

**University of Guyana**

**Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Policy**

***Policy Title: Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Policy***

***Date: June 29, 2021***

***Responsible Executive: Vice-Chancellor Professor Paloma Mohamed, A.A***

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## **1. Background**

### **Situational/Historical Context**

This policy builds on the previous policy entitled ‘Disability Equality Policy’, ratified by University Council in April 2009; it was adopted, utilized and operationalized to treat with inclusive education at the University of Guyana. The University of Guyana (UG) is Guyana’s premiere national higher education institution. It was established on October 1, 1963 following assent provided to the University of Guyana Ordinance on April 18, 1963, by Governor, Sir Ralph Grey. Upon opening its doors on October 2, 1963, UG functioned as an evening institution with 164 students enrolled in three Faculties: Arts, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. The growth of the Institution in its 58-year history has been phenomenal, and for the 2020 – 2021 academic year, UG has an enrolment of just over 9000 students from all 10 administrative regions in Guyana. It has graduated more than 25,000 students.

The Institution currently offers approximately 125 Certificate, Diploma, Associate Degree, Graduate (post graduate) and professional degree programmes. These Programmes are currently delivered through six (6) Faculties, one School, one College and an Institute of Distance and Continuing Education (IDCE) spread across two (2) campuses and four (4) IDCE Centres.

### **Aim of the University**

The aim of the University of Guyana is to discover, generate, disseminate, and apply knowledge of the highest standard for the service of the community, the nation, and all mankind within an atmosphere of academic freedom that allows for free and critical enquiry.

Given this aim, the University has taken the conscious decision to embrace an inclusivity, [diversity](#) and [equity](#) policy, rooted in the [Salamanca Statement](#) (UNESCO, 1994). This statement articulated a vision of inclusion that acknowledges the diversity of students and staff. This position places emphasis on developing the best practices that would enhance the socialization and effective participation of students and staff within the University’s community.

This positioning would allow the UG, a continuous evolving inclusive education institution of higher learning, to be a welcoming place, which actively combats any form of discrimination against students and staff. Indeed, UG has already adopted student-centred pedagogies to ensure

high quality learning for all. In this regard, the UG promotes strict adherence to equity in education in terms of outputs, especially the acquisition of skills and knowledge that support developing psychological, social and economic well-being.

## **2. Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of the University of Guyana policy on *Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity* is to frame the University's approach to Inclusive Education and to provide guidelines to implement its principles and practices on all its campuses. It accommodates all individuals within the University community and others who engage with it, regardless of diversity, [ability](#), background, religion, culture, race, gender, socioeconomic status and impairment.

## **3. Scope of the Policy**

This policy applies within the university to students, staff, academic and administrative departments and units. It extends to prospective students and staff as well as others who engage with the university. The scope of the UG *Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Policy* also extends to awareness, access and accommodation, the University of Guyana Triple 'A' Approach ([see Appendices F, G & H](#)) to inclusivity, diversity and equity with reasonable adjustments made to ensure all individuals are valued and treated fairly at the University. The Triple 'A' Approach places emphasis on Awareness, Access and Accommodation for students and staff. It accommodates any additional need, contingent upon impairment/disability, diversity and any unique circumstance, which may result in depersonalization, marginalization and/or discrimination.

The policy embraces the principles of the [Social Model of Disability](#) (Oliver, 1990, 2008, 2009, 2013) This model recognises that impairment may also become disability through experiences with structural oppression. These include cultural stereotyping, ethnocentric attitudes, bureaucratic hierarchies, institutional inequalities, discrimination, and market mechanisms in society. The policy embraces the principles of multicultural education appropriate for inclusivity in a

multicultural Guyanese society. It advocates for collaborative education and supportive learning structures and systems which cater for [Special Educational Needs](#) and /Disabilities ([SEND](#)) as well as other types of diversity among students and staff in the institution.

## **Definitions**

In this policy, the following terms are to be interpreted as they are defined in [Appendix A](#).

### **4. Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Mission Statement**

The University of Guyana, as a national higher education institution, is committed to inclusivity, diversity and equity in all aspects of its operations as it provides access and opportunities for citizens locally, regionally and internationally. The University believes that culturally diverse campuses are integral to academic excellence and that its students, faculty, and staff should reflect the diverse world in which we live. The University of Guyana recognizes and values the wide range of voices and perspectives in all spheres of the academic enterprise. The University of Guyana strives to ensure that it promotes inclusiveness, social justice and respect for all, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, impairment/[disability](#), political belief or affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity and socioeconomic status.

### **5. Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Policy Declaration**

The University has adopted **The Southern Inclusive Education Framework** ([see Appendix D](#)) and its complement, **The Southern Inclusive Checker**, ([see Appendix E](#)), as its guiding policies:

- i. In the delivery of tertiary education, all content and practices will be free from discriminatory practices such as institutional discrimination and inequalities as well as any form of victimisation or preferential treatment for students based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, background, religion, culture, socioeconomic status, parents' sexual orientation, and impairment ([Guyana, Prevention of discrimination Act 1997, Cap. 99: 08](#)). The University will strive to remove any barrier which may result in preferential treatment

of specific groups of students, increased vulnerability of other groups or restricted participation in experiences and socialisation.

- ii. The Management Committee as stipulated in the Statute No 24, approved in November, 2018 by the University Council, will support each faculty, division and/or units to restructure systems currently in place within institutions so that access is increased and barriers that are constituted or embedded in the discourses, discursive practices, structures and systems of the institution are removed.
- iii. Students will be given the support needed to realize their educational aspirations. This support is not limited to curricula and educational materials/resources; it extends to social, psychological, emotional and physical support as the individual case necessitates.
- iv. Students will be treated with care, respect and dignity and will be valued and appreciated for their individual characteristics such as race, religion, ethnicity, gender, background, culture, socioeconomic status, parents' sexual orientation, and impairment ([Guyana, Prevention of discrimination Act 1997, Cap. 99: 08](#)). Students will be given opportunities to showcase their talents and such talents and uniqueness will be celebrated, especially for students who are considered disadvantaged or vulnerable because of impairment(s).
- v. The University will provide opportunities for students and staff to form social bonds and relations with peers so that they can create connections with others who share similar and different interests, aspirations, skills, and abilities.
- vi. The University will provide lecturers, tutors, educators and support staff with training on Special Education Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), inclusion, differentiated instruction and inclusive learning and assessments. There will also be continuous professional development sessions to enhance the University's capacity to promote inclusion.
- vii. The University undertakes to build the capacity of national institutions and agencies to making make provisions for persons with disabilities.
- viii. The University will provide support for persons, not limited to students and staff, from disadvantaged sociocultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to help reduce barriers

created by poverty and other social disadvantages and will attempt to reduce the feeling of disablement experienced by individuals with SEND.

