analysis of interview data suggested that in both PUA and PUB, some lecturers in the field of special education have adequate knowledge in teaching students with disability and this is demonstrated by adopting varied techniques, approaches, adaptations, and differentiation strategies in teaching, learning and assessment. Where lecturers are not experts in special education, assistance was provided by the DSU. However, in both universities, PUA and PUB, the knowledge of some lecturers in working with students with disability is weak. Participants reported that the manner in which these lecturers teach indicate that they are oblivious of students with disability in their class as they adopt inappropriate methodological approaches in their delivery. These findings were evident in, and consistent with, the policymakers' data where they reported that knowledge in curriculum adaptation and lecturer expertise to respond to the diversity in their classrooms were limited or lacking.

Furthermore, sometimes, some of these lecturers disregard the presence and contributions of students with disability in their class. Even if they are given the opportunity, their attempts to contribute are not recognised or acknowledged. Thus, no feedback is provided to indicate whether their responses or contributions are correct or incorrect. Giving effort or ability feedback to students is a way of acknowledging their responses, contributions and presence within the learning environment. Positive experiences in the university classroom are critical to successful inclusion of students with disability within the campus community. Faculty relationship with students with disability is fundamental in determining whether students with disability are welcomed, accepted, and recognised within the institutional environment (Evans et al., 2017; Graham-Smith & Lafayette, 2004). Karousou (2017) argued that inclusive practice requires a shift in paradigm in our institutional and cultural approach to ensure that all students are included in the university classroom. Recognising the variability of students in learning would engender a critical analysis of current teaching practices, partnership, and collaboration with other faculty to eliminate obstacles that hinder academic achievement (Bonati, 2019).

In both PUA and PUB, findings revealed that because of large class sizes, teacher-centered approaches are adopted without consideration of the learning needs of students with disability. And again, due to a large number of students, some lecturers 'forget' that students with vision impairment are present in the class. Large class sizes coupled with inappropriate pedagogies can frustrate learning engagement of students with disability, particularly when required support is not available. The policymakers' data revealed issues of large class size, which makes it difficult to pay attention to students with disability. These results are consistent with earlier literature (Monks & Schmidt, 2011) that class size influences student learning engagement and outcomes.

In PUA and PUB, although some attempts have been made to use differentiation, major issues still remain. However, in PUC, no differentiation technique is employed in teaching, learning, and assessment of students, which, according to some of the case participants, emanates from the categories of students with disability enrolled. Analysis of policymakers' data revealed that some lecturers have difficulty accepting students with disability in their lecture halls. They see supporting students with disability as burdensome and additional work because it requires diversifying instruction to respond to their learning needs and ensuring their success. Differentiation allows teachers to strategise and adopt varied methods to content, process, product, and anticipate and respond to diversity among learners (Shaddock et al., 2007;

Tomlinson, 2001; Tomlinson et al, 2003). It creates welcoming, respectful, and supportive environment where students feel connected and safe to take risks with their learning and succeed (Department of Education - Tasmania, 2015). Similarly, UDL provides a plan for crafting instructional objectives, approaches, resources, and assessments that work for everyone (Bonati, 2019; National Center on Universal Design for Learning, 2014) and revitalises educational goals to allow all learners to participate in the general curriculum (Adams & Holland, 2006).

The policymakers' findings suggested that HEIs will be required to adapt the existing curriculum in the HEIs to respond to the learning needs of students with disability. Consistent with previous literature, improper consideration for planning the curriculum are impediments for persons with disability in most HEIs (Adams & Brown, 2006; McLean et al., 2003). A barrier-free curriculum increases academic achievement of students with disability (Vickerman & Blundell, 2010). In addition, the policymakers' findings revealed that inclusive education will be included in the curriculum at the initial colleges of education in Ghana. Sharma et al. (2013) identified lack of teacher preparedness to implement an inclusive approach in schools as one of the major challenges in developing countries. The review of the national curriculum to include components of inclusive education will ensure that teachers, at all levels, acquire knowledge and skills in inclusive pedagogy and practice. The review of the national curriculum to equip teachers with knowledge and skills in inclusive pedagogy and practice is consistent with the theory of social justice because this will promote equity in learning opportunities and outcomes for all students (Cochran-Smith, 2010). Similarly, adopting apposite pedagogical strategies and attitudes will ensure that HEIs remain places of possibility, rather than divisive spaces (Osman et al., 2018).

Counselling services

Counselling services may offer assistance and support to diverse categories of learners to deal more efficiently with personal, academic, career, emotional, and social issues during their program of study. Counselling services are an essential component of any HEI (European Association for International Education, n.d.) and a core element in determining the overall achievement of students with disability in higher education and beyond (Curaj et al., 2018; European Commission, 2019). The analysis of the data revealed issues indicating that the case universities, PUA, PUB, and PUC have established well-coordinated counselling units where

students with and without disability can receive counselling services. Students are introduced to the university-wide counselling unit before the commencement of their programs.

Students with disability in PUA and PUB benefit from academic and social counselling services, which focused on the specific needs of students with disability. In PUB, for example, at the beginning of each semester they are invited for group counselling and/or advice by the special education department on issues relating to their academic and social life on campus. Thus, these counselling services are planned and purposely targeted towards students with disability. Additionally, students with disability were empowered by knowledge to understand their rights and responsibilities regarding equitable opportunities for academic and social engagement. This finding concurs with the views of European Commission (2019), which maintained that HEIs are to offer all students the necessary counselling services to enable them to succeed and benefit from higher education.

Access to higher education improves access to employment (Dennis, 2016; Ebersold, 2008) by providing students with disability employment opportunities and social recognition (Dennis, 2016; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). At both PUA and PUB, some level of career counselling services is organised for students with disability, which prepares them for the job market, and also equips them with job acquisition and maintenance skills. However, it was found that career counselling services are more focused, intensive, and extensive in scope at PUB than at PUA. This is consistent with the literature highlighting that, currently, some universities integrate employability skills and compulsory career sessions into their degree courses. Many HEIs also assist students in developing the soft skills that companies look for (European Commission, 2019).

Literature documented that employment rates of some categories of persons with disability remain low despite the implementation of policy initiatives to improve their opportunities (Hiersteiner et al., 2016). It was evident from the analysis that unemployment of persons with disability after graduating from the university is another challenge, which was evident from the analysis of the data of policymakers. In PUB, findings revealed that employment opportunities of students with disability are enhanced if they apply for teaching jobs in the Ghana Education Service. For example, their applications are sent to the Directorate of Special Education of the Ghana Education Service for further action. However, in PUA, analysis of data has revealed that obtaining employment after graduation is difficult for students with disability. After

graduation, these students remain unemployed for approximately two to five years. Even though the Persons with Disability Act 2006 (Act 715) states that organisations that employ persons with disability should be given tax rebates and the appropriate sector ministry shall assist persons with disability to gain employment (Republic of Ghana, 2006), employment challenges still exist. It is unclear whether PUC has ever graduated any student with disability since its inception. The analysis of data revealed that the unemployment situation demotivates some other potential students with disability from accessing higher education.

Quality and effectiveness of the services

In both PUA and PUB, student participants indicated varied perspectives about the quality and effectiveness of the services offered by the DSU from good to average. Students' views suggest that these services positively impact their learning and academic outcomes, although they (these services) do not meet their needs and expectations. This perspective appears to be an acknowledgment of the fact that without these limited academic provisions and support services, their circumstances would have been much more overwhelming. Research highlighted that students with disability value the support they receive from the DSUs at their institutions (Evans et al., 2017; Fossey et al., 2015). FOTIM (2011) reported that students with disability recount many unmet needs but rate the services of the DSUs as adequate and satisfactory. Most students with disability are not sophisticated and assume that certain situations cannot change, which is not essentially the case. FOTIM explained that because appraisal schemes are lacking, it is complicated to assess DSUs and other institutional staff against their delivery on the disability agenda. This situation is similar to that of PUA and PUB, where support seemed inadequate, but the students said the little support that was available positively impact their academic achievements. PUC did not have a DSU, as such the effectiveness of the limited support available could not be assessed by participants.

8.6 Engaging with the Social Environment of the University

The value of active engagement of students with disability within the social environment of the university has been identified by some scholars (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Kiuppis, 2018; Riddell et al., 2004; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). This section discusses issues emanating from the data regarding students' engagement and interaction within the social environment of the university related to activities such as sports and games; SRC and hall week celebrations; and, student politics. Article 30, subsection 5 of the UNCRPD guaranteed the rights of persons with

disability to access, participate in, organise sports and games, recreational, leisure activities, and access related services (United Nations, 2006).

Sports and games, recreational, extra-curricular activities

The value of sports and games for students with disability cannot be overstated (Barg et al., 2010; Hutzler et al., 2016; Lundberg et al., 2008; McLennan & Thompson, 2015; Wanderi et al., 2009). For example, sports and games are valuable in both therapeutic and rehabilitative terms; it allows the maintenance of positive self-identity; and the opportunity to build a long-term network of social relationships (Oliver, 1996). However, in all the three case universities, provisions that would facilitate students' engagement in sports and games are almost non-existence; this situation disallows these students to accrue the benefits therein. In both PUA and PUB, the opportunity for students with disability to actively engage in sports and games activities are restricted by the terrain, adaptive sports and games facilities, and equipment. In the first place, the unsuitable nature of the environment and access related issues limit their engagement. Secondly, facilities and equipment that will facilitate students' involvement in sports and games are inadequate or unavailable. The sporting facilities on both campuses are also not modified and/or adapted to suit disability sports. These situations denied students with disability the opportunity to engage in training and practice consistently, and it negatively impacted their performance during competitions, which one student described as 'abysmal'. Furthermore, the number of sporting disciplines the students with disability engage in is limited to only one, that being goalball.

