

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2018 – 2020

Inclusive practice for staff,  
students and the community.







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## Introduction

Griffith University's fourth Disability Action Plan (DAP) builds on the achievements of the earlier Plans, reflecting the University's longstanding values and commitments articulated in our Strategic Plan 2018 - 2022 including:



Promoting the respect of individual rights and ethical standards



Contributing to a robust, equitable and environmentally sustainable society



Recognizing and valuing diversity







While ensuring compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 is an important driver of the University's Disability Action Plan, it is essential to reconceptualise the Plan so that it promotes the necessary changes to perceptions, policy, practice, environments and attitudes that have at the very least limited, if not actively discouraged and prevented the full participation of people with disabilities in education and employment.

The negative connotations associated with using terms such as 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' remain and are best described by Elizabeth Hastings, Disability Discrimination Commissioner from 1993-97, in a speech she delivered in 1997 referring to the 'right to belong'. She reflected on the use and connotation of the word 'inclusion' when referring to policy development, commenting that:

*“It is the experience of people with disabilities that we have been actively excluded from participation in ordinary living: excluded by flights of stairs, unsuitable information formats, unyielding rules, inaccessible facilities and hurtful attitudes. It would be more correct for policy makers to plan to stop excluding rather than to start including, to acknowledge our right to belong rather than to treat us as optional extras in our community.”*

([www.humanrights.gov.au/news/speeches/right-belong](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/speeches/right-belong))

Griffith's DAP reinforces a contemporary model of disability that promotes a holistic approach to addressing the many barriers that exclude people with disabilities from accessing and participating fully in various contexts and activities. Everyone in the Griffith community has a role to play.



## Goals

The goals of the Plan are to:

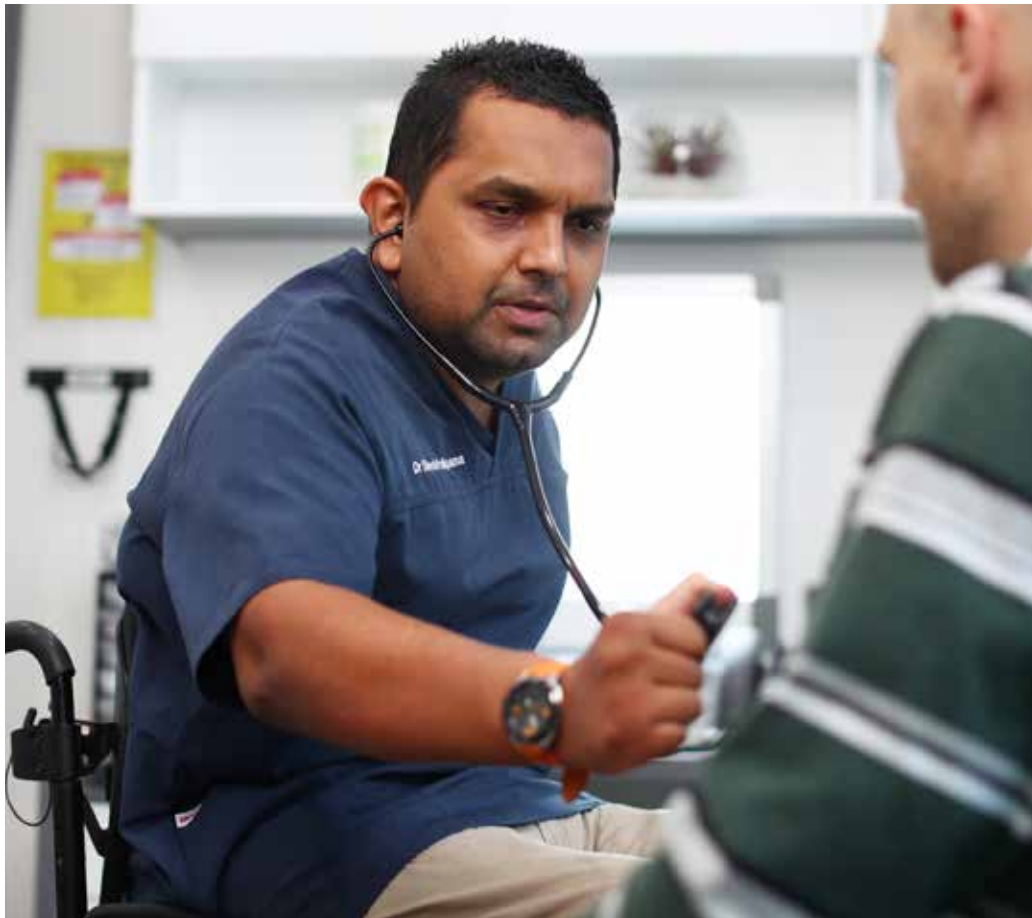
- » develop an inclusive culture that values the contribution of people with disabilities and enables them to actively participate in the life of the University
- » identify and address barriers that exclude people with disabilities and embed inclusive and innovative practices that will not only contribute to compliance with key legislation, standards and guidelines across the University but also enhance the quality of a person's interaction with Griffith and build capacity at all levels of the organisation to proactively and positively engage with disability-related issues
- » foster collaboration and engagement across the University and with key stakeholders external to the University and the wider community in general.