## **6. Objectives of the Policy**

The objectives of the University Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Policy are to ensure that as an inclusive institution:

- (a) students with disabilities occupy the same space(s) as individuals without disabilities and they engage as equals.
- (b) cultures, policies and practices eliminate exclusion, reduce discrimination and remove barriers to learning and participation so that the University responds to diversity in ways that value everyone equally.
- (c) academic and administrative staff are made aware of languages and interactions that indicate that disability is not a simple dichotomy, and there is a strong relationship between disability, social practices, and impairment.
- (d) marginalisation and discrimination based on abilities, background, religion, culture, race, gender, socioeconomic status and impairments are discouraged.
- (e) student-centred pedagogies are adopted to ensure high-quality learning for all regardless of diversities, abilities, background, religion, culture, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and impairments.
- (f) structural and institutional inequalities are removed during curriculum delivery.
- (g) each lecturer is guided to uphold the practice expectations of inclusivity in every course.
- (h) forms of access and support given to staff and students are not limited to those based on abilities, background, religion, culture, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and impairments.
- (i) the framework of inclusion is articulated and implemented.

## **7. Expectations**

Faculty and Staff are expected to:

- a) embrace the Triple 'A' Approach by ensuring that there is access to teaching and learning resources, accommodations in class for students with SEND and support in the learning for students with additional needs.
- b) embrace inclusive pedagogical approaches/strategies in all courses.
- c) help to shape a positive collective consciousness in each course that constitutes a supportive environment for students, especially those with SEND.
- d) demonstrate attitudes and practices which will enhance the experiences of students with SEND and maintain inclusive educational practices.
- e) support the institution's quest to identify all forms inequalities, due to institutional discrimination and implement inclusive practices to eliminate them.
- f) recognize that students will have an additional educational need at one point in each course.
- g) recognize that students who are gifted and have exceptional abilities also require additional support because they have additional needs.
- h) avoid marginalising students in classrooms so as not to damage their sense of self-worth and positive identity.
- i) practice the principles of inclusive education aligned with the social model of disability.
- j) embrace the inclusive declarations of the University when providing administrative and support services.

## **8. Legislative Framework**

### **SEND Provisions in Guyana and The Law**

The University of Guyana as the sole national higher education institution embraces the inclusive education accords and laws of Guyana as well as the regional and international treaties to which Guyana is a signatory. The University of Guyana embraces the following:

1. The [Declaration of Pétion Ville of 2013](#) reiterates the expectations of the Kingston Accord of 2004. The Kingston Accord emphasises:
  - (a) the responsibilities of States with respect to Persons with Disabilities,
  - (b) the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and



- (c) the Inter-American Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against persons with disabilities, in accordance with the Constitution and laws of CARICOM's respective member states.
2. The [Guyana Persons with Disabilities Act, \(2010\), Cap. 36:05](#). The Disability Act emphasises that:
- (a) discrimination against anyone with a disability may take the form of any distinction, exclusion or restriction on the basis of a known disability.
  - (b) discrimination may reduce or restrict the recognition of any of the human rights of a person with the disability or any rights provided for by the [Guyana Persons with Disabilities Act, 2010, Cap. 36:05](#). Therefore, if lecturers/teachers do not offer experiences, opportunities and socialisation that cater for students with SEND in their educational/academic institution, they are breaking the law.
  - (c) The Minister of Education, in collaboration with the Disability Commission, is responsible for the education of all the nation's children ([Guyana Persons with Disabilities Act 2010, Cap. 36:05](#)).
  - (d) The University of Guyana needs to ensure that adequate provisions are made for students and staff with SEND. This means that when lecturers do not have the resources and support needed to provide the experiences, opportunities and socialisation students need in the institution on a daily basis, the Senior Leadership Team of the University of Guyana is breaking the laws of Guyana.
  - (e) Guyana does not have an inclusive framework or evaluative tool that outlines the forms or support and resources needed. As such, the University of Guyana Inclusive Education Policy and Practice expectations take precedence until such a framework is nationally activated in Guyana.
  - (f) The Act also clearly states that any student with SEND should not be excluded from the general institution programmes.
  - (g) Students in Guyana, whether they are disabled or not, are entitled to an education in public institutions ([Education Act, No. 3 of 1876, Cap 39:01](#); [Guyana's Persons with Disabilities Act 2010, Cap. 36:05](#)).
  - (h) The Act also makes provisions for training programmes for educators specialising in SEND.

## **9. Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Awareness**

Inclusivity, diversity and equity cannot be fully realized without full awareness of the policy, practices and principles that frame and constitute inclusivity. The University of Guyana recognizes that disability awareness helps in subsiding any stereotypical mind-set that might exist in society and that providing opportunities for everyone to get involved in creating a positive, inclusive environment for all individuals is a pivotal priority. It will include inclusion awareness as a part of staff and student orientation activities. The University's Management Committee will make arrangements to ensure the provision of funding within the University's annual budget for an Inclusion Unit and for awareness campaigns across campuses.

### **Awareness Training for Staff**

Sensitizing staff about disability will help in breaking social barriers and allowing for a better, wholesome approach to inclusion of people with disabilities. The essential factors when sensitizing staff about the importance of disability awareness involves inclusive pedagogy, empathy, acceptance, diversity and equity. The University of Guyana must give all staff opportunities to participate in awareness training through inclusive modules. See [Appendix E](#) for Awareness of Appropriate Languages and Practices and Appendix F for [Awareness of Appropriate Interaction](#).

