

## **Accessibility barriers in teaching and research: A survey in Switzerland**

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### **Abstract**

Persons with disabilities are underrepresented in higher education. Although some research has investigated the situation of students with disabilities, relatively little attention has been paid to the experiences of teachers and researchers. To gain a broader understanding of the barriers faced by this target group, interviews were conducted with teachers and researchers at higher education institutions across Switzerland. The responses were transcribed, and the identified barriers were clustered into 6 wider categories. Respondents reported a range of barriers including social, financial, and physical aspects. The implications of these findings for higher education institutions are discussed.

**Keywords:** Accessibility, Barriers, Employment and disability, Discrimination, Higher Education

### **Key Points**

- Teacher and researchers with disabilities or chronic illnesses at higher education institutions face unique barriers in their working environments, yet their needs have received little attention in the literature.
- Interviews were conducted with 27 teachers and researchers with disabilities or chronic illnesses at higher education institutions in Switzerland.
- The barriers described in the interviews ranged from attitudinal/social to physical, and can be grouped into 6 categories: Communicating a disability; awareness and understanding; time, energy, and money; discrimination and stigmatization, buildings and infrastructure, and working materials.

### **Introduction**

#### **Disability in the workplace**

Data from 2021 on the employment of persons with disabilities (PWD) in Switzerland show that 73.0% of PWD have employment, compared to 87.9% of people without disabilities. Among those with “severe” disabilities, the employment rate is just 49.3%. Additionally, half of all employees with disabilities

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work part-time (mostly for health reasons), compared to one in three employees without disabilities. The job satisfaction of PWD is lower overall: Various barriers prevent them from certain positions they would be qualified for, working conditions and income are less satisfying, and they consider their jobs to be less secure (Federal Office for the Equality of Persons with Disabilities, 2024).

Statistics from 2019 for European OECD countries indicate that PWD were 40% less likely to have a job than persons without disabilities. The labour market dynamics were also less favourable with a 2.5-times lower hiring rate, more transitions into unemployment, etc. (OECD, 2022).

## **Legal context**

When implementing human rights, there are country-specific challenges that need to be considered and addressed in the respective political and socio-economic context. There are also transnational challenges that are specific to the topic of disability and, in a broader sense, to inclusion and diversity. The latter are general measures for preventing discrimination and removing barriers for persons with different abilities, mainly based on the (shared terminology) of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Signatories of the CRPD have committed themselves to protecting persons with disabilities from discrimination and to ensuring their inclusion and equality in society. This includes equality in all aspects of society, including work and education:

- Article 24 CRPD stipulates that state institutions must ensure that secondary schools, vocational training, adult education, and lifelong learning are made available to persons with disabilities without discrimination.
- Article 27 CRPD demands measures to implement the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others in an inclusive and accessible labour market and work environment which provides also reasonable accommodation for the persons with disabilities if required.

Accessibility (CRPD Art. 9) and reasonable accommodation (CRPD Art.2) are main instruments for the implementing of the rights of persons with disabilities. Their significance centres on the current definition of disability as result of the “interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others” (CRPD Preamble, 5).

In Switzerland, the most important legal provision regarding the participation of PWD disabilities is laid in Article 8 of the Federal Constitution. It stipulates the equality of every person before the law and prohibits discrimination on the grounds of disability, among other things (Federal Constitution, Art. 8. Para 1 and 3). Furthermore, it mandates that “the law shall provide for the elimination of inequalities that affect persons with disabilities” (Federal Constitution, Art. 8 Para 4). Over the last 20 years, further legal provisions have come into force at both federal and cantonal level. In Switzerland, the cantons are largely responsible for managing tertiary education, while the federal government has a coordinating role. Exception: the polytechnic universities are directly supervised by the Confederation.

## **Context for Inclusion**

Universities face challenges in the areas of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. The marginalization and exclusion of specific groups and minorities, including teachers and researchers in universities, need to be addressed within the context of inclusion. Although institutions like universities have made efforts to become more inclusive, these efforts often remain superficial and limited. True progress toward a

more inclusive university requires institutional transformation, which involves addressing issues such as colonial histories, systemic racism, and ableism (Goodley, 2023).

