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# Exploring Pathways for Chinese Universities to Promote Educational Equity for Individuals with Disabilities in the Context of World-Class University Development — A Case Study of Special Education Schools in Chang'an District, Xi'an

*Ying Zhang*

Xian International Studies University, Xi'an, China

ying_zhang2003@163.com

**Abstract.** With the rapid advancement of the times, global competition is no longer confined to the domains of economy, politics, and military affairs; the significance of culture and education has grown substantially. In recent years, China has increasingly prioritized the construction of world-class universities. In 2022, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Finance, and the National Development and Reform Commission of China jointly issued the Opinions on Deepening the Advancement of World-Class Universities and First-Class Disciplines, emphasizing that the development of world-class universities and disciplines is a major strategic decision made by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council. Against this backdrop, Chinese universities, while pursuing academic excellence and internationalization, also bear the crucial responsibility of promoting social equity and justice. Among these responsibilities, ensuring educational equity for individuals with disabilities is not only a manifestation of social progress but also an essential aspect of universities fulfilling their social obligations. This study, based on research conducted at special education schools in Chang'an District, Xi'an, analyzes the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing higher education in China. It proposes targeted recommendations to promote inclusive education in universities, accelerate the development of special education systems, and support educational equity for students with disabilities.

**Keywords:** Special Education, Inclusive Education, Individuals with Disabilities, University Development

## 1. Introduction

The concept of "disability" is both familiar and unfamiliar to us. It is familiar because we often encounter individuals with disabilities in our daily lives; yet, it is unfamiliar because most people have limited understanding of this group, often harboring stereotypes and misconceptions.

### 1.1. Policies on Inclusive Education

According to Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the term "persons with disabilities" refers to individuals with long-term physical, speech, hearing, mental, intellectual, or multiple impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Disabilities can be classified into several categories, including visual, auditory, speech, physical, intellectual, and mental impairments, as well as multiple disabilities. Each type of disability is further categorized into four levels: Level 1 (most severe), Level 2, Level 3, and Level 4 (least severe).

In practice, individuals with Level 3 and Level 4 disabilities are not necessarily required to attend special schools; they can receive education in regular schools with the aid of assistive devices and human support. With the rapid advancement of technology and the continuous upgrading of intelligent devices, even individuals with Level 1 and Level 2 disabilities can potentially pursue education in mainstream schools.

In 1994, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) convened the World Conference on Special Needs Education in Spain and issued the Salamanca Statement, formally introducing the concept of "inclusive education."

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Inclusive education refers to an approach that enables the majority of students with disabilities to enter regular classrooms, enhancing their learning experience within general education settings. The goal is to integrate general and special education systems into a unified framework for managing educational resources, thereby fostering the inclusion of students with diverse needs in the same learning environment. Today, inclusive education has become the dominant global trend in special education development and is a key measure for promoting educational equity.

In 2021, during the 23rd meeting of the Central Comprehensive Deepening Reform Commission of China, the government adopted the Opinions on Deepening the Advancement of World-Class Universities and First-Class Disciplines. The document emphasized that the development of world-class universities and disciplines must adhere to the socialist educational direction, follow the path of education with Chinese characteristics, implement the fundamental educational policy of fostering virtue and talent, and uphold the mission of moral and intellectual development [1]. In 2022, the General Office of the State Council of China issued the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development and Enhancement of Special Education. Guided by Xi Jinping's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, the plan set the goal of achieving suitable and inclusive education, comprehensively implementing the Party's educational policies. It aimed to accelerate the improvement of the special education system, enhance the special education support mechanism, and improve the overall quality of special education. The plan also sought to foster self-respect, self-confidence, self-reliance, and self-improvement among children and adolescents with disabilities, enhance family well-being, and ultimately enable these students to grow into useful talents for the nation [2].