## **10. Rights and Responsibilities of Staff and Students**

### **Responsibilities**

Students and staff at the University shall have the responsibility to:

- a) meet institutional requirements and maintain essential institutional standards for courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities.
- b) identify as an individual with a disability when such accommodation is needed and to seek information, advice, and assistance as necessary.
- c) demonstrate and/or document (from an appropriate professional) how the disability limits their participation in courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities.

- d) follow the [University of Guyana's Triple 'A' Approach](#) to inclusivity, diversity and equity.
- e) follow the guidelines for accommodating students with SEND. [See Appendix G.](#)
- f) ensure intro facilities provided are utilised.
- g) abstain from any misuse or abuse of facilities provided.
- h) report at earliest the malfunction of any equipment utilised.
- i) respect institutional efforts to provide such facilities and fully utilise them.

## **Rights**

Students and staff at the University of Guyana have the right to:

- a) equal access to courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and facilities offered through the university.
- b) equal opportunity to work and to learn, and to receive reasonable accommodations.
- c) appropriate confidentiality of all information regarding their disability and to choose to whom, outside the University of Guyana, information about their disability will be disclosed, except as disclosures are required or permitted by law.
- d) relevant information, reasonably available in accessible formats.

## **11. Priority of Access to Persons with Disabilities**

The University is responsible for making priority access to its facilities and services for students with SEND. These priority access lanes must be clearly demarked with visible blue and white labels. Within all the University's facilities, there must be physical accommodation and modifications to structures to provide access to individuals with physical disabilities. The University will retrofit its facilities and services to ensure priority access and accommodation in existing buildings. Where retrofitting to the buildings is impossible, the University will make alternative adjustments and accommodations for teaching and delivery of services. It will also ensure that all future constructions are designed to accommodate students with SEND in the following locations:

1. Washrooms – These must be fitted with a disability friendly facility.

2. Library
3. Bursary
4. Registry
5. Admissions Units
6. Laboratories/Classrooms/Lecture Theatres/
7. Canteens
8. Resource Centres, e.g., copy shop
9. Transportation Services on all Campuses
10. Parking Facilities, etc.

## **12. Access to Support and Resources for Persons with SEND**

Persons with SEND are required to make direct contact with the Inclusion Unit or through the faculty's inclusivity representative or Senior Assistant Registrar, Students' Welfare, or through the course lecturer. In order to determine what support might be appropriate for the individual, the following procedures will be used to:

- discuss experiences and expectations with individual.
- review evidence of disability.
- consider the current course of study.

### **Categories of Support:**

- Teaching adjustments
- Human support (also known as non-medical help)
- Reasonable adjustments to the teaching and learning environment
- IT equipment and study technology
- Travel between study sites
- Examinations and assessments
- Libraries
- Medical support as provided by the University's medical team.

**N.B.** Funding will not be provided for daily living.

### **Evidence Required:**

- A copy of an educational psychologist's assessment Report/ SEND Specialist Report.
- Special Educational Needs Report from a previous institution or The Assessment and Diagnostic Centre of the Ministry of Education will be accepted. This Centre is located in the compound of the Cyril Potter College of Education, Turkeyen. If students are unsure about the evidence, the Inclusion Unit will look at it and offer advice.
- **In cases where there is no evidence**, the Inclusion Unit can arrange an independent assessment by an educational psychologist/SEND Specialist sourced from external agencies. If the staff/students cannot afford the cost, they may be eligible for support from the Inclusion Unit to cover some or all of the cost.
- A diagnosis for ADHD should be sought via a General Practitioner (Medical Doctor) who will make a referral to a special service.

### **13. Sanctions for being in Breach of the Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Policy.**

The Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Policy are in place to guarantee inclusivity and equity for all individuals within the university community and those who access its services. Breaching the policy will result in the following consequences:

#### **Students**

- a) Verbal warning and [corrective counselling](#) for first offence;
- b) Written warning for the repeated offence which will be reflected on academic records;
- c) Implementation of disciplinary procedures in accordance with the provisions of Statute 27, and
- d) Possible disqualification from special prizes and honours such as Dean's Honour Roll in accordance with the provisions of the Statute 23.

## **Staff**

- a) Verbal warning and recourse to *corrective counselling* for first offence;
- b) Written warning for repeated offence which will be reflected on the HRMIS;
- c) Institution of disciplinary procedures in accordance with the University of Guyana Act and Statutes: Statute 27 for UA staff and the UB Handbook for UB and Supervisory Staff Section 6, Chapter 1.0: Disciplinary Procedure for UB staff, and
- d) Compulsory training or retraining in disability management and inclusive pedagogies.

## **Visitors**

- a) A verbal warning supported by the provision of awareness package with an apology rendered by the first-time offender, and
- b) For repeat offenders an assault report will be made at the nearest police station in accordance with the Disability Act, 2010.

### **14. Complaints Procedure for Persons with SEND experiencing Marginalization, Discrimination, Depersonalization and/or Exclusion**

The University of Guyana is committed to a process of inclusion and equity. The University commits to addressing all complaints promptly and equitably. This Complaint procedure is aligned to University's Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Policy. All complaints shall be directed to the Head of the Inclusion Unit. The University encourages informal processes to resolve the issues and concerns where practicable so that a filing of a complaint is the last resort.

### **Confidentiality**

All complaints will be treated with the utmost confidentiality

### **Categories of Complaints (Please indicate)**

Complaints may fall into the following categories, please indicate. If your complaint does not fit into one of the categories, please explain further.

- Access to program or activity

- Accommodations/Reasonable adjustments/Modifications
- Marginalization, discrimination and depersonalization

The **Procedures** for filing a complaint are:

1. The complaint must be filed in writing or in an acceptable modality such audio/video recording and must outline the name and contact details of the complainant.
2. The Department/Unit/or individual whose action gave rise to the complaint.
  1. A complainant is encouraged to file a complaint at the earliest opportunity but certainly no later than **the end of the semester** in which the incident occurs/takes place except when extenuating circumstances prevent the submission (*inter alia*, hospitalization, special examination circumstances etc.)
  2. A description of the complaint as outlined in the [Complaint Form](#) must be detailed.
  3. The complainant is allowed to provide any evidential material(s) to support the complaint.
  4. If any complainant prefers to remain **anonymous**, the matter/allegation will still be considered and/or investigated as long as the complaint is submitted.