Literature highlighted limited engagement of students with disability in sports and games, recreation, and extra-curricular activities (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Kiuppis, 2018; Mosia & Phasha, 2017; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). Meaningful engagement of students with disability in sports and games activities is contingent on procuring appropriate equipment and adapting the sporting arena to make it accessible, suitable, and usable for them. Further, if sporting and game activities are limited to only one, it has already eliminated a large number of students because they may have varied interests. Kiuppis (2018) argued that this challenge could be addressed by providing students with disability with a range of sporting and games activities. Inadequate knowledge about the various adapted sports and games activities, and attitudes are also exclusionary factors (Goldowitz et al., 2018; Kiuppis, 2018; Shields & Synnot, 2016; Vaillo et al., 2016). Those in charge of sporting and games activities in the universities would

have to identify ways of making a variety of disability sports and games activities feasible and accessible for students with disability.

In PUB, students are not involved in social activities such as Student Representative Council (SRC) and hall week celebrations because of safety concerns. It was reported that the student leaders have apprehensions about the safety of students with disability during some of these activities because no measures are in place to ensure their safety. Although students with disability expressed the same concerns, the situation remains unsafe for them to participate. In PUC, it was reported that students with disability are not prevented from engaging and participating in social activities; however, there are no provisions for them to participate. Consistent with the findings of the case study universities, lack of opportunity for students with disability to participate fully in university-wide activities on the campuses of public universities was evident in the policymakers' findings.

Furthermore, while some students with disability can engage and participate in social, recreational, and extracurricular activities independently, some others need the support of the DSU to create opportunities by removing both physical and unseen barriers to their engagement. It has been asserted that social engagement is a major determinant of students' university experience (Riddell et al., 2004; Sachs & Schreuer, 2011). The social environment of HEIs is crucial in shaping the experience of impairment and disability (Riddell et al., 2004). Interaction with diverse categories of people help to unlearn stigmas and assumptions and relearn the value for diversity and uniqueness (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013).

Student politics

The analysis of the data revealed that experiences of students with disability regarding participation and engagement in student politics differed across the case universities. In PUA, some students with disability occupy SRC positions by appointment rather than election. For example, students with disability are appointed as secretary to the library board, judicial board member, and secretary to the editorial board. However, in PUB, appointments are by election only and there is no representation of students with disability on any student leadership committees and/or boards. This situation prevents the voices of students with disability from being represented at any level of the student leadership and from being heard in the university. In PUA, students with disability can occupy SRC positions by appointment, but students who stand for SRC elected positions fail to win. In PUB and PUC, it is not clear whether any student with disability stood for SRC elected positions.

It is evident from the analysis of policymakers' data that they believe students with disability should be given the opportunity to engage in student politics, standing and competing for positions in the Student Representative Council (SRC). This is consistent with Young's (2011) assertion that undemocratic decision-making structures work to replicate distributive inequality, unjust limitation, marginalisation, and exploitation (Young, 2011). The policymakers' finding suggested that for this to be achieved, students without disability must be sensitised to understand and recognised the ability of students with disability to hold positions, instead of reacting with discouragement and mockery. Similarly, Riddell et al. (2005) and Vickerman and Blundell (2010) contended that respect and recognition of the views of students with disability are crucial to their active participation and engagement in higher education. With Claiborne et al. (2011) proposing that discussions, consultations, or meetings with students with disability offer them a unique opportunity to voice their needs.

8.7 Attitudinal Dimensions of Higher Education Inclusion

Attitudes towards students with disability could have a major impact on their higher education outcomes. The analysis of data revealed both positive and negative attitudes from PUA, PUB, and PUC. In PUA and PUB, reported positive attitudes are marginal, with strong evidence of negative attitudes across all spheres of the university community. However, in PUC, the emerging evidence is that positive attitudes are more prevalent than the negative. This could emanate from the limited number, nature and type of students with disability enrolled. In PUC, there are only three students with disability – two students with physical challenge and the third with a disability that presents with no identifiable characteristics.

Positive attitudes of faculty and peers without disability are fundamental to the inclusion of students with disability in higher education (Costea-Bărluţiu & Rusu, 2015) and crucial for the academic outcomes of students with disability who are placed in inclusive classrooms (Saloviita, 2018). The positive attitudes reported in PUA include support, acceptance, respect for difference, recognition, and equal opportunity in service delivery. In PUB, instances of positive attitudes include peer and staff support, rapport, preferential treatment, friendliness and demonstrated concerns for the welfare of students with disability. Whereas, in PUC, examples include demonstration of acceptance and respect, conducive social environment, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity. Social interaction, familiarity, and proximity with disability builds positive attitude towards persons with disability, increases respect and

promotes inclusion (Costea-Bărluţiu & Rusu, 2015; Hayashi & May, 2011; McGregor, 2003; Thompson et al., 2012). In their study, Hayashi and May (2011) reported that students who were taught by a professor with a disability had more positive attitudes toward disability.

In PUA and PUB, the aspects of negative attitudes emanating from the data analysis have been grouped into mindsets and preconceptions; offensive comments/remarks; and actions and behaviours. With regard to mindsets, similar issues are reported in both PUA and PUB. Examples of this aspects from both universities are stereotypes, stigmatisations, negative perceptions and thoughts, strange assertions, and prejudiced opinions from both staff and students. Furthermore, the situation prevailing in both PUA and PUB, concerning offensive comments and remarks, is quite similar. In both universities, undesirable statements are directed towards students with disability. These comments take the form of mockery, teasing, unsupported generalisations, over-inquisitiveness, and the unacceptable manner some lecturers talk to students with disability. For example, due to the stigmatisation, some students with physical challenges refused to disclose their disability and benefit from support, even though they were prompted to do so by the DSU staff and some faculty staff who are professionals in special needs education. Lightner et al. (2012) reported stigma and limited knowledge as barriers to disclosing disability and seeking support services in HEIs.

The dimension of actions and behaviours relate to the manner in which people acted or behaved towards students with disability. Again, evidence suggests that situations are somewhat parallel in PUA and PUB, though there are subtle variations. In both universities, improper behaviours towards students with disability include avoidance and isolation, insensitivity, impatience, uncaring behaviours, and lack of advocacy. In PUC, the data indicated indifference towards the presence of students with disability in the university and the issues that they may be contending with. Correspondingly, policymakers reported negative attitudes towards students with disability, which they identified as another perceived difficulty in the implementation of the IE policy. The findings suggested that the attitude within the university community is not in keeping with the theory of social justice, which interrogates practices, labels, and assumptions that reinforce stigmatisation, isolation, and exclusionary practices in education systems (Cochran-Smith, 2010).

In African countries, persons with disability can be rejected, stigmatised, and treated inhumanly. For example, people treat persons with disability as things and not human beings

(Amanze, 2019). In the Ghanaian society, people's attitudes towards persons with disability emanated from socio-cultural beliefs, which are deeply rooted in the moral, medical, and charity models of disability (Agbenyega, 2003; Anthony, 2011; Avoke, 2002; Kuyini, 2014; Naami & Hayashi, 2012). These notions have resulted in the various ways society stigmatises, labels, and reacts to persons with disability. These different beliefs have been transferred from the larger society into the higher education system, a community where people are expected to be more knowledgeable and enlightened. Research has shown that attitudes are significant barriers to inclusion and achievement of persons with disability, notably, in institutions of higher learning (Helena-Martins et al., 2018; Jameel, 2011; Rao, 2004; Zafrir, 2016). Attitude is, therefore, an essential factor in higher education inclusion for persons with disability. FOTIM (2011) reported instances of derogatory treatment, rejection, and isolation of students with disability. Challenges regarding the attitude of institutional management were also reported. Inclusion frequently demands a shift in people's attitudes and values. UNESCO (2009) maintained that modifications in attitudes and values require time and a re-examination of beliefs and role behaviour. Creating awareness requires a greater understanding of inclusive education, and societies becoming more understanding and accepting.

Participants' construction of disability

The meaning participants have crafted for disability could impact their perspectives, beliefs, and attitudes towards students with disability and views on issues relating to their access, engagement, and participation in higher education. FOTIM (2011) suggested that the model of disability a university embraces may influence what and how of services provided. A developmental conceptualisation of disability nurtures quality and effectiveness, whereas the medical philosophy limits the ability to pay attention to quality and effectiveness (Ebersold, 2008).

The analysis of data revealed that most of the study participants, 31 out of 36, located disability within the medical model where disability is seen as a deficit. Three participants theorised the concept both as an impairment and social barriers. This perspective demonstrates a combination of both the medical and social model. The remaining two study participants understood disability solely as barriers constructed by society, which prevents persons with disability from functioning effectively, thus, within the domain of the social or the asset model. Within the medical model, disability is regarded as the "property of the individual" (Goodley, 2016, p. 6), a condition which can be treated or cured. Where people conceptualised

disability within the medical model, their attitudes towards persons with disability are often negative. This finding has shown that even though inclusive education is high on political and educational agendas, the perception of disability as a deficit is still prevalent (Helena-Martins et al., 2018).