Goodley (2023) argues that inclusion must be understood through a historical lens. His article emphasizes the need for forms of activism within universities, such as decolonization, which aims to confront colonial legacies and systemic racism, and depathologization, which challenges the medicalized view of disability as a problem residing solely within individuals.

The author also highlights that exclusion of marginalized groups is deeply embedded in the structures and practices of higher education. These structures inherently alienate and disadvantage marginalized groups, including teachers and researchers. Therefore, achieving a more inclusive institution requires more than surface-level adjustments; it demands a systemic transformation of the university's fundamental structures.

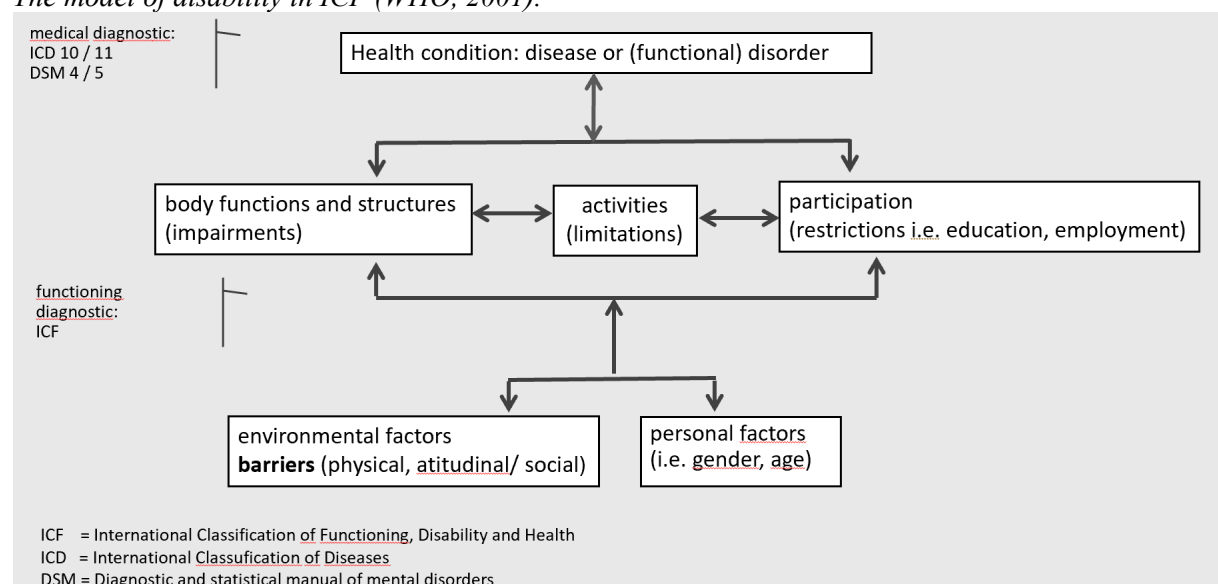
## Definition of disability

The group of persons with disabilities is very diverse. There are visible and, at first glance, invisible impairments that can lead to a disability. They have in common, that there are long-term impairments, “which in interaction with various barriers may hinder” the “full and effective participation in society” of the concerned people “on an equal basis with others” (CRPD Art.1).

The definition of disability used in this research is based on the biopsychosocial model outlined in the ICF or International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (WHO, 2001 – figure 1). It defines disability as resulting from the interaction between a person and their environment in a certain situation: A health condition (disease or functional disorder) with impact on body functions and structures might lead to limitations in activities, which interact with environmental and personal factors preventing the participation of the individual in different domains such as education and employment. Both physical and attitudinal/social barriers are identified among the environmental factors.