To actively respond to these policies, Chinese universities must implement the Party's educational directives and the guiding principles of the 20th National Congress. They should create accessible environments for students with disabilities, enhance their capacity for special and inclusive education, and facilitate the enrollment of students with disabilities into mainstream universities. By safeguarding their right to education and promoting educational equity, universities can contribute to the accelerated development of world-class institutions in China. However, due to multiple influencing factors, the enrollment rate of students with disabilities in regular universities remains relatively low, and they continue to face significant challenges in accessing higher education.

### 1.2. Current State of Higher Education for Individuals with Disabilities in China

According to estimates based on data from the Sixth National Population Census of China and the Second National Sample Survey on Disability, as of the end of 2022, the total number of people with disabilities in China exceeded 85 million. This large population affects approximately 260 million family members, meaning that one in every 16 people in China has a disability.

Additionally, according to a survey conducted by the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF), as of December 31, 2022, a total of 37,681,660 individuals in China had obtained disability certificates. Among them, 19,120,885 were between the ages of 16 and 59. However, only 30,035 of them were able to enter higher education institutions in 2022.

### 1.3. Significance of the Study

Educational equity is a fundamental aspect of social justice, and the right to education is a core component of basic human rights. As a vulnerable group, individuals with disabilities deserve enhanced support and protection in this regard.

This study aims to safeguard the educational rights of individuals with disabilities, ensuring that they can fully access the same educational resources and opportunities as their non-disabled peers. It seeks to improve the quality of education for students with disabilities, enhance the level of inclusive education in Chinese universities, and promote the intrinsic development of higher education in China. Furthermore, this research provides the public with insights into the experiences of individuals with disabilities, fostering an understanding that disability is a form of social diversity rather than a limitation. By lowering the barriers to entry into higher education for students with disabilities—particularly those with visual impairments—this study aspires to place them on an equal footing with other students. Ultimately, it aims to raise social awareness, improve the living conditions of individuals with disabilities, and enhance their social status.

## 2. Research Design

### 2.1. Research Subjects

The subjects of this study were all teachers and students at the Special Education School in Chang'an District, Xi'an. The student population primarily consisted of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), intellectual disabilities, or a combination of both. The students were predominantly between the ages of 8 and 15 and came from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, including both affluent and economically disadvantaged families. The proportion of students from single-parent families was relatively high.

## 2.2. Research Content

This study investigated the Special Education School in Chang'an District, Xi'an, through interviews and field visits. The research focused on the school's general conditions, the current state of special education, teacher development, the integration of educational technology, and the specific circumstances of the students.

## 2.3. Research Findings

Through on-site investigations, our team gained a deeper understanding of individuals with disabilities, particularly those with autism. This study also provided valuable insights into the difficulties and needs faced by students with disabilities in accessing education.

### *2.3.1. Learning Environment Development*

As a special demographic, individuals with disabilities face various challenges in daily life and education, necessitating unique learning environment accommodations.

For example, students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), who were the focus of this study, require specific considerations upon school enrollment. First, schools must assess students' symptom severity based on their responsiveness and speech articulation. Students with milder symptoms are integrated into classrooms with those exhibiting more severe symptoms, allowing the former to serve as role models and facilitators. Additionally, schools may recommend that students with milder symptoms transition to mainstream schools. Second, in terms of sports equipment and toys, schools must cater to the needs of both younger and older students. Toys should not be too small to prevent accidental ingestion, nor too large to avoid potential self-injury. Third, schools should implement a fixed-classroom system for students with autism, meaning that students remain in the same classroom with the same teachers, with only the class nameplates changing. This approach, supplemented by parental accompaniment during learning sessions, helps reduce students' resistance to change and enhances their sense of security. Fourth, schools should arrange for rehabilitation therapists to visit regularly and provide therapy for students.

Given the unique needs of students with disabilities, universities implementing inclusive education must focus on creating accessible learning environments. They should consider the specific requirements of students with various disabilities, ensuring that inclusive education development aligns with the goal of providing a barrier-free educational experience.

