A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research-intensive universities using the revised 4-A framework

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The author declares that he/she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.

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ABSTRACT

The rights of all persons to be granted equal access to higher education are espoused in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. More recently, attention has focused on the provision of inclusive education specifically for students with disabilities. In, amongst others, the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), inclusive education has been promoted as an appropriate vehicle to realise equal participation of students with disabilities in all levels of education. Following a history of exclusivity of educational opportunities in South Africa, higher education practitioners and policymakers should critically engage in strategic efforts that address barriers against students with disabilities to promote diversity and inclusion consistent with international human rights instruments. Furthermore, an in-depth intersectional analysis of the myriad of factors that hinder the full inclusion of students with disabilities is required. Utilising critical disability theory as a theoretical approach, this study's main aim was to analyse how students with disabilities are included in the disability policy and in praxis of South African research-intensive universities in accordance with the 4-A Framework. This Framework's markers, namely availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability, were operationalized for the higher education context and expanded to include a fifth marker, affordability. A deductive qualitative thematic analysis, using a protocol based on these markers was used to analyse disability policies of South African Tier 1 universities and the perceptions of students with disabilities registered at these institutions. Results suggest that the disability policies made mention of provisions related to availability, accessibility, and acceptability. Policy provisions related to adaptability were not uniformly mentioned. Affordability was neglected and not given due regard. Overall, participants perceived their universities as being available. Many of the indicators relating to accessibility, acceptability were not mentioned in the participants' responses. Adaptability was generally perceived to be met, and participants were ambivalent in their responses relating to affordability. Students with disabilities appear to have limited expectations regarding their rights to be realised (internalised ableism). The thesis ends by discussing the implications of the findings and recommendations for future research.

Keywords: ableism, human rights in education, inclusive higher education; policy analysis; provisions; research-intensive universities; students with disabilities

CHAPTER 1
RESEARCH PROBLEM AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study. The background and problem statement are first presented. Thereafter, definitions of some of the key terms used are included. A list of abbreviations and acronyms used in this thesis is also provided. This chapter culminates with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background and Rationale

Across the globe, the higher education system was traditionally established predominately to serve the elite and perpetuate elitism in society (Mathekga, 2013). In doing so, individual sections of society were deprived of access to higher education and were discriminated against based on their race, sex, language, economic condition, ability, or birth. Between 1954 and 1958, the United Nations appointed Special Rapporteurs and commissioned numerous studies to investigate all forms of discrimination in all education levels (Daudet & Eisemann, 2005). The findings and recommendations led to the development of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Convention on Discrimination in Education, 1960. At the eleventh session of this UNESCO meeting in Paris, it was asserted that education is a fundamental human right and that any discrimination in education was a violation of human rights (UNESCO, 1960). Despite these developments, discriminatory practices in education provision, particularly against students with disabilities, still occur (Lyakurwa, 2019). The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [CRPD] (United Nations, 2006) mandates inclusive education throughout a person's life course. It, therefore, provides a directive for increased access to higher education and training, including universities. However, inclusive higher education remains an elusive goal for many students with disabilities, despite the ratification of the CRPD by 168 countries (UNESCO, 2020).

Within the South African higher education milieu, students with disabilities have been subject to exclusions from the cultural, social, and academic environments (Watermeyer, 2009a). The higher education system inherited by the democratic government of South Africa in 1994 from the apartheid government was grounded within the ideology of apartheid (Council for Higher Education, 2010; Odhav, 2009). Apartheid drastically skewed the higher education

system along racial and gendered lines and the lines of the aptness of one's physical and mental functioning (Howell & Lazarus, 2003). With the inauguration of the democratic government in 1994, the higher education system in South Africa was mandated to eradicate existing inequalities that contributed to restricted access and limited participation and throughput for students with disabilities (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2013; Department of Basic Education [DoE], 2001a). At a national and institutional level, South African policymakers responded to this mandate and developed inclusive policies that promote higher education for all, including students with disabilities (Davis, 2002; Freire, 1985; Matshedisho, 2007, 2010). In particular, institutional policies are meant to translate general directives given by the South African government at the national level of the DHET into institutional mandates that promote the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Inclusive policies are a vital prerequisite for an inclusive higher education system as they provide a grounded ideology for an education system (Kearney & Kane, 2006). South African universities' disability policies that are available in the public domain (e.g., Tshwane University of Technology, 2008; University of Cape Town, 2011; University of South Africa, 2013; University of Witwatersrand, 2013) collectively recognize the exclusion of students with disabilities. These policies further state that the responsibility for ensuring the provision of an inclusive higher education rests with the institutions themselves. These policy documents state that the purpose of a disability policy is to redress past inequalities, increase access for all students with disabilities, and create an integrated, inclusive learning experience that allows for full and equal participation in all university activities and environments to promote successful throughput. Despite these policy commitments for an inclusive higher education system, research and government reports on the experiences of students with disabilities at higher education institutions in South Africa indicate that provisions for these students are far from ideal (Kaunda & Chizwina, 2019; Mbuvha, 2019; Mngomezulu, 2012; Mngomezulu, 2019; Mutanga & Walker, 2015; Ndlovu, 2019; Ntombela, 2013; Vergunst & Swartz, 2020a). Another source for insights on inclusive higher education issues was a study published in 2010 by the former higher education academic consortium of South Africa - The Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM, 2011). FOTIM (2011) reported that few South African universities had put measures to ensure an integrated learning environment. The FOTIM (2011) study further noted that during the implementation of disability policies, the higher education system was to no small extent still reinforcing exclusion and inequality. Students with disabilities were continuing to experience restrictions on accessing the higher education system and were provided with limited participation opportunities as reasonable

accommodation requirements were scantily met. Furthermore, students with disabilities were not able to complete and graduate from their studies.

This study's rationale emanated from the researcher's desire to see many more students with disabilities included at higher education institutions and uncover ways to improve policy provisions. Following a history of exclusivity of educational opportunities in South Africa, higher education practitioners and policymakers should engage in strategic efforts that address barriers against students with disabilities to promote diversity and inclusion consistent with international human rights instruments. While selected studies have been conducted, focusing on the inclusion of students with specific types of disabilities (e.g., Bell, 2013; Lourens, 2015; Lyner-Cleophas, 2016), no comprehensive study has examined South African university disability policy provisions and student perceptions thereof. Barriers to inclusion can occur at both policy and praxis level. While the institutional policy sets the parameters of the provisions that students can expect and for which policy implementers can be held accountable, provisions are only actualised when the policy is implemented in praxis. Critically evaluating the policy as well as students' perceptions about its implementation can assist in identifying barriers at either level.

A human rights perspective frames the inclusion of students with disabilities in this study. The internationally recognized 4-A Framework, developed by Katarina Tomaševski (1999), delineates the right to education by means of four markers, namely availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability (Tomaševski, 2001). This Framework provides the structure and specificity needed for addressing the right to education, particularly for marginalised populations, such as students with disabilities, as it outlines governmental obligations to guarantee and realise the right to education (Schaeffer, 2008; Tomaševski, 2001). Issues concerning availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability do not necessarily only apply to basic education. Still, they are equally important to consider within the higher education milieu and in the policies that govern this sector of education. Furthermore, while the 4-A Framework was not explicitly developed for persons with disabilities nor the higher education context, it has been utilised as a conceptual Framework and analysis tool to evaluate the guidelines of provisions in state and institutional inclusive policies relating to persons with disabilities (Murungi, 2013; Skelton, 2013; Tesemma, 2012). Furthermore, taking into account the history of exclusion in South Africa, it is important to think through the political, social, race, gender and ableist issues that impact upon the inclusion of students with disabilities. Theories of intersectionality, such as the critical disability theory, provide a lens to better

understand the overlapping processes of marginalization and exclusion that pertain to the students with disabilities.

In light of the above, utilising critical disability theory as a theoretical approach, the purpose of this study is to describe and critically analyse the inclusion of students with disabilities at Tier 1 South African universities at the level of institutional disability policies and the level of institutional praxis per the revised 4-A Framework. It will do so by firstly analysing Tier 1 university disability policies and secondly, by analysing the perception of students with disabilities regarding their inclusion at these institutions.

1.3 Terminology

The following terms are listed below were operationalised based on the South African context, legislature, and policy documents. These terms therefore have a specific meaning within this study as indicated below:

Ableism

A set of processes, assumptions and practices that are deeply embedded within institutions and seek to devalue and discriminate against persons with disabilities whilst promoting able-bodiedness and able-mindedness (i.e. discrimination in favour of so-called able-bodied people) (Campbell, 2001; 2008). Ableism suggests that disability is inherently negative and a diminished stated of being human, and disallows any prospect of pride (Campbell, 2001).

Disability

The CRPD (United Nations, 2006) defines disability as long-term physical, mental, intellectual, and/or sensory impairment, which in interaction with various barriers may hinder the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society on an equal basis with others. Students with disabilities experience impairments that, in interaction with barriers within their academic environment, may limit their participation in that environment (United Nations, 2006). In this study, it includes hearing, neurological, neurodevelopmental, physical, psychiatric, and medical disabilities.

Disability Unit

Disability Units (also referred to as Disability Rights Units) are established within higher education institutions as a formalized service available to students with disabilities. The naming of these Units, minimum level of services offered differ considerably. Furthermore, these units' staff members vary in occupational types, specialisations, and designations (DHET, 2018).

Higher Education

In South Africa, higher education encompasses all learning programmes leading to a qualification that meets the requirements of the South African Higher Education Qualifications Framework (South African Higher Education Act 101 of 1997). These qualifications range from the undergraduate level (including higher certificates, diplomas, and bachelor's degrees) to the postgraduate level (including master's and doctoral degrees) offered at public and private higher education institutions, including universities and universities of technology. According to the World Bank, higher education refers to all post-secondary education at either a public or private institution (World Bank, 2018).

Inclusive Education

For the purposes of this study, inclusive education will be defined as the process of increasing access, full and equal participation, and successful throughput of students with disabilities within universities and reducing their exclusion from the academic, social and co-curricular activities and community engagement expected in higher education (Booth, 1996, Walton & Nel, 2012).

Learner

In this thesis the terminology 'learner' specifically refers to a person who attends an early child development centre, school, or Adult Basic Education and Training Centre (DBE, 2010). Persons who attend post-school institutions such as universities are referred to as 'students'.

Research-Intensive University

A research-intensive university can be described as an academic institution that creates and disseminates knowledge in a range of disciplines and fields (including medicine) and provides access for its students and academic staff to the appropriate laboratories, libraries, and other infrastructure which permit teaching and research at the highest possible level (Altbach, 2014). A research-intensive university is ranked as a Tier 1 institution by the South African DHET ranking per South Africa's Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET).

Student

In this thesis the terminology 'student' refers specifically to a person who attends a higher education institution (DBE, 2010). Individuals who attend alternative education placements, such as schools, are referred to as 'learners.'

Reasonable accommodation

According to the CRPD, reasonable accommodation refers to the "necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden"

(United Nations, 2006, Article 2). These modifications and adjustments are understood to be necessary for a specific individual in specific environments to ensure equal enjoyment of rights and freedoms with others (United Nations, 2006). The term 'reasonable' is understood as the result of the contextual test that involves the relevance and the effectiveness of an accommodation requested by a person with a disability (United Nations, 2016). While the availability of resources and financial implications are considered when assessing disproportionate burden, the duty to provide the requested accommodations is enforceable from the moment it is asked for and should be considered in light of the overall commitment to develop an inclusive higher education system (DHET, 2018).

Universal Design for Learning

Universal design for learning (UDL) is a Framework that optimizes teaching and learning for all individuals (Centre for Applied Special Technology [CAST, 2017). It entails (a) multiple forms of engagement, which is concerned with the 'why' of learning, (b) multiple forms of representation, which is concerned with the 'what' of learning; and (c) action and multiple forms of expression, which is concerned with the 'how' of learning. UDL could, for example, entail the use of a close captioning for a recorded lecturer that would benefit all students and more specifically students with hearing disabilities.

Universal Design

Universal design refers explicitly to creating products, environments and programmes without the need for adaptation and can be used by all persons (DHET, 2018). Universal design is therefore a broader construct than UDL, and could entail aspects related to the environment, such as building regulations. A ramp, for example, can be regarded as universal design, as it is not only applicable for use by a person who makes use of a wheelchair.

1.4 List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACDEG : African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance
ACHPR : African Charter on Human and People's Rights
ACRWC : African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ADHD : Attention Deficient/Hyperactivity Disorder
AU : African Union
AYC : African Youth Charter
CAST : Centre for Applied Special Technology
CHE : Council for Higher Education
CHET : The Council for Higher Education and Training

CRC : Convention on the Rights of the Child

CRPD : Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CEDAW : Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

DBE : Department of Basic Education

DFA : Dakar Declaration and Framework for Action

DHET : Department of High Education and Training

DoE : Department of Education

DVC : Deputy Vice-Chancellor

EWP3 : Education White Paper 3 Transformation of the Higher Education System

EWP6 : Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education

EFA : Education for All

FOTIM : Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis

HEDSA : Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association

HEMIS : Higher Education Management Information System

OAU : Organisation of Africa Union

HESA : Higher Education South Africa

IECRD : International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination

ICESCR : International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

ICF : International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health

ICT : Information and Communication Technologies

IEP : Individual Education Plan

ISP : Individual Support Plan

NCSNET : National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training

NCESS : National Committee on Education Support Services

NSFAS : National Student Financial Aid Scheme

P : Participant

PG : Postgraduate

PSET : Post-School Education and Training

SA : South Africa

SIAS : Screening Identification and Support

SRC : Student Representative Council

UDL : Universal Design for Learning

UG : Undergraduate

UN : United Nations

UNESCO : United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UP : University of Pretoria

USA : United States of America

USAf : Universities South Africa

WCHE : World Conference on Higher Education

WHO : World Health Organization

1.5 Outline of Chapters

This study is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 provides the background and rationale for the study, as well as the description of terminology, abbreviations, and acronyms used and an outline of the various chapters.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature about the topic. Thereafter the chapter reviews different approaches of understanding disability. The conceptual framework that guides this study is then presented. This is followed by a review of the international laws and declarations that have initiated steps towards inclusive education with particular reference to the right to education for students with disabilities. Thereafter, this chapter explores the right to education as interpreted and developed in both the international and South African higher education contexts. Although most published literature, legislation, and policy to date have focussed on basic education (primary and secondary education), the extent to which these policies and literature can be applied to higher education will be discussed. The chapter culminates in discussing the central issues relating to the inclusive disability policy provisions and practices at higher education institutions in South Africa.

Chapter 3 presents a mapping review of the literature regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions. The mapping review examines the volume and characteristics of the available evidence about the experiences of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions. The literature is presented in the format of a mapping review and includes a review of studies (including qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods designs) that were conducted between 2003 and 2020. Thereafter, a brief overview of the factors identified in the studies that influence inclusion is discussed. The chapter culminates with the introduction of the 4-A Framework as a useful analysis framework to describe the inclusion of students with disabilities as provided for in institutional disability policies and as experienced by students themselves (praxis).

Chapter 4 describes the qualitative methodology used in this study. It commences with outlining the aims and sub-aims of the study. Thereafter, a description of the underlying paradigm that informed the methods of this study is provided. Following this description, the data sources are described separately, including the procedures used for sampling. The description of the 4-A Framework is also provided. The pilot studies and the outcomes thereof are described next. The various research instruments are then described, and the reasons for their inclusion in this study are given. Thereafter, a description of how the data was collected, coded, and analysed is given.

Chapter 5 presents the key findings obtained from the first two research sub-aims. The chapter firstly presents the findings of the analysis of the disability policy provisions of South African Tier 1 Universities for students with disabilities, per the revised 4-A Framework. Secondly, results on students with disabilities' perceptions regarding their inclusion at South African Tier 1 Universities are described per the revised 4-A Framework.

Chapter 6 focuses on interpreting the findings from the data obtained from the analysis of these data sources per the revised 4-A Framework. In this section, the analysis findings are presented as per each of the markers included in the revised 4-A Framework. Under each marker, the findings will be merged to compare the inclusion of students with disabilities as per policy and praxis per the revised 4-A Framework.

Chapter 7 recapitulates the purpose and findings of this study, using the conceptual Framework. This chapter also draws on the pertinent findings and makes recommendations for future research. The strengths and limitations of this study are also discussed. This chapter concludes by reiterating the relevant findings and suggesting recommendations for future research.

1.6 Summary

This chapter justified the study regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities at South African universities. This was followed by an explanation of the terminology and abbreviations used in the study. The chapter concluded with an outline of all the chapters of the thesis through which the study's aims were realised.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW OF INCLUSIVE LEGISLATURE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Through the various societal revolutions, the importance of education worldwide is undeniable. Education is intrinsically valuable as humankind's most effective tool of personal empowerment as it contributes towards mitigating social disadvantage (Claude, 2005). Higher education is inextricably linked to employment opportunities and society's transformation envisaged for a democratic South Africa (DHET, 2013). This chapter begins with outlining the paradigm that guides this study. Following this, models used to understand disability are reviewed. Thereafter, the chapter synthesizes international laws and declarations that have initiated steps towards inclusive education with particular reference to the right to education for students with disabilities. The right to education is explored next, as it has been interpreted and developed in the South African basic and higher education context. Although the focus of most literature, legislation, and policy has been on basic education (primary and secondary education), the extent to which they can be applied to higher education is reviewed. The chapter culminates with an overview of the legislative and inclusive education policy Framework.

2.2 Understanding Disability

Over time, the conceptualisation of disability has seen a shift from a strictly medical definition that focused on disability being caused by individual deficits within a person (i.e., the medical model of disability) to a definition that focuses on environmental determinates (i.e., the social model of disability), to the universalization of disability that accords human rights to persons with disabilities (i.e., the human rights model of disability) (Berghs, Atkin, Graham, Hatton & Thomas, 2016). However, the politics of disability continue to highlight conditions of exclusion and inequality. This section explores various approaches to and models of disability and offers critical disability theory as a diverse set of approaches towards understanding disability.

2.2.1 Medical Model of Disability

The dominant model for understanding disability throughout most of the 20th century was the medical model of disability (Masala & Petretto, 2008). The medical model of disability has been characterized as an essentialist approach, focusing on difference (Shakespeare, 1996). The medical model of disability postulates that disability is the outcome of a person's impairment (Oliver, 1996; Shakespeare, 1996). The construct of disability within the medical

model thus focuses on the pathology within the person. Modern Western medicine's development strengthened this notion with its overemphasis on correcting functional differences within the body (Engel,1977). This raises the question of normality, as persons with disabilities deviate from a certain standard of normal functioning (Shakespeare, 1996). This results in othering and identifying and grouping persons with disabilities as per their impairments -'the handicapped,' 'the albinos,' 'the deaf.' With impairment being the sole focus, persons with disabilities are involved continuously in consultations with health care practitioners so that they may be assimilated to 'normal' functioning utilizing medication, surgery, or equipment that mimics normal functioning. Persons with disabilities who fail to assimilate normal are excluded from society and placed in special schools, hospitals, institutions, or homes to be further cared for by remedial educators, case managers, or caregivers (Bynoe, Oliver, & Barnes, 1991). Thus, the emphasis is on the dependency of persons with disabilities on society.

The medical model of disability has been criticised for not considering the social context and the environmental, political, and cultural barriers that limit the participation of persons with disabilities. Within higher education, institutional policy, practices, and attitudes of role players may restrict the access of students with disabilities to higher education institutions and also negatively affect their participation within the academic and social environment and the successful completion of their qualifications (FOTIM, 2011). Terzi (2005) argues that the medical model's emphasis on individual limitations overshadows the role of barriers created by the design and operation of educational environments.

2.2.2 Social model of disability

Disability activists developed the social model of disability, which stands in direct opposition to the medical model of disability (Corker & Shakespeare, 2002). The disability rights movement can be traced to the mid-1970s in Great Britain (Barnes & Mercer, 2005; Fernie & Henning, 2006; Howell, 2005; Priestley, 2006; Swartz & Watermeyer, 2006; Thomas, 2004; Watermeyer, 2014; Williams, 2001). In 1981 the social model of disability was formally conceptualized by Mike Oliver. He stated that this new way of conceptualising disability "*involves nothing more or less fundamental than a switch away from focusing on the physical limitations of particular individuals to the way the physical and social environment impose limitations upon certain categories of people*" (Oliver, 1981, p. 28). Therefore, as opposed to an essentialist approach, the social model of disability provides a critical theorist approach to disability by highlighting environmental and attitudinal barriers against persons with disabilities and society's inability to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The construct

of disability within the social model focuses on physical and attitudinal barriers within the environment (Shakespeare, 1996; Terzi, 2005). These barriers have a profound impact on the ways of life and daily habits of persons with disabilities. Disability is also viewed as the social identity of a minority group (Shakespeare, 1996). The social model of understanding disability is a collective movement that challenges the view of persons with disabilities as passive and dependent on the need for professional consultations and interventionist strategies. Within a social model of understanding disability, disability is perceived as a socially constructed problem (WHO, 2007).

In recent years the social model of disability has been criticised for its over-emphasis on the social environment and its structures (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2011). While the social environment is an important consideration when conceptualising disability, it is crucial to recognise the impairment and its subjective impact on the individual and the complex interrelationship between impairment and an individual's response to the impairment. Furthermore, the social model of disability has been critiqued for neglecting identity politics as a valuable component of disability (e.g., Deaf culture) (Degener, 2017; Meekosha, 2008).

2.2.3 Human rights model of disability

The critiques highlighted against the medical and the social model of disability, gave rise to alternative approaches in conceptualising disability. The human rights model of disability is a comprehensive model that considers economic, social and cultural rights (Degener, 2017). Although several international conventions incorporate disability, the human rights model has only recently garnered analytical importance in the context of understanding disability (Berghs et al., 2016). A human rights-based approach to understanding disability has been associated with the adoption of the CRPD. The preamble of the CRPD elaborates on how the Convention builds upon the social model of understanding disability. Still, it also recognizes that disability is an evolving concept and emanates from the interaction between a person with an impairment and environmental barriers that limit their full and effective participation in society (Harpur, 2012; Sainsbury, Lawson & Priestley, 2017, United Nations, 2006). Therefore, inclusion is core to the human rights model of disability.

The human rights model of disability is not without criticism. Researchers have argued that the social model of disability and the human rights model of disability are virtually synonymous (Retief & Letšosa, 2018). However, Stein and Stein (2013) argue that a human rights model of disability builds upon both the social and capabilities approaches in understanding disability. The Capability Model was theorized by economist A.K. Sen (1985) and applied as an approach to understanding disability, most notably by Nussbaum (2000) and

Mitra (2006). Stein and Stein (2010) further state that the human rights model differs from the social model and capabilities approach. It underscores the universality of disability both as a human rights issue and as part of the human experience.

Degener (2017) also refutes arguments that the social and human rights model of disability is synonymous and highlights six distinct differences between these models, and suggests that there is a historical progression from a medical model of understanding disability to a social model and then to a human rights model of understanding disability. Degener (2017) also acknowledges that the human rights model offers constructive proposals for improving the life situation of persons with disabilities.

Majiet (1998) calls to question who sets out the agenda globally for human rights. He asserts that the Global North very much sets the agenda. Similarly, Mutua (2015) strongly condemns a human rights approach, not specifically to disability, but human rights as a whole. He argues that human rights cannot assumed to be universal nor should it require a Western-style (global north) democratic government for their achievement. Disability theorists argue for disability to be understood from a Global South perspective (Lorenzo, Mzolisika & Priestley, 2006; Meekosha, 2004; 2008; Watermeyer, Swartz, Lorenzo, Scheider & Priestly, 2006). Conceptualization of disability in the Global South has been firmly linked to Western or Northern imperialism tied to years of colonisation and globalization (Meekosha, 2008; Meekosha & Soldatic, 2011). Therefore, a universal approach is problematic, as the social-political, economic, and cultural factors affecting persons with disabilities in different countries across the globe vary considerably.

2.2.4 Critical Disability Theory (Conceptual Framework)

Critical disability theory (also referred to as critical disability studies) is a theoretical framework used for this study and has its roots in critical theory (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). As with the social model of disability, critical disability theorists argue against a medical understanding of disability and requires a cultural, political, and linguistic construction of disability (Berghs et al., 2016; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009). The use of critical disability theory as an approach to understanding disability recognises that cultural, social, historical, and political ideologies contribute towards a particular society's understanding of disability (Meekosha, 2004; Priestly, 2006). Therefore, an account of disability from a South African perspective must reflect local knowledge, experience, culture, and political phenomena. Hosking (2008) argues that critical disability theory centres around being identified or identifying as a person with a disability and that this is central to understanding a person's social position with its attendant opportunities and limitations. Consequently, critical disability

also intersects with other critical discourses such as critical race theory, feminist theory, queer theory, and more (Sleeter, 1987). A move towards a critical disability theory highlights the complex nature of disability (Goodley, 2013). Disability must be understood as a matter of public discourse and is exemplified in the denial of access to basic human rights, such as the continued exclusion of students with disabilities from accessing education (Goodley, Lawthom, Liddiard, & Runswick-Cole, 2019; Slee, 2018).

In contrast to a medical model approach, that emphasizes disability as embodied in individual minds and bodies, critical disability theory emphasizes disability in context (Sauer & Lalvani, 2017). Critical disability theory posits that disability is understood as a lived reality in which the experiences of persons with disabilities are inextricably linked to access, inclusion and existing societal power relations (Connor & Gabel, 2013; Reaume, 2014; Sauer & Lalvani, 2017). In the context of education, Beratan (2006) contends that discriminatory structures and practices, as well as uninterrogated perceptions about disability that are deeply ingrained within educational systems, can subvert any inclusive policy provisions, by maintaining substantive oppression of existing power relations. This implies that educational institutions, through their inclusive policies and practices, can paradoxically become instruments of institutionalized ableism. This view is supported by Hibbs and Pothier (2006) who analysed university disability policy and praxis, and found that universities reinscribe rather than challenge patterns of ableism and exclusion when granting academic accommodations (reasonable accommodations) to students with disabilities.

Ableism is a term coined by analogy to critical concepts with similar meaning and function such as racism, agism, and sexism (Mladenov, 2015). Critical disability theorists explain that institutionalized ableism refers to the systematic discriminatory practices against persons (students) with disabilities (Beratan, 2004; Connor & Ferri, 2007, Sauer & Lalvani, 2017). It can be assumed therefore, that a critical disability approach to analysing inclusive education systems can serve to generate an informed perspective that describes, analyses and challenges ableist ideologies that are entrenched in inclusive policy and practices, that have a disparate impact on the inclusion of students with disabilities. Institutionalised ableism can be benevolent and paternalistic and allow for the justification of control, restricted rights, and dehumanizing actions (Nario-Redman et al., 2019). For instance, as more students with disabilities access higher education, accommodations are framed as ‘special privileges’ (i.e., paternalistic provision) and students with disabilities are deemed as vulnerable.

Concomitant to institutional ableism, is the notion of internalized ableism. Within various institutions in society, persons with disabilities are exposed to prejudiced assumptions

about ability and are immersed in a culture that uncritically assumes ability differences to be a legitimate means of assigning merit and power (Watermeyer & Görgens, 2013). This could result in internalised ableism (internalized oppression) whereby, persons with disabilities harbour the memories, negative self-images, and low expectations that society negatively associates with the concept of disability as an attempt to escape from disability prejudice and discrimination (Campbell, 2001; Silverman, 2019). Whilst critical disability theory affirms disability as a positive and important element of identity, it is however important to carefully consider the positive and negative valances of disability as an identity, including pride and shame (Kerschbaum et al., 2017). Resisting ableism within identity remains significant within critical disability theory. Therefore, critical disability theory has a discourse of emancipation and recognizes diversity.

Critical disability theory is of particular relevance to the South African context taking into account its history of human rights violations against, and oppression of marginalised persons (see Sections 2.5 and 3.2.2). Despite the democratic dispensation and inclusive legislature and policy framework post-1994, the South African higher education system continues to be characterised by deeply embedded structural social oppressions such as racism, ableism, sexism, and classism (Badat, 2017; Hlatshwayo, 2020; Msibi, 2013; Soudien, 2010; Subrayen, 2011). A critical disability theory approach to the current study is useful in interrogating how issues of sexism, racism, and classism intersect with ableism, to create and perpetuate a system of multiple forms of oppression within South African higher education institutions. In this way, this approach guards against the tendency to make disability invisible – which can easily happen if disability is universalized as a common experience for all students with disabilities. Therefore, a critical disability theory approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the inherent complexities that affect the realisation of inclusive education of students with disabilities within South African higher education institutions.

As outlined in Sections 2.3.1 to 2.3.4., the term disability has been subject to varying definitions over time. For this thesis, critical disability theory provides a framework to understand and explore the interplay of disability and the right to higher education. In its premise that differences due to disability should neither simply be ignored nor unnecessarily highlighted as a ground for exclusion and stigmatization, critical disability theory articulates well with the 4-A Framework regarding the right to education as proposed by Tomaševski (1999). This Framework stipulates four essential markers, namely availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability, that an educational environment needs to exhibit in order for the right to education to be fulfilled. In line with critical disability theory, this Framework,

therefore, proposes that a differentiated and nuanced response by the educational environment is required in order for the right to education to be fulfilled for all students, including those with disabilities. The right to education (and the progressive right to higher education) must be considered beyond mere access. In order to understand the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education, it is crucial to highlight the legal and policy framework on the topic.

2.3 Education as a Human Right

In order to understand the inclusion of students with disabilities in the South African higher education landscape, it is essential to trace the establishment of education as a human right for persons with disabilities more globally. The right to education for persons with disabilities is enshrined in a host of international and regional human rights instruments. In this section, the various human rights standards relating to the right to basic and higher education are discussed. Taking into account the intersectionality of race, gender, and disability, human rights instruments relating to more than just one marginalized group are included in the discussion.

The formation of the United Nations (UN) has had profound effects on the understanding of human rights (Murungi, 2013). The UN Charter was the first international treaty that called for general respect for human rights. Upon ratification, signatory States agreed to promote, amongst other rights, the right to education (United Nations, 1945). In the same year in which the UN Charter was adopted, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was formed. UNESCO affirmed its vital role in the Education for All (EFA) movement, which, by virtue of its universality and commitment to quality, is concerned about the right to education. However, the EFA contained no specific reference to the rights of persons with disabilities to education.

Three years after the adoption of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) was adopted in 1948 as the first international legal instrument that recognised education as a human right for all persons. Article 26 (1) of the Declaration states: "*Everyone has the right to education*." Article 26 further states that *"higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit."* Although the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is not a legally binding instrument, it has a profound political and moral impact on signatory states. Since its adoption, the right to education has been reaffirmed in numerous human rights treaties and declarations adopted by the UN. The various international and regional declarations relevant to the current study are discussed below.

Article 13 of the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (United Nations, 1966) is the most comprehensive provision on the right to education (United Nations, 1966). This Convention recognises the universal right to education without discrimination of any kind. This can be interpreted as persons with disabilities are guaranteed the right to education. Moreover, it provides a framework to achieve the full realisation of this right for both basic and higher education. Article 13 makes provision for equal access to higher education on the basis of capacity, measures to literacy, and quality improvement.

Women and women with disabilities, in particular, are often denied equal access to education opportunities (Chataika, 2009; Chataika, McKenzie, Swart, & Lyner-Cleophas, 2012; Majiet & Africa, 2015). Article 10 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (United Nations, 1979) promotes gender equality by guaranteeing every woman with equal rights in the field of education, ranging from basic to higher education.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (United Nations, 1989) also guarantees education as a right; however, it applies to children younger than 18 years of age. Articles 2 and 23(3) of the CRC recognizes the rights of children with disabilities in a manner that that is conducive towards full inclusion and individual development. Still, Article 28 of the CRC guarantees accessibility to higher education on the basis of capacity. Furthermore, as basic education is the precursor for higher education, it is essential that the right to basic education is guaranteed.

Access to quality education for all citizens regardless of race has yet to be fully realized in South Africa (Meek & Meek, 2009). The education of Black people in South Africa during its history of Dutch and British colonization followed by the National Party (apartheid) rule has a ruthless and violent past, and education was the cornerstone for maintaining colonial and apartheid oppression (Subreenduth, 2013). The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (IERCD) (United Nations, 1965) prohibits racial discrimination in the enjoyment of human rights. Article 5 of the IERCD guarantees the right to education of everyone, without distinction as to race or ethnic origin. Furthermore, Article 7 of the IECRD encourages member states to take proactive measures to combat prejudices that lead to racial discrimination in the field of education.

Central to this current study is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (United Nations, 2006) as it applies to persons with disabilities and reaffirms that signatory states must make provisions for all persons with disabilities to enjoy all human rights and freedoms. Amidst growing awareness of the denial of fundamental rights

to persons with disabilities, the CRPD was adopted on December 13, 2006, by the United Nations General Assembly. This Convention is widely renowned for being the first binding international document addressing the rights of persons with disabilities worldwide (Kanter, 2009). The core principles of the CRPD include the right of all persons with disabilities to full and effective participation and inclusion in society. To implement these principles, sectors relating to education, healthcare, and social service systems, employment, accessible transportation, innovation, and technology, and society generally should be adapted to ensure that they are all accessible and appropriate for all persons with disabilities. The right to education is reaffirmed in Article 24 of the CRPD. A great deal of detail is devoted to how the right to education is to be implemented. The CRPD states that persons with disabilities should be guaranteed the right to inclusive education at all levels (primary, secondary and tertiary), without discrimination, and on the basis of equal opportunity. Article 24 of the CRPD explicitly states that:

> "*States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, States Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning directed to (a) The full development of human potential and sense of dignity and self-worth, and the strengthening of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and human diversity; (b) The development by persons with disabilities of their personality, talents, and creativity, as well as their mental and physical abilities, to their fullest potential; (c) Enabling persons with disabilities to participate effectively in a free society"*.

Specific to the African context, the right to education is guaranteed in a number of African human rights instruments that are referred to as regional instruments. The African continent played a prominent role in the development of various human rights instruments aimed at ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities. The Charter of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (1963), later renamed the African Union, required states to pursue a common regional agenda that ensured educational and cultural cooperation. However, this Charter did not make substantive contributions regarding the meaning of the right to education for children with disabilities (Murungi, 2013).

The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) of 1986, popularly referred to as the 'Banjul Charter,' was a landmark document for the protection and promotion of human rights with the African content (Africa Law Reporter, n.d.; OAU, 1986). It responds to uniquely African notions of human rights that are compatible with African values and

culture, which put less emphasis on the individual and recognizes the collective nature of human rights (Africa Law Reporter, n.d.). Of particular importance to the focus on education is Article 17(1) that affirms the right to education for all persons (OAU, 1986). The Charter also obliges all member states to eradicate all forms of discrimination that are based on human differences. As the Charter was drafted at a time when South Africa was still subjected to segregation, South Africa only ratified this Charter on the 9th of July 1996 (Department of Justice, n.d.). The ACHPR is the primary instrument on human rights in the African region (OAU, 1981). Regarding the right to education, the ACHPR recognised everyone's right to education and required states to report on what measures were taken to achieve the full realisation of the right of its citizens to receive compulsory and free basic education. Article 17 (1) of the ACHPR does not specify provisions specific to higher education.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) (OAU,1990) was adopted a year after the adoption of the CRC (United Nations, 1981). The ACRWC was intended to give an African perspective to the rights of the child contained in the CRC. The ACRWC articulates the right to education in a more comprehensive manner than that provided for in the ACHPR (OAU,1981). The ACRWC provided for the right of every child to education and the duty of State Parties to provide free and compulsory basic education (OAU, 1990). Furthermore, it defines the aims of education and prescribes measures that states must undertake to achieve the full realisation of this right (Right to Education Initiative, 2018).