Use of terminology/language

Stuntzner and Hartley (2014) maintained that language is very powerful, regardless of its intent. The use of inappropriate terminology has a negative influence on persons with disability (Australian Network on Disability, 2020; Back et al., 2016; Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017; Giorcelli, 2016; Stuntzner & Hartley, 2014; Titchkosky, 2001) particularly when such experiences are internalised (Stuntzner & Hartley, 2014). The terminology people use can affect how persons with disability view themselves and experience disability. This mirrors their attitudes towards persons with disability in the society and may demonstrate the respect and/or the value they place on these individuals. The terminology and language adopted in the higher education environment, including classrooms, could be vital elements in shaping the experiences of students with disability within the university environment as it has the power to impact on the experiences of students with disability either positively or negatively (Back et al., 2016).

The analysis of data revealed various terminologies and language participants used in referring to and/or describing students with disability, as well as reporting on disability-related issues. Terminology and labels pervasive in all the three case universities include ‘no eyes, blind, crippled, deaf and dumb, disabled people/person/student, mentally retarded, visually impaired, and hearing impaired. Some of these terminologies are described in the literature as ‘disability-first language’ (Back et al., 2016), which emphasise the disability rather than the person. Furthermore, some of the terminologies are archaic and no longer acceptable because they carry with them derogatory and offensive elements. The use of disability-first language is prevalent in all the three case universities, even among participants with backgrounds in special needs education and students with disability. Analysis of policy architects’ data also revealed the use of unacceptable terminologies such as blind people, deaf people, special people, and the blind. The belief and expectation that persons with disability be perceived and treated with dignity, equity, and respect is the impetus for continuous efforts to curtail terminology that

excludes and reduces and replace it with terminology that celebrates and empowers (Osgood, 2006).

Similarly, if students without disability are described as ‘normal students’, the implication is that students with disability are ‘abnormal students’. Another aspect of this issue is the frequent use of terms such as, ‘them’ and ‘they’ which suggest a sense of dichotomy – ‘us and them’ and also connote undue emphasis on ‘deviation or difference’. Findings also revealed that pejorative language such as ‘these our people, they are too inquisitive’ is sometimes used to refer to persons with disability. Considering the context in which some of these terminologies and languages are used, most could be avoided. Throughout history, some people have always understood and perceive persons with disability as the ‘other’ (Osgood, 2006). Students with disability have an enduring experience of ‘othering’ and social exclusion for failing to meet prescribed norms (Morley & Croft, 2011) and are also socially positioned as different (Agbenyega, 2003; Morley & Croft, 2011). Today, perceiving and referring to students with disability as ‘others’ is like taking a step back into history that is discriminatory and inhuman. Literature highlighted that persons with disability are a human being first before their disability (e.g., Back et al., 2016; Foreman & Arthur-Kelly, 2017; Giorcelli, 2016; Stuntzner & Hartley, 2014). It is crucial to be mindful of language usage and avoid references that may humiliate persons with disability. According to UNESCO (1999), universities are required to grow into the kind of “teaching and learning institutions where students with disabilities feel at home and have a sense of belonging to an intellectual and social community as a right” (p. 25). However, the findings from the policymakers’ data suggested that, despite these hindrances or obstacles in Ghanaian universities, the value of providing higher education for persons with disability exceed any of these impediments.

8.8 Financial Implications for Access and Participation

Worldwide, both well-developed and less-developed education systems experience financial difficulties when implementing inclusive education (UNICEF, 2014b). Funding is fundamental to the discussion on implementing effective educational inclusion (Ebersold & Meijer, 2016). The issue of financing permeates all spheres and dimensions of including persons with disability in higher education. Financing may considerably impact the provisions and support educational institutions can provide for students with disability as well as the level or degree of their engagement and participation. Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) proposed that consideration should be given to whether economic resources available within the

implementing organisation are enough to support successful policy implementation. Effective policy implementation, therefore, requires planning and the mobilisation of sufficient resources.

Funding and financial issues revealed by the analysis of data relate to government's inability to provide adequate funding for the implementation of the IE policy. Financial challenges impacting the universities' ability to create access and ensure active engagement and participation for students with disability were also evident in the data analysis. Furthermore, data analysis revealed financial difficulties affecting the ability of students with disability to cater for their basic needs when pursuing higher education.

Data from the policymakers' highlighted inadequate financial resources as a major constraint of the implementation of the IE policy where the government's recurrent expenditure on inclusive education is 0.6% of the overall budgetary allocation for education, which is insufficient. Another finding suggested that overdependence on donor agencies and development partners is a block to sustainable policy implementation. The 2018 ESA Report indicated that Ghana has a good IE policy; however, there are financial challenges when it comes to implementation. No matter how well the IE policy is written, it will be difficult to actualise its targets with inadequate budgetary allocation and under-resourcing. These findings are consistent with the literature highlighting that poor resourcing has often been alluded to as a fundamental challenge for governments in creating effective inclusive education systems (e.g., Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019; Eleweke & Rodda, 2002; IIEP-UNESCO, 2018; UNICEF, 2014b).

In all the three case universities, PUA, PUB, and PUC, the analysis has shown that funding and financing is a major issue limiting the universities' efforts in providing an accessible built environment for students with disability. For example, building new structures and retrofitting old ones was constrained by inadequate financial resources. In African countries, HEIs lack the financial resources required to remove existing barriers that militate against physical access, as well as academic and social engagement of students with disability (Kochung, 2011).

In both PUA and PUB, procuring adequate, modern and state-of-the-art learning equipment, software applications, assistive technology devices are, in part, impeded by insufficient funds. Although PUC is yet to establish academic support systems, some of its case participants alluded to the high cost of creating and equipping the DSU, adapting the existing curriculum,

and adjusting practicum experiences for students with disability. Furthermore, in PUA and PUB, inadequate funding has constrained the university's attempt at providing further and continuing education, training, and development for existing staff. Similar perceptions became evident from PUC, which is at the early stages of including students with disability. Inadequate funding and limited resourcing could obstruct access to the curriculum and learning (Kochung, 2011; Mutanga, 2018; Pearce et al., 2010).

In PUA, there is no budgetary allocation for the DSU, and there is no office imprest. Funds to repair faulty equipment are not available and, due to the financial constraints of the DSU, some of the equipment has never been serviced since it was installed. In PUB, although students with disability pay the same academic facility user fees as students without disability, the resources they need to study are inadequate. These findings appear to suggest the universities' low level of financial ability to invest in the educational needs of students with disability and in ensuring that their respective DSUs are well resourced. The needs of students with disability are frequently overlooked because of inadequate resources. Often, it is not just the level of resources that is the issue, but also the policies and approaches used in allotting available funds (UNICEF, 2014b).

Services provided by the DSUs, which have direct responsibility for students with disability, are often ineffective without independent budgetary allocation. When departments whose activities have nothing to do with disability have oversight responsibility for the DSUs, the needs of students with disability are often ignored (Mosia & Phasha, 2017). FOTIM (2011) reported situations where budgetary allocations for the DSUs were 'swallowed up' in the budget of other units of the university due to lack of recognition of the DSUs. Leadership can openly show a lack of commitment and/or prioritisation of the disability agenda through a lack of commitment to funding.

Institutional culture is important, particularly in inclusive settings. It is central to the quality of education received by students with disability in institutions (Angelides & Ainscow, 2000). Thus, the determining factor of high or poor educational attainment and outcomes for students with disability is the culture of the institution students with disability attend. Most often, this culture originates directly from the leadership team as to whether the inclusive education agenda is a priority for them and/or high on the institutional agenda. Therefore, the institutional leadership team, particularly, the institutional head has a key responsibility in nurturing and

sustaining a culture of support and inclusion in the institution (MacFarlane & Woolfson, 2013; Parliament of Australia, 2016; UNESCO, 2017).

It was found that students with disability in PUA and PUB students with disability received some financial support in the form of government bursary and are eligible to compete for a range of university-based scholarships meant for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and with high academic achievement. However, in PUC, the only scholarship available is instituted by a donor organisation and it is program-specific or course-related. Despite these financial arrangements, the majority of students with disability encounter enormous financial challenges, mainly due to their unique needs and low-income family backgrounds. This finding is consistent with the literature highlighting that students with disability often come from low-income family backgrounds, and it is challenging for parents to meet the cost of education (Chataika, 2007; Chiwandire & Vincent, 2019; Emong & Eron, 2016; Kochung, 2011; UNICEF, 2014b). Specific funding for special educational needs enables HEIs to provide for learners and support parents in meeting the cost of education (Ebersold & Meijer, 2016).

In PUA, PUB, and PUC, findings suggest that financial difficulties may hinder students with disability from engaging fully with the university. For example, some students with disability have difficulties in paying their academic and residential facility user fees. This situation disrupts school or lecture attendance and affects students' learning outcomes. In PUC, for example, a student with disability reported having difficulties paying his academic facility user fees when his agreement with the municipal assembly was terminated based on semantics. The district assemblies are required by law to support students with disability with a portion of their common fund (DACF). However, the experiences this student narrated during the interview demonstrated that this provision had been compromised with political considerations resulting in substantial financial stress, affecting this student's academic and social engagements. A situation such as this may hinder higher education access for potential students with disability. It could also limit academic and social engagement of those who are able to gain access.

Active engagement and participation of students with disability in out-of-class activities also requires dedicated funding but, evidence from the analysis of data suggested that dedicated funding was not available in PUA, PUB or PUC. In PUA, a low level of engagement and participation of students with disability in activities such as SRC and hall week celebrations was reported. However, experiences differ for students with disability (even for students with

the same type of disability) within the same university environment. Issues were raised about non-involvement in the planning process and the unsuitability of some of the activities slated for the celebrations, which restricted the participation of some categories of students with disability.