### *2.3.2. Family Environment and Psychological Well-being of Students*

For students with disabilities, the family environment plays a crucial role in their psychological well-being, which, in turn, significantly affects their academic performance.

During this study, our team engaged in discussions with Principal Meng of the Special Education School in Chang'an District, Xi'an. From these discussions, we learned that many parents struggle with appropriate educational approaches for their children. A minority of parents, typically those with higher educational backgrounds, adopt a more tolerant and gentle educational style, resulting in happier children with relatively milder symptoms. Conversely, some parents, due to lower levels of education and limited cognitive awareness, tend to use harsh discipline, including verbal suppression and corporal punishment. Students raised in such environments often experience lower levels of happiness, and in severe cases, their symptoms worsen, leading to social withdrawal. Over time, these negative experiences can have devastating consequences on their academic performance and overall well-being. Additionally, many parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) choose not to have more children due to concerns about hereditary risks. This has led to an increased number of single-parent families. To sustain their livelihoods, many single parents are compelled to entrust their children's care to grandparents, further exacerbating students' feelings of loneliness. Some parents also vent their frustrations onto their children, causing emotional harm. To address these challenges, the school regularly organizes parental exchange meetings to facilitate communication between parents and educators. Experts are invited to teach parents proper methods for educating children with disabilities, helping them adopt more supportive approaches.

Psychological education plays a crucial role in special education. Due to their physical and cognitive challenges, students with disabilities often experience feelings of inferiority and depression. Schools must closely monitor students' mental health and provide timely psychological interventions. Additionally, educating parents on proper parenting methods and promoting collaboration between schools and families can significantly enhance students' academic experiences, overall well-being, and future development.

### *2.3.3. Barriers to Higher Education Enrollment*

According to a survey conducted by the China Disabled Persons' Federation (CDPF), only 30,035 individuals holding disability certificates entered higher education institutions in 2022. This accounts for a mere 0.7 per thousand of the certified disabled population and only 0.3 per thousand of the total disabled population in China, indicating an extremely low enrollment rate.

Findings from this study reveal that fewer than one in ten students at the Special Education School in Chang'an District, Xi'an, continue their education after completing compulsory schooling. Due to difficulties in independent living, the vast majority of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) begin working alongside their parents after finishing compulsory education—engaging in small-scale businesses such as street vending or performing cleaning-related jobs. This is largely because individuals with ASD often struggle with logical reasoning and have disordered language systems, making it challenging for them to engage in advanced learning. However, students with physical disabilities, visual impairments, hearing impairments, and speech impairments can communicate and think normally. While they may face certain obstacles in learning, these challenges are not entirely insurmountable. Therefore, it is both possible and feasible for students with disabilities to pursue higher education in mainstream universities.

Universities should not adopt a "one-size-fits-all" approach toward students with disabilities. Instead, they should actively open admissions to students with the ability to learn and provide the necessary support to improve their higher education enrollment rates. This aligns with the goals of the 14th Five-Year Plan for the Development and Enhancement of Special Education, which calls for universities to uphold the leadership of the Communist Party, implement its educational policies, and advance inclusive education practices.

#### *2.3.4. Shortage of Qualified Teachers*

According to a report by China News Service, as of 2023, China had approximately 77,000 full-time special education teachers, while the number of students enrolled in special education schools nationwide stood at 912,000 [3]. This severe shortage of specialized educators significantly impacts the quality of special education.

The Special Education School in Chang'an District, Xi'an, which was the focus of this study, exemplifies this issue. The school currently employs 29 teachers, all of whom were transferred from mainstream schools after receiving only brief training in special education. Compared to full-time special education teachers, they lack specialized expertise. Furthermore, the average age of teachers at the school is 48, and there is a notable absence of younger educators. Additionally, three teachers are set to retire this year, while only one new teacher—who recently graduated with a degree in special education—has been recruited after significant efforts from the school principal. During our discussions, Principal Meng expressed deep concern, remarking, "It is unimaginable that such a small school like ours will see three teachers retire in a single year..."