The African Youth Charter (AYC) (AU, 2006) is the first legal framework in Africa to support programmes specifically in favour of skills development for the youth. Article 13 of the AYC recognises the right of every young person to multiple forms of good quality education. Article 13 (2) and (4f), refers to all levels of education including higher education. Moreover Article 13 (3d) recognises the importance of decolonising education systems and foregrounding the preservation and strengthening of positive African morals, traditional values and cultures to develop African identity and pride. The AYC defines the aims of education and notes obligations in realizing the right to education. The AYC also provides for gender equality and the use of indigenous African languages in teaching (Article 20). The cost of education is often a barrier for the full realisation of this right. Article 13 (4) (a) (b) and (i), makes provision for free and compulsory basic education and for State Parties to take steps to minimise the indirect costs of education and to make education progressively free. Furthermore, it requires State Parties to introduce funding programmes to encourage entry into higher education for academically deserving youth from disadvantaged communities, especially young women. Article 13.4.(f) makes provision for higher education to be equally accessible to all persons.

The African regional Framework that prioritised rights of vulnerable groups of children such as those with disabilities, was the Dakar Declaration and Framework for Action (DFA) (UNESCO, 2000). The DFA calls for African governments to make commitment to allocate resources as would have the potential to make a significant impact on quantity and quality of education.

In 2007, the African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance (ACDEG) was developed in an effort to improve democratic governance on the African continent (Wiebusch et al., 2019). It seeks to address issues of continental human rights protection and democratization. Article 8 and 43 of the ACDEG, make provision for the right to freedom from discrimination and for the right to basic educational for marginalized groups, including persons with disabilities (AU, 2007). This is significant as it indicates a recognition by member states for the right to education for persons with disabilities. The ACDEG's status as a treaty, therefore a legally binding instrument, ensures a continental commitment to the provisions contained with this Charter and reflects the importance of the role of law in addressing societal problems (Wiebusch et al., 2019). In terms of the ACDEG's relevance to South Africa (ratified in 2010) and the advancement of rights of persons with disabilities, the AU has developed a compliance system that is complimentary to constitutional provisions and national policies to ensure adequate implementation of the provisions contained in the Charter.

In this section, the various human rights standards related to the right to basic and higher education for marginalized groups were discussed. However, the approach to ensure the right to education is met for all, including students with disabilities, is inclusive education. The specific provisions discussed above guarantee their right to education and encourage State Parties and governments to adopt an approach that is inclusive to all, including those individuals with disabilities. In the next section, the concept of inclusive education, and the elements that constitute inclusive (higher) education are explored.

2.4 Inclusive Education

In this section inclusive education is discussed as an approach to ensure that the right to education for students with disabilities is met. The focus of this section is on the conceptualization and development of inclusive education, both globally and in South Africa. This is achieved by foregrounding the South African policy and legislative framework.

2.4.1 Defining Inclusive Education

The term inclusive education has different interpretations in various contexts. In reviewing scholarly debates on inclusive education there appear to be at least five dominant

approaches to inclusive education. The first approach to inclusive education is the human rights-based perspective that emanated from 1948 to present (as evidenced in Section 2.4). This approach derives from the UNESCO's Education For All agenda that sets global targets to increase access and participation within education. The second approach to inclusive education is regarding it as a principled approach to education and society – inclusion in this sense refers to the ethical principles that should guide inclusive policies and practices. These principles include equality, participation, and respect for diversity as guiding inclusive values. In reviewing inclusive education on the Asian continent, Mitchell and Desai (2005) noted that the approach to inclusive education here, creates a tension between Western notion of inclusion that places value on individualism and the Asian values of collectivism. In Japan the approach towards inclusive education takes into account the relationship between individuals and broader society and the importance of group identity and concern for the whole person. The third approach to inclusive education specifically focusses on students with special needs (1990- present) and also emanates from the Education For All agenda that was adopted in 1990. This approach refers to the inclusion of students with disabilities who are at risk of exclusion from the education system on the basis of having an impairment. Inclusion, as outlined in this approach, is the most common conceptualization of inclusive education (Messiou, 2017). The fourth approach to inclusive education refers to inclusion of marginalised groups (2001 - present), which is the inclusion for all groups vulnerable to exclusion – similar to the conceptualisation inclusion as it pertains to students with disability. Inclusion in this sense focuses on the inclusion of marginalized groups and on eliminating racial disparities. In South Africa, the approach to inclusive education saw the transformation of a dual segregated and exclusionary education system into an inclusive system of education (Naicker, 2005). The focus of inclusion in South Africa was not merely on disability, but all marginalized groups, including adult learners, learners who experienced exclusion on the basis of their race, gender, language and socio-economic status (Naicker, 2005). The fifth approach to inclusive education refers to the transformation of education systems (2005 – present) emanating from the UNESCO (2005) Guidelines for Inclusion: Ensuring Access to Education for All. The Guidelines for Inclusion underscores that UNESCO regards inclusive education as human right and that a rights-based approach to education is founded upon the principles noted by Tomaševski (2004), that outline human rights obligations to make education available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable.

It is evident that there are various ways in which inclusive education has been conceptualized and the emphasis varies from focusing solely on disability to focussing on all

marginalized groups across society. Furthermore, it is distinctive that most literature on inclusive education focuses predominantly on inclusion at the level of basic education. For the purposes of this study, inclusive higher education will be defined as the process of increasing access, full and equal participation and successful throughput of students with disabilities within universities and reducing their exclusion from the cultural activities, curricula and community engagement expected in higher education (Booth, 1996; Walton & Nel, 2012).

2.4.2 Global Initiative for Inclusive Education

The conceptualization of education as a human right (as outlined in Section 2.3) is evidence that it is of a global concern. The section that follows reviews literature on broad global efforts in terms of the inclusive education for students with disabilities.

Historically, students with disabilities were often seen as uneducable and therefore did not have any access to any form of public education. This changed with the advent of special education. The origin of special education can be attributed to the works of the French physician Jean Marc Gaspard Itard (1775 -1838) and later his student Edouard Seguin (1812 - 1880). Between 1801 and 1805, Itard used systematic techniques to educate a child named Victor of Aveyron (Itard, 1962). Based on his work with Victor, Itard (1962) laid the foundation for special education of students with developmental delays or disabilities. Seguin who studied the works of Itard, developed several guidelines for educating children with special needs (Tablot, 1964). Although special education is often juxtaposed as the polar opposite of inclusive education, it has to be recognized that the work of Itard and Sequin was revolutionary for its time, as it challenged the notion of children with disabilities being uneducable. In this respect, special education can be seen as the forerunner of inclusive education. Special education was the preferred form of educational support for students with disabilities, specifically those with severe conditions (Moore, Anderson, Timperley, Glynn, Macfarlane, Brown & Thompson, 1999). The underpinning philosophy of this service delivery model located the problem within the student, as students with disabilities were deemed incapable of benefitting from mainstream education settings. Special education relied on the generosity of individuals and subsequently a charity discourse emerged (Fulcher, 1989). Although special education was run parallel to the mainstream education, it was by no means equitable to mainstream education (Green & Engelbrecht, 2007). Therefore, students with disabilities were denied equality of educational services as compared to their abled bodied counterparts.

The system of special education was underpinned by principles of separate education. Matso and Muick (1991) viewed the development of intelligence testing by Stanford Binet in

the early 20th century as further impetus for special education as it allowed for the categorization of students into groups for which different and lesser education was necessary.

Critiques against segregated special education was driven by changes in liberal, legal and progressive ideologies that influenced the education system (Engelbrecht & Snyman, 1999). The principles behind the placement of students with disabilities in special schools were also questioned from a human rights position (Ainscow, 1999). Segregation was deemed irrational and morally inefficient (Jordan & Goodey, 1996; Skrtic, 1991). Supportive of these views, Oliver (1992) was critical of the exclusionary nature of special education. He reiterated that segregation inhibited equal educational opportunities. Barton (1998) condemned special education as a part of an oppressive social system which promoted the exclusion of students with disabilities. The cost efficiency of a parallel special and mainstream education was called into question by education economists (Baker & Zigmond, 1990). The allocation of resources as well as assessment costs were deemed to be excessive and implausible.

Therefore, special education was critiqued mainly for being ineffective and discriminatory from varying perspectives. Given the growing concerns of segregation, special education needed to be reconceptualised (Ainscow, 1999). On the basis of the arguments of the exclusionary nature of segregation, there was a progressive shift towards integrated education Frameworks and settings. The process of integration recognized the rights of students with disabilities to receive equal educational opportunities, however this educational format did not equate to full inclusive education of students with disabilities. Instead, it focused solely on the placement of students with disabilities within regular classrooms but without consideration given to the adaptation of teaching methods, modified assessment techniques or accessibility arrangements (Suleymanov, 2014). Integration of students with disabilities did not change or strengthen the capacity of the education system to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

As already mentioned in Section 2.3, EFA was a global initiative to address the disparities in basic education. It was launched at a World Conference of the same name in Jotmien, Thailand in 1990. It was led by UNESCO, whereby world leaders committed themselves to targets set for universal basic education, adult literacy, and education of girls and women. This commitment endorsed education as a fundamental human right and strengthened efforts to ensure quality education for all by 2000, thereby moving education towards an inclusive agenda.

Initiatives against special education were further evidenced in 1994 when 92 governments held the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain. The outcome of the Salamanca World Conference on Special Education Needs Education in

1994 was the UNESCO's Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994). The Salamanca Statement claims that inclusive education systems are the most effective way to counter exclusionary approaches and attitudes (Forlin et al., 2013). It further states that "*human differences are normal and that learning must accordingly be adapted to the needs of the child rather than the child fitted to preordained assumptions regarding the pace and nature of the learning process*" (UNESCO, 1994, p.7) The Salamanca Statement is recognized as the most significant international policy Framework for inclusive education (Ainscow 2006; Makoelle 2012; Mittler 2005; Forlin et al. 2013; Walton 2010). Consequently, legislation and policy of individual countries were re-conceptualized on the basis of eradicating exclusionary practices, focusing on access to high-quality education for all while respecting diversity (Forlin et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2008). UNESCO (1994) policy guidelines for inclusive education provide three mandates for inclusive education systems. Firstly, the educational mandate requires teaching methodologies to respond to different needs of all students so that they all equally benefit from the learning process. Secondly, the social mandate requires changes in attitudes towards diversity to allow for a just and non-discriminatory society. Lastly, the economic mandate requires that an inclusive education system is a cost effective way to establish and maintain education systems that educate all students together as opposed to special education formats.

As the Salamanca Statement focused predominantly on basic education, a subsequent survey entitled 'Provision for students with disabilities in Higher Education' was conducted by UNESCO in 1998 as a contribution to the World Conference on Higher Education (WCHE) a year thereafter (UNESCO, 1999). A total of 50 universities were selected on the basis of information provided to UNESCO by regional officers. All universities included had to have established support services for students with disabilities. Responses were received from 35 of the 50 universities which included universities in South Africa (UNESCO, 1999). Key findings revealed that a majority of universities (24 out of 35) reported no specific admission procedures for students with disabilities. Enrolments rates for students with disabilities were meagre and accounted for less than one percent of the student body. Where the type of disability was recorded, students with physical disabilities represented the largest cohort of students with disabilities, followed by students with visual disabilities. Furthermore, findings revealed that students with physical disabilities were not able to access lecture rooms due to the physical inaccessibility of university campus venues. Additionally, students with print disabilities (i.e., students who are unable to access printed material) were not provided academic material in an accessible format. However, 17 out of the 35 universities reported that they had made provision

for preparation of academic and professional support staff to assist them in responding to the needs of students with disabilities (UNESCO, 1999).

The main implications of these findings were that universities needed to scrutinise the barriers to access for students with disabilities and take the necessary steps to remove them. If students cannot independently move around the campus or gain access to a laboratory, teaching venue or the library, they are effectively denied the progressive right to higher education. Likewise, in order for students with disabilities to fully participate in teaching and learning activities, universities should provide access to academic material and/or assistive technology. However, the accessibility of the physical environment and provision of accessible academic material and assistive technology only provide a context for teaching and learning, and may not address the salient barriers that inhibit the teaching/learning process. These can be embedded in staff and student attitudes; inaccessibility of professional support services, such as the library services, student counselling, sport and leisure activities offered by the institution; or lack of financial support for students with disabilities as they incur additional expenses if they are required to self-fund assistive devices and/or human support (e.g. a South African Sign Language interpreter/practitioner). These survey results, have prompted member States to share a commitment to towards ensuring higher education is accessible for students with disabilities and that access to higher education should be considered as a progressive human right. However, at a time where new challenges are arising in the field of higher education, there is a need for broader awareness raising regarding the plight of students with disabilities in higher education.

The Declaration of the WCHE recognized the role of education in the promotion of human rights and stated that education should therefore be accessible to all persons throughout their lifespan. In shaping a vision of higher education, Article 3 (a) of the WCHE on equity to access makes provision for admission to higher education to be based on merit by those seeking access to it (UNESCO, 1999). Therefore, no discrimination should be tolerated in granting access to higher education institutions on grounds of race, gender, economic considerations, culture, social distinctions, language, religion, or disability. The access of marginalized groups, including students with disability, must be actively facilitated. In doing so, accessible academic material and educational solutions can help overcome the obstacles that these individuals face, both in accessing and in continuing in higher education (UNESCO, 1998).

In this section inclusive education as an approach to ensure that the right to education is met, was discussed. The focus points of this section was on the conceptualization and development of inclusive education globally, as well as the policy and legislative framework

with a specific focus on students with disabilities and higher education. Due to limited literature available on higher education, the discussion included literature on basic education.

2.5 Inclusive Education in South Africa

The movement towards an inclusive education system in South Africa has to be understood within the context of historical exclusion and subsequent efforts to redress past inequalities. Prior to 1994, racially, misogynist and ableist entrenched attitudes and discriminatory practices led to extreme disparities in the delivery of education. These exclusions were challenged in line with human rights imperatives internationally and in South Africa (Bell & Swart, 2018; Lyner-Cleophas, 2016). During this period of human rights violations, the systemic exclusion of Black persons in South Africa from all levels of education (amongst other basic human rights), was instituted by the Apartheid government (Mekoa, 2011; Naicker, 2005). Educational provision for persons with disabilities was racially divided and inadequate for the need that existed, especially for Black persons with disabilities (Howell, 2003). Estimates made in 1997 suggested that around 70% of learners with disabilities were excluded from education and/or training opportunities (Office of the President, 1997). Those who were included (this being proportionately more white children than children from other racial groups) attended schools that catered specifically for learners with disabilities, with only some special schools offering tuition up to Grade 12 level (Howell & Lazarus, 2003). The inadequate provision for learners with disabilities at the basic education level has had a profoundly negative effect on the number of students with disabilities who were able to access higher education. At the basic education level, learners with disabilities were not able to access schooling that would eventually enable them to gain entrance to the higher education system (Howell, 2006). The lack of availability and accessibility of schools for learners with disabilities and decreased throughput rates of learners with disabilities exacerbated the inequalities experienced by these learners when attempting to access universities (Proudlock, 2014).

Section 29 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996,) grants everyone the right to education (South Africa, 1996). Furthermore, the implementation of the right to basic education is not subject to resource availability (Murungi, 2015), making it a non-progressive right. It is therefore a right that has to be directly implemented, and is not subject to progressive implementation. It can therefore be assumed that for this reason, the right to basic education under Section 29 is of higher priority relative to other rights. The right to higher education, however, is a progressive right (United Nations, 2006). The concept of progressive realisation

extends the obligation of the state over a time period. It recognises the fact that full realization of the right to higher education will generally not be feasible immediately and also not achievable over a short period of time. This implies that the legal, financial and operational barriers to the realisation of the right to higher education should be examined and progressively lowered (Murungi, 2013).

At present, the only law that directly refers to inclusive practices in higher education is the Higher Education Act no.1 of 1997 (South Africa, 1997). This act stipulates that universities must redress past inequalities in their admissions policy so that no student is unfairly discriminated against. A number of White Papers and policies that strengthen the inclusive education agenda at national level have been promulgated. Although some of these are aimed at promoting equity in higher education more generally and others are aimed primarily at promoting inclusion of children with disabilities in the basic education system, they all contribute to efforts to include students with disabilities in higher education. The most essential White Papers and complimentary plans/guidelines will be discussed in order of promulgation.

Education White Paper 3 (EWP3): Transformation of the Higher Education System, which the DoE gazetted in 1997, was the South African government's first attempt to address the lack of access to and equity in higher education. The central tenets of EWP3 are equal access and non-discrimination in an effort to overcome past inequalities for marginalised groups under apartheid rule. The EWP3 also advocated for the transformation of the higher education landscape with the provision that students with disabilities must be supported within the system as a whole, as opposed to individual institutions (DoE 1997; FOTIM 2011). Therefore, suitably qualified students with disabilities should be allowed the opportunity to apply to any higher institution in South Africa on the basis of their preferred degree and should not be channelled to a specific institution based solely on the nature of their disability and support available at a particular institution.

Complimentary to EWP3 is the National Plan for Higher Education, which was promulgated in 2001. It identifies non-traditional students (including students with disabilities) as the target for inclusion into the higher education system. Furthermore it makes provision for the transformation of previously disadvantaged institutions and the higher education system as a whole (DoE, 2001b). This plan holds institutions accountable for an inclusive higher education system. The plan addresses the academic cycle of a student, from entrance into higher education to successful throughput and graduation. The admission, throughput and graduation of students with disabilities is highlighted as a critical outcome (Howell, 2006; Lyner-Cleophas, 2016).

In an attempt to realise inclusive education particularly for children and students with disabilities, the South African Democratic Government instituted a National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (NCSNET) and a National Committee on Education Support Services (NCESS) (DoE, 1997). The NCSNET and NCESS adopted a holistic and complete approach, where they considered all facets of education in South Africa at the time and ways to improve upon this. This approach was grounded on the belief that the main task in ensuring an inclusive education system education is one of identifying and addressing the different and diverse needs of all students, whilst also minimizing, removing, and preventing barriers to learning (South African Institute for Distance Education, n.d). The outcomes contained in the NCSNET and NCESS Report of 1997 were captured in the development of Education White Paper 6 (EWP6): Special Needs Education, as gazetted in 2001 by the DoE (2001a).

EWP6 directly addresses inclusive education within the basic education system and only alludes to an inclusive higher education system. However, because access to higher education is contingent upon the completion of basic education, the policies that affect the inclusivity of the basic education sector indirectly influence whether the higher education context is available to students with disabilities on an equitable basis. EWP6 does recommend regional collaboration between universities when increasing access, full-participation and successful throughput of students with disabilities (DoE, 2001a). Therefore, it suggests for universities to specialise or cater for specific categories of disability. For example, some institutions would provide for sign language interpreters/practitioners and therefore be accessible for students who use South African Sign Language, whereas others would provide for braille printing for students who are blind. In this way, students with disabilities are in effect again excluded from some institutions, as not every institution would be accessible to every student with disabilities. This recommendation is contrary to the statements made in EWP3, that students should not be channelled to specific institutions based on their disability. Furthermore, EWP6 lacks clarity regarding the goals of inclusive education and the means by which these goals would be achieved (Donohue & Bornman, 2014). This is a significant factor limiting policy implementation.

Most recently, the Education White Paper on Post School Education and Training (DHET, 2013) set out the new structure of a unified higher education system (which had been divided amongst the Department of Labour and the Department of Education up until 2009). Containing a whole chapter entitled “Addressing Disability,” it reiterates the inclusion objectives as set out in EWP3 and EWP6. It directly addresses the inclusive higher education

environment as it advocates for support for students with disabilities in the higher education system (DHET, 2013). It acknowledges that there are gaps in the provisions of inclusive policies, as students with disabilities still experience discrimination and challenges with access, curriculum, student funding and student support (DHET, 2013). This White Paper further states that access to formal education and training opportunities is fundamental to enabling students with disabilities to transform their own lives and contribute towards society.

Following a recommendation made in the EWP6, the Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the Post-School Education and Training System was published by the DHET in 2018, as the only policy that has as its primary objective the inclusion of students with disabilities in the higher education system. In 2014, the Minister of Higher Education and Training at the time, Dr Blade Nzimande, in his launch address of the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training argued that the management of disability within the higher education sector remains fragmented and separated to that of existing transformation programmes. He further expressed that the inclusion of students with disabilities and resources allocated is determined by individual institutions, thus the inclusion of students with disabilities is considerably varied (DHET, 2013). In 2018, the DHET acknowledged the continued existence of barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from accessing, participating and graduating from higher education intuitions. The DHET further acknowledged a failure to enforce existing legislation for universal application. Furthermore, Disability Rights Units were found to be available but under-resourced, and limited collaboration with broader teaching and learning initiatives was evident. Teaching and learning processes that perpetuate the marginalisation and exclusion of students with disabilities, negative attitudes towards students with disabilities, and underutilisation of funding for students with disabilities were further problems that were identified (DHET, 2018; Mutanga, 2017).

This policy framework provides institutional implementation guidelines to realise students' inclusion with disabilities in the short to medium term 2020/2021 (DHET, 2018). Some of the key recommendations as they pertain to universities can be summarised as follows: (a) a standardised model and approach to disability and establishing a common classification Framework that institutions can use to identify and support students with disabilities; (b) development of guidelines to evaluate institutional disability policies for legislative compliance; (c) a funding strategy that ensures the inclusion of students with disabilities; (d) inclusive teaching and learning strategies; (e) universal access regarding infrastructure, assistive devices and equipment; (f) career development of students with disabilities; (g) inclusive curricular strategies, which include recreation and sport.

While significant progress was made in developing a policy environment that was enabling and inclusive in South Africa after 1994, there is still a great urgency to ensure that the higher education system is inclusive. The next chapter systematically maps empirical literature regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities, at South African higher education institutions. The chapter is presented in the format of a mapping review.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the paradigm that guided this study. Furthermore, it examined various approaches towards understanding disability and presented critical disability theory as a suitable approach. Thereafter developments in inclusive education legislature, policy provisions, and practices aimed at the inclusion of students with disabilities were presented. Policy at national level pertaining to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the higher education sector in South Africa was also reviewed. The next chapter presents experiences of students with disabilities regarding their inclusion in South African higher education institutions. The chapter is presented in the format of a mapping review and includes an overview of studies that were conducted between January 1994 and June, 2020.

CHAPTER 3
MAPPING REVIEW

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a mapping review of the literature regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions (universities). The literature is presented in the format of a mapping review and includes a review of studies (including qualitative, quantitative and mixed method designs) that were conducted between January 1994 and June, 2020.

A systematic mapping review was undertaken to map out and review existing literature in the field of disability studies within the South African higher education milieu. The mapping review aimed to examine the volume and characteristics of the available evidence about the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions. The protocol for the mapping review is outlined within the methods section of this chapter.

3.2 Background

The history of higher education in South Africa is marked by exclusionary and discriminatory practices, particularly for students with disabilities (Herman, 2015; Mantsha, 2016). The factors that counter the inclusion of students with disabilities within the South African higher education system are the restricted opportunities for students with disabilities to gain entry into university, limited opportunities to participate equitably in all university activities and environments and limited opportunities to successfully exit from university prepared for the world of work and ready to find and secure a job placement (Ndlovu, 2019; UNESCO, 1998, 1999).

3.2.1 South African Higher Education pre-1994

University education in South Africa during the colonial and apartheid-era was pursued on the basis of exclusion, in which the cultural values within the institution, visions and missions, the student population and staff profiles were disproportionally skewed in favour of white nationalism (Makgoba, 1996). For many Black South Africans this era was oppressive (in all aspects) and alienated the majority of the population. This racially-based denial of education was equally applicable towards students with disabilities (Soudien & Baxen, 2006). The apartheid system left many persons with disabilities disempowered, segregated and excluded from society (Priestly, 2006). Whilst all persons with disabilities were discriminated against on the basis of their disability, the experiences of Black persons with disabilities, in a profoundly unequal society, were vastly different (Howell, Chalken & Alberts, 2006) to those of the white population. The negative experiences of Black persons with disabilities were

compounded by state constructed issues of deprivation, violence and exclusion and denial of basic human rights such as access to education.

The divided education system during this era meant that students with disabilities endured massive and arduous alienation from higher education systems. The alienation from the higher education systems were founded in the inequalities that shaped the basic education system. The basic education system was segregated along racial lines and also perceived levels for ability. The apartheid government deemed learners and students with disabilities as not fit for the dominant mainstream education system and subsequently placed them in a specialised education system. This special education system only catered for a small number of learners with disabilities with very limited provision for Black learners with disabilities (DoE, 1998). This meant that learners with disabilities, and Black learners in particular, experienced high levels of exclusion from the education system. The lack of equitable and adequate provision for students with disabilities at the basic education level profoundly affected their access to higher education, leaving many students unable to progress into higher education system as they did not have the minimum academic requirements.

3.2.2 South African Higher Education post-1994

The transition from an authoritarian to a democratic state in 1994 did not suddenly result in a smooth radical transformation of universities, as the higher education system inherited by the democratically elected government, was a system marked by exclusion and segregation. The transformation of this sector was and continues to be characterised by a considerable degree of conflict. Academics such as David Brooks 1996 previously at the University of Cape Town described the transformation of South African higher education institutions as a force at work which threatens the credibility of South African institutions. Some of the key challenges that faced the newly elected government in 1994 was meeting the increased need for access to higher education by eligible students, including persons with disabilities, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination. Furthermore, against the socio-politico backdrop of post-apartheid reconstruction, historically Black institutions faced financial constraints as a result of limited financial resources impacted upon limited institutional operational budgets (NPC, 2012).

In increasing access to higher education for marginalised groups, the South African government had to transform 36 deeply stratified and unequal public higher education institutions (Kubler & Sayers, 2010). The Minister of Higher Education at the time, Prof Kader Asmal, embarked on a process of mergers between historically disadvantaged (Black) and historically advantaged (White) institutions. This saw the total number of institutions being

reduced to 23. However, since 2013, three new public universities have been established bringing the total to 26 public universities in South Africa (Mzangwa, 2019). According to statistics by the DHET published in the 2018/2019 report, the student cohort consisted of 1 036 984 students at the time (84% undergraduate and 16% postgraduate students) and a staff cohort of 51 310 academic, administrative and service staff (DHET, 2017; 2019).

A number of governmental reports were reviewed, and no data was available on the headcount of students with disabilities at South African universities, with the enrolment of students with disabilities being only qualitatively described, if at all. Therefore, despite legislative and policy developments that promote the inclusion of students with disabilities, actual enrolment figures of students with disabilities at South African universities are described as being extremely low and are estimated to be at 5% of the total student population (Stats SA, 2014; DHET, 2018). This proportion needs to be understood with reference to the national prevalence of persons with disabilities in South Africa. According to the South African Census 2011, there is a national disability prevalence rate of 7.5%. Considering international statistics, estimated at 15% (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2011) this prevalence seems low, especially considering that prevalence of disability in low and middle income countries is typically higher than higher income countries due to the higher proportion of disability caused by maternal, perinatal and communicable diseases in low and middle income countries (Eide & Loeb, 2006). It should be noted that comprehensive data pertaining to persons with disabilities is not readily available due to the lack of consensus around defining disability. Moreover, what constitutes a disability tends to fluctuate over time and across different social contexts and cultures (Francis & Silvers, 2016). This impedes the ability to develop disability indicators (McLaren, Solarsh, & Saloojee, 2003). Instruments used to measure disability in low and middle-income countries typically lack specificity (ability to correctly identify those without impairments) and/or sensitivity (ability to identify those with impairment) (Cartwright & Carvounis, 2005; Eide et al., 2011). There is also an inconsistency that exists between the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) disability categories and the categories used by University to categories disability types.

Prior to 2018, there was no formal policy to address the inclusion of students with disabilities at South African higher education institutions. Therefore, the type of services available to students with disabilities were subject to individual institutional mandates. According to DHET (2018), only 73% of all South African higher education institutions had established Disability Rights Units in 2018. The HEDSA digital map of services offered to students with disabilities, highlighted that as of 2020 all 26 universities have established

Disability Rights Units (HEDSA, 2020). Table 3.1 outlines the types of services and supports that are generally available to students with disabilities at these Units.

Table 3.1

Services and Supports Offered at Varying Disability Units at South African Universities

Type of support	**Services offered to students with disabilities by Disability Units**
Academic support	Academic support for students with learning disabilities Accessible study venues and a computer laboratory Adapted text arrangements: Conversion of study material into accessible formats Concession applications Facilitation of test and examination accommodations for students with disabilities Referrals for recommended textbooks in electronic format
Human support	Consultative support to staff and disability sensitivity training South African Sign Language Interpreters Personal care assistants Notetakers, scribes and practical lab assistants Orientation and mobility training Provision of integration training of students with special learning disabilities needs through holistic support
Assistive technology	Assistive technological services: provision, screenings, training and support to students with disabilities
Accessibility of the campus environment	Accessible transport services Facilitating physical access to all environments on campus
Advocacy and advice	Advocacy and advice to address disability issues, educational learning disabilities and attitudinal barriers Organizational support to a support body for students with disabilities run by students with disabilities
Financial support	Assistance with financial aid applications and loaning of assistive devices
Research, training and development	Provide literature and material related to disability studies

At a glance, the type of services appear to be quite comprehensive, however, in reviewing studies within the field of disability studies in South Africa and internationally, students with disabilities continue to experience pervasive exclusion from higher education opportunities comparable to their peers without a disability (Bell 2013; Carrim 2002; Fitchett 2015; FOTIM 2011; Howell 2001).

3.3. Rationale for the Mapping Review Regarding the Inclusion of Students With Disabilities

The field of disability studies in South Africa has benefitted from a strong history of qualitative inquiry that has shaped theory and practice among disability researchers and

disabilities within the higher education sector. However, the growing popularity of qualitative research has been captured in only one major review conducted by Oliver Mutanga (2017). His review synthesized the publication of qualitative studies that documented students with disabilities' experience in South African Higher Education for the period 1994 – 2017. A total of 50 studies were included in the narrative review describing six aspects, namely: conceptualisation, access, inclusion and participation in higher education; and supporting mechanisms for students with disabilities (Mutanga, 2017). However, this review had some limitations when considering the principles suggested by Grant and Booth (2009), to demonstrate that a researcher had extensively researched the literature and critically evaluated its quality. For example, Mutanga's (2017) review did not provide a description of the particular type of methodologies of the studies included in the review (i.e., case study, phenomenology, interviews). Furthermore, the literature review conducted in Chapter 2 focused on the inclusive policy and legislative environment that makes provision for inclusive education systems. However, an in-depth understanding of the empirical studies regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in South Africa was needed. Therefore, this mapping review sought to systematically map empirical literature regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities, as it pertains to their perceptions and/or experiences of inclusion at their respective South African higher education institutions.

Therefore, the current review sought to critically review studies in the South African higher education context, by conducting a mapping review for the period 1994 (i.e., democratic South Africa) to date. A mapping review ensures that results are presented in a manner that characterizes quantity and quality of studies conducted within the stipulated time frame (Grant & Booth, 2009). Furthermore, a mapping review will help to identify possible research gaps within this field. The specific objectives of the mapping review would be to (a) describe the characteristics of these disability studies, (b) delineate the methodological approaches, (c) outline the methods of data generation and analysis, (d) appraise these studies and (e) analyse the trends across these studies within the stated timeframe.

3.4 Methodology

The specific methodology selected for this review was a systematic mapping review of empirical data regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities at South African higher education institutions. This methodology was selected as it enabled the researcher to conduct an in-depth systematic literature review of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions and identify gaps in this evidence base (See Figure 3.1) (Grant & Booth, 2009).

3.4.1 Mapping Review Protocol

A mapping review protocol guided the process followed in the study. Mapping reviews are often critiqued for oversimplifying the findings and lacking a quality assessment process (Grant & Booth, 2009). Therefore, to ensure that the current study has a high level of coding detail and to facilitate a rigorous review, a mapping review protocol was developed that included features of systematic review, namely a systematic search, as well as appraisal and synthesising of the research evidence. Figure 3.1. provides an outline of the mapping review process (protocol) followed in this study.

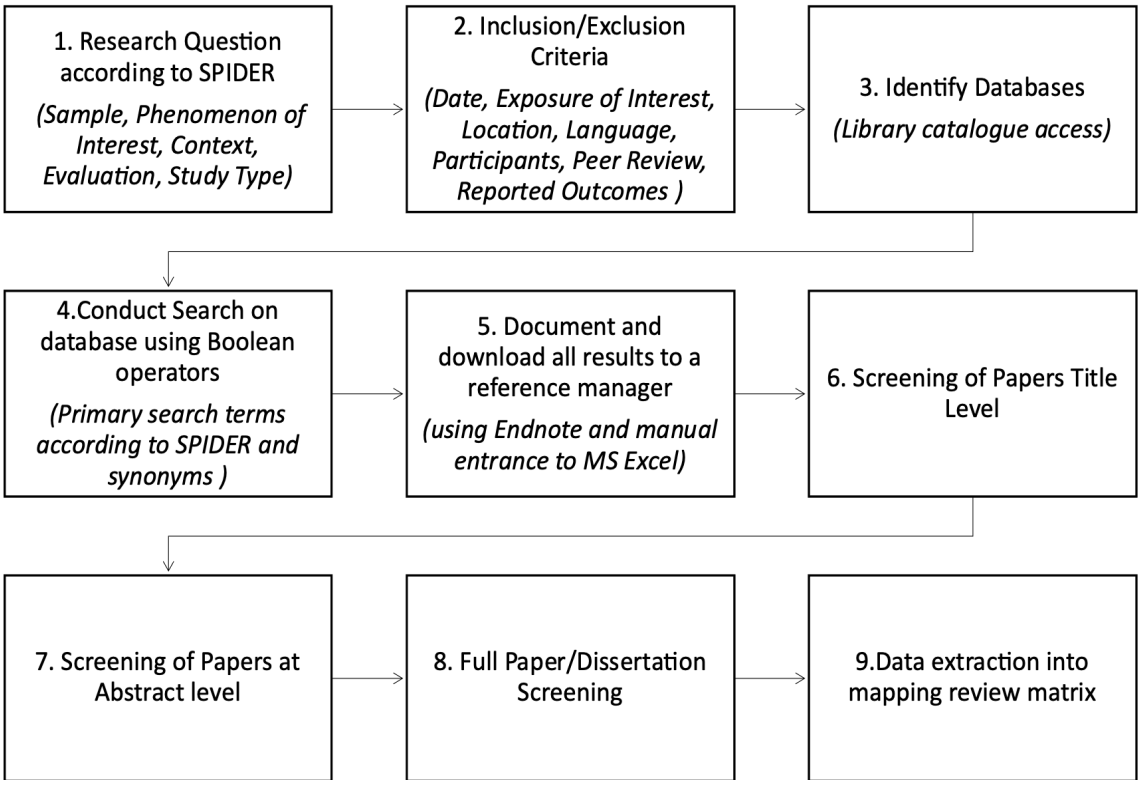

Figure 3.1. Mapping review process.