**Right to [Appeal](#):**

**The complainant may appeal to the Head the decisions emanating from the complaint under any of the following conditions:**

1. The agreed decisions/resolutions were not implemented.
2. New information which was not available during the investigation is discovered.
3. The complainant is dissatisfied with the decisions/resolutions.
4. Any other circumstances that constitute an appeal pertaining to the specific complaint.

**Complaints: Responsibilities of the Head of the [Inclusion Unit](#)**

1. The Office of the Head of the Inclusion Unit must acknowledge receipt within **72 hours**.
2. The Head shall ensure that an investigation of the complaint is conducted within **fourteen days (14)** of the complaint or as far as is practicable. This process will entail that the Head or designate meets with the complainant and (where applicable his/her advocate) to discuss the complaint and possible resolutions.

3. Where necessary, the Head shall cause a team to meet with a view to address the complaint.
4. Upon the completion of the investigative process, the Head shall issue in writing to the complainant and the Department/ Unit or individual against whom the complaint was made the outcome(s) of the investigation.
5. The Head should be given access to student bio-data on the SRMS as well as staff data via the HRMIS.

### **Records Management**

1. The Head shall ensure that all documented records of complaints, resolution, and appeals shall be retained for at least **three years** consistent with the University's policy on records management.

### **Implementation and monitoring of the policy**

The work of the Unit shall be implemented through the head and team of the Inclusion Unit. The Registrar, through the Vice-Chancellor, shall report on a quarterly basis, or any other period as may be determined by the academic board, on the administration of the policy.

### **Students**

As a part of its inclusive strategy, the Unit will be anchored within the Registry, but it will work with Faculties to monitor the progression of students with SEND from matriculation to graduation.

### **Staff**

The Unit shall monitor how accommodations are made for all staff with declared disabilities and recommend provisions within the confines of the policy. Furthermore, participation and completion of training of staff will also be monitored by the Office of Staff Welfare in the Human Resource Department and shared in statutory reports. Reporting will ensure that good practices are celebrated and challenges are addressed.



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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Definitions

<b>The Social Model of Disability</b>	The social model of disability is linked to Marxist ideological or civil rights approaches and political activism (Dell’Anna et al, 2019; Oliver, 1990; Owens, 2015) rooted in the 80s. It draws on working class, black, and feminist liberation movements for its theoretical guidance. The social model of disability does not perceive individuals with impairments as people with disabilities but rather sees their disabilities as a product of the lack of material support in society which creates disabling barriers (Oliver, 1990; 2009; 2013).
<b>Diversity</b>	Understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing these individual differences along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies.
<b>Equity</b>	Social justice according to natural law or right specifically, freedom from bias or favouritism.
<b>Inclusion</b>	Inclusion represents a whole-institution concern and works to align special education with general education in a manner that most effectively and efficiently imparts quality education to students and staff.
<b>Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)</b>	<p>Students who require additional support beyond the normal educational learning experiences and opportunities of the traditional mainstream education system.</p> <p>There are several definitions for SEND with different countries having different definitions. In Guyana, SEND is defined using the UK, 2001 Code of Practice as follows:</p> <p>‘Students have Special Needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Students have a learning difficulty if they:</p> <p>(a) Have a significantly greater difficulty than the majority of students of the same age.</p>

	<p>(b) Have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of the kind generally provided for students of the same age in schools within the local education authority.</p> <p>(c) Are under compulsory school age and fall within the definition at (a) or (b) above or would do so if Special Educational provision was not made for them.</p> <p>Special Educational provision means educational provision which is additional to, or otherwise different from the educational provision made generally for students of their age in school.’ (Department for Education and Skills, 2001, p.13)</p>
<b>Ability</b>	Abilities are properties of the union of person and environment that exhibit the opportunity structure of a situation and the affectivity structure of the person in taking advantage of the opportunities afforded for learning experiences, participation and socialization.
<b>Assault on Persons with SEND</b>	Assault on Persons with SEND is the use of force or threat of force to wilfully injure, intimidate, interfere with, oppress, or threaten any other person in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege under constitutions of Guyana and the University of Guyana because of the person's disability (actual or perceived), diversities, abilities, background, religion, culture, race, gender and socioeconomic status.
<b>Special Education</b>	A subsystem of education planned and organized to provide learning experiences and educational and social opportunities for students with SEND who fail to benefit from regular mainstream programs.
<b>Disability</b>	‘Disability is the complex relationship between the environment, body and psyche, which serves to exclude certain people from becoming full participants in interpersonal, social, cultural, economic and political affairs’ (Marks, 1999, p. 611). It is a limitation created when there are challenges and barriers which hinder participation, socialisation and experiences of individuals with impairments.
<b>Learning Experiences</b>	The combination of activities, interactions, simulations, expositions, courses, programs, or other opportunities structured and organized or unstructured and incidental designed to facilitate the construction of knowledge, development of

	skills and values while transmitting cultures, norms and values resulting in a change in behaviour (Harden, 2007).
<b>Corrective Counselling</b>	The purpose of corrective counselling is to meet with the faculty/students and to jointly identify means of correcting the unacceptable conduct.

## **Appendix B: The Inclusion Unit of the University of Guyana**

The Unit will be the administrative body responsible for the implementation of the policy. However, an independent mechanism will be established for monitoring the policy with reporting responsibilities to the academic board through the Vice-Chancellor.