Beyond the shortage of teachers, special education educators also face imbalances between effort and reward. They struggle with a lack of professional identity and clear role positioning, leading to a dual crisis of recognition and motivation. Over time, this can result in burnout among special education teachers, hindering the development of both special and inclusive education [4].

The shortage of special education teachers not only affects the quality of special education but also limits the opportunities available to children with disabilities. Many children miss the critical window for social integration due to a lack of timely and effective education. This is not only an injustice to their personal development but also a loss of valuable human resources for society as a whole.

## 3. Analysis of the Causes of Educational Challenges for Individuals with Disabilities

As discussed in the previous sections, individuals with disabilities face numerous challenges in education, with barriers to higher education enrollment and shortages of specialized teaching resources being particularly prominent. Many students with disabilities struggle to continue their education beyond the compulsory schooling stage, and the scarcity of qualified special education teachers prevents many from receiving high-quality educational services.

### 3.1. Causes of Enrollment Barriers for Students with Disabilities

#### *3.1.1. Unequal Distribution of Educational Resources*

The uneven allocation of educational resources is a key factor preventing students with disabilities from accessing higher education.

First, there are regional disparities in special education resources. Economically developed areas have the financial capacity to invest more in special education, including teacher training and the upgrading of educational facilities. In contrast, less developed regions often face a shortage of special education resources due to limited funding.

Second, there is an imbalance in the distribution of special education resources between urban and rural areas. Urban special education schools typically attract more qualified teachers due to better career development opportunities and benefits. In contrast, rural special education schools often suffer from a shortage of teachers, leading to lower teaching quality. Additionally, urban schools generally have more advanced teaching facilities and equipment, such as rehabilitation training tools and assistive learning devices, while rural schools may lack these resources due to financial constraints, which negatively impacts the effectiveness of education.

Furthermore, disparities exist among different schools. Some special education schools benefit from historical, geographical, or policy advantages, granting them access to superior resources such as highly qualified faculty and advanced teaching equipment.

Other schools, however, may struggle to meet the needs of students with disabilities due to resource limitations. For example, the Special Education School in Chang'an District, Xi'an, operates with limited funding due to its small scale. The school lacks resources to provide meals and rest areas for students during the day. In an attempt to address this issue, Principal Meng proposed converting teachers' offices into student dormitories. However, progress on this initiative has been slow due to the lack of financial subsidies for teachers.

#### *3.1.2. Inadequate Accessibility in Higher Education Institutions*

Despite progress in recent years, the overall level of accessibility in Chinese universities remains insufficient to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

First, many universities have incomplete or poorly maintained accessibility infrastructure, such as ramps, accessible restrooms, and elevators, making it difficult for students with disabilities to move freely around campus. Second, universities often fail to consider the needs of students with disabilities in areas such as information dissemination and course arrangements. The lack of assistive resources—such as sign language interpretation, voice broadcasting systems, and braille electronic search tools—hinders effective communication and access to information. Additionally, the psychological and social support systems in universities for students with disabilities remain underdeveloped. The lack of institutional support and inclusive community initiatives often leaves these students feeling isolated and marginalized in their academic environment.

The inadequate accessibility of universities not only forces students with disabilities to spend extra time and effort overcoming obstacles, leading to lower learning efficiency, but also limits their participation in classroom discussions and practical activities. This ultimately affects their overall educational experience, discouraging academic engagement and diminishing their self-confidence.