**Figure 1.**

*The model of disability in ICF (WHO, 2001).*



## State of the research

There have been several studies in recent decades investigating the situation of students with disabilities at higher education institutions (HEIs). Meier-Popa (2012) applied the “access” concept, which was used for the development of the CRPD (Brown, 2003), in action research with students with disabilities at the University of Zurich. Based on Penchansky and Thomas (1981), this concept defines “access” as the degree of fit between clients and their system; it is the result of the interaction between the individual and the environment, being characterised by five specific, interrelated dimensions: Availability, Accessibility, Accommodation, Affordability and Acceptance. These dimensions can be used both for identifying and preventing access-barriers for persons with disabilities to different life areas and can be found in the articles of the CRPD and in the Universal Periodic Reviews of UN (United Nations Human Rights Council, 2025).

A recent Swiss national survey of students with disabilities (2021), in which 1294 students participated, investigated the barriers they experience regarding accessibility and infrastructure. The students self-declared the nature of their impairment; most of them were invisible at the first glance. They included chronic health problems (31%), multiple impairments (17%), mental health problems (16%), diagnoses around neurodiversity (14%), physical impairment (7.4%) and visual and auditive impairments (5%). (The remaining 9% of the participants are in the category other/unknown.) The results of the survey show, among other things, that students with severe disabilities rate the situation more negatively and that there is a need for improvement, particularly in terms of counselling services and practical support at the HEI.

However, there is considerably less research focusing on academic professionals with disabilities, who remain severely underrepresented in academic fields (Sheridan and Kotevski, 2014). Some studies that investigate disability in teaching and research positions tend to focus on best practices with regards to a certain type of disability. Smith and Andrews (2015), for instance, engaged with academics who are deaf or hard of hearing. Their study emphasized the importance of access to assistive technologies, and access to the funding needed to acquire it. They also conclude that it is essential to allow individuals to choose which tools they need, as they know what is best suited for their situation and profession. Hergesell (2016) addresses the issue of additional expenditures, showing that individuals with disabilities working at HEIs experience significantly higher financial and time burdens compared to their counterparts without disabilities.

Waterfield et al. (2018) also stress that the subject of employees with disabilities at HEIs receives scarce attention in the literature. They reveal that academics with a disability work especially hard just to prove that they are good enough. The authors point out that it is not enough to only partially include people with disabilities at HEIs; it must be possible for them to participate in all areas of academic life. They conclude that the prevailing perception of disability is still the medical model: People with disabilities do not fit into their environments and therefore have to independently adapt themselves to varying circumstances.

Overall, the level of research on barrier-free universities suggests that the data sources for researchers and lecturers with disabilities is very low.

## Methods

This exploratory study is centred around the question: “What barriers do researchers and lecturers with disabilities or chronic illnesses encounter in their everyday academic life?”

When choosing the research method, it was clear from the outset that the teachers and researchers with disabilities themselves would offer the best insight into the barriers encountered in their working environments.

The study was divided into three phases: The first was to analyse the state of research on disability and accessibility at HEI for people with disabilities. The information gleaned in this phase was then used to develop the questionnaire-outline for the problem-centered interview. Secondly, the interviews were conducted. Thirdly, the data was evaluated with the aim of identifying barriers in the working lives of teachers and researchers with disabilities. Finally, a categorization of barriers was conducted. Some key elements are explained further below.

### **Sample generation, overview and strategy**

Recruiting interviewees was challenging; there is no national database or specific association of teachers and/or researchers with disabilities in Switzerland. With the aim of indirectly raising awareness, various regional disability associations as well as the rectors of the 41 accredited Swiss HEI were contacted; they received an invitation letter and were requested to forward it to their respective members and employees. Potential participants were requested to self-assess whether they belong to the target group ‘persons with disabilities’. The invitation letter clarified that the ICF-based definition of in the Federal Act on Equality for People with Disabilities (Disability Discrimination Act DDA) would serve as a guideline for the description of the target group: “In this Act, a *person with a disability* is a person who, due to a physical, mental or psychological impairment which is likely to be permanent, finds it difficult or is unable to carry out everyday tasks, cultivate social contacts, move around, obtain an education or training, or work.” (DDA, Art. 2 Para 1).

Because the focus of the research was not on individual impairments, but rather on individuals’ perceptions of barriers, the 27 respondents could decide themselves whether to communicate the nature of their impairment.