In relation to the allocation of limited resources, in PUC, a case participant suggested the need for the government to invest its inadequate financial resources in 'low-hanging fruits', brilliant students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, who qualified for university education but cannot access it due to financial challenges, instead of persons with disability who also qualified for higher education. The reasons behind this thought is that while qualified and brilliant students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds can access the existing facilities, eligible persons with disability require provisions, modifications, academic adjustments, and support services to achieve success in higher education. These requirements suggest further expenditure by the government. This position may sound cogent in the face of competing national needs and political priorities as against limited resources; however, it brings to the fore critical consideration of principles and tenets of social justice in higher education. Distributive justice refers to the philosophies that relate to fairness in allocating resources in society. It emphasises the equal rights of all persons to benefit from social goods (Miller, 2017). Educational equality is a core value of social justice (Terzi, 2005). This is relevant here because education is a fundamental human right, and every citizen has an equal entitlement to access higher education (Blessinger, et al., 2018) and benefit from its resources (Nelson & Creagh, 2013). Thus, according to Rawls (1999), each person has an inviolable right to social goods, which prevails over the welfare of society. Higher education is one of such social goods to which persons with disability have the inviolable right to equitable access and participation. Similarly, the Parliament of Australia (2016) maintained that educational institutions or government policies, which fail to provide equal and inclusive educational opportunities to persons with disability are in breach of the UNCRPD; this position is in keeping with the IE policy (Ministry of Education-Republic of Ghana, 2015).

It is apparent that the national government is not allocating adequate resources to support effective implementation of the IE policy even at the pre-tertiary level. As reported earlier, during 2015, the recurrent expenditure on inclusive education was 6% of the total budgetary allocation for the Education Ministry (IIEP-UNESCO, 2018).

In the face of dwindling government subventions to the public universities and the seeming marketisation of higher education, the needs of students with disability appear to have been relegated to the background. This situation has led to public universities, which admit students with disability, to primarily provide learning adjustments rather than inclusion. UNESCO (1999) maintained that if universities with their concentration of intellect are slow in grappling with including students with disability, then it is uncertain if there is hope for other institutions and places of work. The need for a shift in paradigm in the mindsets and attitudes of HEIs is critical for growth to occur in inclusion of people with disability (FOTIM, 2011, pp. 83 - 84).

8.9 Precis of Similarities and Differences Among the Three Universities

This section presents the synopsis of the main similarities and differences between the three case study universities, PUA (the old university), PUB (the young university), PUC (the new university). These main similarities and differences are presented according to the themes.

Understanding the Expectations of the National Inclusive Education Policy. The findings revealed similarities in the understanding of the intents of the IE policy by the three participating universities, PUA, PUB and PUA. Another similarity is the shallowness of knowledge of the IE policy content and the lack of awareness of its existence in the case study universities. This situation was more pronounced in PUC where all four staff participants were oblivious of the fact that Ghana has IE policy.

Institutional Policy and Guidelines on Disability Service Provision. The findings revealed differences in efforts of the three universities to develop university-level strategic policy frameworks and guidelines on disability service provision. These attempts were impacted by contextual factors and the level of resourcing. The old university, which had the highest level of resourcing, has a draft policy, whereas the young university is making efforts to put a policy together. The new university, with the least resources, is yet to consider the design of such a policy, though it acknowledges its importance. Further, despite the absence of a dedicated institutional level policy framework on disability, the old and the new universities have some provisions for students with disability in their corporate strategic plans. However, the new university has nothing in its corporate strategic plan relating to disability, consequently, inclusive practices are limited.

Access to the physical environment. In all the three case study universities, PUA, PUB, and PUC, the physical environment received some attention, though these efforts were not enough

to respond to the mobility needs and meet the expectations of persons with disability. Access to the physical and the built environment in the three case study universities remained a challenge. Another similarity was the lack of disability-friendly buses in all three case study universities, which limited the independent movement of persons with disability within and across multiple campuses. In addition, institutional documents of all the three universities stated that students with disability were allowed to stay in the university halls of residence throughout their program of study, however, not all the students with disability had the opportunity to stay in the halls due to lack of space and financial constraints.

Access to Support Systems Within the Universities. Whereas PUA and PUB had a range of disability support services and resources such as admission schemes, special orientation programs, learning equipment, adjustments in teaching and learning, learning support, assessment and examination adjustments, special education professionals, resource persons, and DSUs, PUC had none of these support services. Another major difference between the three case study universities is that PUA has two ICT laboratories and various forms of adaptive technology and assistive devices for persons with disability, but PUB and PUC have none of these facilities. In all the three case study universities, counselling services were available for persons with disability, although, in PUA and PUC, these services were not tailormade to students' needs. None of the three case study universities had textbooks in braille format and audiobooks in the library for persons with disability.

Furthermore, there were differences in the categories of persons with disability enrolled in the three case study universities. Although PUA's draft Institutional Disability Policy recognised eight categories of persons with disability, only persons with vision impairment and the physically challenged were admitted to courses because provisions were not available for the other categories. PUB provided an opportunity for, at least, five categories of persons with disability to access higher education, including persons with vision impairment, hearing impairment, physical disability, cerebral palsy, and deaf-blindness. However, PUC's commitment to providing access and support for persons with disability was not evident in the findings. This situation limited the enrolment of persons with disability in PUC to two students with physical challenge and a third with unidentified disability.

Engaging with the Social Environment of the University. In all the three case universities, opportunities were not created for students with disability to participate in social activities such as SRC week celebrations, hall week celebrations, student politics, and sports and game

activities. The needs of students with disability were not factored into activities organised for SRC and hall week celebrations. Furthermore, students with disability in all three universities were not elected to SRC positions, though in PUA a few were appointed into student leadership positions. This situation limited their contributions to decisions affecting them. In addition, adaptive sports and game facilities and equipment were not available to facilitate the engagement of students with disability.

Attitudinal Dimensions of Higher Education Inclusion. Attitudes towards persons with disability in all the three universities were predominantly negative, though there were instances of a few positive attitudes. In addition, many of the participants within the three case study universities constructed disability within the medical model, thus, from a deficit perspective. Furthermore, in the three universities, the use of people-first language was limited. The use of inappropriate terminology was prevalent with undue emphasis on 'us and them'.

Financial Implications for Access and Participation. In all three case universities, the issue of inadequate financing had implications for provisions available for persons with disability. This situation had, in part, manifested into under-resourcing of the implementation of the IE policy in PUA and PUB, while in PUC, efforts towards the inclusion of persons with disability were almost non-existent. Further, apart from the government bursary for all persons with disability in HEIs who declared the disability, PUA and PUB have scholarships for high achieving students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, which students with disability could compete for; however, PUC did not have this facility.

CHAPTER NINE
CONCLUSION

9.1 Introduction

Chapter nine presents the conclusions from the study. This chapter summarises and presents an overview of information provided by the case studies that answer the research questions. It also presents limitations and implications of the study, recommendations for practice and future research, contributions to knowledge, and final thoughts. The next section provides an overview of the research.

9.2 Overview of the Study

Ghanaian public universities are mandated by law to translate the national Inclusive Education (IE) policy (2015) into institutional policies, arrangements, and practices that facilitate academic access and success as well as campus membership for persons with disability. Limited progress has been made towards improving access and participation for persons with disability in higher education **(**Braun & Naami, 2019; Budu, 2016; Tudzi et al., 2017), despite the IE policy. This study, therefore, sought to explore how the IE policy of Ghana has been reflected in the policies and provisions of Ghanaian public universities that focus on persons with disability to provide an insight into why access and participation may not have increased since the promulgation of the IE policy.

As an original study, this research employed qualitative methodology using a multiple case study approach within an interpretivist paradigm. This interpretivist paradigm allowed a deep investigation into perspectives, understandings, and experiences of participants, and the meanings ascribed to these in the context of the participants. From this methodological base, the study provides critical information about inclusion that may help improve access and support for persons with disability in Ghanaian public universities. Relevant staff, and students with disability from three public universities, and architects of the national IE policy, were interviewed. In-person, one-on-one semi-structured interview guides were employed to gather qualitative data for the study. Furthermore, university documents relating to inclusive education policies and practices were also examined, and facilities were observed to obtain additional information that might substantiate or conflict with the interview data.

Two major categories of findings emerged from the analysis of data and revealed six main themes. These six themes were discussed in relation to the existing literature. The data were

analysed thematically, and the findings were used to answer the research questions. The section that follows presents the research results in relation to the research questions.

9.3 Summary of Findings in Response to Research Questions

The study explores how the IE policy of Ghana has been translated into institutional guidelines, policies, and provisions that focus on increasing access and participation for students with disability by Ghanaian public universities. This section presents a summary of the findings that answer the research questions guiding the study.

Research Question 1

To what extent are the intents of Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy (2015) reflected in the institutional policies, arrangements, and practices initiated to support the engagement of persons with disability in these Ghanaian public universities?

There are similarities and differences regarding the policy contexts of the participating universities. Firstly, the understanding of expectations generated by the participating universities around the intents of the 2015 IE policy was similar and matched those stated in the policy. There were demonstrated similarities in knowledge regarding the IE policy. Whereas participants are aware of the existence of the policy, knowledge of policy content was deficient. Awareness of the existence of the IE policy and its contents appeared to be limited in the case universities and, hence, among the study participants.