### **Members**

1. The Head of Inclusion/Inclusion Officer/Inclusion Coordinator
2. Secretary of Inclusion Unit
3. Learning Support Staff (2)
4. Assistant Registrar Student Welfare
5. Reps from all academic and administrative departments and units
6. Diagnostic Specialist/Assessment Officers
7. Representative from the UG Students' Society

**N.B** – This Unit will have flexible membership for each member of the technical team.

### **Technical Team**

<b>No</b>	<b>Name of Member</b>	<b>Designation</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
<b>1</b>	Dr. Roslin Khan – Co-Chair	<b>Dean, Faculty of Education &amp; Humanities</b>	<a href="mailto:roslin.khan@uog.edu.gy">roslin.khan@uog.edu.gy</a>

2	Dr. Lidon Lashley – Co-Chair	<b>Assistant Dean, Faculty of Education &amp; Humanities</b>	<a href="mailto:lidon.lashley@uog.edu.gy">lidon.lashley@uog.edu.gy</a>
3	Dr. Mellissa Ifill	<b>DVC - Institutional Advancement</b>	<a href="mailto:mellissa.ifill@uog.edu.gy">mellissa.ifill@uog.edu.gy</a>
4	Dr. C. Nigel Gravesande	<b>Registrar</b>	<a href="mailto:nigel.gravesande@uog.edu.gy">nigel.gravesande@uog.edu.gy</a>
5	Dr. Paulette Henry	<b>Dean – Faculty of Social Sciences</b>	<a href="mailto:paulette.henry@uog.edu.gy">paulette.henry@uog.edu.gy</a>
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10	Dr. Melisha Hanif	<b>University Medical Officer</b>	<a href="mailto:melisha.hanif@uog.edu.gy">melisha.hanif@uog.edu.gy</a>
11	Ms. Juanita Cameron-Charles	<b>University Guidance &amp; Counselling Officer</b>	<a href="mailto:juanita.cameron@uog.edu.gy">juanita.cameron@uog.edu.gy</a>

### **Composition of the Task Force**

The University of Guyana Disabilities Task Force is comprised of various University staff members, Academic and Administrative. The members are:

<b>NO</b>	<b>NAME OF MEMBER</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>NAME OF MEMBER</b>
1	Dr. Roslin Khan – Co-Chair <b>Dean, Faculty of Education &amp; Humanities</b>	13	Ms. Natalya Bobb-Semple <b>Coordinator- Change Projects</b>
2	Dr. Lidon Lashley – Co-Chair <b>Assistant Dean, Faculty of Education &amp; Humanities</b>	14	Ms. Christine Chowargir <b>Senior Alumni Relations Officer</b>
3	Prof. Paloma Mohamed- Martin <b>Vice-Chancellor</b>	15	Ms Pamela Rose <b>Assistant Director – UGBC</b>
4	Dr. Emanuel Cummings <b>DVC Academic Engagement</b>	16	Dr. Mishel Moriah

			<b>Senior Technical Officer, Planning and Student Support</b>
5	Dr. Mellissa Ifill <b>DVC Institutional Advancement</b>	17	Ms. Juanita Cameron-Charles <b>University Guidance &amp; Counselling Officer</b>
6	Dr. C. Nigel Gravesande <b>Registrar</b>	18	Ms. Leann Kendall <b>Assistant Dean – Faculty of Social Sciences</b>
7	Prof. Subramanian Gomalthinayagam <b>Director UGBC</b>	19	Ms. Debbie Hopkinson <b>Lecturer &amp; Coordinator, Masters Program in Social Work– Faculty of Social Sciences</b>
8	Dr. Jacqueline Murray <b>Director- Institute of Distance &amp; Continuing Education</b>	20	Ms. Olivia Parris-Bowen <b>Occupation Health and Safety Officer</b>
9	Dr. Paulette Henry <b>Dean – Faculty of Social Sciences</b>	21	Ms. Sharly Bacchus <b>Executive Assistant</b>
10	Ms. Daniella King <b>Senior Assistant Registrar- Students’ Welfare</b>	22	Dr. Quincy Jones <b>Lecturer II – School of Allied Health</b>
11	Dr. Melisha Hanif <b>University Medical Officere</b>	23	Ms. Arifia Shahabuddeen <b>Executive Assistant/Administrative Support</b>
12	Dr. Anna Perreira <b>HOD - Department of Architecture Faculty of Engineering &amp; Technology (FET)</b>		

The Inclusion Unit of the University of Guyana will be equipped with resources and adequate funding to arrange academic support and adjustments for staff and students with disabilities or long-term health conditions that can impact their ability to study. This may include:

- a. an autistic spectrum condition.
- b. a visual impairment.
- c. a hearing impairment.
- d. a long-standing illness or health condition such as diabetes or chronic fatigue or a mental health condition
- e. a specific learning difficulty (SpLD) such as dyslexia, dyspraxia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- f. physical/mobility difficulties

## Appendix C: Complaints Form

# University of Guyana Inclusivity, Diversity and Equity Policy and Practice Expectations Complaints Form

The University of Guyana is committed to a process of inclusivity, diversity and equity. The University commits to addressing all complaints promptly and equitably. All complaints shall be directed to the Head of the Inclusion Unit. The University encourages informal processes to resolve the issues and concerns where practicable so that a filing of a complaint is the last resort.  
**Confidentiality:** All complaints will be treated with the utmost confidentiality

The University of Guyana is committed to a process of inclusivity, diversity and equity. The University commits to addressing all complaints promptly and equitably. All complaints shall be directed to the Head of the Inclusion Unit. The University encourages informal processes to resolve the issues and concerns where practicable so that a filing of a complaint is the last resort.  
**Confidentiality:** All complaints will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Student USI or Staff ID

Contact number

Email address

Individual/Department/Unit against which the complaint is being tendered.

Category of Complaint.

Access to course or University Services/Facilities

Accommodations/Reasonable adjustments/Modifications

Marginalisation, discrimination, depersonalisation and/or exclusion

Other (please specify):

Please state the complaint. Include if any prior action(s) at resolution had been sought either informally or formally (use another sheet of paper if needed).

Please include what action is being sought.

Signature

---

Date:

\_\_\_\_\_



## Appeal Form

The University of Guyana respects the rights of all staff and students to appeal any decisions rendered by the Inclusion Unit. This form outlines the process to file an appeal.

Consistent with all complaints made, the Head of the Inclusion Unit must acknowledge receipt of the appeal within **72 hours**. The team will assess the appeal and initiate further investigation of said appeal within **fourteen days (14)** once validated. If the appeal is deemed invalid, the appellant will be so advised.