The 27 interviewees represent 10 of the 41 HEIs in Switzerland. These include 6 cantonal universities, 3 universities of applied sciences, and 1 university for teacher education. Seven of the 10 represented HEIs are located in the German-speaking region, while 3 are in the French-speaking region. Unfortunately, no respondents from Italian-speaking HEIs made themselves available for interviews.

### **Data collection**

The questionnaire for the problem-centred interview was drawn up based on the literary research (see Further References). It focuses on the objective aspects of accessibility barriers, about which the interviewees could freely express their experiences (subjective view) (Mayring, 2003). Both for privacy reasons and because the respondents had very different logistical needs, the interviews were conducted one-on-one. This situation also led to an open atmosphere of trust during the interview. To ensure maximum comfort and ease of access, respondents were allowed to select the location for their interview. As a result, locations varied greatly, and included respondent’s homes and workplaces, as well as in public places such as restaurants. The interviews lasted between 1-3 hours. Each respondent reported experiencing anywhere from 3 to 10 types of barriers simultaneously.

The interviews were recorded using two recording devices and were subsequently transcribed in full according to GAT 2 transcription rules.

## Data evaluation

The summarising content analysis, as described by Mayring (2003), was chosen to evaluate the collected empirical data. Its objective was to reduce the amount of collected data while preserving its essential contents. This allowed us to create categories from the collected data via inductive categorisation, without primarily referring to pre-formulated theory concepts. As the aim of this phase was to reveal unknown categories and barriers, this method was deemed the most appropriate.

MAXQDA software was used to encode the collected data. The result, in accordance with Mayring's method (2003), was a system of topical categories connected to specific text passages.

## Results

Through this qualitative content analysis of interview transcripts, six interrelated areas (categories) of barrier situations were identified, as shown in Table 1: Communicating a disability, awareness and understanding, additional time and financial expenditures, discrimination and stigmatization, building and infrastructure, and use of digital and conventional learning and working materials.

**Table 1.**

*Barriers described by teachers and researchers at higher education institutions.*

Barriers	Examples from the statements of the respondents
1 Communicating a disability	The need to reveal one's disability The need to actively demand assistance Lack of adequate advisory centres
2 Awareness and understanding	Social exclusion and pressure to comply with social norms Lack of flexible work models Lack of awareness and understanding
3 Discrimination and stigmatization Time, energy, and money	Discrimination and bullying Discrimination after prolonged career interruptions Job insecurity
4 Time, energy, and money	Additional time to perform everyday tasks Additional travel time Disability insurance process is slow, inflexible, and degrading. Extra costs i.e. for accommodations
5 Buildings and infrastructure	Inaccessible buildings and workspaces Inaccessible grounds and entryways Poor signage or lack of accessibility information
6 Working materials	Inaccessible digital platforms and media Inaccessible libraries and informational materials



Communicating a disability is the first category, since many impairments and chronic diseases are invisible at first glance and interviewers made clear, that in many cases their existence must be revealed to their employees or colleagues sooner or later. Revealing a disability may be necessary to receive assistance, however it might be difficult for those affected to actively seek help. As one respondent put it: “I have to go to the offensive as a matter of principle because I need help to carry things.” Furthermore, the interviews revealed that the need to communicate invisible impairments or illnesses is perceived as unpleasant; it can also be associated with a fear of the consequences of being discriminated or stigmatized, although it can be necessary for various reasons. The question is not only if and how a disability should be communicated, but the interviewers also asked themselves at what point they should reveal their disability – for example whether before or after the job interview and to the supervisor or the team as well. The answers varied greatly across the respondents on if, how and when they communicate their disability. To engage in discussions with supervisors, as well as to navigate administrative processes, the availability of advisory centers can be helpful for PWD. However, interviews revealed that such centers, if available at all, are not always adequately prepared to address the specific needs of academic professionals with disabilities. In general, in universities advisory centers for students are more common than those for academic staff.