3.4.1.1 Research question

The first phase of the mapping review is to define the research question and determine the search terms which in turns assists in setting the scope of the planned review (Puks, 2016). In formulating the key elements of a mapping review question, the SPIDER tool developed by Cooke, Smith and Booth (2012) for qualitative evidence synthesis was utilised. This refers to the Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation and Research type. The SPIDER search strategy tool (see Table 3.2 below) is suitable in its application to qualitative studies and is similar to the PICO approach employed in quantitative studies (Brown, 2020).

Table 3.2

Application of SPIDER/PICO Tool

SPIDER search tool	**Application to study**
Sample/**P**opulation	Students with disabilities
Phenomenon of **I**nterest / **I**ntervention	South African higher education
Design/Context/**C**omparison	South African Post – School Education and Training (PSET) Institutions
Evaluation /**O**utcome	Inclusion
Research Type /	Qualitative/Quantitative/Mixed-Methods
Time (optional)	1994-June 2020

The following mapping review research question was generated:

How are students with disabilities included in South African higher education institutions?

3.4.1.2. Search strategy

The database Scopus and some of the databases within Ebscohost were utilised for this review study in accordance with the SPIDER search tool developed by Cooke, Smith and Booth (2012). It should be noted that a mapping review does not provide a formal guideline for the selection of a database. For this mapping review these databases were selected due to their size and their authoritative standing of indexed and full-text literature and resources relevant to various aspects related to education. Table 3.3 outlines the string of search terms that were used as part of the search strategy. Search terms were truncated where appropriate to ensure that all relevant studies were highlighted, and two BOOLEAN operators (AND and OR) were employed to optimize the search (Aliyu, 2017.)

Table 3.3

Search Terms used for SPIDER Search

	Primary Search Terms	Synonyms
S	Students with Disabilities	student* OR learner* OR disab* OR impair* OR Deaf* OR hear* OR blind* OR learn* OR physical*

Pi	Inclusion/Inclusive Higher Education	Inclus* inclusive education OR inclusive classroom OR special education OR inclusive pedagogy AND South Africa
D	South African PSET Institutions	South Africa AND higher education OR Universit* OR Institution* OR Post-school OR college OR post-secondary or postsecondary
E	Experiences/perceptions	experience* OR perception* OR attitude OR exclusion
R	**Research** Type and Time	Qualitative OR Quantitative OR Mixed-Methods January 1994 - June 2020

Note. *denotes truncations

The main researcher conducted the review independently for a period of 6 months, by searching the aforementioned databases.

3.4.1.3 Screening and appraisal

As the review was conducted by the main researcher only, and to exclude potential bias, explicit and objective inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed. The appraisal of the studies was guided by specific inclusion and exclusion criteria as outlined in Table 3.4. To be included in this mapping review, the studies had to comply with the following criteria: (a) published in peer-reviewed academic journals, books (including text books, monographs, research-focussed books and other scholarly works), or in theses between 1994 - 2020, (b) present original data (i.e., not a review of other studies), (c) only focus on the experiences of South African students with disabilities at a public university. The criteria are set out in more detail in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Mapping Review

Category	**Inclusion Criteria**	**Exclusion Criteria**
Date	1994 onwards (due to democratic dispensations and changes in law).	Studies conducted prior to 1994
Exposure of interest	Inclusion/Inclusive education in higher education	Inclusion/Inclusive education in a basic education setting
Geographic location of study	South Africa	Any study not conducted in South Africa
Language	English	Studies conducted in any language besides English
Participants	Students with disabilities	Learners with disabilities in a basic education setting
Reported outcomes	Self/Objective/Proxy	Studies that do not report on the experiences or perceptions or exclusion or inclusion of students with disabilities
Setting	University/PSET/Higher Education	Basic education
Study design	Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods	Any recognised academic research methodology
Type of publication	Journal papers, books and theses	Non-academic articles e.g., opinion pieces and websites

3.4.1.4 Screening and selection

Based on the initial screening of titles 137 studies met the inclusion criteria across the two databases. After a more detailed screening which involved screening of abstracts, a total of 84 records were excluded because they were either duplicates across the two data basis or did not meet the inclusion criteria. As a result, 53 records were included in the final review (see Figure 3.2. for the PRISMA diagram for article screening and selection).

Search terms:	student* OR learner* OR disab* OR impair* OR Deaf* OR hear* OR blind* OR learn* OR physical* AND Inclus* OR inclusive education OR inclusive classroom OR special education OR inclusive pedagogy AND "South Africa" AND higher education OR Universit* OR Institution* OR Post-school OR college OR post-secondary or postsecondary AND experience* OR perception* OR attitude OR exclusion

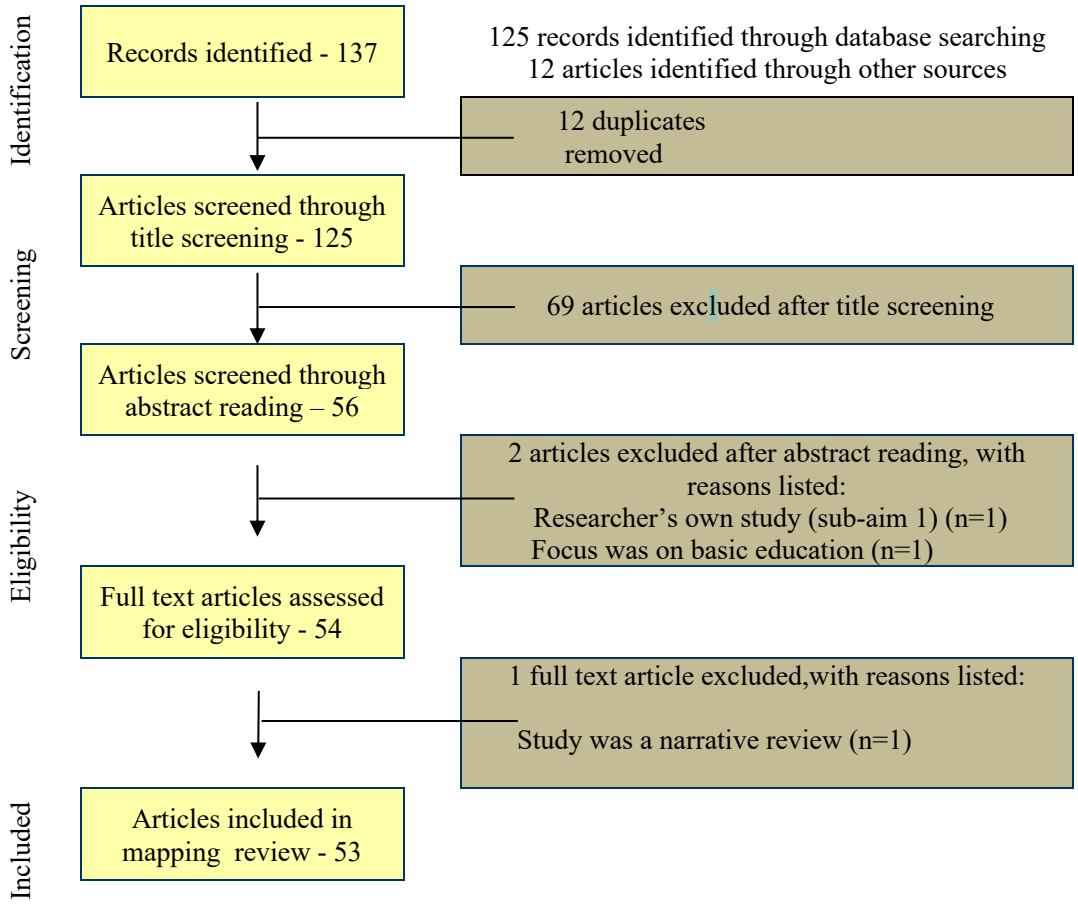

Figure 3.2. PRISMA Diagram outlining the appraisal of studies.

3.4.1.5 Analysis

The process of synthesising the 53 studies included charting (Askey & O'Malley, 2005). This data extraction method includes analysing the studies and sorting into various categories. The process of charting maximised the consistency in the synthesis of the studies (Puks, 2014). For this systematic mapping review, charted data was categorised in the following categories, namely citations (authors and year), title, context or location, category of disability of participants, sample main findings, and implications or recommendations. Data was charted utilising an MS Excel spreadsheet.

In addition to charting, a rapid qualitative analysis (Taylor et al., 2018) was conducted in order to specifically identify factors that influence the realisation of inclusion of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions. Rapid analysis (Taylor et al., 2018) precludes formal coding, and relies on note-taking while perusing the data source. In the current review, the researcher noted any factors mentioned in the results and discussion sections of the articles that were seen as influential in the realization of inclusion. These factors were grouped into four main themes, namely (1) transitioning into universities; (2) role of disability units; (3) structural factors (ableism) with 3 sub themes (3a) attitudinal barriers, (3b) physical barriers, (3c) teaching and learning barriers; and (4) lack of financial resources.

3.5 Results of Mapping Review

A total of 53 studies were identified that were published between 2003 and 2020 as tabulated in Table 3.5. below.

Table 3.5

Table of results from the Mapping Review

No.	Author	Year	Title
1.	Alabi, A. O., & Mutula, S. M.	2020	Digital inclusion for visually impaired students through assistive technologies in academic libraries
2.	Bell, D.	2013	Investigating teaching and learning support for students with hearing impairment at a university in the Western Cape (Stellenbosch University).
3.	Bell, D., & Swart, E.	2018	Learning experiences of students who are hard of hearing in higher education: case study of a South African university.
4.	Cassells, L., & Weber, C.	2018	A report on the current access to academic information at the University of Pretoria for visually impaired students: Challenges and opportunities.
5.	Dalton, E. M., Lyner-Cleophas, M., Ferguson, B. T., & McKenzie, J.	2019	Inclusion, universal design and universal design for learning in higher education: South Africa and the United States.
6.	Duma, P. T.	2019	Diversity includes disability: experiences of resilience in a university residence.
7.	Engelbrecht, L., & de Beer, J. J.	2014	Access constraints experienced by physically disabled students at a South African higher education institution.
8.	Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis.	2011	Disability in higher education, project report.
9.	Howell,C.	2005	South African higher education responses to students with disabilities: equity of access and opportunity?

No.	Author	Year	Title
10.	Howell & Lazurus	2003	Access and participation for students with disabilities in South African higher education: challenging accepted truths and recognizing new possibilities.
11.	Josephine, M. T., Netshisaulu, M. C., & Ncube, D.	2019	Africa's special persons and the challenges faced by students with disability at Black Historical University: A study conducted at the University of Venda, Limpopo province.
12.	Kajee, L. (2010).	2010	Disability, social inclusion and technological positioning in a South African higher education institution: carmen's story.
13.	Kaunda, N., & Chizwina, S.	2019	Providing Access to Students with Print Disabilities: The Case of the North-West University in South Africa
14.	Losinsky, L. O., Levi, T., Saffey, K., & Jelsma, J.	2003	An investigation into the physical accessibility to wheelchair bound students of an institution of higher education in South Africa.
15.	Lourens, H.	2015	The lived experiences of higher education for students with a visual impairment: A phenomenological study at two universities in the Western Cape, South (Stellenbosch University)
16.	Lourens, H., & Swartz, L.	2016	Experiences of visually impaired students in higher education: bodily perspectives on inclusive education.
17.	Lourens, H., & Swartz, L.	2016	‘It’s better if someone can see me for who I am’: stories of (in)visibility for students with a visual impairment within South African Universities.
18.	Lourens, H., & Swartz, L.	2020	'Every Now and Then You Slip up and Then You Are in Trouble': The Responsibility on Students with Visual Impairments to Access Reasonable Accommodations in South Africa.
19.	Luger, R., Geiger, M., & Lyner-Cleophas, M.	2019	Students’ voices: reflections of three young adults with cerebral palsy on factors facilitating their completion of mainstream schooling in South Africa.
20.	Lyner-Cleophas, M., Swart, E., Chataika, T., & Bell, D.	2014	Increasing access into higher education: Insights from the 2011 African Network on Evidence-to-Action on Disability Symposium – Education Commission.

No.	Author	Year	Title
21.	Lyner-Cleophas, M.	2016	Staff and disabled students' experiences of disability support, inclusion and exclusion at Stellenbosch University
22.	Lyner-Cleophas, M.	2019	Assistive technology enables inclusion in higher education: The role of Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association.
23.	Maboe, M. J.	2020	Comparison of Students Using Electronic Learning Website of the University of South Africa
24.	Mahlangu, V. P.	2020	Rethinking student admission and access in higher education through the lens of capabilities approach.
25.	Majoko, T.	2018	Participation in higher education: Voices of students with disabilities.
26.	Matshedisho, K. R.	2007	Access to higher education for disabled students in South Africa: a contradictory conjuncture of benevolence, rights and the social model of disability.
27.	Matshedisho, K. R.	2010	Experiences of disabled students in South Africa : Extending the thinking behind disability support.
28.	Mayat, N., & Amosun, S. L.	2011	Perceptions of Academic Staff towards Accommodating Students with Disabilities in a Civil Engineering Undergraduate Program in a University in South Africa.
29.	Mbuvha, T.	2019	Kinds of Support Offered by the Disability Unit to Students with Disabilities at Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa: A Case Study of the University of Venda.
30.	McIntyre, J., Gurayah, T., Adonis, N., Elliott, L. A., Müller-Nedebock, A., & Sibeko, Z.	2019	Exploring Facilitators to Participation for Wheelchair Users at a South African University.
31.	Mngomezulu, S.	2019	Delayed disclosure of disability related needs: Experiences of "at-risk" students in a South African university.
32.	Mokiwa, S. A., & Phasha, T. N.	2013	Using ICT at an Open Distance Learning (ODL) institution in South Africa: The learning experiences of students with visual impairments.

No.	Author	Year	Title
33.	Moodley, S., & McHunu, G.	2018	Integration experiences of student and qualified nurses with disabilities who graduated from selected KwaZulu- Natal nursing education institutions: An exploratory case study.
34.	Mutanga, O., & Walker, M.	2015	Towards a Disability-inclusive Higher Education Policy through the Capabilities Approach.
35.	Mutula, S., & Majinge, R. M.	2016	Information Behaviour of Students Living with Visual Impairments in University Libraries: A Review of Related Literature.
36.	Mutanga, O.	2018	Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in South African Higher Education.
37.	Nel, K., Rankoana, S. A., Govender, I., Mothibi, K., & Moloantoa, M.	2015	The challenges experienced by students with a physical disability (SWPD) at a higher education institution in South Africa.
38.	Ndlovu, S.	2019	Access into professional degrees by students with disabilities in South African higher learning: A decolonial perspective.
39.	Ngubane-Mokiwa, S. A., & Khoza, S. B.	2016	Lecturers' Experiences of Teaching STEM to Students with Disabilities.
40.	Ntombela, S.	2013	Inclusive education and training in South African higher education: Mapping the experiences of a student with physical disability at university.
41.	Phatoli, R., Bila, N., & Ross, E.	2015	Being Black in a white skin: Beliefs and stereotypes around albinism at a South African university
42.	Phukubje, J., & Ngoepe, M.	2017	Convenience and accessibility of library services to students with disabilities at the University of Limpopo in South Africa.
43.	Roux, C. J., & Burnett, C.	2010	The extent to which students with disabilities are included in elite sport at higher education institutions.
44.	Subrayen, R., & Dhunpath, R.	2019	A snapshot of the chalkboard writing experiences of Bachelor of Education students with visual disabilities in South Africa.

No.	Author	Year	Title
45.	Subrayen, R., & Suknunan, S.	2019	Learning Communities for Teaching Practice School Placements: A Higher Education Initiative to Promote Equity for Students with Disabilities.
46.	Swart, E., & Greyling, E.	2011	Participation in higher education: Experiences of students with disabilities.
47.	Titus, S., Young, M. E. M., Nassen, K., & Ownhouse, S. A.	2016	A systematic review of recreation patterns and preferences of students with physical disabilities.
48.	Tugli, A. K., & Ramakuela, N. J.	2015	Impact of disability grants on the needs of students with disabilities in a higher educational institution (HEI).
49.	van Jaarsveldt, D. E., & Ndeya-Ndereya, C. N.	2015	'It's not my problem': exploring lecturers' distancing behaviour towards students with disabilities.
50.	Vergunst, R., & Swartz, L.	2020	Experiences with supervisors when students have a psychosocial disability in a university context in South Africa.
51.	Vergunst, R., & Swartz, L.	2020	'He doesn't understand that he's struggling with the way I felt' – university students, psychosocial disability and disclosure in the Western Cape, South Africa
52.	Watermeyer, B. P.	2009	Conceptualising psycho-emotional aspects of disablist discrimination and impairment : Towards a psychoanalytically informed disability studies.
53.	Wright, S. A., & Titus, D. S. (2013).	2013	Experiences and perceptions of students with disabilities concerning factors influencing participation in recreational sports at a University in the Western Cape Province, South Africa.

Based on the findings, for almost a decade after the democratic dispensation (1994 – 1999), no studies on this topic were published. In the following decade (2000 – 2009), five studies were published. From 2010 onwards there has been a steady upward curve in the number of publications, with a steep increase in the number of publications between 2015 and 2020 reflecting a total of 39 publications.

Out of the 53 studies, 36 were conducted at only one higher education institution in South Africa, eight studies were conducted across two South African higher education institutions, and one study was conducted across all higher educations. The remaining eight studies provided a general overview regarding the state of inclusion of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions.

In terms of type of disability (e.g. visual, hearing, physical, neurological or psychological disabilities), studies varied in their participant selection. A total of 23 studies included students within a specific disability category, while 16 studies included students across multiple disability categories. The remaining 14 studies did not specify the disability type.

In terms of methodology, a significant amount of studies (46) were conducted using a qualitative methodology. Data collection tools included either the use of interviews, focus groups and/or questionnaires. A total of seven document reviews of institutional policies were also included, however, these reviews were commentaries on the policies rather than an in-depth analysis. Figure 3.3. provides a visual representation of the mapping review.

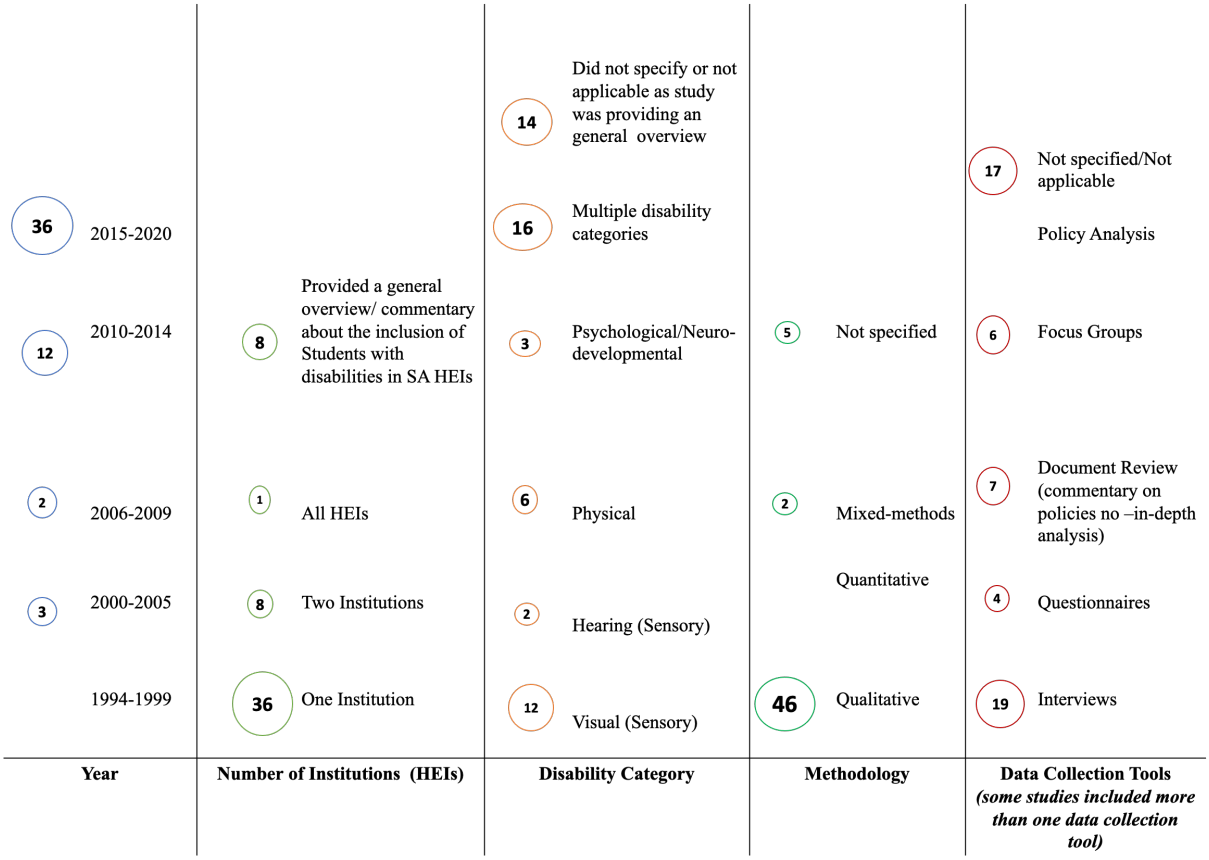

Figure 3.3. Mapping review results.

3.6 Factors Influencing the Realisation of an Inclusive Higher Education

From the rapid analysis (Taylor et al, 2018), four factors that influence the realisation of inclusion of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions were identified, namely (1) transitioning into universities, (2) role of disability units, (3) structural factors (ableism) with 3 sub themes (3a) attitudinal barriers, (3b) physical barriers, (3c) teaching and learning barriers, (4) lack of financial resources.

3.6.1 Transitioning into University

Mahlangu (2020) reviewed literature pertaining to student admissions and access to higher education and found that universities take into account students' racial and ethnic backgrounds, socioeconomic status and students' disabilities in the admission process. Students with invisible disabilities experience challenges due of lack of communication between the institution and the student applying. It was also evident in earlier studies that for students with disabilities, the inequalities they experienced in higher education, began with inequalities that have shaped the whole schooling system in South Africa (Bell & Swart, 2018; Howell, 2005; Howell & Lazarus, 2003; Lourens & Swartz, 2016a). Students with disabilities who were eligible for university (those who meet admission requirements) were often restricted when

attempting to access their preferred university or their degree course of choice, owing to the perceptions of university staff members responsible for course admission, regarding the students' disabilities (Howell, 2005; Matshediso, 2007; 2010).

3.6.2 Disability Units

There was clear evidence that Disability Units play a central role in the inclusion of students with disabilities (Bell, 2013; Howell & Lazarus, 2005; Lourens, 2015; Lyner-Cleophas, 2016; Mbhuva, 2019; Mutanga, 2018). However, findings from the mapping review further reveal that insufficient funding is allocated towards the operational functioning of Disability Units. A lack of commitment from senior management in the allocation of funding for the operation of the Disability Unit was also noted (Lyner-Cleophas, 2016). Therefore, a funding model needs to be developed as part of policy to address the economic accessibility of universities. There is an urgent need for the university management across all universities to be aware of the support requirements of students with disability to ensure that they are provided with the support they need.

3.6.3 Disability Policies

Document reviews were conducted by Chiwandire and Vincent (2019), Engelbrecht and de Beer (2014), Losinsky, Levi, Saffey and Jelsma (2003), Lyner-Clepohas (2019), Matshediso (2010), Mbuvha (2019), and Swart and Greyling (2011). These studies focused predominantly on the implementation of institutional disability policies but lacked a critical appraisal of these policies. These studies have shown that whilst there has been an increase in development of institutional policies relating to the inclusion of students with disabilities, these students continue to face varying challenges in higher education owing to a lack of comprehensive provisions within these policies. Notably, Chiwandire and Vincent (2019) found that students with disabilities were often confronted by insurmountable disability funding barriers and therefore needed to secure additional funding from external bursaries or other crowd funding activities towards the payment of their tuition fees and reasonable accommodation requirements.

Mbuvha (2019) utilised the document review process to verify the data collected through focus group interviews and observations. Generally, the services offered by the Disability Unit to students with disabilities at this particularly university, were well received. The author attributed this positive perception to the provisions with the university's disability policy, that provide for a number of services including use of assistive technology. This study also found that the disability policy stated the services provided to students with disabilities are influenced by resource constraints and subject to an annual review.

3.6.4 Structural Factors - Ableism

The attitudinal, physical, and teaching and learning barriers (elaborated upon below) highlight the structural factors, that further perpetuate ableism and hinder the inclusion of students with disabilities at South African higher education institutions.

3.6.4.1 Attitudinal Barriers

Course selectors (admissions officers and faculties) often incorrectly assumed that if a student had a disability, their ability to learn is also impaired (Lourens & Swart, 2020; Nel, Rankoana, Govender, Mothibi, & Moloantoa, 2015; Vergunst & Swartz, 2020). As a result, students with disabilities were often dissuaded from the university or course of their choice owing to perceptions of the university stakeholders responsible for course admission about their disability (Mutanga, 2018; Vergunst & Swartz, 2020) . These students were made to believe that they were unlikely to cope with the academic requirements of the degree. It is also evident that the attitude of university stakeholders towards inclusion and policy implementation was a major challenge of inclusive education (Bell, 2013; FOTIM, 2011).

Negative perceptions regarding students with disabilities and misconceptions around capabilities prevent students with disabilities from accessing universities (Mutanga & Walker, 2015). Emphasis was placed on individual deficits and a student's impairment and challenges as opposed to institutional criteria for admission or structural transformation. Students with disabilities furthermore continued to face academic, physical, social and attitudinal barriers when accessing or attempting to access higher education and placement in internship sites or clinical placement (Mngomezulu, 2019; Rowe, Steyl, Phillips, 2019; Subrayen & Dunpath, 2019; Subrayen & Suknunan, 2019).

3.6.4.2 Physical Barriers

Inadequate physical infrastructure and lack of access to the built environment continued to be a challenge for students with physical and visual disabilities (Lyner-Cleophas, 2016; Nel, Rankoana, Govender, Mothibi, & Moloantoa, 2015; Ntombela, 2013). Therefore, it is evident that despite funding allocated to all higher education institutions to improve the physical accessibility of the built environment (Bell, 2013; DHET, 2018), this still remains a challenge. Universities must critically evaluate factors that facilitate the inclusion of students with physical disability and utilize funding allocation appropriately.

3.6.4.3 Teaching and Learning Barriers

E-learning environments are often lauded as adhering to UDL as they allow for multiple formats of engagement, expression and representation. In their study on the role of accessibility and usability in an e-learning environment, Maboe, Eloff and Schoeman (2018)

found that e-learning websites were inaccessible to students with disabilities and were not optimized for teaching and learning for students with disabilties. Furthermore, UDL guidelines were not properly adhered to.

Bell and Swart (2018) explored access to higher education for students with hearing disabilities. Results showed that students with hearing disabilities were not aware of available learning support, which precluded them from accessing it. The authors argued that lecturers should be trained in the principles of UDL. Similarly, Lourens and Swart (2020), Subrayen and Dunpath (2019), and Howell (2005), all argue for clear and enforceable guidelines for lecturers regarding their role and responsibility in the inclusion of students with disabilities in teaching and learning activities. This mapping review further indicates that provision for students with disabilities is far from ideal, as these students confront restrictions to or exclusions from the curricula, assessment opportunities, social activities, built environment and financial resources (Alabi & Mutula, 2020; Bell & Swart, 2018). These findings indicate a disjuncture between the South African national policy framework (as discussed in Chapter 2) that promotes an inclusive higher education system and the experiences of students at South African higher education institutions. Matshediso (2007) analysed the experiences of students with disabilities in South African universities and found that universities have been addressing reasonable accommodation needs at their own discretion and within limited means. Furthermore, phenomenological reports of students with disabilities at South African universities by both Bell (2013) and Ntombela (2013) indicated that these students are often told that the university is not equipped to support a student's accommodation needs to allow them full and equal participation. Inclusive terms utilised in disability policies such as reasonable accommodation, access, participation and throughput are vague and hence open for different interpretations by students with disabilities and the universities.

3.6.7 Lack of Financial Resources

The FOTIM research report (2011) showed that current funding is not adequate as students with disabilities pay personally to address needs specifically related to their disability (including information and communication technology [ICT], South African Sign Language interpreters, and assistive devices). Mudau, Thizwilondi, Netshisaulu, and Ncube (2019) conducted a study on challenges faced by students with disability at a historically disadvantaged university and found that the inclusion of students of students with disabilities was hindered by the lack of financial resources. Earlier studies have also noted that students with disabilities in higher education are faced with complex challenges owing to financial constraints (Howell, 2005; Lyner-Cleophas, 2016; Matshediso, 2007; Mutanga, 2018).

Mutanga (2017) specifically pointed out that financial constraints also affect the operation of Disability Units.

3.7 Summary of Mapping Review Findings and Implications

This mapping review focused on studies that explored the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African universities. Complex changes have been noted since 2005 regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions. The review also highlighted that the field of disability studies in South Africa has benefitted from a strong history of qualitative inquiry that has shaped theory and practice among disability researchers and disabilities activists within the higher education sector. It was evident that students with disabilities have systematically experienced discrimination and institutionalized ableism at South African higher education institutions. Structural factors point to ableist processes and services that further marginalise students with disabilities. What may be missing is a critical evaluation of these policies themselves and aligning the policy provisions with students' experiences. Institutional disability policies are required to translate national imperatives and polices into specific institutional courses of action, setting out the rights and responsibilities of role players as well as provisions made in concrete and implementable terms (Ndlovu, 2016). Brabazon (2015) points that the inclusion of students with disabilities must be addressed by policies of higher education institutions. All universities presently have disability policies aimed at ensuring the inclusion of students with disabilities at their institutions (DHET, 2018; FOTIM, 2011; Heiman and Precel, 2003; Sayed, 2003). The institutional disability policy should set out clearly the parameters of the provisions that students can expect and that policy implementers can be held accountable for. When students experience a lack of provision or exclusionary practices, that cause may be found either in a limitation of the policy itself, or in limited policy implementation, or in a combination of these factors.

Despite the growing number of studies, there is a paucity of research that critically evaluates the disability polices of South African higher education institutions. Furthermore, although these studies highlight challenges experienced by students with disabilities with regards to inclusion, the studies are often conducted at only one institution, therefore limiting the generalisability of these findings. Lastly, the studies included in this mapping review were mostly informed by qualitative methodologies and lack a guiding framework from which to analyse their findings. Therefore, there is a gap in the field of disability studies for a rigorous, systematic and comprehensive study focusing on disability policy and praxis.

3.8. The 4-A Framework to Evaluate Inclusion at Higher Education Institutions

The internationally recognised and widely used 4-A Framework was conceptualised within a human rights domain by the human rights activist and legal scholar Katarina Tomaševski (1999) during her term as Special Rapporteur of the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights (UNCHR) from 1998 – 2004. The 4-A Framework was first introduced in the 'Right to Education Primer 3' (Tomaševski, 2001).

This Framework states that the right to education is only fully realised if educational provisions exhibit four essential markers, namely availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability (Tomaševski, 2001). Availability relates to the existence of education institutions and programmes and the provision of appropriate infrastructure, human and financial resources and educational materials to support education delivery (Tesemma, 2012; Tomaševski, 2004). Accessibility is based on the principle of non-discrimination and inclusion (Tomaševski, 1998). It requires that the education system is based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination and that positive steps are taken to include marginalized groups. Acceptability requires that the educational content is relevant, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate (United Nations, 2016). Adaptability requires the education system to implement UDL principles. Additionally, the core elements of adaptability are the flexibility of curricula and instructional techniques for the benefit of all students (Tomaševski 2004). The core elements of this principle - in line with UDL - are the flexibility of the curriculum, instructional methodologies and pedagogy and assessment opportunities for the benefit of all students (Tomaševski 2004).

The 4-A Framework provides the conceptual framework for this current study, and specificity for addressing the right to education, particularly for marginalised populations such as persons with disabilities, as it outlines governmental obligations to guarantee and realise the right to education (Schaeffer, 2009; Tomaševski, 2001). Although this Framework was not developed specifically for persons with disabilities, it has been widely utilised to evaluate provisions in state and institutional inclusive policies relating to persons with disabilities (Murungi, 2013; Skelton, 2013; Tesemma, 2012). Internationally, this Framework has been used to analyse legislature and policy on the basic education of children with disabilities in Sweden and Scotland (Maxwell & Granlund, 2011). Maxwell and Granlund (2011) conceptually reworked the 4-A Framework and added a fifth marker, affordability, to broaden the participation perspectives of their proposed model for analysing these policies and legislative documents. In their model, affordability encompassed not only financial constraints but also time spent by children with disabilities when engaging in an activity.

The 4-A Framework has received criticism for paying little attention to higher education and for not explicitly stating the position taken with respect to the level of education (Klees & Thapliyal, 2007). In 2016, Hajrullaia and Saliua (2016) sought to explore theories, approaches and methods that can help countries improve access to higher education. They found that there was a paucity of frameworks that could be used as an evaluation tool to analyse the inclusion of marginalized groups in all spheres of the society, including higher education. Hajrulla and Saliu (2016) argued that when applied in the context of higher education, the 4-A Framework was useful for the evaluation of the right to education as a human right and that the application of the Framework was effective for framing the right to higher education as a progressive right. The implications of their study were that the 4-A Framework has applicability to the higher education context.

In terms of contextual relevance, the 4-A Framework has been applied to the South African educational context by Tesemma (2012). The study sought to critically analyse legislature and policy on the provision of basic education to children with disabilities in South Africa. Findings revealed that when measured against the 4-A Framework, South African law and policy documents address every aspect of accessibility and availability. Adaptability and economic accessibility (as framed by Tesemma, 2012), through funding and provision of free education was inadequately addressed. In a comparative study of Kenya and South Africa, Murungi (2013) discussed the application of the 4-A Framework to the right to primary education of children with disabilities. The study revealed that despite recognizing the right to education for children with disabilities as being one of the most essential rights, the implementation of the provisions in accordance with the 4-A Framework presents the greatest challenge in the realisation of an inclusive basic education for children with disabilities. Further application of this Framework in South Africa was done by Skelton (2013) as UNESCO Chair of Education Law in Africa. The 4-A Framework was utilised for the analysis of the role of the courts in ensuring the right to a basic education in a democratic South Africa. The study concluded that when measuring South African case law within the basic education context against the interlinked principles of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability, some significant advancements in recent years had been achieved. However, Skelton (2013) warns that the provision of an adequate basic education for all children is yet to be realised.

Inclusive education is an on-going process that requires the application of a comprehensive model that addresses all aspects of the education system (Schaeffer, 2008). Issues of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability for persons with disabilities do not only apply to basic education systems but are equally important to consider in the higher

education context, including the policies that govern this sector of education. Furthermore, policy implementation is binary to the provisions stipulated within a policy. The 4-A Framework can be used to evaluate both inclusive policy imperatives and the implementation of these inclusive policies at universities.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a mapping review regarding the published literature on the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions. The author systematically searched for, selected, and mapped studies that were conducted between January 1994 and June, 2020.

The mapping review examined the volume and characteristics of the available evidence about the experiences of students with disabilities in South African higher education institutions. Results indicated that factors that influence the inclusion of students with disabilities in higher education include transitioning of students with disabilities into university, presence of Disability Units and services offered, development of disability policies, attitudinal and physical barriers, teaching and learning practices and lack of financial resources. The realisation that inclusion for students with disabilities at higher education institutions in SA is still hampered by a number of factors. Therefore, in spite of progressive policies, inclusion is not fully realised at these institutions. The chapter culminated with the introduction of the 4-A Framework as a useful analysis Framework to describe the inclusion of students with disabilities as provided for in institutional disability policies and as experienced by students themselves (praxis).