## Scope of the plan

The Plan will continue to address issues for students and staff with disabilities as well as people with disabilities in the community who access the Griffith environment. In addition, the Plan will seek to address issues that present barriers to the access and participation of people who are carers of people with disabilities in the University environment.



## Implementation Strategy

The successful implementation of the revised DAP is predicated on developing not only a strategic approach to addressing longstanding systemic barriers but also intentional actions that shape inclusive practice across the University on a daily basis.

A more dynamic response is also required to changing external and internal contexts as well as emerging issues that impact on individuals, the University and the wider community.

Such an approach would encapsulate some fundamental requirements that would foster inclusive practice including:

- » adopting an approach that reflects an ecological model of disability rather than perpetuating a deficit model
- » demonstrating leadership and fostering discussion about emerging issues
- » facilitating the inclusion of all stakeholders in consultations around the implementation process
- » achieving a shared understanding that the development of an inclusive Griffith community requires action from everyone
- » adopting the principles of Universal Design and inclusive practices that, at the very least, reduce the impact or remove wherever possible the many barriers to access, participation and success that currently exist and that will continue to emerge
- » enhancing engagement with existing stakeholders and developing new strategic partnerships
- » linking the implementation of the Plan to the University's Planning Cycle
- » ensuring that the implementation of the Plan is supported by appropriate and sustainable levels of resourcing
- » building on our current strengths, while also seeking to continuously improve the quality of the experience that people with disabilities have at Griffith
- » developing regular review processes to evaluate the impact of the Plan and specific activities/initiatives and to inform further implementation activities
- » recognising inclusive practice and commending progress made with the implementation of the Plan.





## Priorities

The implementation of the DAP begins with identifying priorities that capture not only areas where the development of more inclusive practices has been slow or erratic, but also areas and issues of emerging concern. It is also important to include priorities where a mandate for change already exists and only the most effective way for this to be realised remains to be found.

The Disability Advisory Committee will identify such priorities and recommend these for endorsement by Equity Committee. Over the course of the review of the current DAP the following priorities were evident.

The need to:

- » enhance awareness and capacity-building activities for the University community
- » adopt a proactive, evidence-based approach to planning and the development of policies and procedures that is based on consultation with people with disabilities, their supporters and other key stakeholders.
- » adequately resource high quality specialised services and support.
- » embed Universal Design principles (<http://universaldesign.ie/What-is-Universal-Design/The-7-Principles/>) and practices across the full range of activities at the University and continuously improve access to:
  - the physical environment
  - the learning environment regardless of whether that is on-campus, online, includes work integrated learning and/or professional placements
  - information, the digital environment and technology
  - programs and courses by clearly defining inherent requirements and processes to negotiate reasonable adjustments
  - employment and opportunities for career progression
  - activities and events for the wider community.



**Implementation of the DAP requires a University-wide response.**

To ensure this occurs, the implementation of the Plan must be linked to the University's Planning Cycle so that consideration can be given at all levels of the University to endorsed priorities and the allocation of resources within operational plans.

**Key actions** required to initiate the implementation of the Plan include:

- » presence of the Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) to oversee the Plan with appropriate constitution and membership
- » developing a resourcing model that is appropriate and sustainable to support the implementation of the Disability Action Plan and specialised areas of support
- » developing pilot projects to refine and communicate the process for making reasonable adjustments including the identification and articulation of program and course inherent requirements
- » developing a complementary communication strategy by the Disability Advisory Committee that will create awareness about the Plan and enhance the implementation process by stimulating discussion about inclusive practices in education, employment and community engagement.