In addition, efforts made by the universities to design institutional policy on disability have been considerably impacted by their respective contexts culminating in different stages of policy development. PUA has a draft disability policy waiting to receive formal approval, PUB is making attempts to draft an institutional policy, and PUC only recognised its importance for the near future. The corporate strategic plans of two of the three participating universities have outlined core values, key thrusts, objectives, and strategies, which, to some extent, reflect the intents of the IE policy in ensuring the engagement of persons with disability in the universities. PUC has nothing in its corporate strategic plan regarding students with disability, and the information in the university's student handbook on disability is limited to provisions for residential accommodation. Therefore, the extent to which the intents are reflected in the policies of PUC is varied and limited. This situation reflects how the context of the old university, the young, and the new university influenced the attempts made at designing

institutional disability policy and guidelines for inclusive practice. Thus, the old and the new universities, PUA and PUB were more endowed with human, financial and physical resources, and this situation impacted the provisions and support available for persons with disability, however, PUC was less endowed with these resources and could provide only limited provisions and support.

Furthermore, some of the intents of the IE policy are evident in unwritten institutional arrangements and practices, which have been observed over time and have become embedded in an institutional culture of disability practice in these universities. Consistent with the level of corporate strategic planning, the extent of these practices is limited in PUC.

Research Question 2

What is the range of institutional provisions available for persons with disability in these Ghanaian public universities?

The case universities have a range of institutional provisions for students with disability; these provisions are evident in the physical environment, support systems, and social inclusion. The range of these provisions is similar in PUA and PUB whereas, PUC has only a few. While these provisions meet the areas of need for students, some of these provisions are limited in extent and scope.

In all the case universities, the physical access needs of students with disability are being responded to by modifying some of the existing structures to make them disability-friendly, but only some of the new structures have disability-friendly features. Further, the universities have arrangements in place to, for the most part, meet the accommodations needs of students with disability.

In terms of academic provisions, there are special admissions schemes in place at PUA and PUB to expand admission for students with disability. Orientation programs are organised for students with disability at the DSU level. Similarly, students with vision impairment and their sighted guides benefit from orientation and mobility services. Further, PUA and PUB provide academic support via the learning equipment and resources. In addition, PUA and PUB have established DSUs where students with disability receive learning support services such as braille transcription services and examination support. Only PUA has a dedicated ICT facility and training support for students with disability.

Furthermore, resource persons and professionals are employed to offer specialised services for students with disability in both PUA and PUB. Students with disability receive in-class support during the teaching and learning process and unpaid peer support in terms of reading and mobility. Students also receive counselling support services such as specialised career counselling.

With regard to social engagements, some attempts have been made to provide students with disability opportunities to engage in sports and games activities, clubs and associations, SRC and hall week celebrations, and other forms of social activities. A few students have the opportunity to participate in student politics by appointment on leadership committees and boards in PUA.

With respect to financial support, students with disability benefit from a bursary from the central government. They also access the district assembly common fund and can access a range of university-based scholarships meant for students from lower socio-economic backgrounds and with high academic achievement.

Research Question 3

In what ways do these provisions meet the expectations of persons with disability?

From the perspective of participating students with disability, the available provisions do not meet their expectations. These students expected that the physical environment of the university, such as the built environment and the terrain would be accessible to them, but access is minimal. Further, they expected to have disability-friendly buses and busing arrangements that gave them access priorities, but these were absent. Accommodation arrangements, though available, did not meet their needs and expectations.

With regard to academic provisions, students with disability expect that they would have adequate learning facilities, equipment, ICT devices, and technology; lecturers with adequate pedagogical knowledge and skills; sufficient professional staff and resource persons; accessible information; and, examination and assessment provisions. These provisions and arrangements, even where available, were not commensurate to their expectations.

Students with disability expected that provision would be available for them to integrate into the social environment of the university seamlessly, but the prevailing conditions did not

promote their active social engagement. Similarly, students with disability expected that they would be given sufficient financial support such as fee rebates, grants, and scholarships; however, even where there were such arrangements, students reported they were insufficient. People in charge of allocating common funds may not be aware of the requirements, which compelled students to have to advocate for their right to this funding. Lack of disability-friendly buses limit access to commuting within and between campuses.

Research Question 4

What influences the engagement of persons with disability in Ghanaian public universities?

The findings have shown that several aspects impact the inclusion of students with disability in higher education in public universities in Ghana:

Inconsistent Implementation

Policy directives primarily guide university programs. Where there is no comprehensive and formally approved institutional disability policy, provisions that will ensure access and full participation of students with disability was severely limited.

Access challenges

Physical access remains a significant challenge to the engagement of students with disability in public universities. Accessing the built environment poses considerable difficulties to students as old, often inherited buildings, were not designed for students with disability. Many mobility hazards around the campuses impacted engagement due to health, safety, and security risks. Areas of hazards include staircases, washrooms, open drains, and lack of/or inaccessible signage and notice boards. Vehicles were also a hazard on campus, both from access and road safety perspectives. There is a lack of equitable space for the DSU's operational activities, which impact negatively on the operational mandate of the DSUs and, thus, students' academic access.

Academic Support Limited

Admission information regarding the provisions available for students with disability in the case universities is limited. Learning equipment, assistive technology, and devices are inadequate, obsolete, overused, and broken items were not repaired. In PUB and PUC, there were no assistive technology and devices, adaptive ICT facilities, software applications, or

training for students with disability. In PUA and PUB, students with vision impairment had limited access to information in an accessible format. Classroom furniture is both unmodified and insufficient for the number of students and, when this is coupled with large classes, it impedes student participation and engagement in the lecture halls. Limited numbers of specialists and professionals inhibit students' access to adequate specialised services. The lack of pedagogical knowledge of some lecturers in supporting students with disability also hinders students' learning engagement.

Social Support Limited

Provisions for students with disability to engage in the social life of the university is limited. In all the participating universities, the opportunity for students with disability to actively participate in sports and games activities is restricted. Programs planned for out-of-class activities failed to factor in the needs of students with disability during the planning process. In PUA, a few students with disability are appointed to positions on leadership committees and prefectorial boards, but in PUB and PUC, the opportunity for these appointments and representation on leadership committees and prefectorial boards is non-existent.

Negative Attitudes

The majority of student participants and some staff participants reported that negative attitudes in the public universities are widespread and tend to constrain the engagement of students with disability. The dimensions of negative attitudes originating from the data included mindsets, offensive comments, and behaviours. Furthermore, the majority of the participants from the case universities conceptualised disability from the deficit perspective, which impacts negatively on students' engagement. Similarly, the use of out-of-date terminology, negative phrases, a language that suggests dichotomy and needless emphasis on difference, is pervasive in all three participating universities.

Lack of Funding for Disability

Issues of inadequate financing have considerably limited the engagement of students with disability in the case study universities. The problems of funding have, in part, limited the attempts by the participating universities to provide a conducive physical environment, as well as positive academic and social experiences, for students with disability. Providing further and continuing education, training, and development for existing staff and recruiting new staff is also hampered by insufficient funding. Further, students with disability face major financial

challenges that serve as obstacles to their active academic and social engagement within the university.

9.4 Contributions to Knowledge

This study has extended existing knowledge in higher education inclusion for persons with disability. The study explored, in-depth, a combination of important elements of disability inclusion in higher education in Ghana including: awareness of the national IE policy; institutional level policies relating to disability; the suitability of the physical environment of the universities for persons with disability; academic and social experiences of students with disability; attitudes towards persons with disability; and funding related issues. Thus, this study has departed from investigating these critical elements in isolation, as researched by previous studies (e.g., Asiedu et al., 2018; Braun & Naami, 2019; Gavu et al., 2015; Odame, 2017; Tudzi et al., 2017). This study has, therefore, provided comprehensive insights, knowledge, and critical information regarding policy provisions, access, participation, and support for persons with disability in three higher education institutions in Ghana, which may inform progress and planning across the sector.

The study has also established a dissonance between the objectives outlined by the national IE policy and the enactment of these policy objectives in these public universities. The study has identified practices that support disability inclusion in public universities and also identified the components that need improvement to enhance access and participation for persons with disability. The findings suggest that public universities in Ghana, which admit students with disability, provide learning adjustments rather than inclusion and that these adjustments culminate in negative academic and social experiences for students with disability within the university environment and beyond. Furthermore, the study also highlights issues relating to the delivery of the curriculum and pedagogical knowledge and skills of faculty members in public universities with disability orientation in Ghana. These results should initiate thorough and detailed discussions on understanding issues relating to the practice of disability inclusion in HEIs in Ghana and how to adopt curricular and teaching methodologies appropriate for diverse categories of learners, including those with disability.

Additionally, the results of this study contribute to the literature by encouraging more enabling practices and environments in universities that support a social justice philosophy and equity principles in the Ghanaian context. Further, these results support the efforts of Ghanaian public

universities to make their inclusive education practices consistent with effective practice internationally. The study has also revealed how the university community perceived disability, how these perspectives influence their attitudes towards issues concerning students with disability, the commitment towards resourcing and promoting the disability inclusion agenda in higher education, and the experiences these engender for students with disability within the university environment.

Finally, the main findings of this research, although conducted in selected public universities in Ghana, have supported existing literature and empirical studies in both developed economies of the global north and developing countries in the global south. The implication is that this study does not exist in a vacuum: it has extended the boundaries of existing knowledge in disability inclusion in higher education and contributed to the body of literature in the relevant fields. The study extends the boundaries of knowledge in both domestic and international literature on access, academic and social experiences of students with disability in HEIs in Ghana.

9.5 Limitations of the study

Limitations identified by the researcher include those relating to sample representativeness, gender issues, and disability dichotomy.