#### *3.1.3. Low Levels of Inclusive Education in Higher Institutions*

The level of inclusive education in Chinese universities remains relatively low. On the one hand, some higher education institutions exhibit delays and inconsistencies in implementing national inclusive education policies, leading to suboptimal outcomes. On the other hand, most universities lack faculty members who possess specialized knowledge and skills in special education. Additionally, they fail to provide individualized education plans and support services tailored to students with disabilities. Moreover, evaluation and feedback mechanisms for inclusive education in universities remain underdeveloped, making it difficult to accurately assess educational effectiveness and make necessary adjustments. Furthermore, social awareness and support for inclusive education in higher institutions are insufficient. Universities often lack the necessary public discourse and financial backing to promote inclusive education initiatives effectively.

#### *3.1.4. Student-Specific Factors*

In addition to external barriers, some internal factors related to students with disabilities also influence their ability to pursue higher education.

First, some students with disabilities may struggle to meet the demands of higher education due to physical or cognitive limitations. For example, students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as observed in this study, often lack effective communication skills and logical thinking abilities. Some may even experience language processing difficulties and self-harming behaviors, making it extremely difficult for them to succeed in higher education settings. Second, some students with disabilities may miss out on higher education opportunities due to a lack of accessible information or awareness about suitable universities and academic programs. As a result, even students who have the capability to pursue higher education may fail to do so. Additionally, a lack of self-confidence and motivation can lead some students with disabilities to develop a negative attitude toward higher education, further limiting their chances of pursuing advanced studies.

### 3.2. Causes of the Shortage of Special Education Teachers

#### *3.2.1. Incomplete Teacher Training System*

First, the field of special education requires expertise across multiple disciplines, including special education theories, teaching methodologies, and psychological counseling. This complexity makes training for special education professionals more costly than general teacher training. Higher education institutions must allocate significant resources and effort to establish special education programs, which has led to a limited number of universities offering such programs. According to statistics, as of 2024, China had a total of 3,117 higher education institutions, but only 59 universities—including Shaanxi Normal University and Xi'an Physical Education University—offered special education majors, accounting for only about 2% of all institutions. This shortage in training programs directly impacts the supply of special education teachers, failing to meet societal demands.

Second, special education differs significantly from general education. Teachers in this field not only require strong professional knowledge and mastery of specialized teaching techniques but must also possess high levels of psychological resilience and patience. They must be prepared to handle various challenges posed by students with special needs, such as self-harming behaviors or classroom disruptions. These high demands increase the difficulty of training special education teachers, leading to a shortage of qualified professionals.

Moreover, some universities offering special education programs suffer from outdated curricula, a disconnect between theoretical instruction and practical application, and a lack of interdisciplinary integration. As a result, students struggle to develop a systematic knowledge framework and often find it difficult to apply their learning in real-world teaching environments upon graduation, negatively affecting their professional development.

#### *3.2.2. Limited Career Development Opportunities for Teachers*

On one hand, special education teachers must exhibit exceptional care, patience, and attention to detail. They invest significant time and energy in working with students with special needs, making them more susceptible to professional burnout over time. On the other hand, special education teachers often experience lower levels of professional recognition. Many struggle with self-confidence and motivation when facing the challenges of their profession, which affects their enthusiasm for career advancement. Additionally, the career advancement pathways and promotion opportunities for special education teachers are relatively limited due to the niche nature of the field. Many special education teachers feel a lack of upward mobility in their careers, leading to reduced motivation, decreased job satisfaction, and ultimately, lower retention rates in the profession.

#### *3.2.3. Lack of Public Awareness and Understanding of Special Education*

First, there are widespread misconceptions about special education. Many people mistakenly equate special education with "education for the disabled," believing that it is exclusively for students with significant physical or intellectual disabilities. This narrow perspective overlooks the broader scope of special education, which also includes students with learning disabilities, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), emotional and behavioral disorders, and other special needs. Due to these misconceptions, special education is often marginalized and does not receive the attention and support it deserves.

At the same time, public misunderstandings about special education extend to the profession of special education teaching itself. Many assume that special education teachers only need basic teaching skills and do not require extensive professional knowledge. In reality, these teachers must master complex disciplines, including educational psychology, rehabilitation sciences, and behavioral studies, while also demonstrating extraordinary patience, compassion, and a strong sense of responsibility.