## Monitoring, reporting and review

The Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) will monitor the implementation of the DAP and provide regular updates to Equity Committee identifying any barriers to implementation and recommending institutional priorities to be taken into account by Groups and Elements in their operational planning.

The impact of the Plan will be evaluated using a range of measures including various performance indicators used to measure the institutional performance in relation to access and participation of people with disabilities as staff or students.

The Manager, Student Diversity and Inclusion and Senior HR Consultant, Equity and Inclusion Associate Director, HR Strategy and Projects will provide regular updates against relevant performance indicators i.e. Griffith University Equity Targets articulated in Equity and Diversity Plan; Commonwealth Department of Education Equity Performance Indicators for domestic students including access, participation, retention and success percentages.

A comprehensive review of the DAP will take place every three years or as required in response to emerging issues or developments.





## Appendices

**Appendix 1:** Equity, diversity and inclusion resources and plans ([griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/plans-publications](https://griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/plans-publications))

**Appendix 2:** Disability Advisory Committee Constitution

**Appendix 3:** Resourcing the implementation of the DAP

**Appendix 4:** Benchmarking data

- Students with disabilities
- Staff with disabilities

*(Information collated from various sources)*

## Appendix 1: Equity, diversity and inclusion resources and plans

Resource	Description	Location
<b>Equity, Diversity and Inclusion website</b>	Overview of Griffith's mission and commitment to equity and social inclusion. Links to Equity and Diversity Plan and Student Diversity and Inclusion	<a href="http://griffith.edu.au/equity">griffith.edu.au/equity</a>
<b>Equity and Diversity Plan</b>	A priority of the Plan is to: Improve participation and retention rates for students from disadvantaged and underrepresented backgrounds including low SES students, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students with disabilities.	<a href="http://griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/plans-publications">griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/plans-publications</a>
<b>Disability Action Plan</b>	The DAP promotes the necessary changes to perceptions, policy, practice, environments and attitudes that have at the very least limited, if not actively discouraged and prevented the full participation of people with disabilities and their careers in education and employment.	<a href="http://griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/plans-publications">griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/plans-publications</a>
<b>Our People Plan 2017 – 2020</b>	This plan aims to bring together strategies to attract, retain, develop and value both academic and professional staff. Key aims including recruiting and retaining the right people, developing and engaging staff, and valuing diversity and inclusion.	<a href="http://griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/plans-publications">griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/plans-publications</a>
<b>Student Diversity and Inclusion website</b>	Includes the Disabilities Service which focuses on coordinating the support that future and current students with disabilities require to access and participate fully in the University community.	<a href="http://griffith.edu.au/student-services/diversity-and-inclusion">griffith.edu.au/student-services/diversity-and-inclusion</a>
<b>Accessibility and Inclusion</b>	This site provides practical assistance for staff to ensure full accessibility and inclusion for all staff, students and the wider community when engaging with the University. The site promotes capacity building around accessibility and supporting people with disabilities. The site includes exemplars of best practice and a range of resources, guides and learning materials.	<a href="http://griffith.edu.au/accessibility">griffith.edu.au/accessibility</a>



# Appendix 2: Disability Advisory Committee Constitution

Sub-Committee of the Equity Committee

## 1: Establishment

The Disability Advisory Committee was re-established as a sub-committee of the Equity Committee at the 1/2018 Equity Committee.

## 2: Functions

The Disability Advisory Committee shall –

- » act as a reference group for the Equity Committee on matters relating to students and staff with disabilities by –
  - promoting the interests, requirements and rights of students and staff with disabilities within the University
  - providing feedback about the quality of the experiences of people with disabilities accessing and participating in all aspects of University life
  - providing input on policy matters in respect of students and staff with disabilities
  - providing input into the formulation and revision of State and Commonwealth legislation on matters pertaining to people with disabilities.
- » advise the Equity Committee on the development, implementation and evaluation of the University's Disability Action Plan by –
  - evaluating policies, systems, procedures and resources available to students and staff with disabilities using a variety of methodologies including conducting surveys, facilitating focus groups and receiving disability-related project and activity reports from relevant areas of the University
  - suggesting strategies that complement the goals of the University's core activity and key supporting plans that are articulated in the Disability Action Plan
  - identifying and prioritising areas of concern and emerging issues to be endorsed by Equity Committee for consideration in Group and Element operational planning processes
  - preparing proposals for strategic projects focused on embedding inclusive practice at Griffith
  - identifying professional development and awareness-raising activities that enhance a culture of inclusion at Griffith
  - preparing regular reports and summaries to be tabled at Equity Committee meetings and for inclusion in key Equity Committee reports.