The second category refers to awareness and understanding, since respondents noted the pressure to conform to broad social norms, along with a lack of the understanding of impairment-related needs and limitations. Food intolerance is an example, with one respondent stating: “I just take my own stuff to eat. But people aren’t allowed bring their own food in the cafeteria. This creates a bit of a problem from a social perspective again, because I have to say again and again that the other lunch food doesn’t agree with me.” As another respondent stated, failure to comply with social norms runs the risk of social isolation, which itself can further impact future opportunities as well as integration into a team. Several respondents reported not receiving support in special situations due to general lack of acceptance in the workplace, for example if some employees may need extra time to complete a task or greater flexibility in terms of working hours and locations.

The next category shows that not only did the interviewers experience a lack of awareness and understanding, but also discrimination and stigmatization at work as an experience, particularly in the form of their skills, knowledge or capabilities being underestimated. Stigma can be more significant than the disability itself: “I don’t feel like I have a disability; I only have a disability in society. [...] I also say that the biggest disability is in people’s minds.” However, respondents stressed that stigmatization was strongest from individuals they did not know well, and that their abilities are better recognized by those working closely with them. Discrimination and bullying from supervisors or colleagues, due to a lack of understanding, came up multiple times in interviews. Discrimination is not always openly expressed. For example, as one respondent described, an employee might be given a fictional reason as to why they are not suitable for a certain task, while knowing that the real reason is related to their disability. The employment conditions in teaching and research can be especially insecure for persons who have a disrupted employment history due to their illness or disability. One respondent described that they had feared never finding a job because of their disability, and had considered abandoning the field altogether. The prevalence of discrimination can lead individuals to refrain from applying for a suitable and attractive job in teaching and research. One respondent described a fear of leaving their current position due to the risk of not being able to find another job.

As the following category time, energy and money shows, all interviewers face the question of resources, where they come from, who they are provided by and how they are used. Persons with a disa-

bility or chronic illness feel compelled to privately invest additional time, energy and/or money preparing for or performing everyday tasks, as a way of compensating for their symptoms. Respondents report spending much more time on a task than others, just to deliver the expected level of performance. One person stated: “I work 50% of the time. 50% is what a quote 'healthy person' would call it, but for every 50% I give 100%, so I make double the work effort.” These additional investments end up cutting into a person’s leisure time. They can be also energetically costly, leading to a need for even more recovery time. In Switzerland it is the responsibility of the disability insurance program (called Invalidenversicherung or IV in Switzerland) to ensure that funding is available for the basic adaptations or assistive devices required by people with disabilities or chronic illnesses, including work-related adaptations. However, as the interviews made clear, these services are perceived as slow, inflexible, and overly bureaucratic, requiring a ‘fight’ to have someone’s needs met. The IV is also responsible for providing re-training and education opportunities; however, as interviews revealed, the opportunities offered are not based on an individual’s desired career path or competences, but rather on reducing the future costs to the IV program. One interviewee said: “They didn’t want to fund my psychology course. The fact that they wanted me to train as a social worker is so typical, [...] I wasn’t supported by the IV to follow an academic route.” As mentioned above, adaptations are sometimes needed for people with disabilities or chronic diseases in different areas of their working lives. These can incur additional financial costs, if for example they are not covered by the IV or if it would take too much time or effort to obtain them through it. One respondent said: “I have an ergonomic keyboard and a mouse. I brought it all in myself. [...] There are some things that are covered by the health insurance. But I finance some things myself.” Not only one answer stated, that many PWD end up paying out of their own pocket. Many PWD end up paying themselves, creating a financial burden: : “If I must attend a conference, I need assistance. So far, I’ve been able to finance this myself. Of course, it’s a financial burden for me because I have a family.”

Another barrier that was described by interviewers was building and infrastructures, as many HEI buildings are old and fail to meet the standards for accessible architecture. General accessibility issues, including a lack of ramps, small or malfunctioning elevators, stairs without railings, and a lack of accessible toilets and parking spots, were commonly described. Lecture halls can be inaccessible spaces: podiums are often high and immobile, acoustics may be poor, or obstacles may block view to the audience. The day-to-day working places are also not always adapted to the needs of their users. Many disabilities and chronic illnesses involve increased sensitivity to environmental factors, such high noise levels, odours, or poor air quality. These working conditions can affect the experience of teaching and research activities in terms of quality. Finding the information to access or navigate a building can be a problem. In some cases, there is no accessibility information or adequate signage at all. One respondent explained: “I took 20 minutes to find the elevator because it was not signposted. I then took the elevator to the floor that had been recommended to me and found myself standing in front of a locked steel door [...]”