In summary, the public's limited understanding of special education contributes to the undervaluation of special education teachers, reducing the profession's attractiveness and making it difficult to attract and retain top talent. This, in turn, exacerbates the ongoing shortage of special education teachers.

## 4. Policy Recommendations for Improving Education for Individuals with Disabilities

With the increasing societal emphasis on the rights of individuals with disabilities, ensuring that students with disabilities have access to higher education has become a crucial aspect of educational equity. To address existing challenges—such as difficulties in higher education enrollment, shortages of specialized teaching resources, and low levels of inclusive education in universities—this paper proposes the following recommendations:

### 4.1. Optimizing Higher Education Enrollment Pathways for Students with Disabilities

#### *4.1.1. Relaxing University Admission Policies*

Although students with disabilities may face certain challenges in learning compared to their non-disabled peers, this does not mean they are incapable of studying in mainstream schools. In fact, Chinese law mandates that higher education institutions admit students with disabilities. For example, Article 22 of the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Persons with Disabilities states: "Ordinary senior secondary schools, secondary vocational schools, technical schools, and higher education institutions must admit disabled candidates who meet the national admission standards. They may not refuse admission based on disability. If an institution refuses to admit such a student, the individual, their family members, or guardians may request intervention from the relevant authorities, which shall require the institution to comply with the admission requirements." Similarly, Article 29 of the Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities stipulates: "Ordinary senior secondary schools, higher education institutions, and adult education institutions must admit disabled candidates who meet national admission standards. They may not refuse admission based on disability."

Therefore, the first step in enrolling more students with disabilities is a shift in mindset. Universities must eliminate misconceptions about the learning and living capabilities of students with disabilities and move away from the assumption that

they should only attend special schools. Institutions should open their admissions policies and actively seek to enroll students with disabilities.

Additionally, universities should develop individualized admission examination mechanisms tailored to students with disabilities. A dedicated admissions leadership committee should be established to oversee separate entrance examinations and evaluations for these students, ensuring that the admission process is transparent, fair, and just.

#### *4.1.2. Establishing a Comprehensive Disability Assessment System*

Before students with disabilities begin their formal education at a university, a thorough assessment of their disability levels should be conducted. Effective evaluation is the first step in implementing inclusive education within mainstream classrooms.

For example, when assessing students with visual impairments and reading difficulties, a multidisciplinary evaluation process can be implemented:

Medical Assessment: Ophthalmologists record the student's eye condition, functional vision, and any assistive visual devices they require.

Educational Assessment: Special education teachers evaluate the student's needs regarding font size, contrast, lighting, and reading habits.

Based on the assessment, students with visual impairments can generally be classified into three categories:

Category One: Students whose learning content remains largely the same as that of their non-disabled peers.

Category Two: Students who require minor adjustments to curriculum goals or content.

Category Three: Students who need significant curriculum modifications and additional specialized courses.

For Category One students, assistive visual devices can help address their needs. They may also be paired with a volunteer or study partner, allowing them to participate in regular classroom activities without requiring a personalized teaching plan.

For Category Two students, a combination of classroom teaching and individualized tutoring is recommended. They should be encouraged to use assistive visual devices and other supportive tools, be seated at the front of the classroom, and be granted extended time during examinations.

For Category Three students, curricula should be adjusted to create personalized lesson plans. Textbooks should be modified in terms of structure, format, and presentation order. Additionally, assignments and evaluation methods should be adapted. These students should also receive regular medical follow-ups, vision assessments, and assistive visual devices as needed.

Other categories of students with disabilities should undergo similar tiered assessments, enabling universities to implement precise educational placement strategies. This approach ensures that students with disabilities receive tailored support, allowing them to fully develop their potential.