Because the qualitative methodology and case study approach typically involve a small number of research participants, being pragmatic when using this approach means you limit the number of participants. This situation may raise a question of representativeness of the study sample and/or the issue of subject selection bias, especially in the third case where only one student with disability was available. However, the research intended to represent a detailed exploration of the experience and reality of the participating universities: not to present a perspective applicable to all Ghanaian universities.

A second limitation of the research is the unbalanced nature of the sample. As gender could influence participants' perspectives, beliefs, and world views about the phenomenon under study, a more balanced sample of participants would be desirable. To get a balanced view, the need for gender equality, for example, in this type of research is important and desirable. However, individuals in positions of influence in Ghanaian universities are typically males, hence the disproportionate representation in the sample. Furthermore, the inability to secure a

sign language interpreter for the study meant that students with hearing impairments could not participate. Future studies should specifically target this cohort to understand their specific issues.

However, despite the limitations acknowledged by the researcher, the intended purposes of this research and study outcomes have been accomplished. That is, to delineate and define issues impacting widening higher education access and supporting participation and engagement of students with disability in a cross-section of public universities in Ghana.

9.6 Implications of the Study

This study has highlighted several issues which have implications for widening access and supporting the participation and engagement of students with disability in public universities in Ghana. Adequate knowledge of national legislation and policy on disability inclusion by the university community is paramount for successful disability inclusion. The issues of institutional policy and prioritisation of the needs of students with disability by the university hierarchy is strongly recommended.

Finance also emerged as an indispensable ingredient for including and ensuring full participation and engagement of persons or students with disability in higher education. Financial considerations have implications for all dimensions of inclusion in higher education. The issue of financing is a major determinant of the nature of the physical environment of the universities. Issues of funding influence the essence of university experiences of students with disability. The need for policy direction in exploring funding sources, allocating, and dedicating financial resources to promoting and sustaining the higher education agenda for including students with disability is crucial.

It was evident in the research that attitudes at all levels of the university community are a strong element of inclusion in higher education. Although positive attitudes were minimal, they engender positive experiences for students with disability and build and sustain inclusive culture. When attitudes towards students with disability and what matters to them are primarily negative, access, participation, and engagement are bound to remain marginal, even if their physical access, academic, and financial needs are adequately met. Viewing people with disability from a deficit perspective, therefore, has a high propensity to erode any gains made by the higher education institutions in widening access and supporting participation for students with disability. Exploring and implementing policies, programs, and practices that

would culminate in a major attitudinal change is pivotal for ensuring successful inclusion of persons with disability in the universities.

9.7 Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of this study, a number of recommendations are proposed to government officials, policy architects on the National Steering Committee on Inclusive Education, and the university community for successful policy implementation and for improving access and participation for persons with disability in HEIs.

1. **Mandating implementation of IE policy.** There is the need for the government, through the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), to enforce the implementation of the IE policy. This will ensure that both public and private HEIs translate the IE policy into institutional policies, provisions, and support for effective inclusion of people with disability.
2. **Upskilling the university community in disability legislation and preserving human rights.** All university personnel from the top administrative level through to each support person and students/peers be upskilled and knowledgeable about disability legislation and human rights. The skilled managerial staff able to enforce the legislation and ensure that human dignity and rights are preserved in all administrative and support decision taken.
3. **Financing implementation of IE policy.** The government's investment of adequate resources in the implementation of the IE policy could alleviate overdependence on donor agencies. Timely release of budgetary allocations dedicated to policy implementation is critical for the achievement of policy objectives.
4. **Improving data collection.** Adequate financing could ensure that data collectors are trained to gather accurate data for planning and sustainability of policy implementation.
5. **Generating dedicated funding for inclusion.** The public universities should prioritise the inclusion agenda and actively allocate extra funds dedicated to this agenda. Special funding schemes need to be designed and dedicated to meeting the financial needs of the marginalised and economically disadvantaged students, including students with disability. This financial support will enable those from economically disadvantaged background to access higher education and complete their studies. This funding might

also support other students to be successful as reasonable adjustments and assistive technology devices available to students with disability benefit all students.

6. **Removing barriers to physical access.** It is necessary to remove physical barriers and provide facilities (for example, lifts, ramps, automatic reflex doors) that will allow students with disability and students with temporary disability, (for example, fractured limb), ease of access to the physical and the built environment. Residential accommodation and transportation need of students with disability should be prioritised to ensure their safety and security, proximity to learning facilities, and uninterrupted mobility on campus.
7. **Expanding admission schemes.** The public universities need to expand the scope of existing special admission schemes to include adjusting admission requirements, introducing quota systems, increasing school visits and partnerships with special secondary schools, and mentorship programs to increase access and enrolments for persons with disability.
8. **Providing adequate resources.** It is essential for the public universities to provide adequate resources such as specialised and professional staff, learning facilities and equipment, ICT facilities, assistive technology and devices, appropriate software applications and ICT training for students with disability to ensure that their diverse learning needs are met, and they can participate in learning and achieve academic success.
9. **Provision of support services.** The public universities need to provide adequate support services to enable students with disability to access, engage and succeed within the higher education system. These support services include counselling, braille transcription, sign language interpretation, library services, and support and adjustments in examination and assessment procedures. Information such as university documents, notices and signage need to be provided in alternative format particularly, for students with sensory impairments and reading difficulties so that they can access information independently.
10. **Organising training workshops and seminars.** There is the need to organise regular disability-awareness programs, seminars and training workshops including adapting the curriculum, adopting appropriate pedagogy that can support all learners, and modifying assessment procedures to ensure that these students succeed in their learning. The curricular needs of learners with disability are addressed in that each staff member

understands the power of differentiation and personalisation and utilises long-established Universal Design for Learning principles on an automatic, daily basis.

11. **Opportunity for social engagement.** The universities need to improve the opportunity for social engagement of students with disability through the provision of adaptive sports and games equipment and accessible recreational facilities. Creating equitable opportunities to participate in co-curricular activities such as clubs and association meetings, Hall week celebrations and SRC activities will increase their social engagement.
12. **Representation on student boards and committees.** There is the need for students with disability to have representation on student boards and committees to give them a voice during deliberations as their voices must be heard, and their needs factored into every policy decision. Positive discrimination by way of a quota system can be adopted and used with respect to filling appointed positions on prefectorial boards and committees at the student leadership level and any other area where student representation is required.
13. **Raising awareness and sensitisation within the university community.** It is necessary to increase disability-awareness education and sensitisation programs to improve the attitude of the university community towards students with disability, eliminate or reduce the use of inappropriate terminology, and undue emphasis on difference. Allowing people with disability to perform valued roles and constant contact and engagement in activities can promote positive attitudes towards persons with disability. The DSU staff need to adopt friendly, understanding, and responsive attitudes towards students with disability so that these students can easily approach them with their needs. The importance of an understanding and supportive campus culture - the language, actions and attitudes allowed to flourish.

9.8 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could consider investigating disability access and participation issues in a wider range of higher education contexts, including private universities in Ghana. Thus, finding out the extent of implementation of the IE policy generally in the broader context of all other universities in Ghana.

Furthermore, future research in this area can concentrate on the views of students with hearing impairment and other categories of students with disability whose views and perspectives are

not represented in the current research. The findings can be compared to determine whether there are differences or similarities in views and perspectives based on the type of disability.

This study did not involve any administrative professionals and/or senior members in administration in the public universities. Future research can explore the perceptions of this category of staff on inclusion in higher education. The views and perspectives of administrative professionals and/or senior members in leadership and management positions in public universities are worth investigating.

In addition, further research can examine the viewpoints of students without disability in higher education because these students are major stakeholders in inclusion. Students with and without disability co-exist in an inclusive education system – they share the same academic and residential facilities, and they interact with one another in several other ways. The need, therefore, to investigate their views and perspectives on a similar topic are valid suggestions for future research.

9.9 Final Thoughts

Attempts by public universities in Ghana to include persons with disability appears to be progressing very slowly. Before the national IE policy came into effect, some of these public universities provided for the education of students with disability; however, little can be seen in terms of institutional disability policy, adaptation to the physical environment, academic provisions, social engagement, disability-friendly attitudes, and dedicated funding. A visible commitment of the university leadership in prioritising the disability inclusion agenda in the public universities is missing.

Furthermore, some of the public universities in Ghana have not made attempts to include persons with disability. However, the central government cannot enforce the implementation of the IE policy in these public universities because it does not provide financial support to these universities to carry out their mandate as stipulated in the IE policy. However, equity considerations require that these universities explore more proactive and diverse strategies to generate funding for implementation of the IE policy.

Persons with disability have the right to education at all levels of the educational system in Ghana. The rights of persons with disability to higher education are, therefore, non-negotiable. In keeping with the principles of social justice, the public universities in Ghana must devise

and implement more ingenious and innovative approaches aimed at widening or expanding access and supporting active participation for persons with disability in higher education. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework can be employed to create adaptable learning environments that adequately respond to learner diversity. For example, readily available technology can be used rather than the more expensive bespoke assistive technologies.