Next to the infrastructures as barriers, digital platforms and media, such as websites, software, videos, and digital documents, presented also a number of barriers to respondents. Accessibility features such as captions, tags, and alternative text are often missing from documents, and many programs and websites are not designed with accessibility in mind. Respondents reported needing additional time for certain digital teaching or research activities, while other activities are rendered impossible. For example, many HEIs use internal online platforms for teachers to enter student grades. People with visual impairments who rely on screen readers may not be able to use these systems at all. As one interviewee described: “There are many tools that aren’t barrier-free at all. When I have to enter the marks into the system and it doesn’t work, or if I make a mistake and then something stupid happens, I have to get help. This means that I’m always dependent.” Another problem can be accessing professional materials, such as books and scientific publications. This can be because of physical inaccessibility in libraries: “Books



are often at a height that can't be reached by wheelchair users, and there's no other way to reach them. There isn't, for example, a long grabber tool. What a great idea that would be if libraries had grabber tools available, or at least if there were a bell to ring or an app to call someone to help.” For those with print disabilities, a lack of accessible alternatives, such as Braille, accessible PDFs, or e-books, may also be an issue.

## Conclusions

Lecturers and researchers with disabilities encounter a wide range of barrier situations in their daily work. This exploratory study identified six categories of barriers, which demonstrate that these barriers can manifest in various forms, from attitudinal/social to physical. Discrimination and stigmatization were found to be pervasive in the workplace, with respondents frequently facing challenges due to their disability related limitations.

The need to *communicate one's disability* and reveal sensitive personal and/or health-related information was noted by many as a barrier in itself, particularly among those with invisible disabilities.

*Social expectations and lack of awareness* pose barriers to individuals with disabilities. Rigid working and attendance hours can impede them from performing according with their competences. Remote work or alternative arrangements can be crucial in such situations.

*Discrimination* against lecturers and researchers with disabilities or chronic diseases is another recurring challenge in respondents' professional lives. They perceive having a lower status within a HEI due to an inability to meet certain performance expectations, and pressure to perform was a common theme.

Another significant area where barriers are observed is *the additional time and financial costs* imposed on individuals. It is decisive for the HEI or relevant (insurance) programs to finance necessary workplace adaptations.

*Accessibility to buildings* emerged also as a significant problem. Despite existing laws and regulations in Switzerland regarding accessible architecture, the study reveals that not all necessary adaptations have been implemented in HEI buildings. Institutional adjustments must be made to ensure that facilities accommodate individuals with disabilities, allowing them to participate fully in everyday academic life without encountering barriers.

Last but not least, the lack of *accessible information, teaching and working materials*, both digital and analogue, present challenging situations for academic staff with disabilities, which must be addressed.

A number of these issues, particularly the lack of architectural and digital accessibility at HEIs, affect not only the academic staff but also the students and non-academic staff.

Overall, the interview responses paint a picture of an academic environment that lacks awareness of disability issues, and which fails to prioritize accessibility. This echoes a similar conclusion by Waterfield et al. (2018), who likewise note the inadequate consideration of disability-related issues at universities, leaving individuals to find their own solutions with minimal assistance or accommodations. Tellingly, when university rectors in Switzerland were contacted during the recruitment process, more than one responded that, although they thought the project sounded exciting, there were no “such people” working at their institutions – referring to PWD. Responses like this show how important it is to raise awareness of the issue at hand. Barriers for PWD arise from their interaction with the environment, which includes the attitudes of the other people.

Furthermore the results have shown that in a bigger picture in context of inclusion universities not only have a lack of awareness of disability issues, it also shows, that as educational institutions they have not yet overcome an institutional transformation. Although universities have become more inclusive, they have not yet addressed issues such as colonial history, systematic racism and ableism, to overcome the systematic exclusion of marginalized groups such as teachers and researchers with disabilities.