CHAPTER 4
METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the qualitative methodology used in this study. It commences with outlining the aims and sub-aims of the study. Thereafter, a description of the underlying paradigm that informed the methodology of this study is provided. The design used is described next. The study consisted of three stages, namely the preparatory stage, the data collection and analysis stage, and finally, the convergence of results stage. Each stage is described, commencing with the preparatory stage, which entailed selecting the case, obtaining ethics approval, and developing the coding Framework. The description of the 4-A Framework is also provided. The second stage consisted of collecting and analysing data from two data sources, namely from document analysis and online questionnaires. A paper reporting on the process and outcome of analysing the disability policies has been published (Ramaahlo, Tönsing, & Bornman, 2018). The procedures used in collecting and analysing data from these two sources are described.

4.2 Aims of the Study

The main aim of this study was to describe and analyse how students with disabilities are included in the disability policy and praxis of Tier 1 South African Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework. The following three sub-aims consequently emanated from the main research aim:

1. To analyse the disability policy provisions of South African Tier 1 Universities that give effect to the right to inclusive higher education for students with disabilities, in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework;
2. To analyse the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding their inclusion at South African Tier 1 Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework.
3. To compare policy provisions and praxis as perceived by students with disabilities at Tier 1 Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework.

4.3 Research Paradigm

Research paradigms can be characterised as an analytic lens from which to understand a phenomenon (Kuhn, 1962). A critical research paradigm informed the methodology of the current study (Myers, 2009). Ontologically, a critical research paradigm assumes that social reality is historically constituted and is reproduced by people or structures (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). People who are marginalised either on the basis of disability, racial, gendered, ethnic, political, economic, cultural factors, can consciously act to change their social circumstances,

however, their ability to do so is constrained by various forms of social, cultural and political domination (Thomas, n.d) . Therefore a critical research paradigm seeks to analyse and critique social structures, and raise consciousness that will potentially lead to empowerment and social change (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2000). A critical research paradigm lends itself to the theoretical and conceptual framework of this study namely, critical disability theory and the revised 4-A Framework. Critical disability theory, makes visible those versions of reality that have the potential to realize the full inclusion of students and allowed the researcher to think through the political, social, race and ableist issues that impact upon the inclusion of students with disabilities. The revised 4-A Framework used in this study stems from a human rights approach and seeks to address social justice in terms of the right to education for marginalized populations, in this case, students with disabilities seeking higher education. By focusing on the students' perceptions, the study gives voice to a marginalized sector of society (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klinger, Pugach & Richardson, 2005).

In the current study, the perceptions and experiences (social reality) of students with disabilities included at Tier 1 higher education institutions in South Africa was investigated, and the extent to which disability policies at these institutions either eliminate or perpetuate exclusion through discriminatory and oppressive practices. In the current study a qualitative methodology to collect, analyse and interpret data was utilised. Employing a qualitative methodology in the current study allowed for the collection of rich data followed by a more in-depth description and interpretation of key findings. A case study research design was therefore utilized as the inquiry approach in the present study.

The positioning of a researcher within study is a critical ontological component of studying a phenomenon (Hampton et al., 2021). Within a critical (disability) theory framework, positionality refers to the researcher's world view and the position they adopt in a research activity embedded within a socio-political context (Rowe, 2014). The following positionality statement (critical reflection) will be written utilising a first-person narrative. I am a South African Black woman, without a disability and currently employed as the Head of a Disability Unit at one of the Tier 1 Universities used for the case study. Therefore, it was important for me to be continuously cognisant of my experiences, beliefs and assumptions that may influence the research process. Particularly, as a manager of the Disability Unit, I was aware that this role and its associated mandate, could create a power dynamic between the research participants and myself, as my role is a privileged identity. It was essential that I leveraged this position to highlight and critique structural ableism, whilst also taking into consideration the perceptions and experiences of students with disabilities through an emancipatory research agenda, by

emphasizing and advancing social justice as it pertains to the inclusion students with disabilities. In doing so, I perceived my positionality as being a disability ally to students with disabilities. Consequently, throughout this study I had to ensure that I was able to offer a nuanced analysis of the myriad of underlying dynamics that create inequities and exclusionary practices against students with disabilities.

4.4 Research Design

A descriptive qualitative case study design was used in this study. A case study design refers to an in-depth description and analysis of a confined system (Merriam, 2009). According to Creswell (2013) a case study design allows for the understanding of a situation in great depth. Hence, utilising this design for this study allowed for a rich and deep understanding and interpretation of the phenomena at play within a higher education context. Denzin and Lincoln (2013) define a case as a single entity under investigation around which there are boundaries. In agreement with Creswell (2013), Denzin and Lincoln (2013) define a single entity as an individual, community or even as specific policy. The current study sought to understand how students with disabilities are included in Tier 1 Universities in South Africa and aimed to identify and describe the uniqueness of this case rather than attempting to generalize the findings (Nieuwenhuis, 2012). Tier 1 (i.e., research intensive) Universities were selected as a case study as they represented what is termed a "best case" study (Baskarada, 2014). All Tier 1 Universities have drafted and implemented disability policies to ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities at their respective institutions. Furthermore, Tier 1 Universities are known to be well-established higher education institutions that are recognised for their academic excellence, economic activity and innovation, high levels of scholarship, and international diversity of students and staff profile (Times Higher Education, 2017). Within the South African context, these universities are considered to have Disability Rights Units and are generally able to provide students with disabilities with a wide range of support services (FOTIM, 2011).

A case study design is also characterised by the use of multiple data sources, and is a research approach that enhances data credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). For this current study the two data sources included document analysis and an online questionnaire. The document analysis was selected as a technique to gain an understanding of the degree to which disability policies adequately address the revised 4-A Framework. As students with disabilities were the key constituency in this study, online questionnaires were employed as a data collection technique to gain their perceptions regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in line with the revised 4-A Framework.

4.5 Stages of the Study

The study consisted of three distinct stages, namely the preparatory stage, data collection and analysis and finally convergence of results (Figure 4.1).

<table>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Chapter 4</td><td colspan="2">Stage 1: Preparatory stage

Case selection

Approval by the Research Ethics Committee
in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria

Development of coding scheme</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Stage 2: Data collection and analysis</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td><u>Data Source 1: Policy documents</u>

Sub-aim 1:
To analyse the disability policy provisions of South African Tier 1 Universities that give effect to the right to inclusive higher education for students with disabilities, in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework.

Procedures
Document selection
Document analysis</td><td><u>Data Source 2: Online questionnaire</u>

Sub-aim 2:
To analyse the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding their inclusion at South African Tier 1 Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework.

Procedures
Pilot study 1: Online focus groups
Pilot study 2: Online questionnaire
Main study:
Recruitment
Data collection
Data analysis</td></tr>
<tr><td>Chapter 4</td><td>Results of policy document analysis</td><td>Results of analysis of praxis</td></tr>
<tr><td>Chapter 5</td><td colspan="2">Stage 3: Convergence of results for final analysis and discussion</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 4.1. Overview of the three stages of the study.

4.6 Stage 1: Preparatory Stage

4.6.1 Case Selection and Description

As per Section 4.3, Tier 1 universities were selected as the case study. Since the aim of the current study was to obtain an understanding of a specific case rather than generalize findings to other similar populations, purposive sampling was used to select the case, namely South African Tier 1 universities.

At the time when this study was conducted there were 26 public universities in South Africa, that comprised of a student cohort of 985 212 and a staff cohort of 51 310 (academic and professional services staff members) (DHET, 2017). Rankings and groupings of universities are a complex process and there are a number of ranking systems available. In the current study, the selection of universities to include in the case study was based on the grouping and ranking used by South Africa's Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET). The CHET groups place all South African universities within one of three clusters, namely Research-intensive Universities (Tier 1), Universities of Technology (Tier 2) and Comprehensive Universities that combine formative and technical/vocational higher education (Tier 3) (CHET, 2012).

A university classified as research-intensive (Tier 1) is characterised by both the range of disciplines and fields in which knowledge is created and disseminated, as well as its infrastructure that typically includes libraries and science laboratories as well as other features which permit teaching and research activities at the highest possible level (Altbach, 2014). A university in South Africa is ranked as a Tier 1 by the South Africa's Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) when a university is research intensive as measured by research outputs (CHET, 2012). Currently, five universities in South Africa are ranked as Tier 1. These five Tier 1 Universities vary in their historical backgrounds, as they reflect the racial divide of South Africa's past (Lourens, 2015). Three of these universities (referred to as Universities 1, 2 and 3 in this study) were recognised by the apartheid government as 'for whites only' institutions. This implied that these institutions were founded with the purpose of providing training and education for people designated as White. The language of instruction was predominantly Afrikaans with limited courses available in English. Conversely, the fourth institution (University 4), was not discriminatory in its admission criteria as it accepted admissions from students of all racial categories. When racial segregation was enforced in apartheid South Africa in 1959, University 4 took a stand against the apartheid government. As a consequence, riot police regularly invaded the campus and staff and students were banned, deported or detained (Council for Higher Education, [CHE] 2010). University 5 is currently

recognised as a historically disadvantaged university and is the newest of the Tier 1 Universities. This university was established on 1 January 2004, following a merger between two universities, one of which was created in the 1930s and served a predominantly Indian student population group. The other was created for those classified as Coloureds and Indians by the government in the 1960s (Reddy, 2004). The merger in 2004 proceeded amidst misgivings from staff of both institutions who expressed their concerns regarding a lack of cultural compatibility and loss of institutional memory, although both institutions provided education and training predominantly for people designated as Indian (Cebekhulu & Mantzaris, 2006; van der Westhuizen, 2011). More information as to student numbers and services offered to students with disabilities at each of the institutions is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Description of Tier 1 Universities

Characteristics	**University 1**	**University 2**	**University 3**	**University 4**	**University 5**
Student numbers	29 231	59 514	30 160	37 202	32 654
Services offered to students with disabilities as per university webpages					
Academic support	✓	✓	✓	□✓	□✓
Accessible study venues and a computer lab	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Accessible transport services	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adapted text arrangements	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assistive technology services: provision, screening, training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Concession applications	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Consultative support to staff and disability sensitivity training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Physical access to all environments	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Test and examination accommodations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Partnership with society for students with disabilities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Orientation and mobility	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provision of holistic support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Characteristics	University 1	University 2	University 3	University 4	University 5
Referrals for recommended textbooks in electronic format	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
South African Sign Language interpreter/practitioner	✓		✓	✓	✓

4.6.3 Ethics Approval

Before proceeding with the study, ethics approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the researcher's institution (see Appendix A). However, due to changes in the data collection techniques, additional ethics approval was required for each change. The final email response from the Ethics Committee stipulated that the identity of the university/ies remain confidential to ensure the integrity of the university is upheld. As a result, the names of the universities are not disclosed in the current study.

4.6.4 Development of Coding Scheme

The development of the coding system entailed four steps, as depicted in Figure 4.2. These steps are further explained in the sections following.

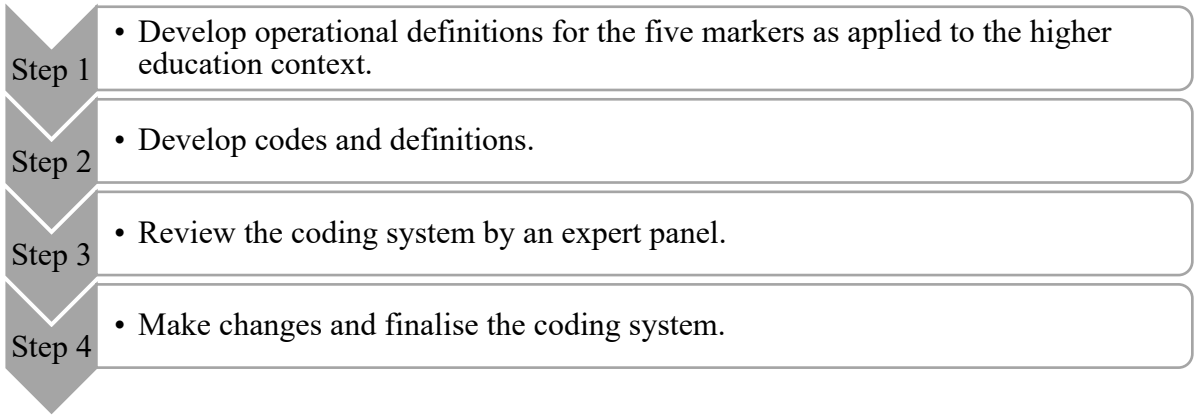

Figure 4.2. Steps to develop the coding system.

4.6.4.1 Operational definitions of the five markers (themes)

The overarching themes of the coding system comprised of the four markers from the 4-A Framework, namely availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability (Tomašveski, 1999) with the addition of a fifth marker, namely affordability, based on the work by Maxwell and Granlund (2011). The researcher, in collaboration with the supervisors, developed operational definitions for these five markers as applied to the South African higher education

context. These definitions were adapted from the ones that Tomašveski (1999) had developed for basic education. The markers were defined as follows:

The *Availability* marker refers to the existence of higher education institutions and academic programmes that students with disabilities can apply to without any restriction (DHET 2013; Howell 2001; Tesemma, 2012). In addition, availability requires that Disability Rights Units are established at these institutions as they play a central role in the inclusion of students with disabilities (Lourens, 2015; Matshedisho, 2010; Ramaahlo et al., 2018).

The *Accessibility* marker is based on the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion (Tomašveski, 1999). In fulfilling this marker, higher education institutions are required to actively work to remove barriers that would prohibit students with disabilities from gaining admission to these institutions. A proactive approach to accessibility is needed to achieve this ideal, in which institutions must address structural and cultural barriers that exist that may restrict the opportunity of students with disability to gain admission. The attitudinal, physical and social barriers that students with disabilities experience at these institutions, substantially limit the ability of these students to gain equal access to higher education institutions (Ramaahlo et al., 2018).

The *Acceptability* marker is based on higher education institution accepting and recognising students with disabilities as a part of the university community by indicating a willingness to engage with students with disabilities (to hear the student voice) (Ramaahlo et al., 2018; Tomašveski, 1999). The provision of a platform for the voices of students with disabilities is seldom found in inclusive policies and practices (Beauchamp-Pryor, 2012; Tinklin, Riddell & Wilson, 2004).

The *Adaptability* marker requires higher education institutions to apply UDL principles (UN, 2016). The core feature of adaptability, in line with UDL is the flexibility of curricula, instructional techniques and assessment opportunities for the benefit of all students (Tomaševski 2004). UDL describes the proactive design of curricula, instructional techniques and assessments without the need to adapt these post-hoc once students fail to benefit from education (Edyburn, 2010; Rose, Meyer, & Hitchcock, 2011). A university's academic and social environments should be conceived, designed and applied to meet and adjust to the requirements of every student. In addition, the institution is required to adapt and reasonably accommodate the needs of each individual student (Tomaševski 2004).

In contrast to UDL, reasonable accommodation describes the adaptation of the learning environment reactively to meet the needs of specific students who are unable to benefit from the UDL curriculum, instructional techniques and assessment opportunities without adaptation.

Reasonable accommodation is therefore an additional step to ensure UDL (Ramaahlo et al., 2018). According to the CRPD (United Nations, 2016) the term 'reasonable' is understood as the result of the contextual test that involves the relevance and the effectiveness of the accommodation. Although the availability of resources and any possible financial implications are considered when assessing disproportionate burden, the duty to provide reasonable accommodation for students with disabilities is enforceable from the moment it is requested and must be considered in light of the overall obligation to develop an inclusive higher education system. The CRPD asserts that using financial crisis and the lack of resources as a justification for failure to progress towards an inclusive education system is in direct violation of Article 24 of the CRPD (United Nations, 2016).

Within a critical disability theory framework, both UDL and reasonable accommodation are desirable as measures to reduce the impact of an impairment on the person's participation in educational opportunities. UDL ensures that a baseline requirement of accessibility is met, thereby acknowledging the role of the environment on participation, whereas reasonable accommodation acknowledges that individualised measures may also be needed to respond to individual needs of students with disabilities. Reasonable accommodation without UDL would be more reminiscent of the special education approach, whereby the learning needs of students are addressed through specialised measures only, without an expectation being placed on the general educational environment to become more accessible and accommodating.

The *Affordability* marker refers to the economic accessibility of educational services provided by the institution. This marker was important to include, taking into account the vast disparity in per capita funding in different education departments during the Apartheid era. The right to higher education is qualified to the extent that reasonable measures (within available resources) must be made to achieve the progressive realisation of this right (Arendse, 2011). Operationally, South African universities are constrained in terms of financial resources as they often lack the necessary funding to provide adequate resources for students with disabilities (Kaunda & Chizwina, 2019). The higher education student protests of 2015 and 2016, #FeesMustFall, students have brought to light the economic disparities that make higher education difficult to afford - more so for students with disabilities, as there are higher costs associated with having a disability (i.e., requiring assistive devices, access to health professionals) (Lourens & Swart, 2020). In light of this, affordability is an important marker to include for an analysis of disability policy provisions of South African institutions.

4.6.4.2 Development of codes and definitions

As a second step, 17 indicators (refer to Figure 4.4.) that were relative to the South African higher education context were provisionally identified by using the indicators that Tomaševski (1999) and Schaeffer (2008) had developed for basic education. These 17 indicators served as codes to further delineate the five makers of the revised 5-A framework. The 17 indicators address the following: academic and social environments, instructional techniques, support structures, UDL, resource allocation, and changes in attitudinal and social barriers in order to embrace diversity.

4.6.4.3 Expert panel reviews

The revised 4-A Framework coding system was subjected to two rounds of expert panel reviews. The panel of experts who conducted both of these reviews comprised of ten researchers in the field of disability studies, of whom eight held master's degree qualifications and two held Doctoral degree qualifications. The expert panel conducted a blind allocation of the 17 indicators (to be used as codes) to the five markers. The panel also commented on the clarity of the wording. The researcher reviewed the responses from the expert panel and noted indicators that were problematic for the expert review panel (i.e., the ones that were incorrectly allocated). Of the 17 indicators, five (spread across the five markers) were considered ambiguous. Subsequently, the descriptions of these five ambiguous indicators were revised to best fit the description of the marker. A second round of review by the same expert panel included a blind allocation of the revised 17 indicators to the five markers. The outcome of the review indicated that one of the 17 indicators under the *Availability* marker was ambiguous. This indicator as well as the operational definition for *Availability* was revised to avoid ambiguity. Thereafter, the final coding system (see Figure 4.3) of the revised 4-A Framework comprising five markers and 17 indicators was used for the document analysis and focus group data analysis.

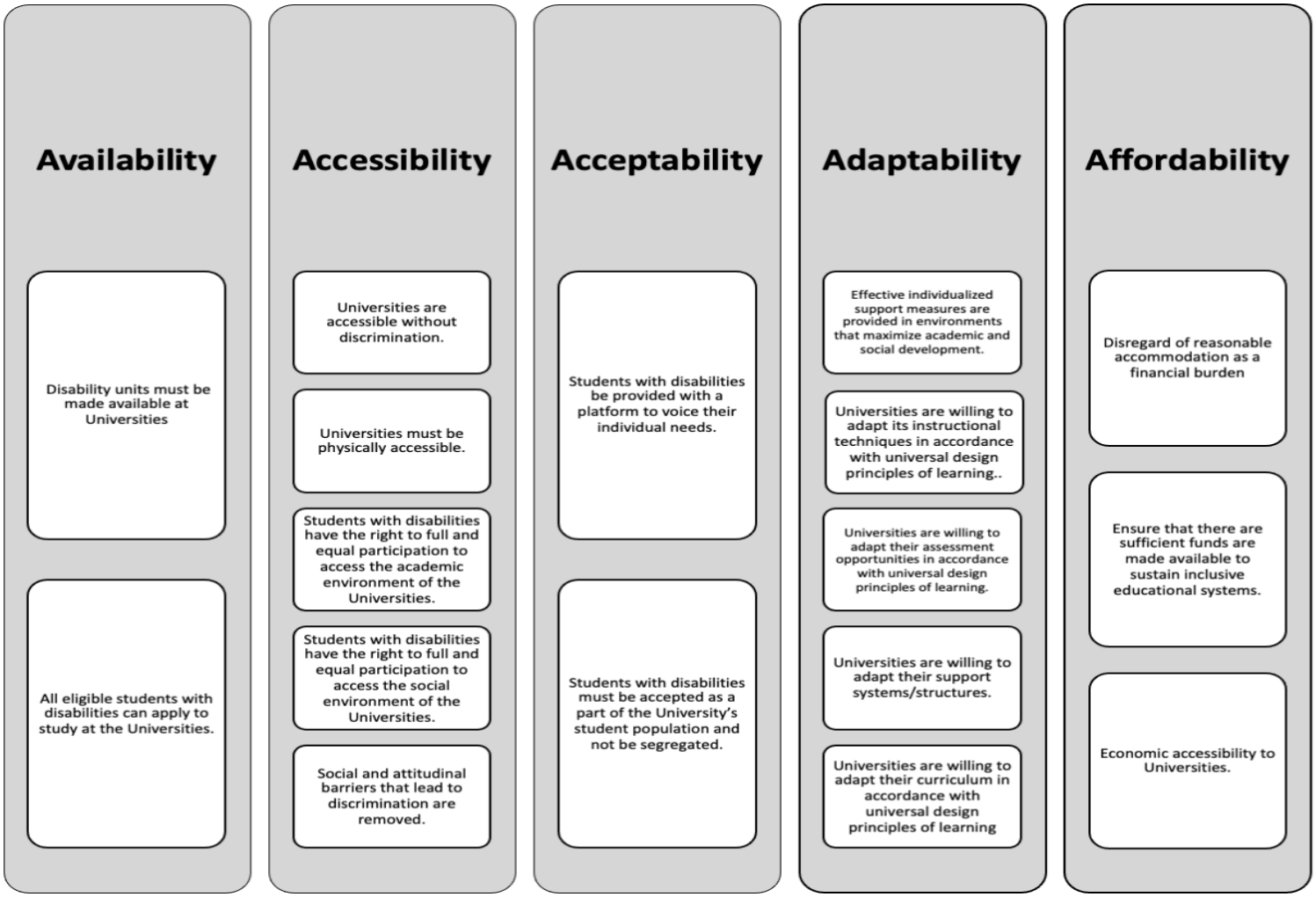

Figure 4.3. Coding scheme, including the five markers and 17 indicators with definitions.

4.7 Stage 2: Data Source 1

4.7.1 Sub-Aim 1

Sub-aim 1 was to analyse the disability policy provisions of South African Tier 1 Universities that give effect to the right to inclusive higher education for students with disabilities, in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework.

4.7.2 Document Selection

The data source selected to answer Sub-aim 1 of the current study were disability policies of Tier 1 South African Universities. These disability policies are publicly available from the websites of Tier 1 Universities. They were therefore open to review. The policies were accessed directly from each University's webpage using the search terms "*Policy for Students with Disabilities.*" As with all University policies, disability policies are drafted by key stakeholders in the university. Disability Rights Units would be the key custodian to ensure that the policy is implemented. As is practice at the researcher's current institution, disability policies are reviewed every three years and the process is led by the Disability Rights Unit (UP, 2013). Thereafter, the amended policy is reviewed and approved by the Senate of the relevant university.

4.7.3 Document Analysis

Thematic analysis is a research method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A deductive qualitative analysis was used to categorise the provisions made in disability policies of Tier 1 Universities according to the markers and indicators of the revised 4-A Framework. In doing so, this study utilised a protocol that integrated two qualitative deductive approaches, namely deductive thematic analysis and pattern matching as developed by Pearse (2019), Hyde (2000), and Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006). The deductive qualitative analysis of the disability policies was conducted in three steps.

Step 1: Application of coding scheme

The coding scheme that was developed (see Section 4.6. 4.), was applied to the policies as a deductive analysis tool. As the coding scheme was developed within a deductive qualitative protocol, the researcher strictly adhered to the coding scheme that was developed, and no additional codes were identified in the policy analysis. A process of consensus coding by the researcher and supervisors was conducted utilising the revised 4-A Framework as the coding scheme.

Step 2: Pattern Matching

In line with a deductive approach, pattern matching was applied, in which the disability policy provisions were matched against the five markers and 17 indicators of the revised 4-A Framework. Each numbered text segment within the disability policy was allocated one code (i.e., indicator) from the revised 4-A Framework. In the instance when a numbered segment was lengthy and clearly referred to more than one code, it was further divided (by consensus) into codable units, after which each unit was then allocated to one code from the revised 4-A Framework. It seldom occurred that a longer segment needed to be further divided.

Step: 3 Recording of hits and misses

The final step of the analysis involved a recording of the hits and misses to identify how the revised 4-A Framework best fits the data. This involved analysing if the five markers and 17 indicators are addressed in the polices of Tier 1 Universities or not. The hits and misses were tabulated as: '*Yes*' to indicate that specific provisions were addressed in the policy; '*No*' indicated that specific provisions were not being addressed in the policy. In the last column of the Table 5.2 the totals related to each of the markers and their associated indicators were calculated, by adding up the number of '*Yes*' responses in each column and row. Responses from each of the three coders were compared. When any disagreement arose, these were discussed to reach a resolution to a code by consensus. This allowed for rigor to be demonstrated during the deductive qualitative analysis process (Braun & Clarke 2006). The use of a predefined coding system for the qualitative deductive analysis increased the procedural integrity of the coding process as it allowed for the coding not to drift (Braun & Clarke 2006). Furthermore, documenting the coding process in this manner, provided a mechanism against bias, thus establishing dependability (Riege, 2003).

4.8 Stage 2: Data Source 2

4.8.1 Sub-Aim 2

Sub-Aim 2 was to analyse the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding their inclusion at South African Tier 1 Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework.

4.8.2 Participants

The second data source focussed on the perceptions of undergraduate and postgraduate students with disabilities at Tier 1 Universities. This data was collected by means of online interviews. The participant selection criteria, recruitment and sampling procedures as well as a description of the students with disabilities who participated in the study are given in the sections following. The participant selection criteria is provided below in Table 4.2

Table 4.2

Participant Selection Criteria

Criterion	Justification	Measure
Student has a self-disclosed disability that can be classified as a physical, sensory or invisible disability and is registered with the university's Disability Rights Unit	The current study focuses on students with disabilities. Furthermore, the researcher sought to ensure that students with all categories of disabilities are included. Students with disabilities are not a homogenous group, and therefore their experiences would differ. The barriers experienced by students with a visual disability may differ to a student with a psychiatric disability (Fuller, et al. 2004; Mullins & Preyde, 2013).	Biographical Questionnaire (see Appendix B)
Student has been registered at the selected university for at least six months.	The duration of a semester at a South African university is between 5-6 months. As per university regulations, in this time a student would have completed the registration and orientation process, attended lectures, practicals and tutorials and completed the required assessment procedures (i.e., semester tests and semester-end examinations). Students would therefore have had numerous experiences that would enable them to judge their in- or exclusion stemming from various aspects of university life. Furthermore, over the course of a semester the Department of Student Affairs would have conducted a number of events within the social environment of the university, such as student life events.	Biographical Questionnaire
Student has access to an internet-connected computer and preferred assistive technology with which he/she accesses this computer (if needed).	Data collection procedure will take place online, thus students will require access to internet-connected computers. Tertiary studies typically require access to the internet, and students with disabilities enrolled at Tier 1 institutions typically have access to the internet, using assistive technology such as screen-readers, enlargement software and text-to-speech software if needed.	Biographical Questionnaire

Note. [a] Invisible disabilities is an umbrella term to refer to disabilities that do not have a physical manifestation (Mullins & Preyde, 2013). Although some of the symptoms of the disability may be exhibited behaviourally, the cause of the disability remains invisible. The types of disabilities that are classified as invisible for the purposes of this research include neurodevelopmental disabilities (e.g. Specific Learning Disorders in reading, writing and or mathematics, ADHD), psychiatric disabilities, neurological disabilities and medical disabilities.

4.8.3 Sampling and Recruitment

Non-probability convenience sampling was utilised for the second stage of data collection for the main study, as the researcher recruited students via student disability societies that had a social media platform that the researcher was able to access. An email which included an invitation to the study and the link to the online questionnaire on Qualtrics was sent to the contact email address of Disability Student Societies of each of the five Tier 1 Universities utilizing their social media pages (see Appendix C). Student society details were found via a social media search bar. The online questionnaire(5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire) (see Appendix D) was prefaced with an informed consent form (see Appendix D). Participants who selected the "*I consent*" checkbox could proceed to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was comprised of biographical questions (Appendix B) and the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire developed as per the revised 4-A Framework (see Appendix E). Eight students responded to the invitation and agreed to participate (see Table 4.4). Due to a lack of responses from this recruitment strategy insufficient data was obtained. The researcher therefore decided to use an additional recruitment strategy, namely recruiting participants via the institutional Disability Rights Units at Tier 1 Universities, thereby using comprehensive sampling (i.e., inviting all participants who met the selection criteria). The permission process to recruit students via the institutional Disability Rights Units is provided in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Permission process per university (students)

Tier 1 University	Process for Permission for Data Collection
University 1	Ethics application to the Research Ethics Committee
University 2	Permission email sent to the Registrar of the University
University 3	Ethics application via online ethics application system
University 4	Permission letter sent to Deputy Registrar
University 5	Ethics application submitted to the Research Ethics Committee

When conducting data collection for the second data source (i.e., students' perceptions), two challenges were experienced by the researcher which necessitated varying strategies of data collection. For institutions that required a permission letter only, the letter included details about the researcher, rationale for the study and what would be expected from the Disability Rights Unit Manager and participants. A permission form was attached (See Appendix F) . For

University 2, the Registrar granted permission to conduct the study on the basis that the integrity of the institution be maintained and no identifying details relating to the institution be disclosed. For University 4, permission was granted by the Deputy Registrar, after which the researcher emailed the Manager of the Disability Rights Unit for assistance in disseminating (once-off only) the online survey link and invitation letters to students registered with the institution.

Universities 1, 3 and 5 required the researcher to undergo an additional ethics application. This saw the researcher having to submit an updated research proposal, relevant informed consent forms and a PDF version of all instruments (i.e., 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire) in addition to completing ethics application form either online or via an electronic form that was emailed to the researcher. For University 1, the ethics application was emailed to the Research Ethics Committee. For University 2, the permission request letter was sent to the Registrar of the University. For University 3, the ethics application was completed via the online ethics application system. For University 4, a permission request letter was sent to Deputy Registrar. For University 5, an ethics application was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee. No response was received from University 5, regarding the procedure to follow for permission to contact the Disability Rights Unit.

Once written approvals were received from four out of the five universities via the varying approval processes, an email was sent to the Disability Rights Unit Managers. The email included an attachment of proof of permission from their respective institution and an electronic invitation email inviting students to participate in the main study (see Appendix C) to all students registered with the Disability Rights Unit. The electronic invitation email included the link to a consent form(see Appendix D), a biographical questionnaire (Appendix B), and the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire (see Appendix E) all available via the same link on Qualtrics. The information email also contained contact details of the researcher in order for students to be able to engage and obtain clarifications before consenting to participate. The invitation email with the link was sent out by the Disability Rights Units to students registered with them. Participants who selected the 'I consent' checkbox could proceed to the biographical and online questionnaire. One student responded to the invitation and gave consent to participate in response to the additional recruitment strategy.

4.8.4 Description of Participants

Table 4.4. provides a description of the participants, as per the descriptive categories included in the biographical questionnaire.

Table 4.4

Summary of Participants Recruited via Both Recruitment Strategies

Description	**P1**	**P2**	**P3**	**P4**	**P5**	**P6**	**P7**	**P8**	**P9**
Age range	18-21	18-25	18-21	22-25	18-21	18-21	22-25	18-21	22-25
Gender identity	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male	Male	Female	Female	Female
Race	African	African	White	Coloured	White	African	White	White	African
University	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
NSFAS funded	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Disability type	Hear-ing & psycho-logical	Visual	Psycho-logical	Physical	Visual	Visual	Psycho-logical & learning	Visual	Physical

4.8.5 Equipment And Materials

The following section discusses the material and equipment used in this study.

4.8.5.1 Biographical questionnaire and consent form

A consent form (see Appendix D) was drafted and also loaded onto Qualtrics. The consent form was the preface of the questionnaire. In the format of a checkbox, potential participants could select either '*I consent, begin the study*' or '*I do not consent, I do not wish to participate'*. If the participant chose to not provide consent, the questionnaire was automatically discontinued. If the participant chose to consent, they were redirected to a biographical questionnaire (see Appendix B). The biographical questionnaire elicited details such as age, disability status, name of institution and current support received. All the questions had to be completed. The biographical questionnaire was followed by the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire. Both the biographical and the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire was estimated not to take more than 15 minutes to complete.

4.8.5.2 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire

Due to various changes and decisions following the pilot studies (as explained in Section 4.9), the final format for collecting data from students was via an online questionnaire.

The researcher had initially devised an online focus group schedule (see Appendix G)that had been validated by an expert panel – the same panel that had validated the coding Framework (see Section 4.6.4.3). The format of the focus group schedule (see Appendix G) allowed the researcher to adapt it to an online questionnaire namely the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire (see Appendix E) that could be accessed via Qualtrics. The 11 open-ended questions contained within the questionnaire were aligned to the coding scheme discussed in Section 4.6.4. The researcher ensured that the questions addressed the five markers of availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and affordability. In doing so, the 17 indicators were used to formulate questions about students experiences regarding the provisions at their respective institutions. The researcher avoided using dichotomous questions that could be answered with a simple '*yes*' or '*no*' thus preventing brief responses. Two pilot participants gave feedback on the questionnaire (see Section 4.9.2.2) and changes were made after this feedback to ensure that questions were clear and easy to answer.

4.8.5.3 Qualtrics

As outlined in the previous section, Qualtrics was selected as a platform for the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire. Qualtrics is an online service for creating and distributing electronic questionnaires or surveys. The university through which the researcher is registered has a Qualtrics Enterprise plan. This plan allows for full access to all features of Qualtrics, including the '*Check Survey Accessibility*' feature. This feature diagnoses which questions are inaccessible and provides recommendations for increased accessibility for participants with disabilities (Qualtrics, 2018). Utilising Qualtrics allowed for the questionnaire to be easily accessible to participants via a link that can be included or posted to any online platform, such as emails or social media pages.

4.8.5.4 Blackboard

For the first pilot study (see Section 4.9.1 and Appendix H), the online focus group was scheduled to take place utilising the University of Pretoria's e-education platform namely ClickUP (Blackboard). Participants who gave consent to participate in the study would have been provided with a username and password. The use of a pseudonym (username) allowed for a non-threatening environment (Hine, 2000). To ensure cybersecurity and data security, password protected access for the focus groups were set up by the ClickUP administrator (Turney & Pocknee, 2005).

4.8.5.4 Google Forms

For the first pilot study (see section 4.9.1) the consent letter (see Appendix H) and biographical form (see Appendix I) were created using Google Forms. Google Forms was

selected as due to ease of access and no cost to the participant in completing and returning the form (Cobanoglu et al., 2001).

4.8.5.5 Hardware

The researcher's personal computer was used to develop the online focus group schedule and questionnaire.