### 4.2. Enhancing the Level of Inclusive Education in Universities

#### *4.2.1. Providing Transitional Support*

When students with disabilities transition from special education schools to mainstream universities, they face a completely new learning environment and social circle. Therefore, it is essential and compassionate for universities to provide a transitional support period to facilitate their adaptation.

Specific measures include:

Academic support and assistance, such as after-class tutoring, study groups, and access to online learning resources.

Social integration activities, including orientation sessions, networking events, and interest-based clubs to foster interaction between students with disabilities and their peers.

Psychological counseling and support services to help students build confidence, overcome feelings of inferiority, and develop strategies for managing academic and personal challenges.

Additionally, the duration of transitional support should be determined based on the specific circumstances and needs of individual students.

#### *4.2.2. Providing Learning Assistive Devices*

Students with disabilities often require specialized tools to support their learning. For example, students with visual impairments may rely on magnifiers or screen readers, while students with hearing impairments may need FM wireless assistive listening systems. Upon admission, universities should provide necessary assistive devices for students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds who cannot afford them. When equipping students with assistive devices, universities should carefully consider their specific needs and physical conditions to ensure that the provided equipment is both practical and effective. Furthermore, universities must establish comprehensive systems for the management and maintenance of these devices to ensure their proper functioning and timely updates. By implementing these measures, universities can foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment that promotes the holistic development of students with disabilities.

*4.2.3. Improving Related Facilities*

As centers of knowledge dissemination, libraries play a crucial role in meeting the learning needs of students with disabilities. In 2022, the National Copyright Administration of China issued the Interim Provisions on Providing Works in Accessible Formats to Readers with Reading Disabilities, aiming to ensure that students with disabilities have access to reading materials and to protect their cultural and educational rights. However, among all students with disabilities, those with visual impairments face the greatest challenges in accessing library resources. Thus, universities seeking to accommodate students with disabilities must further enhance their library services, particularly for visually impaired students.

First, expanding the collection of accessible materials, including a sufficient number of braille books and other accessible learning resources. Universities should also establish electronic resource libraries featuring e-braille books, audiobooks, and other accessible digital materials to meet the learning needs of visually impaired students. Second, optimizing spatial design and facility arrangements to accommodate the specific needs of visually impaired students. Adequate lighting conditions and accessible pathways are essential, as well as dedicated study areas equipped with specialized reading devices, audiobook players, and other relevant tools to enable independent access to learning materials. Third, ssigning dedicated staff to assist visually impaired students in retrieving and navigating library resources. These staff members should be trained to provide precise guidance and support. Moreover, leveraging technological advancements to enhance accessibility. Libraries can integrate innovative services and expand their offerings by utilizing new technologies and platforms. By analyzing the reading habits and preferences of students with disabilities, libraries can design user-friendly, easy-to-navigate interfaces, ultimately improving the reading experience for visually impaired students [5].

*4.2.4. Providing Humanistic Care*

Students with disabilities who enroll in mainstream universities should benefit from "support and assistance" policies. Universities should waive tuition, book fees, and accommodation costs for economically disadvantaged students with disabilities. Additionally, financial aid and scholarships should be provided to those in need, ensuring that students with disabilities from low-income backgrounds have access to high-quality higher education at little or no cost.

Furthermore, universities should establish volunteer teams to offer academic tutoring and daily assistance to students with disabilities. Once recruited, volunteers should undergo proper training to understand the special needs of students with disabilities and the appropriate ways to provide support. The training should cover:

Effective communication techniques with visually impaired individuals, including both verbal and non-verbal communication methods (e.g., touch and sound localization).

Relevant laws and regulations governing disability support.

Ethical guidelines to ensure that volunteer assistance is lawful, compliant, and appropriate.

Additionally, universities must strengthen career planning and employment guidance for students with special needs. This includes offering academic programs tailored to the learning characteristics of visually impaired students and aligning their education with labor market demands to facilitate a smooth transition from education to employment.