## Further steps

This study is characterised by its application orientation and its relevance for practice. Based on the results of this explorative study, the guide, “Teaching and research with disabilities – barrier-free!” (Darvishy et al., 2022) sets out recommendations, checklists, and examples of problem-solving approaches to remove barriers for lecturers and researchers at universities. By using the guide, each HEI will be able to examine relevant areas to see whether they are already sufficiently barrier-free for the target groups.

Although there is no one-size-fits all solution, there are some key steps institutions can take to ensure a more equal workplace for all. Accessible and professional advice centres specializing in serving lecturers and researchers with disabilities or chronic diseases are essential. Not only can they serve as flag-bearers and support awareness-raising overall, but they can also offer direct help to individuals, connecting them with assistive services and accommodations. They could also liaise with diversity offices and the Disability Offices for students, ensuring that hiring practices are inclusive. This could lead to higher numbers of researchers and teachers with disabilities, leading to increased visibility overall.

Institutions must also keep digital accessibility in mind for their websites, internal platforms, and digital documents; the PDF format, for example, is particularly crucial, as most scientific publications are published in this form. Institutions should consult the most current Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and should utilize existing tools for creating accessible documents (see for example Jembu Rajkumar, 2020; Doblies et al, 2014; Darvishy & Hutter, 2013; Darvishy et al., 2012).

Finally, it is crucial to involve PWD directly in finding solutions, whether these be system-wide (such as establishing advisory centres) or individual. As Smith and Andrews (2015) also emphasize, individuals are best placed to determine which tools or solutions they need.

At the same time, the Swiss Disability Research Centre SDRS was founded, a network of teachers and researchers on the subject of disability and tertiary education. The network's website hosts a platform with resources for awareness-raising and information, including the guide mentioned above and a matching tool for persons interested in giving and/or taking disability-related assistance.

The network also aims to promote further research projects on the topic of ‘disability - diversity – inclusion’ in tertiary education. As this initial study has shown, there are still many questions that need to be researched, e.g. in relation to the transition of graduates with disabilities into the world of work in general, as well as intersectional discrimination at HEIs. Collaboration with the Swiss Study and Disability Network<sup>2</sup> and the Swiss Disability Studies Network<sup>3</sup> will help to create synergies.

## Outlook in Switzerland

Since the study was conducted (2018-19) and the guide published (2022), there have been some positive developments that give hope for the future:

The Swiss Disability Discrimination Act is currently being revised and an extension of the entitlement of people with disabilities to accessible working conditions in private institutions is expected. A number of cantonal Disability Equality Laws<sup>4</sup> have come into force and they concretise the implementation of

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/organisation/bodies/networks-and-agencies/network-studium-und-behinderung>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.disabilitystudies.uzh.ch/de.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.sz.ch/themen-der-heil-und-sonderpaedagogik/recht-und-finanzierung/internationales-nationales-und-kantonales-recht>

the rights of people with disabilities. The Swiss Study and Disability Network has been officially recognised by swissuniversities, the umbrella organisation of Swiss HEIs. Some universities have made great progress in the area of digital accessibility, i.e. <https://ethz.ch/en/the-eth-zurich/education/e-accessibility/atETHZ.html>

Switzerland has not only signed the Marrakesh Treaty but has also included a corresponding article in the revised Copyright Act, Cop A: “A work may be reproduced, distributed or made available in a format which is accessible to people with disabilities insofar as the work cannot be perceived, or can only be perceived with difficulty, in its already published form.” (CopA, Art. 24c).

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## Conflict of interest statement

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. All co-authors have seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript and there is no financial interest to report. We certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

## Ethics statement

All participants in the study signed consent forms prior to the interviews, stating that their personal data and the conversation would be treated anonymously.

Ethics approval was not required, as all participants were capable of judgment, and therefore, according to the university’s guidelines, a consent form was sufficient.

## Data availability statement

For privacy and security reasons, the interview response data from this study is not shared.

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