4.9 Pilot Studies

Pilot testing allowed for the researcher to determine if there were any limitations in the research design, materials and methods and thereafter make the required adjustments (Turner, 2010; Yin, 2003). Pilot testing was conducted to highlight any challenges in the intended recruitment strategy. The intention was also to test the online-focus group methodology. This was the format of data collection originally envisaged for the study. Since the online focus group format involving students with disabilities in the South African context is relatively novel, it was imperative that this aspect of the study (including the logistics) was tested prior to the commencement of the main study. This allowed the researcher to evaluate any deficiencies in the design (Lancaster, Dodd & Williams, 2004).

Results from the first pilot study required that major adjustment be implemented to the data collection techniques (refer to Table 4.5). The second pilot study aimed to evaluate the collection of data from students with disabilities utilizing an online questionnaire (see Appendix N and O). Both pilot studies were intended to serve as guidelines for the main study.

4.9.1 Pilot Study 1

4.9.1.1 Participants

As the target population for this study is small and contained, the researcher decided to recruit students from a Tier 2 University for the first pilot study. In this way, all students with disabilities at Tier 1 Universities would still be eligible to be included in the main study. The remaining selection criteria for selecting students from the Tier 2 University for Pilot Study 1 were the same as those utilised for the participants for the main study (see Section 4.8).

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria (see Appendix A). A permission letter was submitted to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Research at the selected Tier 2 University (see Appendix J). The letter provided detail about the researcher, rationale for the study and what would be expected from the Director for the Student Counselling Division, the Disability Rights Unit Manager as well as students with disabilities. A permission reply form was attached to this information letter. A telephonic response was received from the selected University to request the researcher to re-address the permission letter to the Director of their Student Counselling Division and

Disability Rights Unit Manager. The permission letter was revised accordingly (see Appendix K). Permission was granted by the Director of the Student Counselling Division on the basis that only one opportunity for recruiting participants would be allowed. It was specified that under no circumstance (including lack of response from participants) would the researcher be provided a second opportunity to recruit of students with disabilities.

The intention was to use non-probability convenience sampling to select 10 students with disabilities. Once written approval was received from the Director of the Student Counselling division, an administrator was tasked by the Director to forward an email to all students registered with the Disability Rights Unit. The email sent by the Disability Rights Unit included Google Forms links to a consent letter inviting students to participate (see Appendix H) and to a short biographical questionnaire (Appendix I). The consent letter explained the eligibility criteria and details of the study and extended an invitation to contact the researcher directly if there was an interest to participate and/or obtain further details about the study. Once a respondent provided consent, they would have been asked to complete a short biographical questionnaire on Google Forms about their name, race, disability status, degree information.

Only one student responded to the invitation (via email) and requested additional information regarding any incentives for participation. In her response, the researcher again included the link to the consent letter. However, no further communication was received from this student nor from any other students at the pilot university.

4.9.1.2 Objectives, materials, procedures, results and recommendations of the pilot study

The results and recommendations of the pilot study are outlined in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

Pilot Study 1: Objectives, Materials, Procedures, Results and Recommendations

Objective	**Materials**	**Procedure**	**Results**	**Recommendations and adaptations**
To evaluate the recruitment strategy, and permission letters.	Permission letters to the selected university's research directorate (See Appendix J). Permission letters to Director of the Student Counselling division and Disability Rights Unit Manager (See Appendix K) Electronic consent letter to students (see Appendix H)	The permission letter was emailed to the DVC for research at the pilot university. It was then requested that the permission letter be addressed to the Director of the Student Counselling division and Manager of the Disability Rights Unit. The permission letter was adapted and addressed to the Director of the Student Counselling Division and Disability Rights Unit Manager. The Director requested further explanation regarding the study i.e., level of involvement required from the manager of the Disability Rights Unit. The role of the manager was clarified by indicating that the manager need only forward the invitation letter to all students registered with their Disability Rights Unit. Following this clarification, permission was granted to conduct the pilot study. The manager stipulated that only one opportunity for data collection would be permitted. An adapted consent letter was devised which clarified the Disability Rights Unit manager's role during the recruitment of participants.	No students were recruited.	The researcher hypothesized that both the once-off recruitment opportunity and the time-commitments required to participate in an online focus group were factors that contributed to the poor response rate. It was therefore decided to change the recruitment strategy and to change the data collection method to be less time consuming and time-dependent for participants. A second pilot study was conducted using an online platform questionnaire loaded onto Qualtrics. See Section 4.9.1.4.

Objective	Materials	Procedure	Results	Recommendations and adaptations
To determine the clarity of the information letter, consent form and biographical questionnaire.	Consent letter (Appendix H) Biographical questionnaire (Appendix I)	The administrator of the Director of Student Counselling Division emailed links to the letter and the questionnaire to all students with disabilities registered at the Disability Rights Unit of the Tier 2 University.	No responses were received.	Unknown. No conclusions could be drawn for main study.
I tries to make shorter to fit on 3 pages	Consent letter (Appendix H) Biographical questionnaire (Appendix I)	The administrator of the Director of Student Counselling Division emailed links to the letter (including the consent form) and the questionnaire to all students with disabilities registered at the Disability Rights Unit of the Tier 2 University.	No responses were received.	Unknown. No conclusions could be drawn for main study.
To determine if the use of ClickUP allowed for the online focus groups to be facilitated.	ClickUP forum on the Blackboard Online Learning System	The use of a username and password to enter the forum provided secure access to the members of the group as well as the researcher. The online forum was set on ClickUP to allow participants to test their access to the forum.	No responses were received	As no students volunteered to participate in the study and considering the limitations set by the pilot university, it was decided that the recruitment procedure and data collection methods proposed be redesigned to attempt to recruit participants more effectively.
To determine if ClickUP could be integrated with the various assistive technologies.	ClickUP forum on the Blackboard Online Learning System	The online-focus group was intended to be set up two days in advance to overcome any technical issues that arose such as log in difficulties incompatibility with their assistive technology. During this 2-day trial period all participants would have been asked to respond to an icebreaker on the online forum to ensure that they had access.	No responses were received.	

Objective	Materials	Procedure	Results	Recommendations and adaptations
To determine if the questions posed during the focus group would elicit participants' perceptions during the online group discussions.	Focus group guidelines. (Appendix M) Focus group questions (Appendix G) Focus group transcripts Evaluation form of the focus group script (Appendix L)	The researcher developed questions asking the participants about their perceptions regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework (see Appendix E). These were uploaded (one question per thread) into the ClickUP forum. Guidelines were developed about the engagement in the focus group (Appendix M) that were to be emailed to the participants prior to the commencement of the focus group. The guidelines stated that participants should contribute to questions as often as they would be able over the two days. Participants were required to answer all the questions at least once. Participants would have had the opportunity to type their responses to the questions posed by the researcher and also to post comments on the responses of other participants. To allow participants the opportunity to communicate their responses as clearly as possible, they would have been able to edit their individual online responses during the course of the online focus group. The evaluation form of the focus group was to allow participants an opportunity to provide feedback on the clarity of the instructions and questions, usability of the platform and overall impression of the online focus groups and recommendations for improvement.	No responses were received.	Specifically, the researcher would approach independent societies and organizations of students with disabilities for recruitment and would also change the online focus group format to an online questionnaire to do away with the requirement for a longer engagement over a specific period of time.

4.9.1.3 Results and amendments for Pilot Study 1

Results from the first pilot study suggested that adjustments be implemented to improve the response rate. Recruitment of students with disabilities who would be willing to participate in an online focus group via the Tier 2 University proved to be more difficult than envisaged. The researcher postulated that this may have been due to:

- Recruitment being restricted to only one email being sent out to the students via the Disability Rights Unit and that no follow-up opportunities were allowed. The researcher was also not allowed to gain access via a face-to-face meeting with students with disabilities.
- Students with disabilities being unwilling or unable to commit to an online focus group. This may have been due to the time commitments involved in having to access the online platform within a specific time frame.
- Furthermore, at the time when the study was conducted most Universities had switched to a hybrid learning model as a result of the #FeesMustFall student protests that saw Universities switching to online learning in an effort to save time lost during university closures. Therefore, students were required to complete certain aspects of modules online. It is likely, that the online focus groups could have been seen as additional burden over and above the notational hours required for computer based activities and assessments.

Based on the researcher's personal experience in receiving research requests, students with disabilities are an over-researched population group. In the best interest of the students, this often results in the strict gatekeeping from the Disability Rights Unit. As similar restrictions and gatekeeping in accessing students with disabilities at Tier 1 institutions was expected, the researcher therefore needed to reconsider or expand the recruitment strategy, and also reconsider the online focus group format. Due to lack of responses from the first pilot study, no data was obtained. The researcher therefore decided to firstly trial an alternative data collection strategy that would be less demanding of participants. She decided to utilize an online questionnaire (refer to Table 4.7). The proposed structure of the online focus group schedule (see Appendix G), allowed for the researcher to adapt the questions for an online questionnaire (see Appendix F). Accordingly, the online focus group schedule was adapted for use on Qualtrics (Qualtrics, 2018), an online survey software. The development of the questionnaire is described in detail in Section 4.8.5.2 The main aim of the second pilot study

was to test the data collection method of using this online questionnaire. As a secondary aim, the researcher also decided to ask the participants of Pilot 2 for ideas to recruit more students.

4.9.2 Pilot Study 2

4.9.2.1 Participants

Students with disabilities were recruited from the researcher's institution. The pilot study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria (see Appendix A). Non-probability sampling was utilized, namely convenience sampling, as participants who were willing and available to be studied were recruited as participants for the second pilot study. An email which included an invitation to the study and the link to the online questionnaire was sent to five students with disabilities (see Appendix N). The online questionnaire was prefaced with a consent letter (see Appendix O). Participants who selected the '*I consent*' checkbox could proceed to the survey. Three students responded to the invitation and agreed to participate in the second pilot study (see Table 4.6)

The same selection criteria as those used for the main study (see Section 4.8) were utilised for selecting participants for the second pilot study. Additional descriptive information was obtained by means of the online questionnaire and is summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Description of Participants: Pilot Study 2

Pilot online questionnaire	**Participant 1**	**Participant 2**	**Participant 3**
Age range	35 – 44 yrs.	18 – 24 yrs.	18 – 24 yrs.
Gender identity	Male	Female	Female
Race	White	African	African
Course type	Postgraduate	Undergraduate	Undergraduate
NSFAS funded	Yes	Yes	No
Disability type	Visual	Learning	Learning

4.9.2.2 Objectives, materials, procedures, results and recommendations of the second pilot study

The results and recommendations of the second pilot study are outlined in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

Pilot Study 2: Outcome

Objective	**Materials**	**Procedure**	**Results**	**Recommendations and adaptations**
To identify potential nonresponse questions.	Online questionnaire (see Appendix O,P).	The completed questionnaires were evaluated for missing data.	No missing data was evident.	None.
To determine the clarity of the questions within the online questionnaire.	Online questionnaire developed using Qualtrics (see Appendix O,P).	Following the completion of the online questionnaire participants were asked to report on questions that they found difficulty to understand.	One participant indicated Question 8 and 10 required further clarity. No other participants indicated difficulty in understanding the questions.	Question 8: Recommendation was made to include more examples apart from academic support. Thus '*adapted residence'* and *use of an 'assistive device'* was included. Question 10: Recommendation was made to the edit the question to *'Please share your experiences regarding support services offered by the Disability Rights Unit. In your response you may include your current and/or previous experiences when interacting with the Disability Rights Unit or reasons for not doing so'.*
To evaluate data collection procedure.	Email sent to prospective participants and	Participants were asked for any procedural feedback that might	Feedback received emphasized the use of	Snowball sampling will be used as a sampling strategy in addition to convenience sampling.

Objective	Materials	Procedure	Results	Recommendations and adaptations
	online questionnaire (See Appendix N).	improve the completion of the questionnaires.	snowball sampling to recruit more participants.	
To determine if those students with disabilities that required the use of assistive technology, were able to access the online questionnaire.	Qualtrics.	The participant with a visual disability made use of speech-to-text software to access the online questionnaire.	No barriers to accessing the online questionnaire were identified.	Maintain in current form.
To obtain input from participants as to alternative recruitment strategies for the main study.	Electronic informed consent letter (Appendix N) and online questionnaire (Appendix O).	By utilising convenience sampling, participants were identified to participate in the current study. Emails were sent to senior students with disabilities who volunteer their services at the Disability Rights Unit.	Three out of the five participants responded to an email request to participate in the study.	Participants suggested to use snowball sampling via email, Twitter and Facebook to recruit more participants.

In summary, the results of the pilot studies included valuable recommendations that increased the quality of the main data collection. This included clarifying the questions to elicit clear responses. Following analysis of the pilot results, the recommendations were incorporated before the final questionnaire was published online. The recruitment strategy was revised and finalized before the main data collection commenced.

4.10 Reflections on Data Recruitment Difficulties

The difficulties encountered during the recruitment stage of this study can be interpreted from a critical disability theory lens. As indicated in Section 4.9.1.3, gatekeeping was experienced at the time of recruitment. It is likely that the researcher experienced significant difficulty recruiting participants, as students with disabilities may have been deemed as particularly vulnerable and unable to safeguard their own interests in research (i.e., unable to provide consent to participate in research) by their institutions. This view is supported by the findings of the mapping review (see Chapter 4) that indicated that students with disabilities have experienced institutionalized ableism at South African higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the difficulties experienced in gaining permission from institutions as well as with the recruitment of participants need to be interpreted within the socio-political context of the time. The current study took place during #FeesMustFall movement (see Section 4.6.4.1), i.e., the student protests that took place during 2015 and 2016 across all South African higher education institutions, whereby students were calling for, amongst other demands, the decommodification of higher education; and gender, racial, and class justice (Ndelu, 2017). University management responses to these issues and the protests itself were far from ideal. University management utilised court indicates to prevent students from protesting, and outlawed any student gatherings (Booysen & Bandama 2016). These court interacts were also used by university management to justify the deployment of both private security and the South African Police Services at university campuses, which led to violence against students. Students across all universities have made numerous allegations of police brutality and some students were jailed (Malabela, 2017). Furthermore, institutional disciplinary procedures were instituted against student protesters.

Against this backdrop, it was evident that when institutional power and issues of institutional discrimination (racism, sexism, classism and ableism) were being challenged and social justice being demanded, universities' management responded negatively to this and

attempted to silence these movement through the use of brutal force and the silencing of dissenting voice, thereby further entrenching institutional discrimination. A critical disability theory lens brings to light pre-existing systems of power within institutions that have been put in place to continuously perpetuate disadvantage and ableism (Hall, 2019). Based on the researcher's personal experience, at the time of the study, the higher education environment was restrictive and there were issues of distrust between students and governance structures at these institutions. It is likely that a study such as this one that sought to critically analyse disability policies and students' perceptions, could have exposed exclusionary practices against students with disabilities and structural ableism may have been made evident through the findings of this study. The lack of response from three out of five universities in terms of granting permission to conduct this study and the restrictions placed on data collection from the remaining universities, seemed to signal self-protection against any possible dissent from students with disabilities regarding institutional ableism. Furthermore, this lack of response and restrictions seemed to imply an unwillingness to engage with social discourses pertaining to the inclusion of students with disabilities.

4.11 Procedures for Main Data Collection

Following the recommendations for adaptation and change in Pilot study 2, and taking into account the socio-political context in which the study was conducted (see section 4.10) the following materials were used in this phase of the main study and will now be discussed in depth. The development and refinement of the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire was discussed in Section 4.6.4. Utilising the 5-A Questionnaire, would allow for a once-off online engagement in which participants would spend a reduced time on their responses. The 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire used for the main data collection comprised of three sections: consent letter, biographical questionnaire and the nine open-ended questions that was developed for the online focus group questions (see Appendix G-H). Both Questions 8 and 10 were adapted in line with recommendations from the pilot study before publishing the questionnaire on Qualtrics. The published questionnaire included the consent letter as the preface. In the format of a checkbox, potential participants could select either '*I consent, begin the study*' or '*I do not consent, I do not wish to participate'*. As pointed out in Section 4.5, if the participant chose to not provide consent, the questionnaire was automatically discontinued. If the participant chose to consent, they were redirected to the biographical questionnaire followed by the nine questions based on the revised 4-A Framework. The biographical questionnaire requested details such as age, disability status, name of institution and current support received. All the questions were compulsory. The online questionnaire was estimated

not to take more than 15 minutes to complete. The questionnaire on Qualtrics was open to receive responses for a period of 13 months (November 2018 - December 2019).

As the researcher did not have access to the number of students who received the survey invitation via the Disability Right's Unit at their respective universities or across the five universities, a response rate could not be established. Furthermore, no reminders could be sent to these students for the same reasons. Qualtrics was selected as it allowed for the elicitation of responses from a large cohort of students with disabilities in a secure and accessible format. As indicated in Section 4.8.2 nine participants responded to the questionnaire.

4.12 Data Analysis

The revised 4-A Framework was used to conduct a deductive qualitative analysis of all questionnaire responses. Due to a limited number of responses, a cross-comparison of policy and praxis was not feasible. Furthermore, the participants' responses to the questionnaire itself were limited, as they provided at most one to two sentences in their responses, rather than longer written reflections. It is likely that the questionnaire format precluded a more participatory approach and richer data. The scope for additional inductive analysis of responses beyond the deductive themes was therefore limited. The deductive qualitative analysis of the questionnaires was conducted in three steps.

Step 1: Application of coding scheme

The coding scheme that was developed (see Section 4.6.4.), was applied to the questionnaire responses as a deductive analysis tool. The researcher and main supervisor independently deductively analysed all the online questionnaire responses according to the coding scheme. The data was coded in two steps (steps 2 and 3 here following):

Step 2: Pattern Matching

The questionnaire was subject to two rounds of doing. In the first round of independent coding, questionnaire responses were matched against the five markers and 17 indicators of the revised 4-A Framework. Each of the nine opened questions were allocated codes (indicator) from the revised 4-A Framework. In some cases, when a participant response referred to more than one code (indicator), the written response was further divided into codable units, each unit was then allocated to one code from the revised 4-A Framework.

Step: 3 Recording of Hits and Misses

In the second round of coding, the researcher and main supervisor independently deductively analysed all the online questionnaire responses according to the coding scheme. This step of the analysis involved a recording of the hits and misses to identify how the revised

4-A Framework best fits the data. This involved analysing if the students judged the indicator as met, partially met, or not met. The hits and misses were tabulated as: '*Y*' indicates that the student perceived that the indicator was met; '*N*' indicates that the student perceived that the indicator was not met/unmet; '*P*' indicates that the student perceived that the indicator was partially met; '*N/M*' indicates that the student did not make mention of this indicator. Responses from each of the coders were compared. When any disagreement arose, these were discussed to reach a resolution by consensus and thereafter tabulated. As pointed out in section 4.7.3 this method of deductive qualitative coding allowed for rigor to be demonstrated during owing to the use of a predefined coding system.

4.13 Ethical considerations

According to the Belmont Report (Biomedical, & Behavioral Research, 1978). All research involving human participants must uphold the principles of respect for persons, beneficence and justice. The critical research paradigm furthermore aims to promote social justice and human rights, emphasizing once again that the rights and values of the participants should be upheld.

As mentioned, this study obtained ethics approval from the Faculty of Humanities Ethics Committee at the University of Pretoria (see Appendix A). The email response from the Ethics Committee stipulated that the identity of the respective universities remain confidential to ensure the integrity of each of the participating universities. As a result the names of these universities was not disclosed in the current study.

The following ethical principles were upheld in this study:

Informed consent was sought from all participants to ensure the participants' right to autonomy was respected. Detailed explanations on the purpose and procedure of the study was provided to participants and their informed consent was sought. Participants were fully informed of all aspects of the study through the information and consent letters (see Appendix C, D, H, I, N and O,P). They were made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences and that information collected from them would be destroyed immediately if they chose to withdraw. They were provided with the opportunity to provide or withhold consent by completing the informed consent form. Thus, the researcher ensured that comprehension, competency, and voluntariness were addressed as part of informed consent.

The research methods employed in this study were sensitive to the dignity and welfare of students with disabilities. Several steps were taken to protect the confidentiality of the information and to protect the participants from harm (non-maleficence). The researcher

ensured that the identity of participants (and all identifying information such as age, race and category of disability, mobile phone numbers) was kept confidential by using participant numbers to reference these participants during the data analysis and discussion. To ensure cybersecurity and data security, the questionnaire was embedded in a cloud-based survey tool namely Qualtrics, to which the researcher's institution is a license holder. The responses were downloaded from the online forum by the researcher directly after the completion of the questionnaire time-frame as decided by the research team with any identifying details removed of individual participants replaced by participant numbers. This was done in order to ensure that no identifying information was retained in the data. The data from the online questionnaires was stored safely, and the information can only be viewed by the researcher and supervisors. Participant names were not mentioned in any publication or presentation. The data obtained will be securely stored for the purposes of research and archiving for a period of 15 years at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, University of Pretoria. The online questionnaire was closed and erased.

Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the study was conducted in a manner that promoted the progressive right to higher education (beneficence) by ensuring that the perceptions of students were documented through the process.

In this study the selected participants were students with disabilities. Numerous difficulties were experienced in the recruitment of students with disabilities as participants for this study (see Section 4.9.1.3), with the main difficulty being gatekeeping. It is likely that the researcher experienced significant difficulty recruiting participants, as students with disabilities may have been deemed by their institutions as particularly vulnerable. Perceiving or classifying students with disabilities as vulnerable indicates that students with disabilities at Tier 1 universities are susceptible to stigmatising and discriminatory attitudes (Bernardini, 2016). In this sense, considering students with disabilities as a vulnerable population group is likely to have a labelling effect as these students might be considered unable to safeguard their own interests in research (i.e., unable to provide consent to participate in research). In line with a critical disability theory approach, it was important for the current study to recognise students with disabilities as rational, independent and self-sufficient participants capable of providing informed consent, whilst still adhering to each university's research permission processes. To ensure that non-maleficence and autonomy were upheld, students with disabilities were not coerced by the researcher to participate as the recruitment strategy included voluntary participation. For this reason, participants were not paid for their

participation in the current study. However an incentive was offered in the format of a lucky draw for 500MB of mobile data, to potentially increase participation rates.

4.13 Trustworthiness of the data

Merriam (2009) postulates that trustworthiness of data entails the rigour involved when doing a study. For this study, trustworthiness was addressed by taking steps to increase the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.13.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the correctness of data and that the research findings reflect the credible perceptions of the participants included in the study. Furthermore, it ensures confidence in the truth of the research findings (Anney, 2014). In this study the researcher used two sources of data – disability policy analysis and online questionnaires completed by students with disabilities. The methods chapter provides comprehensive details of the steps taken during the document selection and participant recruitment, data collection and analysis. This ensures that the regimentation and explicitness of the how the current study was conducted is clearly outlined.

The coding system developed for the analysis of the data (documents and online questionnaire) was co-developed among three researchers and subjected to two rounds of expert panel review. Furthermore, the use of a predefined coding system for the analysis increased the procedural integrity of the coding process as it allowed for coding not to drift (Braun & Clarke 2006). To ensure that document analysis was a systematic process, segments of text that had already been numbered provided a useful method of segmenting the text, and each numbered text segment within the policy was allocated one code by consensus among the three coders. Only when a numbered segment was lengthy and clearly referred to more than one code, was it further divided into codable units by consensus among the three coders. Utilising a comprehensive process of data coding as per the coding manual and allocation of themes by the three coders from different disciplines, allowed for rigor to be demonstrated during the thematic analysis process of the documents (Braun & Clarke 2006).

The responses to the online questionnaire data were downloaded. The researcher and main supervisor independently, deductively analysed all the data according to the revised 4-A Framework. Thereafter, analysis was compared, if disagreement occurred, this was discussed until agreement was reached. Following this process, the researcher worked through all transcripts again ensuring that all items were coded consistently.

Investigator, methodological and target-person triangulation was employed in the current study (Mertens, 2007). Investigator triangulation was achieved by creating a research team (researcher and supervisors) with shared interest in the field of disability studies but from varying disciplines with the health profession. The researcher and supervisors all work with persons with disabilities but are from different disciplines and areas of expertise. This strengthens the credibility of the study as it allowed for diverse perspectives and areas of expertise on the current study.

fTarget-person triangulation was achieved by collecting data from more than one Tier 1 university. All Tier 1 Universities within the South African higher education context were included in the study. By including all five Tier 1 Universities, this ensured a comprehensive, in-depth analysis on the inclusion of students with disabilities at research-intensive Universities in this context.

4.13.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the findings of a qualitative study can be transferred to other contexts with other participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The quantitative equivalent for transferability is generalisability of findings to the population. Whilst the aim of the current was not to generalise findings, the coding system developed can be applied to analyse the inclusion of students with disabilities within the broader higher education environment.

4.13.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent to which the qualitative findings are consistent and dependable with the data that was collected (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba 1985; Merriam, 2009). The quantitative equivalent of dependability is reliability, therefore the process of a qualitative study should be traceable and clearly documented (i.e., have an audit trail). Due to the written format of the online questionnaire, no transcription was necessary. Therefore, this precludes transcription errors since no transcription was necessary. All downloaded responses were not changed or any mobile phone numbers that were included were deleted to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. To increase dependability, consensus coding was utilised for document analysis. During the document analysis of the policies and student responses were divided into codable units by consensus among the researcher and her supervisor.

4.13.4 Confirmability

Denzin and Lincoln (2013) assert that confirmability refers to the extent to which findings are free from bias and shaped by the research participant's perceptions. An audit trail is the most common process used to ensure qualitative findings are objective, neutral, credible

and consistent as opposed to being based on the researcher's preconceptions. Confirmability is related to dependability as a measure of validity. Throughout the data collection process, the researcher made use of a research journal in which the researcher's personal views were recorded to minimize any bias and preconceived ideas about the inclusion of students with disabilities in Tier 1 South African Universities. It must be noted that the research methods were informed by a critical research paradigm that advocates for social justice and human rights.

The positionality of the researcher as a person who currently works in the field of disability support with students with disabilities was made explicit by informing participants of the researcher's area of work in the information letters and during introductions of the online questionnaire (Lincoln, Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

4.14 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the methodology followed for this study was described. The main aim and sub-aims were outlined, and the underlying paradigm that informed the methods of this study was provided. The design used was described. The two stages of the study (the preparatory stage and the data collection and analysis stage) were described. For the preparatory stage, the case selection, the ethics approval obtained and development of the coding Framework are described. For the second stage, the process of analysing the disability policies from the five Tier 1 institutions using deductive coding by means of the developed coding scheme was described first. Thereafter, the process of obtaining data on student perceptions was described. The participants are described first, as well as the materials used in this part of the study. The two pilot studies are explained, and the implications that the results had on the main study. The data collection process using an online questionnaire for the main study is described, as is the deductive qualitative analysis of the student responses. The chapter concluded by describing the ethical considerations that were considered, as well as the measures used to ensure trustworthiness of the study.

CHAPTER 5
RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The main research goal of this study was to critically analyse the inclusion of students with disabilities at Tier 1 South African universities at the level of policy and praxis in accordance with the adapted version of the 4-A Framework. This chapter presents the key findings relating to the first two sub-aims:

Sub-aim 1: To analyse the disability policy provisions of South African Tier 1 Universities that give effect to the right to inclusive higher education for students with disabilities, in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework;

Sub-aim 2: To analyse the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding their inclusion at South African Tier 1 Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework.

5.2 Policy Analysis

The results of the policy analysis are presented in this section by describing and comparing findings regarding provisions contained in disability policies of Tier 1 Universities in South Africa. These results have also been published in a paper (Ramaahlo et al., 2018). Of the 26 public universities in South Africa, the five universities that were described as Tier 1 Universities at the time of data collection, were included in this case study (refer to Section 4.4.1 for a description of Tier 1 Universities).

Table 5.1 indicates the extent to which Tier 1 Universities addressed the five markers of availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and affordability markers as well as the respective 17 indicators in their disability policies. Specific indicators addressed in the policy are marked with an '*Y*' to indicate that specific provisions were addressed in the policy; '*N*' indicated that specific provisions were not being addressed in the disability policy.

Table 5.1

Disability Policy Provisions of South African Tier 1 Universities According to the Five Markers and 17 Indicators of Inclusive Higher Education

Code	Theme	Univ 1	Univ 2	Univ 3	Univ 4	Univ 5	Total
Disability Units must be made available at these institutions.	Availability	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
All eligible students with disabilities can apply to study at these institutions.	Availability	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	4
Universities are accessible without discrimination.	Accessibility	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	4
Universities must be physically accessible.	Accessibility	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	4
Students with disabilities have the right to full and equal participation to access the academic environment of these universities.	Accessibility	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Students with disabilities have the right to full and equal participation to access the social environment of these universities.	Accessibility	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	4
Removal of social and attitudinal barriers that lead to discrimination.	Accessibility	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	4
Students with disabilities are provided a platform to voice their individual needs.	Acceptability	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	4
Students with disabilities must be accepted as a part of the universities' student population and not segregated.	Acceptability	Y	N	Y	Y	N	3
Effective individualised support measures are provided in environments that maximise academic and social development.	Adaptability	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5

Code	Theme	Univ 1	Univ 2	Univ 3	Univ 4	Univ 5	Total
Universities are willing to adapt their instructional techniques in accordance UDL.	Adaptability	Y	N	N	Y	Y	3
University are willing to adapt their assessment opportunities in accordance with UDL.	Adaptability	N	N	N	Y	Y	2
Universities are willing to adapt its support systems/structures.	Adaptability	N	N	N	N	Y	1
Universities are willing to adapt their curriculum in accordance with UDL.	Adaptability	Y	N	N	Y	Y	3
Disregard of reasonable accommodation as a financial burden.	Affordability	N	N	N	N	N	0
Ensure that there are sufficient funds made available to sustain an inclusive educational system.	Affordability	N	Y	N	Y	Y	3
Economic accessibility to educational institutions	Affordability	N	N	N	N	Y	1
Total		11	9	9	14	14	

Note. 'Y' indicates specific provisions being addressed in the policy; 'N' indicates specific provisions not being addressed in the policy.

From Table 5.1. it is clear that disability policies made mention of provisions related to the markers availability, accessibility and acceptability. However, provisions related to adaptability were not uniformly mentioned in all policies. Affordability as a policy provision for the inclusion of students with disabilities was neglected and not given due regard. University 1 and 3 made no provisions for affordability in their disability policies.

Universities 4 and 5 generally made provisions for most indicators (14 out of the 17 indicators were met). University 2 and 3 policies made the least amount of provisions across the five markers. Moreover, the markers adaptability and affordability were specifically neglected by these institutional policies. The section below provides an in-depth analysis of each marker and its associated indicators across the five institutions.

5.2.1 Marker 1: Availability

In terms of making universities available for students with disabilities (Indicator #2), results indicate that due regard is given to the marker availability in disability policy provisions of Tier 1 Universities. Four out of the five disability policies stated that eligible students with disabilities can apply for admission at these universities without restriction. University policies make the following provisions for students with disabilities to apply without restriction:

> *"(The University) recognises that access to higher education is a national imperative in South Africa and that it is imperative that higher education… specifically, puts measures in place to redress the inequalities and disadvantages created by prejudice and discrimination, and contributes to a democratic vision which is respectful of human rights …(The) Disability Unit plays an important role to ensure the implementation of and adherence to the provisions set out herein"* (Disability policy, University 4).
>
> *"…we are committed to ensuring the effective attraction, participation and contribution of students with disabilities throughout the … learning experience"* (Disability Policy, University 2).

The disability policy of University 3 had a disclaimer in place that limited the right of eligible students with disabilities applying to study to this institution without restriction. This restriction was as follows:

> *"In terms of such a policy, the University wishes to provide a service to a large spectrum of the South African society, within the Framework of its goals and with due consideration of the viability of providing such a service on all the different levels, by providing for the needs of such students where necessary, where doing so is practically viable and without impinging on the rights of other students"*

Essential to universities addressing the availability marker, is the recruitment of prospective students with disabilities in attracting them to study at these institutions. In this regard, University 5 makes provision for a recruitment strategy that includes outreach to prospective students with disabilities in special, full-service/inclusive and mainstream schools. Full-service schools are schools that provide quality education to all learners by supplying the full range of learning needs in an inclusive and equitable manner (DBE, 2010). Furthermore, provision is made for the admission information of these institutions (i.e., minimum entrance requirements) to be available in accessible formats (e.g. braille print).

The policies of all five institutions explicitly provide for Disability Units or the equivalent thereof to be established (Indicator #2). The naming convention used for these units differs between institutions, namely Disability Unit, Disability Rights Unit or Unit for Students with Special Needs. University policies state the following regarding the mandate of these units:

> *"The Disability (Unit) will play a facilitative role in the fulfilment of this responsibility"* (Disability policy, University 1).
>
> *"The… Disability Unit assists students with different types of disabilities to have access to and succeed in all academic programmes and for them to contribute equally to the University's academic legacy"* (Disability policy, University 2).
>
> *"…maintaining a central office and employing specific persons to coordinate and promote academic accessibility and support for students with special learning needs/disabilities"* (Disability policy, University 3).
>
> *"The Disability Unit will provide support to Faculties, Schools, Departments and Units in relation to the implementation of this policy"* (Disability policy, University 4).
>
> *"The office responsible for overseeing and enforcing this policy will be the Office of Equity. The Equity Support Unit will include an officer with portfolio responsibility for disability" (*Disability policy, University 5).

In terms of the operational functioning of these units (i.e., establishing support provision), Universities 2, 3 and 5 provide further detail of the service offerings and staffing allocations required to facilitate support. The nature of the support outlined in policies mostly relates to support in teaching and learning activities and to a lesser extent for co-curricular activities. University 2 states that the Disability Unit should provide a number of services including Information and Communication Technology (ICT) facilities, accessible academic material and assistive devices (Disability policy, University 2). To promote the rights of Deaf students who ascribe to Deaf culture, Universities 2 and 5 make provision for South African Sign Language interpreter/practitioners.

University 5 makes provision for a decentralized approach towards supporting students with disabilities. The policy makes provision for a suitably qualified staff member to be employed as a manager within an office that oversees diversity and inclusion for the institution. The role of this manager will be to "*coordinate, monitor, advocate and provide leadership on issues of disability*" (Disability policy, University 5). In terms of staffing allocations, the policy makes mention of "*Student Disability Officers*", with no further detail thereof.

"Where students with a disability are enrolled in units or courses in a Faculty, the Dean or Head of School, once informed (by either the student, their advocate or the Student Disability Officer) shall be responsible for ensuring that appropriate and reasonable accommodation is made to teaching and assessment methods for them, where the need exists; by their disability/medical condition; the student is provided with academic counselling; and that the student's education and performance in assessment, so far as is practicable, are not impeded… All support staff in the Information Technology Division and persons responsible for training in information technology, will be trained in accessibility options for students and staff… The University Librarian will be responsible for ensuring efficient access to information for students and staff with disabilities… Where special equipment or arrangements are needed for a student with a disability/medical condition to participate in examinations or tests, the student should apply to the Student Disability Officer who will liaise with the Examinations Officer for or other appropriate member of staff with relevant portfolio responsibility for alternative arrangements" (Disability policy, University 5).

Similarly, University 3 also places equal responsibility on other stakeholders within the institution to ensure the inclusion of students with disabilities, however, the policy only mentions professional support departments in this regard and not academic departments/faculties. Departments that are specifically mentioned are student counselling services, examination office, sports departments and academic support and development.

The disability policies of Universities 1, 2 and 4 make provision for the Disability Rights Units to serve as a central point for ensuring the inclusion of students with disabilities. These Units, therefore, provide operational support to academic and professional support departments in relation to the implementation of the provisions of their respective institutional disability policies.