Nations and their educational institutions do not generally claim to be able to implement inclusive education, particularly for those with disability, without challenges. The universities of the well-developed economies of the global north also have issues with implementing inclusive education. It is often maintained or argued that inclusive education for persons with disability, particularly in higher education, is complex, multidimensional, and expensive. This might partly explain why the public universities in Ghana, which admit students with disability, tend to provide learning adjustments rather than a full range of inclusive practices. It takes the passion, commitment, and determination of those who matter to make things happen appropriately and acceptably. A major shift in attitude towards disability across the higher education system, in government and the entire Ghanaian society, would, therefore, be indispensable.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Excerpts from the Persons with Disability Act, Act 715, 2006 (Republic of Ghana, 2006)

The Persons with Disability Act 2006 (ACT 715) was enacted by the president and the parliament of the Republic of Ghana in 2006. The Act made essential provisions for the rights, employment, education, transportation, healthcare and facilities, and miscellaneous stipulations for persons with disability in Ghana. It stipulated that any person who contravenes these rights and provisions shall be punishable by a fine or imprisonment or both (p. 4). The Act defines persons with disability as "an individual with a physical, mental or sensory impairment including a visual, hearing or speech functional disability which gives rise to physical, cultural or social barriers that substantially limits one more of the major life activities of that individual" (p. 17). It provides the rights of persons with disability to access public places and services (Sections 6, 7, and 8).

The Act specified that persons with disability should be assisted by the appropriate ministry to secure employment in the public service. They shall be provided with the appropriate working tools and facilities by their employers to perform competently on the job (Sections 9, 10, and 11). It also made provisions for incentives such as annual tax rebates for private organisations or businesses that employ persons with disability and manufacturers of technical aids and devices used by persons with disability (Sections 10 and 36).

Further, the Act stipulated the right of persons with disability to free education and educational opportunities at all levels of education. It is mandatory for education providers in each region to provide appropriate educational equipment and facilities, including library facilities, that will ensure access and full participation of persons with disability in schooling. The Minister of Education, by legislative instrument, will ensure that in each region, selected public technical, vocational, and teacher training institutions are selected to include sign language and braille writing and reading in their curricula (Sections 17, 18, 20, 21 and 22).

The Act makes provision for the transportation needs of persons with disability including the design and operation of the transportation network - rail, air, and road transport; movement as pedestrians and passengers in commercial vehicles; seat reservation in commercial vehicles;

acquiring driving license; parking facilities; and importing non-conventional vehicles - adapted or modified vehicles (Sections 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 & 29).

Miscellaneous Provisions of the Act include punishment for users of derogatory names for persons with disability because of their disability; not providing access to sporting events, festivals and cultural activities; and the establishment of the National Council on Persons with Disability, which shall be responsible for disability-related matters (Section 37, 38 & 41).

APPENDIX B: Excerpts from the Inclusive Education Policy (MoE, Ghana, 2015)

The inclusive education (IE) policy of the republic of Ghana came into effect in 2015, though the draft policy has been around since 2013. The IE policy defines the strategic path of the Ghanaian government for the educational provisions for learners with special educational needs. The IE policy is built on the portions of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana to guarantee that every citizen has equal opportunity and access to quality education. Other national legal documents, which are important precursors of the national IE policy are the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA), the Education Strategic Plan (2010 - 2020), the Persons with Disability Act, and the Education Act. The IE policy also draws on international conventions and protocols to education, which Ghana has signed, including the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (UNESCO, 1994); The Dakar Framework for Action (2000); and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006, p. 6).

The overarching goal of the IE policy is to "redefine and recast the delivery and management of educational services to respond to the diverse needs of all learners within the framework of Universal Design for Learning and Child-Friendly School Concept" (p. 7). The basic principle underpinning the Inclusive Education (IE) policy is that every person who attends an educational institution is entitled to equity of access to quality teaching and learning. This principle goes beyond the physical location but integrates the basic tenets that uphold participation, interaction, and friendship (p. 4).

In Ghana, education is a fundamental right for every citizen. Since the country had her independence in 1957, successive governments have acknowledged the importance of education in national development and have constituted measures to increase educational provision at all levels. The government has recognised the all-inclusive educational philosophy by designing many policies and approaches to allow consultations with various stakeholders, including educators, learners, parents, policymakers, non-governmental organisations, disability organisations, and faith-based organisations, to deliberate on ways to include learners with different abilities. Many of these policies and approaches failed to achieve their intended objectives and purposes due to inadequate resources.

The IE policy includes learners with special needs. The term 'learners with special educational needs' refers to learners with disability and those who are failing in school due to barriers they experience, which stop them from making excellent progress in learning and development. Thus, the IE policy recognises different categories of learners with diverse educational needs,

including those with various forms of disability. These forms of disability include intellectual disability; persons with: hearing impairment, vision impairment, deaf-blindness, physical disability; persons with specific learning disability; persons with autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, speech and communication disorders, other health impairment and chronic diseases, and multiple disability (pp. 7 - 8).

The IE policy is grounded in a number of fundamental principles, which recognises the right of all persons to quality education; the ability of all persons to learn and benefit from education; non-discrimination and exclusion based on status; modification and adaptation of the education system to suit every learner. In addition, the curriculum, teaching methods, assessment, school culture, and environments, shall present opportunities for promoting inclusion. The policy acknowledges that "regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discrimination, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all" (p.8). The IE policy sought to increase access to quality education for every learner with special educational needs.

Objectives and Strategies

The IE policy has four objectives and about 19 strategies for achieving these objectives. These objectives are:

1. Improve and adapt education and related systems and structures to ensure the inclusion of all learners, particularly learners with special educational needs.
2. Promote a UDL/learner-friendly school environment for enhancing the quality of education for all learners.
3. Promote the development of a well-informed and trained human resource cadre for the quality delivery of IE throughout Ghana.
4. Ensure the sustainability of inclusive education implementation.

Responsibility for IE policy Implementation

The total leadership and responsibility for policy implementation lie with the Ministry of Education (MoE) and its agencies. The MoE works together with appropriate sector ministries, agencies and departments, non-governmental organisations, private sector organisations, and the umbrella coalitions of disability organisations for implementation. It is the responsibility of the MoE to ensure the development of appropriate national curriculum, training, capacity

building, and professional development of teachers. Teachers shall be equipped with inclusive pedagogical skills and sufficient knowledge of educational policies to adequately respond to the needs of learners with special educational needs. The curriculum for pre-service teacher training shall be re-aligned to inclusive education practices.

Both private and public educational institutions are mandated by law to implement inclusive education. A person with special educational needs shall not be deprived of admission no matter the circumstances. Fair and impartial treatment shall be given to every learner with a special need. The learning environments shall be well equipped, organized, conducive, and appropriate. The universal design principle shall be adhered to by the management of educational institutions.

The IE policy states that admission to both public and private HEIs shall be given to an applicant who meets the minimum requirements for admission. The National Accreditation Board (NAB) is mandated by law to ensure that HEIs adhere to UDL principles. All HEIs shall, according to the policy, establish well-equipped resource centres and trained personnel and professionals to provide support for students with special educational needs. All HEIs shall ensure that their respective premises, personnel, and students are ready for the practice of inclusive education.

The policy made provision for adequate resourcing, including accessible school infrastructure, disability-friendly buses, sufficient budgetary allocation, and timely release of funds. The Ministries of Local Government, Transport, and Finance have the responsibility for implementing these provisions. The Government of Ghana (GoG) is the principal financier of the IE policy and shall demonstrate its financial commitment by adequate budgetary allocation and timely release of funds. The policy also provides for issues relating to monitoring and evaluation, and data collection and research. The National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) is required to play an advocacy role for policy implementation. The IE policy shall be reviewed every five years by MoE.

Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan – 2015 - 2019

The Inclusive Education Policy Implementation Plan (IEPIP) provides a synopsis of the anticipated outputs for five years from 2015 - 2019. A costed annual plan shall be designed out of the five-year plan for implementation each year to ensure timely achievement of targets. The yearly outputs and targets are outlined in the IEPIP. The implementation plan outlined the

strategies, actions/activities, indicators, estimated costs, time frame, agencies responsible, and collaborating institutions that shall work together for the achievement of policy objectives. In addition, the implementation plan provided a detailed costing of the five-year inclusive education plan. Each year, the MoE and GES are required to review sector performance for its inclusivity to selectively integrate some or all of the activities into more comprehensive budgeted support initiatives.

Standards and Guidelines for Practice of Inclusive Education in Ghana

In 2015, the MoE developed the Standards and Guidelines for Practice of Inclusive Education in Ghana. The standards and guidelines serve as the reference material to educational institutions seeking to facilitate access to the physical and the built environment, learning equipment and materials, curriculum, and pedagogy for the effective practice of inclusive education. The standards and guidelines suggested that both public and private educational institutions need to eliminate barriers in the learning environment to ensure diverse categories of learners benefit from education (p.6). The implementation of the standards and guidelines is made compulsory for all public and privately-owned educational institutions.

The first standard focused on issues of accessibility. It prescribed the design for site planning, standard specifications for walkways, ramps, buildings, doors and doorways, stairways, handrails, water closets, and toilet compartments (pp. 7 – 14). The standards also covered issues relating to health and safety. The guidelines specified adaptation of the curriculum and pedagogy to meet the learning needs of each child. It also made provision for an extended time of half an hour for students with special needs to facilitate completion of work and examination. Every educational institution is expected to make reasonable provisions for appropriate equipment, assistive technology and devices and associated resources for all learners for programs and subjects offered. Essentially, libraries and e-libraries shall have an adequate supply of essential and current books in accessible formats. Besides, institutions shall have suitable space adequately secured for recreational activities where applicable (pp. 14 – 17).

The GES, National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE), and National Inspection Board (NIB) are mandated to carry out monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the standards and guidelines (p. 17).