**Confidentiality:** All complaints/appeal will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

### Student USI or Staff ID

### Contact details

Date of incident:

Date resolution was communicated

Please attach a copy of resolution communicated.

### Please indicate the reason(s) for the appeal (Please tick what applies)

- The agreed decisions/resolutions were not implemented.
- New information which was not available during the investigation is discovered.
- The complainant is dissatisfied with the decisions/resolutions.
- Any other circumstances that constitute an appeal pertaining to the specific complaint.

**Please explain the reason indicated:**

**Please explain what steps you would suggest to resolve this matter which was not taken in the initial resolution process**

**Signature**

**Date:**

**Appendix D: The Southern Inclusive Education Framework**

The Southern Inclusive Education Framework is a Social Model of Disability Framework specifically articulated contextually and conceptually for the specificities of Southern Countries. It has been adopted by the University of Guyana as its guiding policies. Framed from this lens, for Guyanese educational institutions to be fully inclusive, the following features need to be fully implemented:

1. All educational institutions and local education districts need to be free from discriminatory practices such as institutional discrimination and inequalities as well as any form of victimisation or preferential treatment for students based on race, religion, ethnicity,

gender, background, culture, socioeconomic status, parents' sexual orientation, and impairment ([Guyana, Prevention of discrimination Act 1997, Cap. 99: 08](#)). All educational institutions and local education districts need to be free from any barrier which may result in preferential treatment of specific groups of students and increased vulnerability of other groups or restricted participation in experiences and socialisation offered at institutions.

2. Reasonable adjustments and modifications need to be made to the structures and systems currently in place within institutions to reduce barriers to access that are constituted or embedded in the discourses, discursive practices, structures and systems of the schools.
3. Students need to be given the support needed in the educational intuition in which they are placed. This support is not limited to curricula and educational materials/resources but need to extend to social, emotional and physical support as the individual case necessitates.
4. Students need to be treated with love and respect and be valued and appreciated for their individual characteristics. Each student needs to be given opportunities to showcase his/her talents and such talents and uniqueness need to be celebrated, especially for students who are considered disadvantaged or vulnerable because of impairment(s).
5. Opportunities need to be provided for all (students and staff) to form social bonds and relations with peers so that they can also create connections with others who share similar and different interests, aspirations, skills, and abilities. In addition, compassion committees could be established to ensure awareness and sensitisation of all stakeholders to students' diversities and potential to contribute to society's development to increase the value placed on students.
6. All opportunities, experiences and socialisation need to be flexible and adaptable to individual differences while maintaining equal standards, expectations and outcomes for all. Opportunities, experiences and socialisation for students need to be provided, based on individual needs, culture, and readiness.
7. Lecturers, tutors, teachers, educators, support staff and other stakeholders need to receive compulsory training on SEND, inclusion, differentiated instruction, inclusive learning and assessment. There also needs to be continuous professional development sessions to

enhance local capacity to promote inclusion. More local studies need to be carried out to enhance students with SEND experiences in educational institutions.

8. Due to the diverse cultures, geography and demography of the education districts in Guyana, inclusive policies, while broadly adhering to national policy, need to be based on the local context. In addition, local teachers need to receive support from national specialists as required and/or requested.
9. All local educational institutions need to attempt to be more than educational institutions in the local communities. They need to also strive to be avenues where all (students, staff, faculty and members of the society) can have the opportunities to collaborate and help each other advance in an inclusive environment.
10. All educational institutions need to emphasise not only academic achievements at national assessment, but also highlight skills attainment, sports, arts and creativity, music and these wider areas of education need to be of equal merit to academic performance/achievement.
11. All educational institutions need to actively try to reduce discriminatory behaviours and practices toward persons (students and staff) with impairments in society even when they are not placed in educational institutions.
12. Educational institutions could provide support for persons (not limited to students) from disadvantaged sociocultural and socioeconomic backgrounds to remove barriers created by poverty and other social disadvantages and attempt to reduce the feeling of disablement experienced by individuals with SEND.
13. Educational institutions could also ensure everyone honours the national motto “one people, one nation, and one destiny.

*Developed by: Dr. Lidon Lashley, 2021*

## Appendix E: Inclusive Checker for Southern Educational Institutions

### Key:

**5- Always    4- Often    3- Satisfactory    2- Sometimes    1- Seldom    0- Never**

The maximum possible score is 75 points. Lecturers/Teachers need to achieve a minimum total of 45 in order for their practices and classrooms are considered meeting basic inclusiveness. However, it is intended to be a recorded maintained by the individual lecturer/teacher and only made public at the lecturer/teacher's request or consent.

#	Inclusive Checks Criteria/Behaviour	Degree of Behaviour Presence						Notable Comments
		5	4	3	2	1	0	
1	Students are warmly greeted at the start of each school day and are treated with love, respect and appreciation of their individual uniqueness							
2	Students are never classified and/or differentiated on the basis of need, background, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, culture and any criteria which could be deemed discriminatory or non-inclusive.							
3	Instructions are always tailored to suit each student's level of communication, readiness and interest while maintaining the basic benchmarks for the grade level							
4	Differences in students are celebrated and are used as resources to enhance learning experiences. They are never highlighted as deficiencies.							
5	Learning experiences are flexible and easily modified to suit students' differences.							
6	Instructional materials and resources are diversified and cater for all. Some instructional materials are culturally related to students.							