Across all five institutions it was evident that Disability Rights Units are mandated by policy to facilitate the process by which a student discloses their disability status. The Disability Rights Unit staff members thereafter assess the reasonable accommodation requests of these students. In this regard all policies call upon students with disability to self-disclose their disability status and to submit documentary evidence of their disability as assessed by a health professional. Thereafter a student is registered as a student with a disability and the institution is obliged to reasonably accommodate their support requirements.

5.2.2 Marker 2: Accessibility

The marker of accessibility prescribes that universities must address the importance of the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion of students with disabilities and make provisions for this in their respective policies (access) (Indicator #3). Universities 1, 3, 4 and 5 make provision for their universities to be accessible without discrimination. However, these institutions generally qualify this access with disclaimer such as "*as far as feasible and affordable*".

Universities 2 - 5 make an important provision with regards to their institutions being physically accessible and to establish a universally accessible environment that benefits all stakeholders (Indicator #4). These policies (Universities 2 - 5) make provision for continuous physical accessibility audits of the built environment and to progressively remove all physical barriers and accessibility hazards. A phased approach is mandated by the policies, whereby older infrastructure will be gradually amended whilst new projects must include universal access requirements from the outset, thereby ensuring accessibility by persons with different types of disabilities. University 4 states that these audits and the progressive removal of physical barriers must be under the under the guidance from the Head of the Disability Unit. University 1, however places prominence on its location and heritage status of its built environment, over barrier-free access for students with disabilities.

The marker of accessibility further requires that students with disabilities have the right to equal and full participation in both the academic and social environment (Indicators #5 and #6). Whilst all universities make provision for students with disabilities to access the academic environment, University 5 does not make provision for access to the social environment within its disability policy. Therefore, no provision is made to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities in co-curricular activities and other student life initiatives at the University.

The use of language within institutional policies can either reinforce or challenge negative attitudes and stereotypes (Indicator #7). Whilst University 3 and 5 make provision for non-discrimination, the term "*students with disabilities*" is used interchangeability with the term "*students with special needs*" or "*special learning needs*". The terms "*special needs*" refers to students who require specialized programs and/or support in order to participate in a teaching and learning process, thereby differentiating these students from the larger student cohort. This could further entrench the discriminatory behaviour against students with disabilities and nullify Indicator #7 of the marker accessibility, that requires institutions to remove attitudinal and social barriers that lead to discrimination. Albeit, it is evident from the

policy analysis that any student with a disability who alleges prejudice on the basis of disability, has the right to lodge a formal complaint. Whilst Universities 1 - 4, outline these procedures within the disability policy, University 5 specifies that the process for unfair discrimination is encapsulated in the University's general policy covering discrimination and harassment.

5.2.3 Marker 3: Acceptability

Acceptability combines elements of acceptance and recognition of the voice of students with disabilities. Results indicated that, overall, Tier 1 Universities do make provision for the acceptance and recognition of students with disabilities as a part of the university community as the provisions highlight a willingness to engage with students with disabilities (to hear the student voice) (Indicator #8). This was indicated by phrases such as:

> *"Students with disabilities will benefit from the policy provisions contained herein and can apply for reasonable accommodation in accordance with this policy"* (Disability policy, University 1).
>
> *"A consultative approach will be followed with the student or prospective student requesting accommodation"* (Disability policy, University 2).
>
> *"The University recognises the importance of consultation with people with disabilities in all decisions that affect their opportunity for full participation in University life"* (Disability policy, University 5).

The marker of acceptability also focuses on diminishing practices of separating students with disabilities from the rest of the student cohort (Indicator #9). It requires a review of longstanding practices of relegating students with disabilities to the less competitive types of academic courses or co-curricular activities based on the perceived capability of a student with a disability, such as emphasizing that students with disabilities may not be able to cope with the demands of a particular course or program. University 1 states that it commits itself towards the development of admission, recruitment and retention practices and policies for students with disabilities that maximise their participation in higher education. University 3 partially meets this indicator as it only ensures non-segregation in the social environment. "*A student will not be refused membership to a University society or club due to a disability, though his/her membership will be considered in terms of practical considerations and viability".* University 4 states that *"the inclusion, empowerment and integration of students and employees with disabilities are integral elements of the* (University 4) *experience*". University 2 and 5 make no specific provision within their policies for students with disabilities to be accepted as a part of their institutions student populations and not to be segregated.

5.2.4 Marker 4: Adaptability

The adaptability marker requires that institutions recognize the capability of all students with disabilities by providing a personalized education response in line with reasonable accommodation, rather than expecting the student to fit the university (United Nations, 2016). As highlighted in Chapter 2, the term 'reasonable' is understood as the result of the contextual test that involves the relevance and the effectiveness of the accommodation. The theme of adaptability further promotes the application of UDL as a set of principles required to create adaptable learning environments and design, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2.

Whilst all Tier 1 Universities promote effective individualized support measures for students with disabilities (Indicator #10), UDL principles are not uniformly addressed (Indicators #11, 12 and 14), and only University 5 addresses the adaptability of support systems and structures (Indicator #13). The policies of University 2 and 3 do not recognize UDL principles in the development of instruction techniques to meet the diverse needs of every student (Indicator # 11). Neither do the policies of these universities make provision for multiple forms of assessment in accordance with UDL principles (Indicator # 12). Curriculum adaptation in accordance with UDL principles (Indicator # 14) is only acknowledged in the policies of Universities 1, 4, and 5.

> *"The University undertakes to encourage and support wherever possible: Universal Design Principles in new course offerings; and Educating academic staff with regard to the range of reasonable accommodations, and alternative assessment modes"* (Disability policy, University 1)
>
> *"The university will endeavour to make teaching methodologies and processes accessible to students with different types of disabilities. Universal access and design principles will be applied in relation to faculty instruction and curricula including the content and design of training material, facilitation and teaching style, practicals, etc. to facilitate integrated learning"* (Disability policy, University 4).
>
> *"Such modifications or adjustments will be cost-effective and may include but are not limited to…reviewing, modifying, substituting or supplementing curricula and course work requirements"* (Disability policy, University 5).

5.2.5 Marker 5: Affordability

Across Tier 1 institutions, due regard was not given to affordability in policy provisions. All institutions indicated that where reasonable accommodation is requested, the institution reserves the right to utilise lack of resources as a justification for failure to provide such a

request (Indicator #15). Therefore, the policy allows for financial burden to be used as a justifiable reason for failure to fulfil a reasonable accommodate request by a student (i.e., financial implications are taken into account when assessing disproportionate burden on the part of the institution). Therefore, these universities disclaim responsibility for ensuring that additional accommodations required by the student in order to access educational opportunities available at their institutions are affordable for students with disabilities, and instead, qualify their own financial commitment in this regard. This was indicated by phrases such as:

> *"…the provision of appropriate support where needed in a particular case will be limited by the affordability of those support systems and with due regard for the current and future financial constraints of the University"* (Disability policy, University 2*).*
>
> *"This policy aims to provide specially adapted facilities for the needs of students with special learning needs/disabilities, within limits of reason, and taking financial restraints into consideration"* (Disability policy, University 3).
>
> *"The University commits itself, within current and future financial constraints, to enabling as many students with disabilities as possible to study at this institution"* (Disability policy, University 4).
>
> *"Any temporary or permanent modification or adjustment to a job, or to the working, living or studying environment which does not cause unjustifiable hardship to the University"* (Disability policy, University 5).

Results further indicate that only the policies of University 2, 4, and 5 make provision for financial resources (for the support of students) to be made available to sustain an inclusive higher education system (Indicator #16). Furthermore, only the policy of University 5 makes provision for the economic accessibility (operational and capital budgets) to educational services provided by the university (Indicator #17):

> *"There shall be a special budget, within available resources, for the implementation of support services for students and staff with disabilities administered by the Disability Management Committee. This budget shall cater for equipment, furniture, access, capital building projects, and academic development*." (University 5).

5.3 Perceptions of Students With Disabilities

The results are presented in this section by describing and comparing findings regarding perceptions of students with disabilities of their inclusion at Tier 1 Universities according to the five markers (availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability, and affordability) and 17 indicators of inclusive higher education. Table 5.2. indicates the extent to which students

with disabilities perceive their inclusion being addressed in accordance with these markers and their respective indicators. '*Y*' indicates that the student perceived that the indicator was met; '*N*' indicates that the student perceived that the indicator was not met/unmet; '*P*' indicates that the student perceived that the indicator was partially met; '*N/M*' indicates that the student did not make mention of this indicator. A total of nine students answered the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire. Due to the limited number of responses, an analysis per institution was not possible. As eight out of the nine participants were from one institution (University 2), a cross-comparison of policy and praxis per institution was not possible because no participants from Universities, 1, 4 and 5 agreed to partake in this study. Furthermore, as the researcher did not have access to the number of students who received the survey invitation via the Disability Unit at their respective universities or via the Student Societies' social media platforms across the five universities, a response rate could not be established.

Table 5.2

Student Perceptions of Inclusion at South African Tier 1 Universities According to the Five Markers and 17 Indicators of Inclusive Higher Education

Code	Theme	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9
Disabilities unit must be made available at these institutions,	Availability	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	P
All eligible students with disabilities can apply to study at these institutions.	Availability	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	P
Universities are accessible without discrimination.	Accessibility	N/M	Y	Y	N	Y	N/M	N/M	N/M	N/M
Universities must be physically accessible.	Accessibility	Y	P	N/M	N	Y	Y	N/M	N	P
Students with disabilities have the right to full and equal participation to access the academic environment of these universities.	Accessibility	N/M	N/M	Y	N/M	Y	N/M	N/M	N/M	N/M
Students with disabilities have the right to full and equal participation to access the social environment of these universities.	Accessibility	N/M	N/M	N/M	N	N/M	N/M	N/M	N/M	N/M
Removal of social and attitudinal barriers that lead to discrimination	Accessibility	N	Y	Y	N	Y	P	N/M	P	N/M
Students with disabilities are provided a platform to voice their individual needs.	Acceptability	Y	P	P	Y	Y	P	Y	P	Y
Students with disabilities must be accepted as a part of these universities student population and not segregated.	Acceptability	N/M	Y	N/M	N/M	N/M	N	N/M	N	N/M

Code	Theme	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8	P9
Effective individualised support measures are provided in environments that maximise academic and social development.	Adaptability	N/M	Y	Y	P	N/M	Y	N/M	Y	N/M
Universities are willing to adapt its instructional techniques in accordance with UDL.	Adaptability	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	N/M	Y	N/M
Universities are willing to adapt its assessment opportunities in accordance with UDL.	Adaptability	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	P	Y	Y	N/M
Universities are willing to adapt its support systems/structures.	Adaptability	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Universities are willing to adapt its curriculum in accordance with UDL.	Adaptability	N/M	NM	Y	P	N/M	Y	N/M	Y	N/M
Disregard of reasonable accommodation as a financial burden.	Affordability	P	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P
Ensure that there are sufficient funds made available to sustain an inclusive educational system.	Affordability	N	N	P	P	N	N	P	P	N
Economic accessibility to educational institutions.	Affordability	N/M	N	N/M	Y	N/M	N/M	N/M	N/M	P/M

Note. '*Y*' indicates student perceived that the indicator was met; '*N*' indicates student perceived that the indicator was not met; '*P*' indicates student perceived that the indicator was partially met; 'N/M' indicates student did not make mention of this indicator.

The discussion that follows provides an in-depth description and analysis of each marker and its associated indicators as perceived by students with disabilities.

5.3.1 Marker 1: Availability

Results indicate that six out of nine participants (all at University 2) commented positively about their perceptions of being available to them (Indicator #1). Participant 1 (student with a hearing disability) highlighted that the Disability Unit was instrumental in their transition into university, and expressed that *"(I) was assisted through all process by the staff at the Disability Unit. They contacted me when I was in grade 12*." Participants 2, 6, and 9 perceived Indicator #1 to be only partially met. Participant 6 (student with a visual disability), expressed that "*I had challenges with the registration process as I did not know that the university has a disability unit*."

Results further indicate that seven out of nine participants commented positively about their perceptions of applying to their respective universities (Indicator #2). This would include factors such as the academic registration processes, student accommodation and first-year orientation. Participant 3 (student with a psychological disability) expressed that "*the application process to the university was relatively straightforward".* Similarly, Participants 4 (student with a physical disability) and 5 (student with a visual disability) expressed that the application process was "*simple*" and "*easy enough*". Participant 9 (student with a visual disability), commented that Indicator #2 was partially met and Participant 7 (student with psychological and learning disabilities) indicated that Indicator #2 was not met, commenting respectively "*With application, I have experienced any problems from both universities I attend." ; "I myself did not apply, a family friend applied for me."*

5.3.2 Marker 2: Accessibility

In terms of universities addressing the importance of the principles of non-discrimination and inclusion of students with disabilities (Indicator #3), only Participants 2, 3 and 5 felt that this indicator was met. Participant 3 expressed that "*the staff members at the Disability Unit on campus are involved in educating lecturers (that the students are not aware of), because I do not recall having any issues at my time at university so far where lecturers did not accept or respect my test/exam concessions.*" Participant 4 perceived the University to be inaccessible and discriminatory by commenting *"a few of the buildings are inaccessible due to a lack of elevators. This is a bit of a challenge because I struggle up staircases*." Participants 1, 6, 7, 8, and 9 did not mention this indicator in responses.

Participants 1, 5, and 6 perceived their institutions to be physically accessible and to have established a universal access design environment (Indicator #4). Participant 1 (student with a hearing and psychological disability) indicated that they were allocated a single room on the basis of their disability status, "*they allowed for me to reside alone. My buildings are all accessible to me*." Participant 5, expressed that "*ramps are put in place for wheelchair accessibility, for example.*" Participant 6 did not experience any barriers at their institution university.

Participants 2 and 9 expressed that Indicator #4 was partially met. Participant 2 highlighted that inter campus transport requires improvement so that they are accessible for all students with disabilities. Participant 9 expressed that whilst their university tried by all means to make sure that all systems were put in place to accommodate all students, they tend to "*miss the little things that can make a student's campus experience a nightmare. And when they put certain measures in place, they forget that at some point other students will have to break them because of the type of disability they might have.*" Participants 4 and 8 expressed that Indicator #4 was not met. Participant 4 (student with a physical disability) indicated that campus buildings were inaccessible due to lack of elevators and this creates a challenge as they are forced to navigate the building using staircases. Participant 8 expressed that there were no effective measures in place at their university to remove physical barriers. Participants 3 and 7 did not mention Indicator #4 in their responses.

The marker of accessibility requires that students with disabilities have the right to equal and full participation in the academic environment (Indicator #5). Participants 3 and 5 perceived their institutions to have fulfilled their right to full and equal participation in the academic environment. The remaining participants did not mention Indicator #5 in their responses.

The marker of accessibility also requires that students with disabilities have the right to equal and full participation in the social environment (Indicator #6). Participant 4 indicated that not much was being done to remove social and attitudinal barriers at the university. Participant 5 commented that "*as far as I have experienced, there has not been much publicity about people with disabilities or organizations*". The remaining participants did not mention Indicator #6 in their responses.

Accessibility also encompasses the removal of social and attitudinal barriers. Students generally noted that they perceived the attitudes as neutral and that there are no active practices in place to remove social and attitudinal barriers (Indicator #7). In answer to the question,

"*What practices are currently in place at your university to remove social and attitudinal barriers as experienced by you?*" Participants 2, 3 and 5 perceived that this indicator was met by their institution. Participant 2 considered attitudinal and social barriers as stemming from a place of lack of awareness about disability. However, an openness to engage in dialogue may lead to greater social cohesion.

> *"The[ir] attitudes are fine, but its subjective because some students may say it's hard, but at the end of the day it is what you make of it. People are curious, but the questions may lead to conversations and friendships."* (Participant 2)

Participants 6 and 8 expressed that Indicator #7 was partially met. These participants perceived the Disability Unit management as having a positive influence on the attitudes of university staff in general and lecturers in particular.

"the university recently employed a new HOD of the disability unit, and the attitude of the lecturers has changed as they are now more considerate and inclusive as there is continuous communication between the unit and faculties. However, there are other departments that do not meet our needs, for example, enlarged font for question papers." (Participant 6)

In contrast, Participants 1 and 4 commented that Indicator 7 was not met. They required the Disability Units to improve disability awareness across campuses and to provide information about organizations for students with disabilities. Participant 1 commented that "*Not all lecturers understand why I need support*." Participants with invisible disabilities perceive lecturers as having discriminatory attitudes. Lecturers tend to question the support requirements of a student with a hidden disability.

> *"Having a psychiatric disability is difficult. Not all lecturers understand why I need support"* (Participant 1).

Participants 7 and 9 did not mention Indicator #7 in their responses.

5.3.3 Marker 3: Acceptability

Acceptability brings together elements of acceptance and recognition of the student voice. When asked "*Is there a space (be it virtual or an office or person) for you and other students with disabilities to voice your views on the support for students with disabilities?*", participants generally perceived this indicator (Indicator #8) to be met (Participants 1, 4, 5, 6 and 9). The remaining participants perceived Indicator #8 as partially met. Participant 8 commented that *"I can generally shares views with friends but not the University."* Participant 2 perceived university management as indifferent to the views of students with disabilities, and

commented that *"there are platforms like student societies, but I am not sure how effective the platforms are. We share our views, but management does not really listen."*

It was evident that participants perceived the Disability Unit as being accepting of students with disabilities as a part of the University. This was indicated by statements such as:

> *"There used to be a society for the Disability Unit. The society has a Facebook page, Twitter account and email account." .... now, generally all concerns go directly to the staff members at the Disability Unit."* (Participant 3)

> *"should a student have something they would like to address they could easily approach the staff members of the Disability Unit or request a meeting with the SRC (Student Representative Council Responsible for student governance)."* (Participant 3)
>
> *"Yes the Disability Unit"* (Participant 4)
>
> *"Yes, we can communicate our views with the staff at the disability unit."* (Participant 7)
>
> *"Yes, but only the Disability Unit."* (Participant 8)
>
> *"Yes there is. [The Disability Unit] office doors are always open for students and they always for an extra mile to assist them."* (Participant 9)

In terms of Indicator #9, participants were asked if they perceived themselves to be accepted as part of the university's student population and not as segregated. Participant 2 perceived this indicator to be met and Participants 6 and 8 perceived this indicator as unmet. Participant 6 commented that the student representative council that is meant to be a representative body of all students does not have a portfolio specifically for students with disabilities. The remaining participants did not mention Indicator #9 in their responses.

5.3.4 Marker 4: Adaptability

Indicator #10 refers to individualized support measures for students with disabilities. Participants 2, 3, 6, and 8 perceived Indicator #10 to be met. Participant 4 perceived indicator #10 to be partially met and commented that "*in the study guide they inform us to refer to the Disability Unit if we have special needs.*" Participants 1, 7 and 9 did not mention this indicator in their responses.

For Indicator #11, most participants (Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8) perceived that their institutions had implemented UDL principles to develop instruction to meet the diverse needs of every student. Participant 4 perceived Indicator #11 to be partially met. Participants 7 and 9 did not mention this indicator in their responses.

Similarly most participants (Participants 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8) perceived that UDL principles were being implemented for assessment practices (Indicator #12). Participants 4 and 6 perceived Indicator #12 to be partially met. Participant 9 did not mention this indicator in their response.

When asked about the adaptability of support systems and structures (Indicator #13), most participants perceived this indicator to be met while Participant 2 perceived this indicator as partially met. Professional support departments were largely perceived as being willing to adapt their services in line with reasonable accommodation requirements. This was indicated by statements such as:

> *"Having a psychiatric disability I am able to consult with my psychologist for free on campus."*(Participant 1)
>
> *"the services are situated on campus making travel to them easy."* (Participant 5)
>
> *"Student Counselling and Student Health services are available to me. They are available to anyone attending the university."* (Participant 3)

When asked about curriculum adaptation in accordance with UDL principles (Indicator #14), only Participants 3, 6 and 8, perceived this indicator to be met. The remaining participants did not mention this indicator in their responses.

5.3.5 Marker 5: Affordability

Affordability refers to the economic accessibility to educational services provided by the university. When asked if institutions make provision for concession support/accommodations at no cost to students (Indicator #15), Participants 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 perceived this indicator to be met as they were not asked to pay additional fees to receive this support. Participants 1 and 9 perceived Indicator #15 as partially met and noted that more support could be provided to ease the financial burden on students with disabilities. Assistive devices and personal carers are still required to be financed by the student themselves. Participant 2 perceived this indicator to be unmet.

When participants were asked about their institution's financial commitment towards the inclusion of students with disabilities (Indicator #16) Participants 3, 4, 7 and 8 perceived Indicator #16 to be partially met. Participant 4 commented that "*there is some level of support from the institution, however I do not feel that it is enough."* Participant 8 commented that *"applying for NSFAS was a bit difficult, but I think it is good that you can get funds. "*

The remaining participants (Participants 1, 2, 5, 6 and 9) perceived Indicator #16 to be unmet. Participant 2 commented that *"Not enough is being done, they could more. For example*

get a better Disability Unit, make campus more accessible. Support students with mental disabilities more. They could also make more of an effort to make students with disabilities don't struggle financially." Similarly, Participant 1 expressed that "*very little financial support is given*." Participant 5 commented that "*provision should be made for individual's specific disabilities to better accommodate the individual."*

Results further indicate that in terms of economic accessibility of educational services provided by the institution (Indicator #17), Participant 4 perceived this indicator to be met, Participant 9 perceived this indicator to be partially met, and Participant 2 perceived this indicator to be unmet. Participant 2 commented that the "*biggest barrier is finances*." The remaining participants did not mention this indicator in their responses.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter the findings from the policy analysis were first presented. Results showed that, while the disability policies of the five institutions generally addressed the first three markers (availability, accessibility, and acceptability), the markers 'adaptability' and 'affordability' were not addressed as consistently. Thereafter the results from the analysis of the responses to the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire were presented. Results showed that, while some indicators were generally perceived to be met, others were evaluated more ambiguously across students, and some indicators were perceived to be unmet by most of the respondents.

CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Introduction

This study was conducted in accordance with the design and procedures highlighted in Chapter 4. The main goal of this study was to apply the revised 4-A Framework to describe and analyse the inclusion of students with disabilities at Tier 1 Universities in South Africa in accordance with the universities' disability policies and praxes. The investigation utilised two data sources, namely policy documents (disability policies of Tier 1 Universities) and online questionnaires. This chapter focuses on interpreting the findings from the data obtained from the analysis of these data sources in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework. In this chapter, the findings from these two data sources are merged and discussed accordingly.

6.2 Stage 3: Convergence of Results from Policy Analysis and Student Perceptions

As highlighted in Chapters 2 and 3, the revised 4-A Framework enables the right to education for students with disabilities to be linked to specific provisions within the higher education context. The five markers provide parameters for universities to facilitate the appropriate responses necessary to enable the progressive realisation of the right to higher education for students with disabilities. The disability policies of five Tier 1 Universities in South Africa were analysed using the coding scheme developed by the researcher based on the revised 4-A Framework, to describe provisions made in the policies according to the five markers. Furthermore, the perceptions of students with disabilities of the provisions made for them in practice at the Tier 1 Universities where they were enrolled were also analysed according to this coding scheme. The results were presented in Chapter 5. Here following, the results of both data sources are integrated and discussed in an effort to provide an overall comment on the inclusion of students with disabilities in policy and praxis at South African Tier 1 Universities.

6.2.1. Marker 1: Availability

Availability refers to the existence of higher education institutions and programmes that all students with disabilities can apply to without restriction (DHET, 2013; Howell, 2006; Tesemma, 2012). Furthermore, availability requires that Disability Units be established at the universities, as they play a central role in the inclusion of students with disabilities without restriction at these universities (Lourens, 2015; Matshedisho, 2010).

Across the five universities disability policies reviewed, adequate provision was made overall to ensure that higher education for students with disabilities is available. Except for a qualification of this provision at University 3, policies made provision for eligible students to be able to apply to study at the institution, and all policies stipulated that Disability Units must exist and serve students with disabilities. Results from Data source 2 mirrored these findings – students in general perceived that this marker was fulfilled at their institutions, commenting positively on their experience in applying to study at their chosen institution and on the availability of the disability unit.

The finding that the availability marker is adequately addressed in disability policies at these universities and in students' experiences is consistent with a considerable body of literature that indicates that there is a growing commitment by universities in South Africa to include students with disabilities in higher education settings (FOTIM, 2011; Fuller, Bradley & Healey, 2015; Lourens, 2015; Ntombela, 2013). These developments can be traced back to the transformation of higher education and policy in South Africa (Gibbon & Kabaki, 2004). Higher education policy post-1994 had to incorporate the fundamental principles of equity and redress and embrace diversity. In particular, these policies had to make provision for the inclusion of marginalised student groups by ensuring that higher education was available to all students and not just the privileged few. This is now evident in the inclusive disability policies of Tier 1 Universities and is also reflected in the experiences of the students who participated in this study.

More recent studies on the experiences of South African students with disabilities in universities by Mutanga (2018) and Mbuvha (2019) corroborated the findings of this current study, in that an increasing number of eligible prospective students with disabilities are able to apply to universities and that Disability Units play a central role in supporting students with disabilities. Both these authors also reported that students with disabilities stated that the support received from their Disability Rights Unit, had a positive impact on their performance.

However, the findings of the current study differ from published studies in the USA and United Kingdom in relation to the perceptions of students regarding the availability of Disability Rights Units (Cole & Cawthon, 2015; Marshak et al., 2010; Scott et al., 2016). These studies stated that whilst Disability Rights Units are available in their specific contexts, students with disabilities do not fully perceive these Disability Rights Units as being available. In viewing the results of these studies the main themes were identified as barriers to availability, included confusion about or unawareness about services offered , self- determination skills in

how to explain their disability to staff members of the Disability Rights Unit, and negative experiences with academic staff members regarding the use of approved academic accommodations (concession support).

It is likely that the current study's findings, and other studies conducted in South Africa differ from the findings of international studies due to the unique South African context, where there is a marked history of exclusion. Universities are intended to be objective conveners of suitably qualified students. It is imperative that Tier 1 Universities in South Africa, which are viewed to be the pinnacle of higher education in South Africa, make provision for all suitably qualified students with disabilities to advance their knowledge and training. One of the critical factors that emerges from these findings is that, Tier 1 Universities make provision for ensuring a more diverse student profile that is representative of the broader South African population. The current study also found that University 5 made provision for a recruitment strategy that included outreach to eligible prospective students with disabilities in special, full-service and mainstream schools. Additionally, provision was made for the admission information of these institutions (i.e., minimum entrance requirements) to be available in accessible formats (e.g. braille print). It is likely that an accessible recruitment strategy is also available at University 2, but not provided for in the policy, as one participant from University 2, explained that the Disability Unit was instrumental in their transition into University. This finding can be better explained by the central role Disability Units play in the facilitation of their support requests and disclosure of their disability status. These finding is significant in at least two significant respects. Firstly, adapting the recruitment program to be specific to the needs of prospective students with disabilities implies that an inclusive education model is underpinned in this recruitment strategy (i.e., the recruitment program is differentiated in accordance with the needs of all prospective students). Secondly, the finding is significant, as it can be reassuring to prospective students with disabilities of the university's commitment to equal participation and non-discrimination. University 5 historically catered for marginalised groups in South Africa and may therefore be cognizant that an inclusive approach imbedded it its policy provisions is needed not only for students who apply and who are admitted to the universities, but even at the recruitment stage to ensure a seamless transition for students from basic education to higher education.

When compared to other Tier 1 Universities, University 3 qualified the right of eligible prospective students with disabilities applying to study to this institution. There are two possible explanations for this qualification, which is either be the institution's history of

exclusion of marginalised groups and/or a medical model of disability embedded in this policy. As pointed out in Chapter 3 and in recent studies, the first explanation for this qualification could be due to University 3 having been identified throughout the apartheid era and in the current democratic dispensation as a critical institution in preserving a history and culture through its policies and campus activities that excludes others (Kamanga, 2019). It is likely that the cautious wording and qualification of the right to apply to the institution stem from the universities history of exclusion still embedded in the institutional culture. Similarly, in a recent South African study at a Tier 1 University by Ndlovhu (2019), the author argues that students with disabilities' limited access into the specific programmes could be understood in the light of lack of total institutional transformation to include all diverse students at entry. As no participants from University 3 consented to participate in the current study, it would be difficult to ascertain if the students' perceptions mirror these findings from the policy analysis.

The second possible explanation for this qualification could be due to University 3 imbedding its understanding of disability within a medical model, which in turn links to the thinking / policy within the basic education sector. The manner in which University 3 views the eligibility of prospective student with disabilities as impinging on the rights of other students can possibly be linked to the medical discourse of disability which has provided the historical basis for a segregated and inadequate basic education system (Bell, 2013; Fulcher, 1989; Howell & Lazarus, 2003). Whilst public universities in South Africa are not segregated into special, full-service and mainstream institutions, a focus on individual deficit seems to prevail. Although the basic education system is distinct from the higher education system in its directives, inequalities in the higher education environment can be linked to those that have shaped schooling in South Africa. At the basic education level, students with disabilities were often not able to access educational opportunities that would eventually enable them to gain entrance to the higher education system (Howell, 2006). Although the access to basic education has improved since 1997, an estimated 70% of children with disabilities of school-going age were estimated not to be in school (South Africa, 1997a), access to basic education remains problematic. In the year 2015, reports indicated that more than 500 000 children with disabilities (over half of the school-aged population with disabilities) were not in school (DoE, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2015). The lack of available schools that accommodate learners with disabilities and decreased throughput of learners with disabilities exacerbate the inequalities experienced by these prospective students when attempting to access universities (Proudlock, 2014). In 2019, Human Rights Watch interviewed parents of children with

disabilities and young adults with disabilities in Gauteng, about their education experiences. This study reported that learners with disabilities, and Black learners in particular residing in rural areas in South Africa, still experience high levels of exclusion from an inclusive education system. Schools that catered for learners with disabilities lacked basic equipment for quality training and with dismal inadequacy implemented the approved curriculum by the DBE curriculum, therefore precluding educational outcomes for these learners that would ultimately lead to an independent life and the ability to seek meaningful employment (Human Rights Watch, 2019). Students with disabilities who do go on to have suitable basic education qualifications (i.e., those who meet university admission requirements) are often restricted when attempting to access the university or course of their choice owing to the perceptions of university staff members responsible for course admission, regarding the students' disability and subsequent abilities and skills (Odendaal-Magwaza & Farman, 1997; Swart & Greyling, 2011). Course selectors (admissions officers and academic administrators at faculty level) may incorrectly presume that if a student has a physical disability, their ability to learn is also impaired. As a result, students with disabilities are often dissuaded from either the university or from the specific course of their choice owing to perceptions of the university stakeholders responsible for course admission, on the grounds of their disability. Emphasis is often placed on individual deficits and a student's impairment as opposed to institutional criteria for admission or structural transformation (Riddell, 1998) (i.e., disability is being framed within the medical model). This further indicates a disjuncture between inclusive policy imperatives and the implementation of these inclusive policies at universities as a prerequisite for entering the higher education environment, universities in particular, is the completion of basic education.

Whilst the marker of availability was adequately addressed in the disability policies, the policies are phrased in a manner that render students as a homogenous social group. The provisions do not take into account the relationship between disability and other social identities. Morris (1993) and Dutta (2015) highlight the interacting effect of disability and other social identities that overlap, interact and reinforce one another. In applying intersectionality to the context of disability, race, gender and class, Black women with disabilities are likely to experience a disproportionate amount of discrimination when applying to a South African university. This is due to the South African higher education context being profoundly and structurally shaped by racialised, and gendered segregation owing to its history of colonialism and apartheid (Badat, 2009, 2017). The student protests of 2015 and 2016 (#FeesMustFall) and

the #OpenStellenboschCollective foregrounded the intersectional relationship between institutional racism, alienating language in policies, fee increases, and lack of spatial justice as all continuing to reinforce the exclusion of Black students (Hlatshwayo, 2020). Similarly, Moodley and Graham (2015), argue that disability, race and gender insect to create negative outcomes for women with disabilities and, particularly for Black women with disabilities. In South Africa race is still the strongest predictor of earning, education and employment, and intersects with gender and disability to generate negative outcomes. Therefore, whilst Tier 1 Universities make provision for the marker of availability on the basis of disability, complex inequalities based on intersecting social identities are still largely inadequately addressed.

Linked to the establishment of Disability Rights Units, findings show that the disability policies of Tier 1 Universities outline the process for disclosure of a disability status by a student with disability. In this regard all policies call upon students with disability to self-disclose their disability status and submit documentary evidence of their disability as assessed by a health professional to the Disability Rights Unit. Such procedures seem closely aligned to a medical model, where disability is seen as a medical condition inherent in the individual. No mention was made of more functional assessments that focus on access needs and environmental adaptation requirements. A decision to disclose a disability by a student is commonly related to the need for academic accommodations or access (Cole & Cawthon, 2012). Whereas, a decision not to disclose is linked to a student's perceptions that accommodations would not be needed, or that accommodations would be detrimental to them as they would not be admitted into the university or face exclusion (if disclosure takes place after admission). The phrasing in each policy points to the fact the disclosure of a disability status and requesting support is solely the onus of the student. From the policy analysis, apart from University 5, it could not be established if Universities 1- 4 make provision for other initiatives to encourage disclosure which is directly linked to accessing support. This could create barriers to access for students with disabilities in the process of transitioning from a special school environment into university, whereby at a special school the premise is that all learners will have an individualised education plan (IEP) or individualised support plan (ISP) as outlined in the Policy on Screening, Identification and Support (SIAS) (DBE, 2014). The drafting of the ISP is a collaborative process between all stakeholders at the school. Therefore, when these students enter into university they are not necessarily familiar with the process of self-disclosure and requesting support. When comparing this finding with those of other studies, Mngomezulu (2019), who analysed the delayed disclosure of students with disabilities

who are at risk of exclusion by a South African university, found that for students with invisible disabilities, the chances of not receiving warranted supports are high, as students tend not to self-disclose. He argues that there needs to be increased coordination of school-to-university transition – the so-called 'seamless system of transition' - as this would take the burden away from students having to self-disclose.

Disclosing a disability could also be viewed as a matter of succumbing to social oppression and control (Brown & Leigh, 2018). As a result, ableism could be internalised by students with invisible disabilities, to such an extent that students attempt to approximate as much as possible to 'able-bodiedness' and choose not to disclose their disability. Ableism renders disability as abject and invisible. Policy provisions that place equal responsibility on the university in the process of disclosure and in the process of determining the additional support provision that is needed by a student, may negate concerns of any student who might be reticent to disclose their disabilities.

6.2.2 Marker 2: Accessibility

Accessibility is based on the principle of non-discrimination and inclusion (Tomaševski, 1998). Furthermore, it is a precondition for the full and equal participation of students with disabilities in their academic environments (United Nations, 2014, 2016). Generally, Tier 1 made provision for their universities to be accessible without discrimination, with the exception of University 2. However, these institutions generally qualify this access with a disclaimer such as "*as far as feasible and affordable*". Furthermore these universities (with the exception of University 1) make provision for continuous physical accessibility audits of the built environment and to progressively remove all physical barriers and accessibility hazards. Overall, all Tier 1 Universities made provision for students with disabilities to access the academic and social environment, with the exception of University 5, that does not make provision for access to the social environment within its disability policy. Furthermore, good provision was made to address the removal of social and attitudinal barriers, with the exception of University 3. Results from Data Source 2 did not echo these findings. Overall, this marker was rarely mentioned in participants responses. Although seven students each commented on the physical accessibility and the removal of social and attitudinal barriers, findings were mixed, with some students perceiving these provisions to be met while others perceived them to be unmet or only partially met. Therefore, an overall conclusion could not be drawn if this marker was perceived to be met or not.

