

## **Introducing the Service Center for Students with Special Needs (SSS)**

### **History of Center**

Service Center for Students with Special Needs (SSS) as the first center of its kind in Iranian universities was established with the support of the Vice-Chancellor for Students of the University of Isfahan, the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Psychology, and faculty members of the Department of Psychology and Education of people with special needs. This center was approved on 22/Oct/2020 by the board of the University of Isfahan. It should be noted that before the establishment of this center, the Office of the students with visual impairment was established in 1987 at the Faculty of Literature of the University of Isfahan. The SSS is a subset of the University's Vice Chancellor for Students and is located in the Faculty of Education and Psychology. According to the center's statute, the center's head is always a faculty member of the Department of Psychology and Education of People with Special Needs. Two branches of the center are located in the student's dormitories namely Alamolhoda and Shahid Fahmideh dormitory.

### **Necessity and Importance of Establishing the Center**

In recent years, in the educational system of Iranian universities, efforts have been made to have students with special needs to attend university classes. Education experts have found that the current state of the education system does not meet the comprehensive needs of these students. They believe that the implementation of the "education for all" slogan can only be achieved in an inclusive education system. Because the core of inclusive education is to provide equal opportunities, to pay attention to the human rights of learners with different abilities and to include them in the education system and society. In this regard, the University of Isfahan is the first university in the Islamic Republic of Iran which established the first SSS.

### **Strategic Council and Working Groups**

The strategic council of the SSS is composed of legal and general members. The legal members of the Strategic Council include the Vice Chancellors for Students and Education, the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Psychology, the representative of the Vice Chancellor for Finance, the Dean of the SSS, the Dean or Head of the University Counseling Center and the Dean of the University Health Center. The general members who have been elected by the Strategic Council, are participated to the relevant meetings.

At present, the center consists of four working groups, which are:

- 1- Working group for the Adaptation
- 2- Working group for Education
- 3- Working group for Welfare
- 4- Working group for Development.

According to the center's statute, the head of each working group should be a faculty member of the Departments of Psychology and Education of People with Special Needs, Counseling and Rehabilitation. Each working group has five to eight members, consisting of faculty members, the Department of Welfare, the Department of Exceptional Education, the municipality or other provincial organizations, departments and agencies. One of the members of each working group can be a student or a person with special needs. These members are selected on the proposal of the head of the working groups and the decision of the legal members of the strategic council of the center.

## **Introducing Students with Special Needs**

Students with special needs in terms of educational goals are students who need special education and related services to rehabilitate and achieve their maximum potential. These students need special education because they are significantly different from most students in one or more areas, such differences have led to their classification, but these categories have no priority over each other. Students with special needs are usually divided into 11 groups, which are:

- 1- Students with diverse intellectual abilities
- 2- Students with specific learning disorders
- 3- Students with attention-deficit / hyperactivity disorder
- 4- Students with emotional and behavioral disorders
- 5- Students with autism spectrum disorders
- 6- Students with communication disorders
- 7- Students with hearing impairment
- 8- Students with visual impairment
- 9- Students with severe and multiple disabilities
- 10- Students with physical disabilities
- 11- Students with specific diseases

## **Objectives of Center**

The main goal of the SSS is to identify the respective students and to try to provide the required services and to solve their problems. The working groups for the adaptation, education, welfare and development have been formed to reach the goals. Fortunately, students with special needs attend regular classes after admission to the university, study their courses like other students, attend exams at the same time, and are required to perform all homework assigned by their respective professors. For these students to be successful in education and research, it is necessary to provide them with educational, welfare, adaptation and development facilities.

## **Educational, Research, Welfare and Counseling Activities**

According to the needs of students with special needs, experts must carry out activities so that the students can study and research in more favorable conditions, the most important of which are:

- 1- Identifying the environmental and physical characteristics of the university and its public places to guide the respective students
- 2- Adapting about the university environment based on the principles of adaptation, to make the respective students' independence mobility
- 3- Providing special training to students with special needs, such as computer skills
- 4- Counseling and guidance with students in various fields
- 5- Following up on students' issues and related matters through negotiations with relevant officials and correspondence
- 6- Guiding students and cooperating with them in conducting research activities
- 7- Cooperating in providing a secretary and facilitating the holding of university exams
- 8- Planning to collect and produce study and research resources
- 9- Attracting talented students to produce the required books and help in the exams
- 10- Producing booklets and educational instructions about the principles of content production
- 11- Converting textbooks into computer texts or appropriate texts
- 12- Cooperating with students regarding easy access to study and research resources

- 13- Planning for extracurricular group activities such as excursions, scientific gatherings and specialized conferences
- 14- Providing facilities for students to access university information and news.

### **Work Methods, Facilities and Equipment**

The SSS welcomes students during office hours. The center is ready to provide educational and cultural compensation classes, sports and recreation classes, navigation and movement classes, Braille and sign language training classes, psychological services and counseling, rehabilitation services and equipment, mobility equipment, hearing aids, communication technologies, organizational chart and infographics, educational flashcards and analytical course content. The most important facilities of this center are:

- 1- Four recording studios for producing audiobooks
- 2- Nine computers equipped with speech and sound-making software
- 3- Three laptops
- 4- Two braille printers
- 5- Three braille note taker
- 6- Two scanners
- 7- An ordinary printer
- 8- Braille embosser or touch screen
- 9- Telephone line, high-speed internet access facilities, tables and chairs and other accessories as needed.
- 10- The audio library of the center is available to the students with special needs of the University of Isfahan and other people with special needs all over the country can use it through the Internet.

The center is ready to produce the required resources for which computer text or audio files are not available if the student work fee is provided (by the relevant institutions such as the respective university or government centers and non-governmental organizations). The steps for applying and sending a book for the students with visual impairment across the country are as follows:

- 1- Applicants should send their required resources by e-mail to "Bcui1395@gmail.com".
- 2- The center reviews the applications and, if it exists, less than 24 hours after the request, except for holidays, informs the applicant about the source download link through email.

Arrangements are made by the above-mentioned e-mail and phone 03137935565.

In the end, the University of Isfahan is ready to cooperate in developing educational and research facilities for students with special needs with universities and higher education centers in the country and hopes that in the shadow of God Almighty, we will see more favorable conditions for students with special needs.