7	Opportunities are provided for students to share in classroom activities. They are guided and provided with support to aid effective socialization						
8	Students are praised regularly and given immediate constructive criticism and feedback on the issue or learning and never the child directly.						
9	Classrooms are organised in such a way that students have easy access to all shared resources especially students with SEND						
10	Lecturers'/Teachers' attitude is positive towards students, their socialisation and their learning.						
11	Students are guided to support each other and to express themselves without fear of prejudice, mockery or segregation.						
12	Students are helped and/or supported to overcome challenges and/or barriers to learning and socialisation in addition to achieving the basic targets each day.						
13	Students are always given the opportunity to contribute towards enhancing their experiences at the educational institution and lecturers/teachers respect and take their contributions into consideration.						
14	Reasonable adjustments and/or modifications are made by lecturers/teachers as they are necessary or needed by students.						
15	Share high yet reasonable expectations for students creating parallel alternatives of the same shared expectations for students with SEND.						
<b>TOTAL</b>							

**A+ - Outstanding 70-75**

**A - Excellent 65-69**

**B+ - Very Good 60-64**

**B - Good 55- 59**

**C+ - Fair 50- 54**

**C - Satisfactory 45 -54**

**D - Low inclusiveness 44 and below**

Date Completed: ..... Name of Lecturer/Teacher:

.....

Course: ..... Signature of Lecturer/Teacher:

.....

Grade Achieved: .....

*Developed by: Dr. Lidon Lashley, 2021*

**Appendix F: Awareness of Appropriate Languages**

People with disabilities are, first and foremost, people. The person first and then the disability. This emphasizes the person and not the disability (for example: a person with autism spectrum). As part of its awareness training, the following principles will be included in all training materials:

- a) Encourage the use of the word "disability" when referring to someone who has a physical, mental, emotional, sensory, or learning impairment.
- b) Avoid the use of the word "handicapped". A handicap is what a person with a disability cannot do.
- c) Avoid labeling individuals as victims, or "the disabled", or as names of conditions. Instead, refer to people with disabilities as "someone who has epilepsy", "a wheelchair user", etc.
- d) Avoid terms such as "wheelchair bound". Wheelchairs provide access and enable individuals to get around. Instead, refer to a person who uses a wheelchair as someone with a mobility impairment or as a wheelchair user.
- e) Choose the correct terminology for the specific disability when it is appropriate to refer to an individual's disability. Use terms such as quadriplegia, speech impairment, hearing impairment, or specific learning disability.

**Appendix G: Awareness of Appropriate Interaction**

Interactions with persons with disability can be a normalized experiences once appropriate interactions practices are followed.

- a) Offer to shake hands when introduced. People with limited hand use or artificial limbs can usually shake hands. It is an acceptable greeting to use the left hand for shaking.
- b) Treat adults as adults. Avoid patronizing people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the shoulder or touching their head. Never place your hands on a person's wheelchair as the chair is part of the body space of the user.
- c) Sit down, if possible, when talking to a person who uses a wheelchair so that you are at the person's eye level.
- d) Speak directly to the person with a disability. Avoid communicating through another person. If the person uses an interpreter, look at the person and speak to the person, not the interpreter.
- e) Offer assistance with sensitivity and respect. Ask if there is something you might do to help. If the offer is declined, do not insist.
- f) Allow the person to take your arm at or above the elbow if you are a sight guide for a person with a visual impairment so that you guide rather than propel.
- g) Listen attentively, ask short questions that require short answers, avoid correcting and repeat when talking to a person with a speech impairment if you are uncertain of what you understand.
- h) Identify yourself and any others who may be with you when first meeting a person with a visual impairment.
- i) Look directly at the person and speak slowly when speaking to a person with a hearing impairment, and avoid placing your hand over your mouth when speaking. Written notes may be helpful for short conversations.

## **Appendix H: Accommodation**

Accommodations are alterations in the way tasks are presented that allow students with disabilities to complete the same assignments as other students. Accommodations do not:



- (a) alter the content of assignments.
- (b) give students an unfair advantage or in the case of assessments, change what a test measures.

They do make it possible for students with disabilities to show what they know without being impeded by their disability.

Some students with disabilities may need an Individualized Education Plan/Program (IEP) supported by an IEP team. Any appropriate accommodations should be written into a student's IEP. Some examples of possible accommodations for an IEP team to consider are in six categories:

**Presentation:**

- (a) Provide on audio tape.
- (b) Provide in large print.
- (c) Reduce number of items per page or line.
- (d) Provide a designated reader.
- (e) Present instructions orally.

**Response:**

- (a) Allow for verbal responses.
- (b) Allow for answers to be dictated to a scribe.
- (c) Allow for the use of a tape recorder to capture responses.
- (d) Permit responses to be given via computer.
- (e) Permit answers to be recorded directly into test booklet.

**Timing:**

- (a) Allow frequent breaks.
- (b) Extend allotted time for a test.

**Setting:**

- (a) Provide preferential seating.
- (b) Provide special lighting or acoustics.
- (c) Provide a space with minimal distractions.
- (d) Administer a test in small group setting.
- (e) Administer a test in private room or alternative test site.

**Test Scheduling:**

- (a) Administer a test in several timed sessions or over several days.
- (b) Allow subtests to be taken in a different order.
- (c) Administer a test at a specific time of day.

**Other:**

- (a) Provide special test preparation.
- (b) Provide on-task/focusing prompts.
- (c) Provide any reasonable accommodation that a student needs that does not fit under the existing categories.

**Grading Assignments/Tests**

- School assignments and tests completed with accommodations should be graded the same way as those completed without accommodations.
- Accommodations are meant to "level the playing field," provide equitable and ready access to the task at hand and are not meant to provide an undue advantage to the user.

**Specific Accommodation for The Visually Impaired**

- Audiotaped, Brailled, or electronically formatted lecture notes, handouts, and texts
- Verbal descriptions of visual aids
- Raised-line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials

- Braille lab signs and equipment labels; auditory lab warning signals
- Adaptive lab equipment (e.g., talking thermometers and calculators, light probes, and tactile timers)
- Computer with optical character reader, voice output, Braille screen display and printer output
- An environment that is conducive for learning. i.e., providing (E) classrooms
- Software that are friendly to the blind and visually impaired, e.g. Jaws, Alexa, Talk back, Voiceover, Siri, etc.
- Tactile material that will enhance the class experience for visually impaired persons
- Seating arranged to accommodate visually impaired persons, so they can manoeuvre and adapt easily to their environment
- Adequate lighting to eliminate dark spots throughout the facility
- Learning material accessible in soft copy ahead of the next class also in braille
- Reading materials in library accessible in soft copy and compatible with visual enhancement capability
- A special room in the library to accommodate visually impaired students with assistive technology
- Pathways more user friendly and accessible for blind and visually impaired persons, i.e., providing a ridge at the sides of walkways to facilitate persons using canes, as well as eliminating sudden drops
- Sound effect material on the ground in front of the entrances and exits to classrooms, washrooms, offices and all other facilities
- A special room equipped with a swift technology to conduct examinations for blind and visually impaired persons
- Timetable and classroom locations in soft copy compatible with Jaws, Alexa, Siri or other assistive technologies
- User friendly websites for persons who are blind and visual impaired