The finding that the accessibility marker is adequately addressed in institutional policies, is supported by the findings of other South African studies although gaps were noted in practice for this marker in particular (amongst the other four markers) (Lourens, 2015; Lyner-Cleophas, 2016). Research currently indicates that in spite of policy provisions that promote the principles of inclusion and non-discrimination, students with disabilities are still affected by a broad range of individual, social, educational and environmental factors that exacerbate exclusion, challenge personal life circumstances, learning experiences and are denied full and equal participation in environments (Phatoli et al., 2013; Singh, 2017; Subrayen, 2011).

Where participants did mention accessibility, these findings were intermittently able to support the findings of previous studies and differed across disability categories. Both students with physical disabilities and students with sensory disabilities perceived the universities to be neglecting the accessibility requirements for students with sensory disabilities(e.g., visual disability). They highlighted that inter-campus transport requires improvement so that it is accessible for all students with disabilities. This finding was also reported by Odame et al. (2021), who reported that students with visual disabilities expressed they did not have access to transportation. However, as per Table 3.5 (in Chapter 3 of this study) that provided an overview of the services offered to students with disabilities as per their university webpages, all five Tier 1 Universities indicated that accessible transport services were offered to students with disabilities. Additionally, participants with physical disabilities (both from University 2) expressed that there were no effective measures in place at their university to remove physical barriers. It could conceivably be hypothesised that the built environment of University 2 requires significant improvement in terms of access for students with physical disabilities. However, this is an expected finding, as a number of South African studies related to inclusion of students with disabilities within higher education (see Table 3.5) found that the built environment is largely inaccessible and that access constraints were experienced by students with physical disabilities. Whilst the findings of this study is limited in terms of a majority of the participants being from University 2, it must be noted that inadequate physical infrastructure has been reported by students with disabilities from various South African higher education institutions in studies dating back to 2003 and spanning this time frame up until the present date (Engelbrecht & de Beer, 2014; Losinsky, Levi, Saffey & Jelsma, 2003; Lyner-Cleophas, 2016; Nel, Rankoana, Govender, Mothibi & Moloantoa, 2015; Ntombela, 2013). The study by Losinsky, Levi, Saffey and Jelsma (2003) (which was conducted at a university

included in this study), found that students with physical disabilities consistently had to travel further and for longer times between lecture theatres in all the faculties measured. These students would therefore be unable to reach their lectures within the 10-minute transition time between lectures allocated by the University.

The findings of the current study have not been able to demonstrate that universities are insensitive to physical accessibility requirements of persons with invisible disabilities (Syma, 2019). Participants with invisible disabilities at University 2 expressed that they were accommodated in a private residence, on the basis of their psychological disability. This finding is interesting, as physical accessibility usually is only considered from a practical point of view in terms of architectural changes. It is encouraging that physical aspects of the environment seemed to be considered more broadly by this university and in relation to persons with different types of disabilities. This is especially encouraging because psychosocial disabilities are prevalent and rates of diagnosis are rising (Vergunst & Swartz, 2020a).

In contrast to published studies in South Africa and other contexts (Howell & Lazarus, 2003; Kajee, 2010; López Gavira & Moriña, 2015; Moriña et al., 2018; Rowe, Steyl, Phillips & Rhoda, 2019; Subrayen & Dhunpath, 2019), limited evidence of attitudinal and social barriers as experienced by the students were detected in the current study. Participants generally noted that they perceived the attitudes as neutral but that there were no active practices in place to remove social and attitudinal barriers. It is likely that this finding points to the hierarchical power relations between students with disabilities and Tier 1 Universities and the reporting of discrimination. Thornton (2000) argues that reports about discrimination by persons with disabilities are often channelled through committees and interpreted through a paradigm of ableism. Therefore, it can be postulated that most participants perceived the attitudes of lecturers and peers as neutral as the process of defining and addressing discrimination is from the perspective of the university. Consequently, students with disabilities could be discouraged in recognizing and reporting issues of discrimination.

6.2.3 Marker 3: Acceptability

The acceptability marker brings together elements of acceptance and recognition of the student voice and also focuses on diminishing practices of separating students with disabilities from the rest of the student cohort. Results indicate that, overall, all Tier 1 Universities make provision for the acceptance and recognition of students with disabilities as a part of the university community by indicating a willingness to engage with students with disabilities (to hear the student voice). However, only Universities 1 and 4 made provision for diminishing

practices that separate students with disabilities from the rest of the student cohort. The findings from Data source 2 mirror these findings. Students in general perceived that their university provided them with a platform to voice views on the support for students with disabilities. Furthermore, only one participant perceived themselves to be accepted as part of the university's student population and as not feeling segregated.

In South Africa, marginalised groups, particularly within the educational context, have historically used their voices to speak out about human rights violations. Students in particular, have been noted for vocalising their concern. This has been evidenced in the events leading to the Soweto Uprising of June 1976, where Black South African learners protested against the Afrikaans Medium Decree of 1974 whereby Afrikaans was sought to be enforced as the language medium of teaching and learning at selected schools. Learners set up an inclusive structure that would take up student grievances to the school board, circuit inspectors and regional representatives of Bantu Education. These students utilised their afternoon periods, allocated for sports and study, to hold meetings to discuss other classroom issues, such as low marks in the various subjects that used Afrikaans as the medium of teaching and learning. Ultimately, they decided to forsake passive resistance and to go public through overt protest (Ndlovu, 2006). In the current democratic dispensation, the 2016 #FeesMustFall movement was also a student led movement that sparked debates on fee increases in universities. The #FeesMustFall movement expedited discussions about slow transformation, institutional racism, tuition costs and the de-colonisation of universities (Langa, 2017). Tinklin et al. (2004) postulate that a platform for the voices of students with disabilities is seldom found in inclusive policies and practices as institutions rarely evaluate student's perceptions about their inclusion following the implementation of a disability policy. Fuller, Bradley and Healey (2015), in their investigation of the incorporation of students with disabilities within an inclusive higher education environment, argued that despite the growing interest in inclusive higher education, "*the voices of students with disabilities themselves have barely been heard*" (p. 1). Therefore, it is encouraging to note that all Tier 1 Universities have addressed this indicator. In this way, the agency and expertise of student with disabilities regarding their own experiences is acknowledged, in line with critical disability theory (Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009).

The current finding of limited policy and praxis regarding the abolition of practices that separate students with disabilities from the rest of the student cohort, broadly supports the work of other studies in this area highlighting that students with disabilities are often excluded from the larger university community (Lourens & Swartz, 2016b; Mutanga & Walker, 2015;

Vergunst & Swartz, 2020a). This finding suggests that, despite provisions to hear the students' voice, this provision does not result in true inclusion. Having a platform for engagement does not necessarily mean that one has influence, and does not guarantee that one's voice is heeded and acted upon (Friedman et al., 2016). If student voices are only heard within segregated spaces that have little to do with the larger university structures, their voice will carry limited weight. Therefore students with disabilities need to be given the opportunity to have a voice and to have influence within governance bodies of the university – bodies that have the power to dismantle ableist structures and practices (e.g. student councils, departmental meetings, policy committees). Unless the students' voice leads to change, its 'hearing' remains tokenistic. One participant expressed that the student representative council (that is meant to be a representative body of all students) does not have a portfolio that specifically caters for students with disabilities. Epistemic ignorance plays a large role in understanding why the needs of students with disabilities are not met, and more needs to be done to break down these barriers of ignorance (Osborne, 2019). Tier 1 Universities have failed to sufficiently respond to the practices that uphold institutionalized ableism. Universities should ultimately provide the space and opportunity to hear the student voice, in an effort to dismantle structural ableism and create institutional change. Segregating students with disabilities from the broader university community reinforces their marginality and further perpetuates exclusion.

6.2.4 Marker 4: Adaptability

With respect to the adaptability marker, it was found that all Tier 1 Universities promote effective individualised support measures for students with disabilities. UDL principles are not uniformly addressed. Findings further reveal that Tier 1 Universities neglect the provision relating to the adaptability of support systems and structures. Findings from Data Source 2 partially echo the findings of Data Source 1. When asked about individualised support measures for students with disabilities, most participants expressed that they were provided academic accommodations specific to their individual needs. This included text adaptation, additional writing time and use of the Disability Rights Unit as an assessment venue. Participant 4 perceived this indicator to be partially met, as their lecturers placed sole responsibility on the Disability Rights Unit to adapt academic material. In contrast to Data Source 1, participants generally perceived their institutions to have implemented UDL principles to develop instruction to meet the diverse needs of every student. Similarly, UDL principles were perceived by students as being implemented for assessment practices and to adapt the support systems and structures.

As discussed in Chapter 2, UDL is a framework used in educational institutions to be inclusive of different learning preferences , and helps to reduce barriers for all students including those with disabilities (Black, Weinberg, & Brodwin, 2015). The findings of this study for Data Source 1 corroborate previous studies (Dalton, McKenzie & Kahonde 2012; Howell, 2015; Mutanga, 2019) that few South African universities are moving towards making provision for applying the principles the UDL. The lack of UDL policy commitments in relation to facilitating the provision of inclusion for students with disabilities has been identified as a major barrier that hinders the full inclusion of students with disabilities in South African universities (Chiwandire, 2020). Conversely, the University of Southern Maine in the USA recently noted an increase in its enrolment figure of students with disabilities and has therefore recognised the requirement to modify its curricula, instruction, assessment, and environment in line with the principles of UDL to address the diverse needs of its students (Langley-Turnbaugh, Blair & Whitney, 2013). Similarly, the University of Hawaii at Mānoa, has made provision for the implementation of UDL principles for its online course offerings (Rao, 2015). Furthermore, Rao (2015) found that at the level of implementation, integrating UDL principles required additional forethought, planning, and availability of resources during the instructional design phase.

In order to fulfil the right to equal participation of all students, and students with disabilities in particular, universities need to make provision for UDL principles within institutional disability policies in order to achieve the goal of inclusive education. Implementation of UDL principles cannot be achieved by the efforts of the Disability Unit alone, but becomes the responsibility of everyone offering tuition and academic support to students. The finding that policies seem to emphasize the provision of individualised support (reasonable accommodation) rather than UDL seem to suggest that the responsibility for inclusion of students with disabilities is largely relegated to the Disability Rights Unit. It seems that it is still considered as a matter requiring specialised support and services rather than a matter requiring a more holistic institutional response. While individualised responses to ensure equal participation of persons with disabilities are necessary and in line with critical disability theory (Hosking, 2008), an overemphasis on these and a relegation of responsibility to “experts” runs the risk of negating the need of the environment to transform.

As noted earlier, for Data Source 2 participants generally perceived their institutions to have implemented UDL principles to develop instruction to meet the diverse needs of every student. This findings is supported by a recent study that investigated the ‘Inclusion, universal

design and universal design for learning in higher education: South Africa and the United States' (Dalton, Lyner-Cleophas, Ferguson, & McKenzie, 2019). At the institutions in the USA and SA (both SA universities were included in the current study) results indicated that UDL principles was gradually being implemented to help guide the development of more inclusive learning environments for all students to some extent. Therefore, in terms of the current study, the implication of the finding for Data Source 2 in relation to UDL, is that academic and professional support staff can and have created a foundation for an accessible and accommodating learning environment despite policy provisions not being in place.

6.2.5 Marker 5: Affordability

Affordability refers to the economic accessibility to educational services provided by the University. Results indicate that in terms of the affordability marker, only Universities 2 (previously white) and 5 (previously disadvantaged) make provision for resources to be made available to sustain an inclusive education system. Furthermore, only University 5 makes provision for the economic accessibility to educational services provided by the university. Results further indicate that none of the universities disregarded reasonable accommodation as a financial burden. For Data Source 2, when participants were asked about their institution's financial commitment towards the inclusion of students with disabilities, the findings mirrored Data Source 1, as there was an overwhelming response from students regarding insufficient funds being made available to support them. When asked about the universities overall commitment towards the economic accessibility of educational services beyond reasonable accommodation (i.e., the cost of higher education in its entirety, beyond mere academic support accommodations), the responses were inconsistent, with only one student responding that this indicator was not met.

The findings for Data Source 1 and students' perceptions that mirrored these findings (for Indicator #16) support the seminal work of the FOTIM (2011) research, that showed that funding was not adequate, as students with disabilities pay personally to address their support needs such as personal care assistants, note takers, assistive technologies and South African Sign Language interpreters/practitioners. Similarly, Kaunda and Chizwina (2019), found that universities are constrained in terms of financial resources and often lack the necessary skills to provide resources and information literacy opportunities for students with disabilities. Alabi and Mutula (2020) also argued that universities should allocate an adequate ring-fenced budget for assistive technologies, and in particular those devices that would facilitate access to information in the library for students with visual disabilities. Sufficient funds need to be made

available to sustain an inclusive educational system. Many of the provisions relating to affordability in university policies lack timeframes and seem to be indefinite. Whilst the CRPD (United Nations, 2006) allows for financial implications to be recognised when assessing disproportionate burden, it asserts that this cannot be used as a justification for failure to fulfil a request for reasonable accommodation. Universities should not escape the obligation to provide support to students with disabilities on the grounds that the necessary resources are not available. Sufficient funds need to be made available to sustain an inclusive educational system. Ensuring the affordability of higher education for students with disabilities is especially important in light of the intersection between poverty and disability, particularly in the Global South (Hosking, 2008; Meekosha & Shuttleworth, 2009).

Conversely, students in the current study seemed to perceive that reasonable accommodations were provided in most cases and that the university did not disregard it on the grounds of insufficient funding (Indicator #15). Only a few students felt this indicator was partially met, while one student felt this indicator was not met. A possible explanation for the contradictory findings of the perceptions of students with disabilities for the affordability marker, could be that these students are not requested to pay additional fees to receive this support. The students who perceived this indicator to be partially met expressed that more support could be provided to ease the financial burdens on students with disabilities. However, personal assistive devices and personal carers are still required to be financed by the students' themselves. Furthermore, the findings relating to student perceptions were unanticipated, taking into account the higher education landscape and time frame in which the study was conducted (during #FeesMustFall movement), where the economic disparities in gaining access to universities, were brought to the forefront in advocacy campaigns and the media. This finding could be due to that fact six out of the nine participants did not rely on state funding (NSFAS) as their tuition fees and associated costs were privately funded. Furthermore, this finding could point once again to the internalised oppression/ableism. It seems that students may have accepted that it was up to them and their support systems to finance any personal assistive devise or personal carers to make access to university possible, and did not question such practices as exclusionary or discriminatory. As discussed in Chapter 2, persons with disabilities are exposed to prejudiced assumptions about ability and are immersed in a culture that uncritically assumes ability differences to be a legitimate means of assigning merit and power (Watermeyer & Görgens, 2013). Therefore, it is likely that students with disabilities came from a basic education system (schools) where the expectation of accessing higher

education were not fostered by their teachers. Consequently, students with disabilities who do access higher education institutions, and Tier 1 Universities in particular may have low expectations with regards to provisions and may perceive themselves as privileged to be able to enrol at these institutions.

6.4 Comparison of Policy and Praxis

As eight out of the nine participants were from the same institution (University 2) an in depth- cross comparison of policy and praxis would not yield significant results no participants from Universities, 1,4 and 5 agreed consent to partake in this study. However, an attempt will made be made to draw an overall conclusion of the two data sources.

It was clear that Tier 1 Universities have developed disabilities policies to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities. However, the extent to which students with disabilities perceive their inclusion as being addressed could not easily be established as many of the participants did not indicate if policy provisions were met or not. Due to the limited and small sample size, caution must be applied, as the findings are not representative and cannot be generalised. Furthermore, as most respondents were from University 2 it is important to bear in mind the possible bias in these responses.

There was congruence between policy provisions and student perceptions for the marker of availability, particularly regarding the central role Disability Rights Units play in the inclusion of students with disabilities. Therefore, the revised 4-A Framework will need to perhaps place prominence on the role of other stakeholders for this marker, particularly in the transition from basic to higher education. Whilst the marker of availability was adequately addressed in the disability policies, students with disabilities were regarded as a homogenous social group. The policies largely overlooked the intersections of disability, race, gender and class.

For the accessibility and acceptability markers, the was a noticeable difference between policy provisions and praxis as articulated by the student responses. A possible explanation for this result may be linked to the fact that all participants had been accepted to study at their respective universities, hence students may have perceived their acceptance into the university community as indicative of their right to full and equal participation as being fulfilled. According to Matshedisho (2007), the disability discourse in South African higher education institutions is still strongly characterised by benevolence, casting students with disabilities in the role of recipients of charity. Such a discourse is disempowering. Although a disability rights movement has existed in South Africa since the 1980s, a rights-based discourse was not

part of the official government rhetoric until the 1990s (Matshedisho, 2007). Arguably a charity perspective and/or stigmatisation and exclusion of persons with disability is still pervasive in South African society and can lead to low self-esteem and disempowerment (Trani et al., 2020). Persons with disabilities may not be aware of their rights and have limited expectations regarding environmental changes to be made in order for their rights to be realised. Tier 1 Universities have failed to sufficiently respond to the practices that uphold institutionalized ableism.

By comparison, affordability for the inclusion of students with disabilities is neglected. Furthermore, policy provisions that are addressed are often conditional, preventing the policy from taking full effect. However, students' perceptions in this regard did not mirror policy findings. This finding was not anticipated taking into account the current higher education climate outlined in Chapter 2, in which the high costs of higher education is being questioned by students and their call for the reduction in fees.

The overall extent to which students with disabilities perceived their inclusion as being addressed could not easily be established. Students with disabilities appear to have limited expectations regarding their rights to be realised (internalised oppression/internalised ableism).

6.5 Summary

In this chapter, the findings from the policy analysis and student perceptions were discussed. The findings and interpretations regarding perceptions of students with disabilities of inclusion at South African Tier 1 Universities according to the five markers and 17 indicators of inclusive higher education were presented. In this chapter, the findings from these two data sources were merged and discussed accordingly

CHAPTER 7
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter a summary of the contributions of this study and possible implications are provided. This chapter recapitulates the purpose and findings of this study, using the conceptual Framework. Strengths and limitations of this study are also discussed. This chapter also draws on the pertinent findings and makes recommendations for future research.

7.2 Summary and Conclusions

To reflect, this study described and analysed the inclusion of students with disabilities at Tier 1 South African Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework. Chapter 6 in particular, illustrated the disability policy provisions of Tier 1 Universities and the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding their inclusion at these universities.

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this study. Firstly, all Tier 1 South African Universities recognise the importance of an inclusive higher education system and therefore have established institutional disability policies that make provision for the inclusion of students with disabilities at their individual universities. It was evident that these policies are anchored in a human rights discourse. The discourse recognises that students with disabilities have the (progressive) right to higher education, thereby advocating for equality and non-discrimination. This discourse is expressed in the policy provisions relating to non-discrimination and education as right, as encompassed in the CRPD (United Nations, 2006) and in the Constitution of South Africa (South Africa, 1996). However, these disability policies largely overlooked the intersections of disability, race, gender and class.

The second conclusion relates to the policy provisions themselves in relation to the availability, accessibility, acceptability, adaptability and affordability markers as per the revised 4-A Framework. It was established that disability policies made mention of provisions relating to availability, accessibility and acceptability. However provisions related to adaptability were not uniformly mentioned in all policies. Affordability as a policy provision for the inclusion of students with disabilities was neglected and not given due regard. University 1 and 3 made no provisions for affordability in their disability policies. Universities 4 and 5 generally made provisions for most indicators (14 out of the 17 indicators were met). The policies of University 2 and 3 made the least amount of provisions across the five markers. Moreover, the adaptability

and affordability markers were specifically neglected by these institutional policies. Therefore, these gaps in policy provision may give rise to students with disabilities being discriminated against and/or excluded from these institutions. The marker of affordability was generally neglected by Tier 1 Universities, therefore implying that these universities seemingly want to retain the right to qualify their financial commitments towards the inclusion of students with disabilities and towards ensuring economic accessibility of the higher education system, to promote the inclusion of students with disabilities. The inclusion of students with disabilities is perceived by Tier 1 Universities as being an additional cost or expense to the institution and therefore optional.

With respect to availability, it was established that all five Tier 1 Universities do not restrict suitably qualified students from applying. Furthermore, these institutions explicitly provide for Disability Units or the equivalent thereof to be established. It was argued that Disability Units play a crucial role at universities as they are intended to be custodians of the disability policy of their respective institutions. Although all five universities make provision in their policies for Disability Units, the services offered by these units are affected by resources. The researcher therefore postulates that, if resource allocation to Disability Units is not regarded as an essential feature by senior management, institutions only pay lip service to inclusion of students with disabilities. Consequently, if there is lack of support from senior management and/or if management reduces the budget of disability units, this will have a negative impact on the type and level of support provided to students with disabilities, as there may be insufficient financial and human resources to provide effective services. This ultimately hampers equal participation of students with disabilities in the university environment, including successful and timely graduation.

From the discussion on the provision of accessibility, it can be concluded that whilst most Tier 1 Universities make provision for institutions to be accessible without discrimination, these institutions generally qualify this access with a disclaimer such as "*as far as feasible and affordable*". This qualifying statements speaks to the broad issue of the perceptions of disability support in South African Tier 1 universities being an additional cost or expense.

There were notable attempts by Universities 2 - 5, regarding the accessibility of its built environments by implementing universal design principles to ensure the safety, security and well-being of all students with disabilities on its premises.

For the marker of acceptability it was established that Tier 1 Universities have made provision for the acceptance and recognition of students with disabilities as a part of the university community by indicating a willingness to engage with students with disabilities. This provision allows for students with disabilities to sit in on committees, structures or make a contribution towards decision making processes within the university that seek to address exclusionary practices and promote the inclusion of students with disabilities. However it was evident that Tier 1 Universities have failed to sufficiently address and respond to the practices that uphold institutionalized ableism. Students with disabilities are segregated from the broader university community which in turn reinforces their marginality and further perpetuates exclusion.

In terms of adaptability it was found that , whilst Tier 1 Universities cater for individual support measures, UDL principles are not uniformly addressed. Findings further reveal that Tier 1 Universities neglect the provision relating to the adaptability of support systems and structures. Many of the provisions relating to affordability in university policies lack timeframes and seem to be indefinite. This finding helps to showcase the interconnectedness of inclusion and economic accessibility.

The fourth conclusion of this study relates to the perceptions of students with disabilities regarding their inclusion in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework. Overall, the extent to which students with disabilities perceive their inclusion as being addressed could not easily be established. Students with disabilities appeared to have limited expectations regarding their rights to be realised (internalised oppression/internalised ableism). As pointed out in Chapter 6, eight out of the nine participants were from the same institution (University 2) and therefore a cross-comparison of policy and praxis would not be possible. In general, participants perceived their universities as meeting the availability marker. As all participants who participated in the study were current students and registered with their respective Disability Rights Units, it is likely that this contributed to their perception of their universities fulfilling the marker of availability. Likewise, the adaptability marker was overall perceived to be met. Regarding accessibility and acceptability, responses were more mixed, and for some indicators limited responses were received. Lastly participants were ambivalent in their responses relating to affordability. These findings were not anticipated, taking into account the higher education landscape and time frame in which the study was conducted (i.e., #FeesMustFall movement). The findings of this study relating to student perceptions were largely unexpected taking into account the literature reviewed on the experiences of students

with disabilities in higher education in South Africa whereby it was found that provision for students with disabilities is far from ideal, as these students confront restrictions to or exclusions from the curricula, assessment opportunities, social activities, built environment and financial resources. Based on the researcher's personal experience in receiving research requests, students with disabilities are an over-researched population group; therefore, it is possible that this population experiences research fatigue. This was noted in the limited written responses from students to the 5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire.

7.3 Critical Evaluation of The Study

7.3.1 Strengths

Inclusive education is an on-going process and applying a human rights-based approach to higher education requires the development of a comprehensive model that addresses all aspects of the education system. This study affirms that the revised 4-A Framework can be useful for benchmarking the inclusion of students with disabilities in Tier 1 Universities in South Africa. The revised 4-A Framework translates the right to education within the higher education context into more concrete provisions, and therefor provides parameters to this right and makes it less elusive. The five markers provide parameters for universities to facilitate the appropriate responses necessary to facilitate the progressive realisation of the right to higher education for students with disabilities.

The reviewed literature focused predominantly on the implementation of institutional disability policies. This study critically evaluated the institutional disability policies themselves and established the parameters of the provisions that students can expect and for which policy implementers can be held accountable. The policies reviewed were carefully evaluated beyond just their overall commitment towards the inclusion of students with disabilities, describing the specific policy provisions that contribute towards the realisation of an inclusive higher education system.

A large proportion of previous studies utilised either a medical or social model of understanding disability. The current study explored and implemented a critical disability theory conceptualisation in understanding disability. Therefore, this study has provided a theoretical contribution toward the field of disability studies within the South African higher education context.

Methodologically, the coding scheme developed based on the revised 4-A Framework provides a consistent method of coding data from both policies and from students, thereby

enabling the researcher to align and integrate findings from these two data sources more easily. The collaborative approach to coding increased the rigour of the process.

Whilst the online focus-groups did not yield any participants, this study through its pilot studies and write-up thereof could assist researchers to further refine their protocols and avoid barriers to data collection, as experienced in the current study.

7.3.2 Limitations

Five major limitations could be identified in the study and may be used as recommendations for further studies within the field of disability studies, psychology, inclusive education and human rights.

As pointed out in Chapter 4 and 5, eight out of the nine participants were from the same institution (University 2), hence a cross-comparison of policy and praxis was not feasible. No participants from Universities 1, 4 or 5 agreed consented to partake in this study. This limitation was due to the barriers experienced during the recruitment phase of this study.

The scope of this study is limited to Tier 1 Universities in South Africa. Thus, findings are not generalisable to other higher education institutions in the country. Furthermore, the scope of this study focussed only on policy provisions of institutional disability policies in South Africa and the perceptions of students with disabilities and did not include the perceptions of professional support staff and academic staff. The inclusion of the perceptions of staff members would provide valuable input regarding how policy provisions are implemented.

As the revised 4-A Framework was reformulated into a questionnaire, it is likely this format placed a limitation on the type of responses yielded from students with disabilities and limited their ability to fully share their experiences. However, this format was chosen based on the outcome of two pilot studies.

This study utilised a deductive qualitative analysis. Therefore, the researcher's analytic preconceptions and theoretical interests may have influenced analysis, as opposed to an inductive approach, where the themes identified would be more strongly linked to the data. The particular framework chosen limited a more critical analysis and may have precluded a more in-depth engagement regarding the intersectional political, social, race and ableist issues that impact upon the inclusion of students with disabilities. Although the revised 4-A Framework provided a unifying structure to analyse both policy and practice, more covert issues that preclude full inclusion (such as internalised oppression and intersectionality) were hard to capture. Seeing that critical disability theory aims to shed light on pre-existing systems of

power within institutions that have been put in place to continuously perpetuate disadvantage and ableism (Hall, 2019), the revised 4-A Framework may have been aligned more with a human rights approach than a critical disability theory approach.

The researcher was employed at one of the participating institutions, and this could be seen as a limitation to the research process. Eight out of the nine students with disabilities were recruited from the researcher's university. Students may have felt obliged to provide a positive response in terms of their experiences, resulting in a social desirability bias (the so-called Hawthorne effect). However, the online process of data collection as opposed to face-to-face data collection assisted in removing direct contact with participants. The students could choose to remain anonymous.

In addition, the researcher was wary of her own positionality as she works closely in the field in which the study was situated. Therefore, the researcher is aware of the current challenges that students with disabilities report as barriers that hinder inclusion. The researcher had to constantly and consistently reflect on this. The researcher also disclosed in the permission letter for each institution her current role beyond the research. The use of deductive qualitative framework, and investigator triangulation helped reduce this bias as the analysis and interpretation of the two data-sources was informed by the revised 4-A Framework.

7.4 Recommendations for Practice

From the foregoing discussion of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations can be made with a particular relevance to South African Tier 1 Universities:

- It is of paramount importance that universities consider the historical disadvantages experienced by students with disabilities not only based on their disability, but race and as well –factors which have been termed as the double and triple burden of disability. This ensures that students with disabilities are not excluded due to belonging to more than one marginalised group. Therefore, previously white institutions, should address the gaps in their policies and make provision for the evaluation of social barriers to inclusion.
- Whilst web availability on the application process is commendable; it would be negligent not to recognise the disparities within the South Africa context. Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) are not readily available to all students. There are many students living in areas where basic education facilities have rudimentary access to the internet. Therefore, it is essential that the application process to Universities is available across multiple platforms. This could be in the format of

recruitment drives at schools for learners with disabilities. This would enable learners to directly interact with Universities and be assisted with the application process.

- Some of the policy provisions that contribute towards the realisation of the inclusion of students with disabilities are qualified by statements such as 'progressive realisation' and 'without undue hardship'. It is therefore essential to establish benchmarks to ensure that these qualifying statements do not undermine the realisation of the right to higher education for students with disabilities.
- Universities in South Africa should take a critical appraisal of physical accessibility and consider all categories of disability and all environments, including student transport, residences, effective signage, and evacuation procedures. As students with disabilities often encounter barriers to accessibility, addressing this at policy level will foster the participation of students with disabilities and reinforce inclusive practices.
- In order for students with disabilities to be included in the full learning experience, adherence to universal design standards should be made mandatory and not be made contingent upon available resources. Development of the curriculum in line with UDL is essential for all students including students with disabilities to access learning material required in order to equally participate in teaching and learning activities, Therefore, the curriculum and instructional material at Tier 1 Universities should be available in a range of representation to accommodate for all students. Furthermore, it is important for Universities to provide both undergraduate and postgraduate students accessible assessment opportunities.
- Sufficient funds need to be made available to sustain an inclusive educational system. Students with disabilities have the right to affordable access to education. It is recommended that sufficient funding, budgeting processes and commitment from senior management in the allocation of funding be secured. Thus, a funding model needs to be developed as part of policy to address the economic accessibility of universities. As tertiary education in South Africa is a progressive right, the reasonable accommodation of students with disabilities can be viewed equally so.

7.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

Despite some limitations to this study, it does present with avenues for further research. An understanding of policy provisions and gaps for all 26 higher education institutions in the country is required. The current sample was chosen as a best-case study – these Tier 1 Universities all had developed and implemented disability policies, and were well-established

and relatively well-resourced (FOTIM, 2011). Policy provisions at other higher education institutions may well be more limited, and this would have negative implications for the inclusion of students with disabilities. A larger and more diverse sample of higher education institutions will allow for a comprehensive understanding of institutional disability policy provisions.

Policy implementation is binary to the provisions developed within a policy. A more comprehensive qualitative exploration of the disability policy implementation at universities in South Africa will indicate whether policy provisions are implemented successfully or not. This qualitative exploration should also include staff perceptions. Such an in-depth exploration can inform future policy development and a policy Framework for inclusive higher education.

Using additional and diverse methodological approaches to analyse disability policies can broaden our understanding of not only provisions within the policy, but also the underlying ideologies, assumptions and problem constructions inherent within policy. Future studies could employ methods like critical discourse analysis to unpack ideologies of higher education disability policies.

A qualitative study into the role of University staff in promoting the education of students with disabilities should be considered. In addition, a qualitative study involving interviews with institutional policy makers who were involved in the drafting of disability policies aimed at the inclusion of students with disabilities at their respective institutions could also reveal interesting findings with regard to the factors considered and underlying drivers in the drafting of the policies. Such a study should emphasize UDL over and above reasonable accommodation.

7.6 Conclusion

In this concluding chapter a summary of the contributions of this study and possible implications were discussed. This chapter recapitulated the purpose and findings of this study, using the revised 4-A Framework. Strengths and limitations of this study were also discussed, as were implications for practice. This chapter also drew on the pertinent findings and made recommendations for future research.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Ethics Approval Letter

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Humanities

14 September 2018

Dear Ms Ramaahlo

Project:	**An analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities at a Tier 1 South African University in accordance with the 4 'A' framework**
Researcher:	**M Ramaahlo**
Supervisor:	**Dr K Tőnsing**
Department:	**Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication**
Reference Number:	**13415281 (GW20150514HS) (Amendment of Protocol)**

Thank you for the application to amend the existing protocol that was approved by the Committee on 2 August 2018.

I have pleasure in informing you that the amendment was **approved** the Research Ethics Committee, the Dean of Humanities and the Registrar at an *ad hoc* meeting held on 14 September 2018. Further data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the amended proposal. Should your actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof Maxi Schoeman
Deputy Dean: Postgraduate Studies and Ethics
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: tracey.andrew@up.ac.za

cc: Dr K Tönsing (Supervisor) Prof J Bornman (HoD)

Fakulteit Geesteswetenskapp
Lefapha la Bomoth

APPENDIX B

Biographical Questionnaire on Qualtrics

1. Your current age

- 18 - 21
- 22-25
- 26 - 29
- 30 - 35
- 35-40
- 41 and older
-

2. I identify my gender as....

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary/non-conforming
- Transgender male
- Transgender female

3. I identify my race as...

- African
- Coloured
- Indian
- White
- Prefer not to say

4. Which University are your currently registered at?

- University of KwaZulu-Natal
- University of Johannesburg
- University of Cape Town
- University of Pretoria
- University of the Witwatersrand
- Stellenbosch University

5. Your current academic year of study at your university?

- 1st year student
- 2nd year student
- 3rd year student
- 4th year student
- Honour's Student
- Master's Student
- PhD Candidate

6. Type of qualification you are studying towards

- Degree
- Postgraduate Degree
- National Diploma
- Advanced Certificate

8. Are you currently being funded by NSFAS?

- Yes
- No

9. Please tick the checkbox(es) marking the nature of your disability.

- Visual Disability
- Hearing Disability
- Learning Disability
- Physical Disability
- Psychiatric/Psychological Disability e.g. eating disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety
- Neurological Disability e.g. epilepsy, traumatic brain injury.
- Medical Disability e.g. chronic heart condition, longstanding medical condition that affects functioning
- Multiple Disability that affects multiple needs
- Un-diagnosed/unknown condition

10 .Do you currently receive support for your disability at your University? (e.g. extra time, use of a separate venue or a computer, adapted residence or an assistive device).

- Yes
- No

11. Do you currently make use of any of the following assistive devices/technology or human support?

- Screen Reader e.g. JAWS, NVDA
- Learning Software e.g. Read & Write Gold, ClaroRead, Dragon
- SASL Interpreter
- Notetaker
- Scribe
- Reader
- Care assistant/caregiver
- Mobility device e.g. wheelchair, crutches, walking frame
- None of the above
- Other _____

APPENDIX C

Electronic information email inviting students to participate in the main study

Dear Student

My name is Maria Ramaahlo, and I am a PhD student at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. I am interested in understanding the extent to which the needs of students with disabilities have been addressed in policy and praxis at South African Universities. I am writing to invite you and your fellow students to participate in my study (in the format of an online questionnaire/survey).