APPENDIX C: Interview Guide for Research Participants

Policymakers

1. What does the term disability mean to you?
2. How would you describe inclusive education?
3. What was inclusive education like in HEIs in Ghana before the enactment of the national Inclusive Education (IE) policy in 2015?
4. What is your understanding of the purpose of the national IE policy?
5. What are the perceived challenges and constraints of implementation at universities?
6. How do you monitor and obtain feedback on implementation?
7. Based on current feedback and monitoring, do you think the national IE policy should be revised? If yes, what changes do you recommend and why?

Senior Managers of the Universities – Vice-Chancellors and Dean of Students

1. What does the term disability mean to you?
2. How would you describe inclusive education?
3. What is your understanding of the purpose of the national IE policy?
4. What do you think are the benefits of the national IE policy?
5. How is the national IE policy implemented in your university?
6. Is your university implementing the national IE policy as it is or have modifications been made? If yes, what are these modifications and why?
7. What are the challenges and constraints faced by your university when implementing the national IE policy?
8. What is the university's mission and long-term vision for the Disability Support Unit (DSU)?
9. Does this vision form part of the university's strategic plan?
10. How do you obtain feedback from students and staff on the implementation of the IE policy and how do you respond to feedback?
11. Based on current feedback and monitoring, do you think the national IE policy should be revised?
12. If yes, what changes do you recommend and why?

Head of Disability Support Unit and Staff

1. What does the term disability mean to you?
2. How would you describe inclusive education?

3. What are the expectations of the national IE policy for your university?
4. What is the mission and vision of the DSU?
5. How do the facilities and infrastructure available on campus meet the academic and social needs of students with disability? For example, physical access to infrastructure, recreational facilities, etc.
6. What assistive technology is available to meet the academic needs of students with disability? For example, braille, text-to-speech software, etc.?
7. What are the services available for the teaching and the non-teaching staff to adequately equip them to support students with disability?
8. Are you aware of teaching staff using UDL and/or differentiation in their delivery of academic content?
9. What are the support services available for students with disability in your university regarding career advice for prospective, current and graduating students?
10. Do you receive any complaints about the DSU from staff, and if so, what is the nature of these complaints and how do you handle them?
11. Do you receive any complaints about the DSU from students with disability, and if so, what is the nature of these complaints and how do you handle them?
12. Do persons with disability face any challenges in accessing support services (reasonable adjustments)? If so, describe them and give examples.
13. Do persons with disability face challenges in accessing academic facilities or infrastructure, and the physical environment of the university? If so, describe them and give examples.
14. Are there negative attitudes in your university towards students with disability? If so, what are these and who do they come from?
15. How can we enhance or encourage positive attitudes towards students with disability?
16. How can you improve the DSU in supporting students with disability?

Deans of School/Heads of Department

1. What does the term disability mean to you?
2. How would you describe inclusive education?
3. What is your understanding of the purpose of the national IE policy and its expectations from higher education institutions?
4. What is the role of the DSU in your university?
5. How well do you think the DSU supports students with disability?

6. Describe how students with disability can access lecture theatres, computer laboratories, residential accommodation, indoor and outdoor facilities, within your university.
7. Describe how students with disability can access academic content within your university. For example, approaches to UDL/differentiation.
8. How do your staff safeguard disability equity and integration in the university?
9. Are there any negative attitudes in your university towards students with disability? If so, what are these and who do they come from?
10. How can we enhance or encourage positive attitudes towards students with disability?
11. How can the university improve the effectiveness of the DSU?
12. What enables or hinders students with disability in engaging in your university?

Students

1. What does the term disability mean to you?
2. How would you describe inclusive education?
3. What do you consider as your rights and support that the university should offer?
4. Are there any negative attitudes in your university towards students with disability? If so, what are these and who do they come from?
5. What are the support services (reasonable adjustments) you receive in your university?
6. How effective are the support services provided by the DSU and how do they enhance your academic and social achievements?
7. What were your expectations of university before you entered and have those expectations been met?
8. Is there anything that hinders your full participation in the university? If so, what?
9. How can the university better support you during your programme of study?

APPENDIX D: Observation Checklist

The observation checklist was used to explore the range of facilities, equipment and infrastructure in the participating universities. Availability, appropriateness, suitability, adequacy, and accessibility of both academic and non-academic facilities and infrastructure were assessed. The observation data enabled the researcher to understand, confirmed or disconfirmed the circumstances described during interviews and in written documents.

Code of University: …….

S/N	Type of Facility /Infrastructure	Availability	Appropriateness /Suitability /Accessibility	Adequacy
i	Access ways			
ii	Lecture Theatres			
iii	Computer laboratories			
iv	Library facilities			
v	Assistive technology and devices			
vi	Recreational facilities			
vii	Residential accommodation			
vii	Automatic reflexes on doors			
viii	Disability-friendly washrooms			
ix	Transportation			
x	Others			

APPENDIX E: Document Review

Relevant documents were reviewed to explore how statements written in these documents support and contribute to inclusive practices for students with disability in the respective participating universities.

S/N	University	Type of Document	Areas and Issues Considered
1	**PUA**	-Draft Institutional Disability Policy -Corporate Strategic Plan	Provisions and support and other disability related issues
2	**PUB**	-Corporate Strategic Plan	Provisions and support and other disability related issues
3	**PUC**	-Strategic Plan -Handbook for undergraduate students on rules and regulations - 2016/2017 academic year	Provisions and support and other disability related issues

APPENDIX F: Information Letter for Vice-Chancellors/Pro-Vice-Chancellors

Title of Research: Higher Education Access and Participation for Persons with Disability in Ghanaian Public Universities

My name is Mary Afi Mensah. I am a postgraduate student in a Doctor of Philosophy degree program at Edith Cowan University (ECU) in Perth, Western Australia. As part of the requirements for the degree, I am currently undertaking a research project entitled "Higher Education Access and Participation for Persons with Disability in Ghanaian Public Universities". The research project has received ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee at ECU. Therefore, I kindly invite you to participate in this study as an interviewee.

The research explores how the Inclusive Education Policy of Ghana is reflected in the institutional policies and provisions of Ghanaian public universities that focus on students with disability. The insights obtained from this study are expected to improve support for persons with disability in Ghanaian public universities and provide information about inclusion. The findings will also support the efforts of Ghanaian public universities to make their inclusive education practices consistent with effective practice internationally.

This study cannot be completed successfully without the participation of key stakeholders in the Ghanaian public universities. As the vice-chancellor/pro-vice-chancellor whose perspective influences how the national inclusive education policy is translated into institutional arrangements and inclusive practices in your university, your perspective will be of immense value to this study. If you agree to take part in this research, you will be contacted to arrange a mutually convenient time for the interview. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes. During the interview, you will be asked a series of questions about Ghana's Inclusive Education Policy, 2015 and its implementation. The interview will be audiotaped.

All information collected during the research will be treated confidentially. Pseudonyms will replace the real names of participants and universities. A soft copy of the original data (transcripts) will be kept on a password protected hard drive. Hard copies of transcripts will be shared only with my supervisors. The data will be stored securely on a password encoded hard drive on the ECU premises for five years after the research has concluded then, it will be destroyed. The information gathered during this research will be presented in a thesis and may

be published in journals or at conferences, but your identity will not be revealed. You may be sent a summary of the final report upon your request.

There are no anticipated risks of participating in this research, although you may experience a slight inconvenience because of the time you put aside for the interview. There are no direct benefits for individual participants, but the research will provide you with the opportunity to share your views regarding the national inclusive education policy and its implementation.

Participation in this research is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time, and there will be no penalty for doing so. This means that you can decide to participate (or not) and that will not disadvantage you in your current relationship with the university community, university management, government or the wider society. If you decide to withdraw, all data related to you will be withdrawn and destroyed.

If you would like to participate in the research, please complete, sign and return the attached consent form to Mary Afi Mensah.

If you have any questions about the research or require further information you may contact the following:

Student Researcher: Mary Afi Mensah
Telephone Number: [redacted]

Supervisor: Prof Glenda Campbell-Evans
Email: g.campbellevans@ecu.edu.au

Dr Susan Main
s.main@ecu.edu.au

If you have any concerns or complaints and wish to contact an independent person about this research, you may contact:

Research Ethics Officer
Edith Cowan University
Phone: +618 6304 2170
Email: research.ethics@ecu.edu.au

NB: Individual Information Letter for each category of participants was attached to the STREAM.

APPENDIX G: Consent Form for Research Participants

Title of Research: Higher Education Access and Participation for Persons with Disability in Ghanaian Public Universities

- I have been provided with an Information Letter explaining the purpose of the research, and I understand the letter.

- I have been given an opportunity to ask questions, and all my questions have been answered satisfactorily.

- I am aware that I can contact Prof Glenda Campbell-Evans/Dr Susan Main or the Research Ethics Officer if I have any further queries, or if I have concerns or complaints. I have been given their contact details in the Information Letter.

- I understand that by participating in this research, I will be asked to take part in an individual interview.

- I understand that the interviews will take approximately one hour each.

- I consent to have my voice recorded during the interview.
- I understand that I may experience slight time inconvenience.

- I understand that the researcher will be able to identify me, but all the recorded information will be coded, kept confidential and will be accessed only by the researcher and her supervisors.

- I am aware that the information collected during this research will be stored securely on a password encoded hard drive at Edith Cowan University (ECU) for five years after the completion of the research and will then be destroyed.

- I understand that I will not be identified in any report, conference paper or thesis resulting from this research.

- I understand I can withdraw from this research at any time without penalty.

- I understand that I can request a summary of the final report.

- I freely agree to participate in this research.

Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Institution/Organisation/University: _____