### **Specific Accommodation for the Auditory Impaired**

## **Amplification Options**

- Personal hearing device (hearing aid, cochlear implant, tactile device)
- Personal FM system (hearing aid + FM)
- FM system/auditory trainer (without personal hearing aid)

## **Assistive Devices**

- Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD)
- TV captioned

## **Communication Accommodations**

- Specialized seating arrangements
- Focused students' attention prior to speaking
- Reduced auditory distractions (background noise)
- Reduced visual distractions
- Enhanced speech reading conditions (avoid hands in front of face, mustaches well-trimmed, no gum chewing)
- Simple structured, sequential manner of presenting information
- Clearly enunciated speech
- Extra time for processing information

## **Physical Environment Accommodations**

- Noise reduction (carpet & other sound absorption materials)
- Specialized lighting
- Room design modifications
- Flashing fire alarm

## **Instructional Accommodations**

- Use of visual supplements (projected materials, whiteboard, charts, vocabulary lists, lecture outlines)
- Captioning or scripts for announcements, television, videos, or movies
- Speech-to-text translation captioning (i.e., computer on desk)
- Educational interpreter (ASL, signed English, cued speech, oral)
- Buddy system for notes, extra explanations/directions
- Checks for understanding of information
- Down time / break from listening

### **Accommodation for Students with Dyslexia**

#### **Overall Teaching Accommodations**

- Provide a consistent routine.
- Make sure documents are well organized and are not too visually dense.
- Preview new topics and review the vocabulary.
- Use small group or one-to-one instruction.
- Break projects into organized activities with clear deadlines.
- Check students understanding prior to assigning assignments.
- Allow for assistive technologies to take notes and complete assignments.

#### **Listening/Reading Accommodations**

- Provide audiobooks.
- Provide a picture or directions and schedules.
- Offer extra time when reading.
- Offer larger font with less content on each page.
- Offer coloured overlays.
- Provide highlighters to colour code assignments and assessments.

#### **Spelling Accommodations**

- Provide text to speech and technology.

- Provide pre-exposures or advanced notice of reading assignments.
- Offer coloured overlays.
- Avoid penalizing for incorrect spelling on classroom writing and tests.
- Offer spelling banks.

### **Writing Accommodations**

- Supply a copy of the teacher's notes or another student's note. Provide a few blanks for the student to fill in.
- Shorten writing assignments.
- Offer a scribe for classroom writing assignments.
- Provide assistive technologies such as speech to text, word prediction, spelling checkers and grammar checkers.
- Acknowledge sloppy writing.
- Avoid having student copy information.

### **Mathematics Accommodations**

- Allow the use of graph paper for lining up math problems.
- Read word problems aloud and assist with tricky words.
- Allow for the use of manipulatives and coloured markers.
- Allow the use of assistive technology and calculators.

### **Accommodation for Students Autism Spectrum Disorder**

- Clearly establish and order routines.
- Warn and prepare when changes are anticipated.
- Plan and practice communication strategies and social routines.
- Use earplugs or noise-canceling headsets in hallways or lunchroom.
- Set aside a quiet area where the student can take a time-out if necessary.
- Use visual schedules and graphic organizers.
- Use visual or written, rather than auditory, instructions.
- Use computers especially word processing for writing.

- Engage a note taker.

## Instructional Support

### Severity of Support Expectations/ Reasonable Adjustment Impairment

	Lectures/Discussions/Forums	Interaction	Resource Support
<b>Mild Impairment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Speak in clear, short sentences and use simple words.</li> <li>2. Pause to enable the person to process what is being said.</li> <li>3. Avoid long, complex sentences, technical words or jargon.</li> <li>4. Ask one question at a time, and provide adequate time for the person to process the question and then formulate and communicate their response.</li> </ol>	Provide opportunities to stimulate socialization and interaction in class.	Provide resources in advance if possible.
<b>Moderate Impairment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teach self-monitoring techniques.</li> <li>2. Have students work each step in an assignment in different colours.</li> </ol>	Lead socialization activities.	Provide all resources in multiple forms in advance of class.

- 3. Encourage students to subvocalize while learning.
- 4. Assign a peer tutor and allow the peer or adult to read the text aloud to the student.

<b>Severe Impairment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use small steps.</li> <li>2. Modify teaching to be more hands-on.</li> <li>3. Think visual.</li> <li>4. Use baby steps.</li> <li>5. Incorporate more physical learning experiences.</li> <li>6. Start a feedback book or chart.</li> <li>7. Encourage music in the classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support all social interaction in class and in groupings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Colour code handouts and instructions.</li> <li>3. Use charts.</li> <li>4. Give handouts in small parts periodically instead of large bits at once.</li> </ul>
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**Assessment and Classroom Activities**

**Severity of Impairment Support Expectations/ Reasonable Adjustment**

	<b>Additional Time</b>	<b>Task Modification</b>	<b>Resource Support</b>
<b>Mild Impairment</b>	25%	Make reasonable modification to simply task while maintaining the original task all nuerotypical students	Direct students to additional resources as much as possible



are expected to complete.

<b>Moderate Impairment</b>	50 %	Make reasonable modification to task while maintaining the original task all neurotypical students are expected to complete. However, the students may also be provided with an alternative yet similar simplified task.	Provide additional resources as much as possible.
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<b>Severe Impairment</b>	75 % - 100 %	Make reasonable modification to task without focusing primarily on maintaining the original task all neurotypical students are expected to complete. Students may be given a completely different task aligned with their capacity and development in the course.	Provide additional resources as much as possible.
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