In this questionnaire you will be asked to comment on your experience of inclusion as a student with a disability in higher (university) education. The questionnaire should take you around 15 minutes to complete, and you may receive one out of twenty 500MB mobile data bundles specific to your cellular network for your participation. If you want to be considered please include your contact details at the end of the questionnaire. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. The online questionnaire is available on Qualtrics at the link below:

https://pretoria.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8JqfldM9Wx8hvGR

Please feel free to share this questionnaire with fellow students with disabilities. Should you need any further information or clarification on the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 012 420 2582 or email me at mariaramaahlo@gmail.com. You are also welcome to contact my supervisor, Prof Kerstin Tönsing, on tel. 012 420 4729, or email her at kerstin.tonsing@up.ac.za.

Kind Regards

Ms Maria Ramaahlo	Prof Kerstin Tönsing
(Principal researcher)	(Supervisor)

APPENDIX D

5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire and Informed Consent Form (Main Study)

Welcome to the research study on the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African Universities.

My name is Maria Ramaahlo. I am undertaking this research as part of my PhD degree within the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria under the supervision of Prof K Tönsing. I am interested in understanding the extent to which the needs of students with disabilities have been addressed in policy and praxis at South African Universities. I would like to invite you to participate. In this questionnaire you will be asked to comment on your experience of inclusion as a student with a disability in higher (university) education.

Inclusion of students with disabilities requires that university education is:

available - students with disabilities are admitted without being discriminated against

accessible – students with disabilities are not discriminated against once they are admitted

acceptable – students with disabilities are accepted and given a voice by the institution in matters that concern them

adaptable- - the needs of students with disabilities are accommodated

affordable – the students do not have to pay for the adaptations made for them and do not incur additional financial expenses due to their disability.

The questions should take you around **10-15 minutes** to complete, and you stand the chance to win one out of twenty **500MB mobile data** bundles specific to your cellular network for your participation. If you want to be considered for the draw please include your contact details at the end of the questionnaire. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. The results of the study will be published in a thesis and a scientific article. If you would like to receive a copy of the article or if you would have any comments or questions about this study, please feel free to contact me (mariaramaahlo@gmail.com) or my supervisor (kerstin.tonsing@up.ac.za).

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age or older, you are currently studying at a University in South Africa and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time

and for any reason. Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device

- I consent, begin the study
- I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

APPENDIX E

5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire

1. Please share your experiences with regards to the application process at University. In your response, please refer to the factors that affected the application process that you used to apply to study at your university and also to factors, such as your academic registration processes, and first year orientation amongst other factors
2. What practices are currently in place at your university to remove physical barriers as experienced by you? This could be barriers experienced when accessing buildings, residences and campus transport. Please elaborate on your reply (e.g., how effective/appropriate are the practices, how do you experience them)
3. What practices are currently in place at your university to remove social and attitudinal barriers as experienced by you? This could be attitudinal barriers from your lecturers, administrative staff, fellow students. Please elaborate on your reply.
4. Is there a space (be it virtual or an office or person) for you and other students with disabilities to voice your views on the support for students with disabilities? Please elaborate on your reply.
5. Are you and other students with disabilities provided with opportunities to engage in dialogue with management (e.g. HODs, student governance, and other leadership structures at your university) with regards to support for students with disabilities?
6. In terms of your study guides, lecture material, practical work, assignments, reading packs, and assessment material– is this academic material adapted so that you are able to access this material? Please elaborate on your reply (e.g., how effective/appropriate are the adaptations, how do you experience them?)
7. Are the services offered by the Information Services (Library) adapted so that you are able to access their services? Please elaborate on your reply.
8. Are the services of support departments such as Student Counselling, Student Health, and Academic Development accessible to you? Please elaborate on your reply?
9. When requesting reasonable accommodation such as concession support, use of a scribe, caregiving services, does your institution make provision for these accommodations at no cost to you? Please elaborate on your reply. Please comment on how you perceive your institution's financial commitment towards the inclusion of students with disabilities.

10. Any additional comments relating to the inclusion of students with disabilities at your university?

APPENDIX F

Request for Permission from the University to Conduct Research

Faculty of Humanities

To	**:** Registrar
	: Disability Rights Unit
Name of Institution	**:**
Date	**:** 30 May 2019
Subject	**:** Permission to conduct a research main study

My name is Maria Ramaahlo, and I am a PhD student at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Faculty of Humanities. I am writing to request permission to conduct a research study that forms part of my PhD at your institution. The title of my study is *An analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities at a Tier 1 South African University in accordance with the 4 'A' Framework*.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse the extent to which the needs of students with disabilities have been addressed by policy and praxis of South African research universities in accordance with the 4 'A' Framework. The 4 'A' Framework specifies availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability as four parameters that outline governmental and institutional obligations to guarantee and realise the right to education.

What will be expected from your institution?

Should you provide consent, I would like to recruit students with disabilities as potential participants to participate my study (in the format of an online questionnaire). In accordance with the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2 of 2000, your institution's Disability Unit will be requested to forward the electronic information letter (see appendix A) to all students registered at your institution's Disability Unit.

The electronic information letter details information about the study and includes the link to the online questionnaire. The letter stipulates that participation is voluntary and that participants can withdraw at any stage should they wish do so for any reason without negative consequences to themselves.

What will be expected of the participants?

Students with disabilities will be invited to complete an online questionnaire. The questionnaire is embedded in a cloud-based survey tool namely Qualtrics, to which the University of Pretoria is a license holder. The questionnaire consists of 23 questions as per the revised 4 'A' Framework and questions relating to their age group, gender identity, disability status and reasonable accommodation requirements. The questionnaire link can be accessed directly from the electronic invitation letter.

The questionnaire should take students 10- 15 minutes to complete and is accessible for students who make use of an assistive device (e.g. screen reader). An incentive is offered to students to encourage participation. Twenty students will be randomly selected to receive 500MB mobile data bundles specific to their mobile network for their participation. If participants wants to be considered for this incentive, they are prompted to include only their mobile phone number and network provider at the end of the questionnaire. Participants responses and contact details will be kept completely confidential.

Several steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the information participants provided in the questionnaire as well as their identity. The data from the electronic questionnaire will be kept safely, and the information will only be viewed by the PhD student, a research assistant and supervisors.

Data storage and dissemination of results

The data obtained from the online questionnaire will be securely stored for the purposes of archiving for a period of 15 years at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, University of Pretoria. The online questionnaire will be closed after completion of this study.

The results from this study will be reported in oral and written form, including a doctoral dissertation, manuscripts submitted for publication in scientific journals, or oral and/or poster presentations at scientific meetings, seminars, and/or conferences. If you wish to receive a copy

of the results of the study, you may contact the researcher at 0124202582 or email maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would consider this request favourably. If you agree, kindly sign the permission slip below and email to maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za. Thank you for your time and consideration of this request. Should you need any further information or clarification on the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0124202582 or email me at maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za. You are also welcome to contact my supervisor, Prof Kerstin Tönsing, at kerstin.tonsing@up.ac.za.

Kind Regards

Ms Maria Ramaahlo	Prof Kerstin Tönsing
(Principal researcher)	(Supervisor)

Permission: Reply Slip

An analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities at a Tier 1 South African University in accordance with the 4 'A' Framework

Researcher: **Maria Ramaahlo** PhD student Centre for AAC Tel: 012 420 2582

Supervisor: Kerstin Tönsing (PhD) Senior Lecturer Centre for AAC Tel: 012 420 7429

I,_____,

Name and surname

(please tick box that applies)

☐ give permission to Maria Ramaahlo to recruit students from UCT as described in the information letter provided for possible participation in the study entitled *An analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities at a Tier 1 South African University in accordance with the 4 'A' Framework*, conducted by Maria Ramaahlo under the supervision of Prof Kerstin Tönsing. This permission is voluntary and I understand that I may withdraw it at any time.

OR

☐ do not give permission to Maria Ramaahlo to students from UCT as described in the information letter provided for possible participation in the study entitled *An analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities at a Tier 1 South African University in accordance with the 4 'A' Framework.*

_____
Signature

_____
Date

Official stamp

APPENDIX G

Online Focus Group Schedule to be used on ClickUP (Pilot Study 1)

Entry (to be emailed to participants)

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study

Focus Group Questions

(Availability)

1. Could you all tell me about how your university ensures that you were able to apply to study and register at your university. In your response, please refer to the application process that you used to apply to study at your university, the academic registration processes, the residence registration, the orientation of students with disabilities amongst other factors.
2. Your university has a Disability Rights Unit that is responsible for the coordinating support for students with disabilities. If you or have made use of the services of the Unit, how do you experience these services?

(Accessibility)

3. In an inclusive setting, Universities work closely with students to ensure opportunities for significant and meaningful involvement in the learning process and the social environment. What practices are currently in place at your university to remove physical, social and attitudinal barriers as experienced by you? This could be barriers experienced from your lecturers, administrative staff and/or colleagues.

(Acceptability)

4. Is there a space (be it virtual or an office or person) for students with disabilities to voice their views on the support for students with disabilities? Please elaborate on your reply.
5. Are students with disabilities provided with opportunities to engage in dialogue with management (e.g. HODs, student governance, and other leadership structures at your university)?

   (Probe further so that participants reflect on both academic and social support requirements)

(Adaptability)

6. In terms of your study guides, lecture material, practical work, assignments, reading packs, and assessment material– is this academic material adapted for you?
   (Probe further in terms of how academic material and assessments are adapted/ or if principles of universal design are utilized).
7. Are services offered by support departments such as Sport, Student Counselling, Information Services (Library) adapted for you?
   (Probe further in terms of how these services are accessed by students with disabilities).
   (Affordability)
8. When requesting reasonable accommodation such as concession support, use of a scribe, caregiving services, does your institution make provision for these accommodations at no cost to you?
9. Please comment on how you perceive your institution's financial commitment to the inclusion of students with disabilities.

APPENDIX H

Consent Letter for students with disabilities (Pilot Study 1)

Faculty of Humanities

Dear Student

My name is Maria Ramaahlo, and I am a PhD student at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. The title of my study is: A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities using the revised 4-A Framework. I am writing to you request your consent to participate in my pilot study. The pilot study is intended to determine the suitability of the proposed internet-based data collection methods and materials.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse the extent to which the needs of students with disabilities have been addressed by policy and praxis of South African research Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework. The 4 'A' The Framework has four main themes namely, availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability that guarantee and realise the right to education.

What will be expected of the participants?

Should you provide consent, you will be asked to complete a short biographical questionnaire on Google Forms about your name, race, disability status, degree information. Thereafter you will be invited to take part in an online focus group together with about 9 other students with disabilities from your institution. The online focus group will take place over two consecutive days (Tuesday –Friday) utilising the University of Pretoria's e-Education platform namely ClickUP (Blackboard). You will be provided with a username and password to access this platform and partake in discussions. The discussions will take place asynchronously, meaning that all the participants will not be required to be online at the same time of the day. You will be able to enter the focus group at a time of day that suits you.

I will be posting questions asking about your perceptions regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities in accordance with a human rights Framework on the right to education, namely the revised 4-A Framework. A total of ten questions will be asked as per the revised revised 4-A Framework, whereby all nine questions will be posted on the first day of the focus group. You are encouraged to contribute to questions as often as you are able to over the two days. It is recommended that you answer all the questions at least once. You will have the opportunity to type your responses to the questions posed by the myself and also to post comments on the responses of other participants. The online forum will be opened one day before the onset of the group to allow you and other participants an opportunity to test their access to the forum. It will be closed immediately after the two days have passed. Detailed instructions on accessing the online forum will be communicated to you after consent has been received.

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained as you will be provided with a username and password to access the online-focus group discussions. Under no circumstances whatsoever will you be identified by name in the course of this research study or in any publication thereof. Every effort will be made that all information provided by you will be treated as strictly confidential. The discussions will be downloaded from the online forum by the researcher directly after the completion of the focus group, with names of individual participants replaced by participant numbers. The online data will be erased. The data from the focus group will be kept safely, and the information will only be viewed by myself and my supervisors.

All participants in the online focus group will be requested to treat any information shared in the online group as confidential. However, I do not have control over the actions of the other participants in the focus group. Therefore, a risk exists that participants could share information obtained during the group. All participants will be made aware of this risk. As all participants in the group are students with disabilities and familiar with the importance of confidentiality regarding disability status, this is thought to be a small risk.

Participation and Withdrawal

You have the choice to be a part of this study or not. If you consent to be in this study, you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Should you withdraw, any information

collected from you will be destroyed immediately. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Dissemination of results

The results from this study will be reported in oral and written form that may be presented in manuscripts submitted for publication in scientific journals, or oral and/or poster presentations at scientific meetings, seminars, and/or conferences. If you wish to receive a copy of the results of the study, you may contact the researcher at 0124202582 or email maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za.

Thank you for your time in considering this request. I would be grateful if you could complete the permission slip attached to indicate whether you consent to participate in this study. I would be most appreciative if you could email the permission slip to me at maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za. Should you need any further information or clarification on the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 012 420 2582 or email me at maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za. You are also welcome to contact my supervisor, Dr Kerstin Tönsing, on tel. 012 420 4729, or email her at kerstin.tonsing@up.ac.za.

Kind Regards

Ms Maria Ramaahlo	Prof Kerstin Tönsing
(Principal researcher)	(Supervisor)

Consent: Reply Slip

Pilot Study: An analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities at a Tier 1 South African University in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework

Researcher:	**Maria Ramaahlo**	**Supervisor:**	Kerstin Tönsing (PhD)
	PhD student		Senior Lecturer
	Centre for AAC		Centre for AAC
	Tel: 012 420 2582		Tel: 012 420 7429

I,_____,

Name and surname

hereby consent to voluntarily participate in the study described in the information letter provided for possible participation in the study entitled *An analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities at a Tier 1 South African University in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework*, conducted by Maria Ramaahlo under the supervision of Dr Kerstin Tönsing. I confirm that I am 18 years or older and am legally able to provide consent. This permission is voluntary and I understand that I may withdraw it at any time. I understand that participating in the study involves an online focus group. I understand that the data will be stored for 15 years at the CAAC and that all data will be treated confidentially. I understand that the data maybe re-used for analysis. I understand that the data may be used for a scientific article and for conference presentations. I understand that all information used and obtained in this study will be treated as confidential.

_____
Signature

_____
Date

APPENDIX I

Biographical Form for students with disabilities (Pilot Study 1)

1. Your current age

- 18 - 21
- 22-25
- 26 - 29
- 30 - 35
- 35-40
- 41 and older

2. I identify my gender as....

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary/non-conforming
- Transgender male
- Transgender female

3. I identify my race as...

- African
- Coloured
- Indian
- White
- Prefer not to say

4. Which University are your currently registered at?

- University of KwaZulu-Natal
- University of Johannesburg
- University of Cape Town
- University of Pretoria
- University of the Witwatersrand
- Stellenbosch University

5. Your current academic year of study at your university?

- 1st year student
- 2nd year student
- 3rd year student
- 4th year student
- Honour's Student
- Master's Student
- PhD Candidate

6. Type of qualification you are studying towards

- Degree
- Postgraduate Degree
- National Diploma
- Advanced Certificate

8. Are you currently being funded by NSFAS?

- Yes
- No

9. Please tick the checkbox(es) marking the nature of your disability.

- Visual Disability
- Hearing Disability
- Learning Disability
- Physical Disability
- Psychiatric/Psychological Disability e.g. eating disorder, schizophrenia, anxiety
- Neurological Disability e.g. epilepsy, traumatic brain injury.
- Medical Disability e.g. chronic heart condition, longstanding medical condition that affects functioning
- Multiple Disability that affects multiple needs
- Un-diagnosed/unknown condition

10 .Do you currently receive support for your disability at your University? (e.g. extra time, use of a separate venue or a computer, adapted residence or an assistive device).

- o Yes
- o No

11. Do you currently make use of any of the following assistive devices/technology or human support?

- o Screen Reader e.g. JAWS, NVDA
- o Learning Software e.g. Read & Write Gold, ClaroRead, Dragon
- o SASL Interpreter
- o Notetaker
- o Scribe
- o Reader
- o Care assistant/caregiver
- o Mobility device e.g. wheelchair, crutches, walking frame
- o None of the above
- o Other _____

APPENDIX J

Request for Permission from Tier 2 University to Conduct Research: Pilot Study 1

To **:** DVC Research

Name of Institution **:**

Date **:** 18 April 2018

Subject **:** Permission to conduct pilot study

My name is Maria Ramaahlo, and I am a PhD student at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. The title of my study is: A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities using the revised 4-A Framework. I am writing to request permission to conduct a pilot study at your institution. The pilot study is intended to determine the suitability of the proposed internet-based data collection methods and materials.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse the extent to which the needs of students with disabilities have been addressed by policy and praxis of South African research Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework. The revised 4-A Framework specifies availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability as four parameters that outline governmental and institutional obligations to guarantee and realise the right to education

What will be expected from your institution?

Should you provide consent, I would like to approach the to ask for their assistance with recruiting participants by forwarding an information letter and consent form to all students with disabilities registered with PsyCaD: the Disability Rights Unit across all categories of disabilities as potential participants.

Participant selection

The criteria for the inclusion of students with disabilities will be clearly stipulated in the information letter. These criteria are that the participants have a self-disclosed disability and be registered with the Disability Rights Unit. Furthermore, the participants need to be registered at your university (undergraduate or postgraduate) for at least 6 months so that they are familiar with the academic environment. As the focus groups will be conducted in a secure online environment, participants will need to have access to internet-connected computers and their preferred assistive technology with which they use to access these computers. The manager will be asked to email an information letter about the study to all students registered with the

Disability Rights Unit. The email will explain the eligibility criteria and details of the study as well as an invitation for interested students to contact the researcher directly if there is an interest to participate and/or find out further details about the study. The first 12 participants who respond and meet the selection criteria will be included in the online focus group.

What will be expected of the participants?

The online focus group will take place over four consecutive days utilising the University of Pretoria's e-Education platform namely ClickUP (Blackboard). Participants who give consent to participate in the study will be provided a username and password. The discussions will take place asynchronously, implying that all the participants will not be required to be online at the same time of the day. They will be able to enter the focus group at a time of day that suits them. The researcher will post questions asking the participants about their perceptions regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities in accordance with the revised 4 A Framework. A total of ten questions will be asked as per the revised 4-A-Framework, whereby five questions will be posted on the first day of the focus group, and five questions on the second day. Participants are encouraged to contribute to questions as often as they are able over the four days. It is recommended that participants answer all the questions at least once.

Participants will have the opportunity to type their responses to the questions posed by the researcher and also to post comments on the responses of other participants. The online forum will be opened a few days before the onset of the group to allow participants to test their access to the forum. It will be closed immediately after the five days have passed. Detailed instructions on accessing the online forum will be communicated to participants.

Steps taken to uphold ethical principles of research involving human participants:

Participants will be fully informed of all aspects of the study through the information letter. They will be made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Should they withdraw, any information collected from them will be destroyed immediately. They will also be made aware of the risks and benefits of participation in the study. They will be provided with the opportunity to give or withhold consent by completing a written consent form.

Several steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the information participants provide in the focus group, as well as their identity. The discussions will be downloaded from the online forum by the researcher directly after the completion of the focus group, with names of individual participants replaced by participant numbers. This will be done in order to ensure

that no identifying information is retained in the data. The data from the focus group will be kept safely, and the information will only be viewed by the PhD student and supervisors. Participant names will not be mentioned in any publication or presentation. The data obtained will be securely stored for the purposes of research and archiving for a period of 15 years at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, University of Pretoria. The online forum will be erased. All participants in the focus group will be requested to keep information shared in the group confidential. However, the researcher does not have control over the actions of the participants. Therefore, a risk exists that participants could share information obtained during the group. All participants will be made aware of this risk. As all participants in the group are persons with disabilities and familiar with the importance of confidentiality regarding disability status as they sign a letter of consent with PsyCaD, this is thought to be a small risk.

Dissemination of results

The results from this study will be reported in oral and written form that may be presented in manuscripts submitted for publication in scientific journals, or oral and/or poster presentations at scientific meetings, seminars, and/or conferences. If you wish to receive a copy of the results of the study, you may contact the researcher at 0124202582 or email maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za.

Thank you for your time in considering this request. I would be grateful if you could complete the permission slip attached to indicate whether or not you grant permission to recruit participants for this study from your institution. I would be most appreciative if you could email the permission slip to me at maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za. Alternatively, you may prefer to submit a signed letter of permission on your institution's letterhead.

Should you need any further information or clarification on the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 012 420 2582 or email me at maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za. You are also welcome to contact my supervisor, Dr Kerstin Tönsing, on tel. 012 420 4729, or email her at kerstin.tonsing@up.ac.za.

Kind Regards

Ms Maria Ramaahlo	Dr Kerstin Tönsing
(Principal researcher)	(Supervisor)

Permission: Reply Slip

Pilot Study: A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities using the revised 4-A Framework.

Researcher:	**Maria Ramaahlo**	**Supervisor:**	Kerstin Tönsing (PhD)
	PhD student		Senior Lecturer
	Centre for AAC		Centre for AAC
	Tel: 012 420 2582		Tel: 012 420 7429

I,_____,

Name and surname

(please tick box that applies)

☐ give permission to Maria Ramaahlo to recruit students from the University of Johannesburg's PsyCaD: Disability Services Unit as described in the information letter provided for possible participation in the study entitled *A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities using the revised 4-A Framework*, conducted by Maria Ramaahlo under the supervision of Dr Kerstin Tönsing. This permission is voluntary and I understand that I may withdraw it at any time. I understand that participating students will take part in an online focus group. I understand that the data will stored for 15 years at the CAAC and that all data will be treated confidentially. I understand that the data maybe re-used for analysis. I understand that the data may be used for a scientific article and for conference presentations. I understand that all information used and obtained in this study will be treated as confidential.

OR

☐ do not give permission to Maria Ramaahlo to recruit students from the University of Johannesburg's PsyCaD: Disability Services Unit as described in the information letter provided for possible participation in the study entitled *A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities using the revised 4-A Framework*

_____ ☐

Signature

_____

Date Official stamp

APPENDIX K

Request for Permission from Tier 2 University to Conduct Research: Pilot Study 1

To **:** Director Disability Rights Unit

Name of Institution **:**

Date **:** 18 April 2018

Subject **:** Permission to conduct pilot study

My name is Maria Ramaahlo, and I am a PhD student at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. The title of my study is: A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities using the revised 4-A Framework. I am writing to request permission to conduct a pilot study at your institution. The pilot study is intended to determine the suitability of the proposed internet-based data collection methods and materials.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyse the extent to which the needs of students with disabilities have been addressed by policy and praxis of South African research Universities in accordance with the revised 4-A Framework. The revised 4-A Framework specifies availability, accessibility, acceptability, and adaptability as four parameters that outline governmental and institutional obligations to guarantee and realise the right to education

What will be expected from PsyCaD Disability Services Unit?

Should you provide consent, I would like your Unit's assistance with recruiting participants by forwarding an information letter to all students with disabilities registered with the Disability Rights Unit across all categories of disabilities as potential participants.

Participant selection

The criteria for the inclusion of students with disabilities will be clearly stipulated in the information letter. These criteria are that the participants have a self-disclosed disability and be registered with the Disability Rights Unit. Furthermore, the participants need to be registered at your university (undergraduate or postgraduate) for at least 6 months so that they are familiar with the academic environment. As the focus groups will be conducted in a secure online environment, participants will need to have access to internet-connected computers and their preferred assistive technology with which they use to access these computers. The manager will be asked to email an information letter about the study to all students registered with the Disability Rights Unit. The email will explain the eligibility criteria and details of the study as

well as an invitation for interested students to contact the researcher directly if there is an interest to participate and/or find out further details about the study. The first 12 participants who respond and meet the selection criteria will be included in the online focus group.

What will be expected of the participants?

The online focus group will take place over four consecutive days utilising the University of Pretoria's e-Education platform namely ClickUP (Blackboard). Participants who give consent to participate in the study will be provided a username and password. The discussions will take place asynchronously, implying that all the participants will not be required to be online at the same time of the day. They will be able to enter the focus group at a time of day that suits them. The researcher will post questions asking the participants about their perceptions regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities in accordance with the revised 4 A Framework. A total of ten questions will be asked as per the revised 4-A-Framework, whereby five questions will be posted on the first day of the focus group, and five questions on the second day. Participants are encouraged to contribute to questions as often as they are able over the four days. It is recommended that participants answer all the questions at least once.

Participants will have the opportunity to type their responses to the questions posed by the researcher and also to post comments on the responses of other participants. The online forum will be opened a few days before the onset of the group to allow participants to test their access to the forum. It will be closed immediately after the five days have passed. Detailed instructions on accessing the online forum will be communicated to participants.

Steps taken to uphold ethical principles of research involving human participants:

Participants will be fully informed of all aspects of the study through the information letter. They will be made aware of their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Should they withdraw, any information collected from them will be destroyed immediately. They will also be made aware of the risks and benefits of participation in the study. They will be provided with the opportunity to give or withhold consent by completing a written consent form.

Several steps will be taken to protect the confidentiality of the information participants provide in the focus group, as well as their identity. The discussions will be downloaded from the online forum by the researcher directly after the completion of the focus group, with names of individual participants replaced by participant numbers. This will be done in order to ensure that no identifying information is retained in the data. The data from the focus group will be

kept safely, and the information will only be viewed by the PhD student and supervisors. Participant names will not be mentioned in any publication or presentation. The data obtained will be securely stored for the purposes of research and archiving for a period of 15 years at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, University of Pretoria. The online forum will be erased. All participants in the focus group will be requested to keep information shared in the group confidential. However, the researcher does not have control over the actions of the participants. Therefore, a risk exists that participants could share information obtained during the group. All participants will be made aware of this risk. As all participants in the group are persons with disabilities and familiar with the importance of confidentiality regarding disability status as they sign a letter of consent with PsyCaD, this is thought to be a small risk.

Dissemination of results

The results from this study will be reported in oral and written form that may be presented in manuscripts submitted for publication in scientific journals, or oral and/or poster presentations at scientific meetings, seminars, and/or conferences. If you wish to receive a copy of the results of the study, you may contact the researcher at 0124202582 or email maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za.

Thank you for your time in considering this request. I would be grateful if you could complete the permission slip attached to indicate whether or not you grant permission to recruit participants for this study from your institution. I would be most appreciative if you could email the permission slip to me at maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za. Alternatively, you may prefer to submit a signed letter of permission on your institution's letterhead.

Should you need any further information or clarification on the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 012 420 2582 or email me at maria.ramaahlo@up.ac.za. You are also welcome to contact my supervisor, Dr Kerstin Tönsing, on tel. 012 420 4729, or email her at kerstin.tonsing@up.ac.za.

Kind Regards

Ms Maria Ramaahlo	Dr Kerstin Tönsing
(Principal researcher)	(Supervisor)

Permission: Reply Slip

Pilot Study: A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities using the revised 4-A Framework.

Researcher:	**Maria Ramaahlo**	**Supervisor:**	Kerstin Tönsing (PhD)
	PhD student		Senior Lecturer
	Centre for AAC		Centre for AAC
	Tel: 012 420 2582		Tel: 012 420 7429

I,_____,

Name and surname

(please tick box that applies)

☐ give permission to Maria Ramaahlo to recruit students from the University of Johannesburg's PsyCaD: Disability Services Unit as described in the information letter provided for possible participation in the study entitled *A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities using the revised 4-A Framework*, conducted by Maria Ramaahlo under the supervision of Dr Kerstin Tönsing. This permission is voluntary and I understand that I may withdraw it at any time. I understand that participating students will take part in an online focus group. I understand that the data will stored for 15 years at the CAAC and that all data will be treated confidentially. I understand that the data maybe re-used for analysis. I understand that the data may be used for a scientific article and for conference presentations. I understand that all information used and obtained in this study will be treated as confidential.

OR

☐ do not give permission to Maria Ramaahlo to recruit students from the University of Johannesburg's PsyCaD: Disability Services Unit as described in the information letter provided for possible participation in the study entitled *A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities using the revised 4-A Framework*

_____ ☐

Signature

_____

Date Official stamp

APPENDIX L

Evaluation Form of the Focus Group Script (Pilot Study 1)

Entry (to be emailed to participants)

Thank you for participating in this pilot study. Kindly complete the evaluation form below regarding your overall impression of the online focus group. Your feedback will help improve the data collection procedures and materials for the main study. was to allow participants an opportunity to provide feedback on the clarity of the instructions and questions, usability of the platform and overall impression of the online focus groups and recommendations for improvement.

Focus group Evaluation Questions

- Were the instructions for participating in the focus group clearly articulated clearly? If no, please provide feedback on the any issues you experienced or how the instructions can be improved upon.
- Were the focus groups questions easy to read and understand? If no, please provide feedback on the any issues you experienced or how the instructions can be improved upon.
- Were you able to reply to the discussion thread?
- Were you able to use the discussion thread for each marker (i.e., Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability, Availability, and Affordability?
- Were you able how to change your responses posted on thread?
- Do you have any suggestions regarding the clarification of instructions, improvements in format, ClickUP accessibility, addition or deletion of questions?
- Did parts of the online focus group seem boring or repetitive or too long?

Thank for taking the time to respond to this evaluation form.

APPENDIX M

Online Focus Group Guidelines to be posted on ClickUP (Pilot Study 1)

Entry (to be emailed to participants)

Thank you for your interest in participating in this study. You have received a letter explaining this study as well as how it fits into the bigger study I am undertaking.

As communicated to you, approximately nine other people will be participating in this online focus group, conducted in a secured online environment on ClickUP. The online focus group will take place over two consecutive days. The discussions will take place asynchronously, meaning that all the participants will not be required to be online at the same time of the day. You will be able to enter the focus group at a time of day that suits you.

I will be posting questions asking about your perceptions regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research Universities in accordance with a human rights Framework on the right to education. A total of nine questions will be asked. All nine questions will be posted on the first day of the focus group. I would kindly ask you to contribute to questions as often as you are able over the two days. Please answer each question at least once.

The table below is a brief explanation of the revised 4-A Framework that has been used to inform the current study. It is also basis for the questions asked during the online focus group.

Revised 4-A Framework:

Availability	Students with disabilities can apply to study to a university without restriction
Accessibility	Universities must prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities once they are admitted.
Acceptability	Describes the institution's acceptance and recognition of students with disabilities as a part of the University community, by indicating a willingness to engage with students with disabilities (to hear the student voice).
Adaptability	Refers to the Universities willingness to adapt and reasonably accommodate the needs of each individual student. For example, use the flexibility of curricula, instructional techniques and assessment opportunities for the benefit of all students. Thus, an institution's academic support structures and its social environments should also reasonably accommodate the needs of each individual student.

Affordability,	A Universities commitment to allocate financial resources to ensure the inclusion of students.

APPENDIX N

Electronic information letter inviting students to participate in Pilot Study 2

Dear Student

My name is Maria Ramaahlo, and I am a PhD student at the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication, Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. I am interested in understanding the extent to which the needs of students with disabilities have been addressed in policy and praxis at South African Universities. I am writing to invite you and your fellow students to participate in my study (in the format of an online questionnaire/survey).

In this questionnaire you will be asked to comment on your experience of inclusion as a student with a disability in higher (university) education. The questionnaire should take you around 15 minutes to complete, and you may receive one out of twenty 500MB mobile data bundles specific to your cellular network for your participation. If you want to be considered please include your contact details at the end of the questionnaire. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. The online questionnaire is available on Qualtrics at the link below:

https://pretoria.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8JqfldM9Wx8hvGR

Please feel free to share this questionnaire with fellow students with disabilities. Should you need any further information or clarification on the study, please do not hesitate to contact me on 012 420 2582 or email me at mariaramaahlo@gmail.com. You are also welcome to contact my supervisor, Prof Kerstin Tönsing, on tel. 012 420 4729, or email her at kerstin.tonsing@up.ac.za.

Kind Regards

Ms Maria Ramaahlo	Prof Kerstin Tönsing
(Principal researcher)	(Supervisor)

APPENDIX O

5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire Informed Consent Letter (Pilot Study 2)

Welcome to the research study on the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African Universities

My name is Maria Ramaahlo. I am undertaking this research as part of my PhD degree within the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria under the supervision of Prof K Tönsing. I am interested in understanding the extent to which the needs of students with disabilities have been addressed in policy and praxis at South African universities. I would like to invite you to participate. In this questionnaire you will be asked to comment on your experience of inclusion as a student with a disability in higher (university) education.

Inclusion of students with disabilities requires that university education is:

available - students with disabilities are admitted without being discriminated against

accessible – students with disabilities are not discriminated against once they are admitted

acceptable – students with disabilities are accepted and given a voice by the institution in matters that concern them

adaptable- - the needs of students with disabilities are accommodated

affordable – the students do not have to pay for the adaptations made for them and do not incur additional financial expenses due to their disability.

The questions should take you around **10-15 minutes** to complete, and you stand the chance to win one out of twenty **500MB mobile data** bundles specific to your cellular network for your participation. If you want to be considered for the draw please include your contact details at the end of the questionnaire. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. The results of the study will be published in a thesis and a scientific article. If you would like to receive a copy of the article or if you would have any comments or questions about this study, please feel free to contact me (mariaramaahlo@gmail.com) or my supervisor (kerstin.tonsing@up.ac.za). By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age or older, you are currently studying at a University in South Africa and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time

and for any reason. Please note that this survey will be best displayed on a laptop or desktop computer. Some features may be less compatible for use on a mobile device

- o I consent, begin the study
- o I do not consent, I do not wish to participate

APPENDIX P

5-A Disability Inclusion Questionnaire (Pilot Study 2)

1. Please share your experiences with regards to the application process at University. In your response, please refer to the factors that affected the application process that you used to apply to study at your university and also to factors, such as your academic registration processes, and first year orientation amongst other factors
2. What practices are currently in place at your university to remove physical barriers as experienced by you? This could be barriers experienced when accessing buildings, residences and campus transport. Please elaborate on your reply (e.g., how effective/appropriate are the practices, how do you experience them)
3. What practices are currently in place at your university to remove social and attitudinal barriers as experienced by you? This could be attitudinal barriers from your lecturers, administrative staff, fellow students. Please elaborate on your reply.
4. Is there a space (be it virtual or an office or person) for you and other students with disabilities to voice your views on the support for students with disabilities? Please elaborate on your reply.
5. Are you and other students with disabilities provided with opportunities to engage in dialogue with management (e.g. HODs, student governance, and other leadership structures at your university) with regards to support for students with disabilities?
6. In terms of your study guides, lecture material, practical work, assignments, reading packs, and assessment material– is this academic material adapted so that you are able to access this material? Please elaborate on your reply (e.g., how effective/appropriate are the adaptations, how do you experience them?)
7. Are the services offered by the Information Services (Library) adapted so that you are able to access their services? Please elaborate on your reply.
8. Are the services of support departments such as academic support? Please elaborate on your reply?
9. When requesting reasonable accommodation such as concession support, use of a scribe, caregiving services, does your institution make provision for these accommodations at no cost to you? Please elaborate on your reply.
10. Please comment on how you perceive your institution's financial commitment towards the inclusion of students with disabilities.

11. Any additional comments relating to the inclusion of students with disabilities at your university?

APPENDIX Q

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

Certification of Language Editing

This letter certifies that the research study titled:

A critical analysis of the inclusion of students with disabilities in South African research-intensive universities using the revised 4-A Framework,

prepared by the author,

Maria Ramaahlo

for the purpose of submission for a research study, was proofread and language edited for grammar, punctuation, spelling and overall style.

All editing was indicated in track and written changes. GK Studios confirms that the edits made in the final document were implemented and finalised by the author, to their own discretion.

Kind Regards

Khatija Cassim
GK Studios