*4.2.5. Building a Professional Faculty for Special Education*

First, universities should establish a professional team of special education teachers to support the implementation of inclusive education programs.

Second, teacher training programs should be designed to be highly targeted and practical, addressing specific needs. For example:

For newly recruited special education teachers, training should focus on basic teaching skills and student management strategies.

For experienced teachers, advanced workshops should be provided to explore the latest teaching methodologies and educational theories.

Third, universities should foster long-term collaborations with internationally renowned special education institutions. They can regularly send faculty members abroad for further training to learn about advanced educational concepts and techniques. Additionally, foreign experts should be invited to China to conduct lectures and share best practices.

Fourth, universities should improve the salaries and benefits of special education teachers. Special allowances should be introduced to reflect the unique demands and significance of their work. Universities should also provide favorable working conditions, such as comfortable office environments and sufficient rest periods, to enhance job satisfaction.

Moreover, an online and offline teaching resource platform should be developed, offering free access to high-quality lesson plans, teaching materials, and instructional videos. Regular teaching seminars should be organized to promote experience-sharing and resource exchange among teachers. Most importantly, universities should emphasize teacher empowerment by encouraging initiative and fostering a strong sense of professional identity. By enhancing teachers' confidence in their teaching effectiveness, universities can improve overall educational outcomes and further advance inclusive education [6].

*4.2.6. Offering Sign Language Elective Courses*

Sign language is a unique communication tool used by the deaf and mute community. Universities should introduce sign language elective courses to the general student body and incorporate sign language education into their curriculum.

By doing so, universities can:

Help non-disabled students eliminate communication barriers when interacting with students with hearing or speech impairments.

Increase awareness and understanding of the culture and daily lives of students with hearing and speech disabilities.

Encourage students to recognize and respect the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities.

Ultimately, integrating sign language education into university curricula will foster a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for students with disabilities.

### 4.3. Strengthening University-Enterprise Collaboration

To address employment challenges faced by students with disabilities and improve both their employment rates and job quality, universities should enhance their career guidance services. This includes helping students with disabilities understand labor market trends and industry demands while assisting them in developing reasonable career plans. Additionally, universities can collaborate with businesses to organize career planning seminars and job training programs, equipping students with disabilities with essential employment skills and enhancing their competitiveness in the job market.

Furthermore, universities should deepen their partnerships with enterprises by formulating detailed university-enterprise collaboration policies that clearly define cooperation objectives, principles, methods, and safeguard measures. These policies should ensure that collaborations are comprehensive and well-integrated. By jointly establishing university-enterprise cooperation platforms, institutions can provide students with disabilities with hands-on training opportunities, helping them develop practical skills and workplace adaptability. Moreover, universities should establish evaluation criteria and performance indicators for university-enterprise cooperation projects. Regular assessments should be conducted to ensure the quality and effectiveness of these initiatives. Feedback should be collected from students with disabilities, participating enterprises, and relevant stakeholders, allowing for continuous improvement and refinement of these programs. This approach will enhance the relevance and impact of university-enterprise collaborations, ensuring that they effectively support the employment prospects of students with disabilities.

## 5. Conclusion

Achieving educational equity for individuals with disabilities is not an overnight process; it requires the collective efforts of governments, universities, social organizations, and individuals with disabilities themselves. Within the grand vision of building world-class universities, educational equity is not only an expression of respect and care for every individual but also a crucial measure of a university's social responsibility and international influence. In advancing this cause, Chinese universities should embrace an open and inclusive mindset. On the one hand, they should actively learn from international best practices, drawing on successful global experiences and progressive concepts in disability education. On the other hand, universities must align these efforts with China's national conditions and cultural characteristics, considering the realities of Chinese society and the specific needs of individuals with disabilities. By adopting localized and individualized approaches, Chinese universities can pave the way for an education system that is both aligned with global trends and uniquely suited to China's context, ensuring meaningful progress toward educational equity for individuals with disabilities.

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