### 3: Membership

The Advisory Committee shall comprise -

- » the Chairperson appointed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Engagement).  
The Chair will also become an ex officio member of Equity Committee.
- » ex officio -
  - Manager, Student Diversity and Inclusion
  - Senior HR Consultant (Equity and Inclusion)
  - A representative from each Group, nominated by the Pro Vice Chancellor
  - Representatives from key Elements that have a role in ensuring compliance to legislation and standards
- » members appointed by Equity Committee including -
  - two (2) students appointed by the Equity Committee from the University's cohort of students with disabilities
  - one (1) member of academic staff who identifies as having a disability
  - one (1) member of the general staff who identifies as having a disability

The Committee may co-opt additional persons into membership of the Advisory Committee where particular expertise or insights are required. This would include representatives of external stakeholders.

Membership may include members with overlapping areas of representation. In appointing members, consideration is given to representation that will ensure a balance of representation from the campuses of the University and from people with a range of disabilities.

In appointing members, consideration is given to achieving gender balance in representation.

The Chair, in consultation with members, may establish working parties to develop and/or undertake research and/or consultations about specific concerns or emerging issues.



#### 4: Terms of office

All members of the Committee other than ex officio members shall be appointed for a term not exceeding two years, up to but not including the first ordinary meeting of the Council in February of the relevant anniversary year, and shall be eligible for reappointment.

#### 5: Secretary

The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Engagement) shall appoint a Secretary to the Committee who shall have rights of audience and debate.

#### 6: Meetings and reports

The Advisory Committee will meet three times a year prior to the second, third and final Equity Committee meetings in that year.

#### 7: Review

The Equity Committee will initiate a review of the work of the Advisory Committee, and the need for its continued existence as part of the review process for the University's Disability Action Plan.





## Appendix 3: Resourcing the implementation of the DAP

Implementation of the DAP requires a University-wide response. To ensure this occurs, the implementation of the Plan must be linked to the University's Planning Cycle so that consideration can be given at all levels of the University to endorsed priorities and the allocation of resources within operational plans. The following diagram illustrates the three tiers of resourcing required to implement the DAP:

- » Strategic level
- » Group and element level
- » Specialised support





## Strategic Level

- » Should address systemic issues that create barriers for people with disabilities across the University.
- » Embed practices that reflect Universal Design principals and demonstrate compliance with legislation and standards.
- » Individual and community expectations have changed and increasingly people with disabilities, their supporters and advocates are considering their legal options to have intractable issues addressed. Recent examples include complaints, nationally and internationally against Coles and MIT/Harvard . Legal action against Coles over website accessibility ([www.mediaaccess.org.au/latest\\_news/news/coles-web-accessibility-case-settled](http://www.mediaaccess.org.au/latest_news/news/coles-web-accessibility-case-settled)).
- » Other strategic examples include a recommendation that the University Assessment Committee develop of an Inherent Requirements Project as a natural progression from disclosure statements and various codes of conduct and which would provide support for decision making processes.

## Group and Element

- » All areas at Griffith have a responsibility to embed inclusive practices that enhance the quality of the learning experience or workplace.
- » While the nature of activities of some Elements requires them to ensure their information/activities are accessible; there are Groups and Elements that already prioritise improvements, projects and budgets through their Operational Plans.
- » Valuable collaborative partnerships exist between these areas and specialist support services to focus on identifying solutions and developing sustainable and inclusive responses.
- » Examples include: Digital Solutions have an Assistive Technology Support Officer and allocate budget for Assistive Technology Projects on an annual basis; Campus Life have an on-going process of managing accessibility issues and retro-fitting existing assets for accessibility as well as redevelopment of campus-specific Access Maps; GBS – have collaborated with Disabilities Service to improve Bachelor of Business (OUA) to ensure access to its online course offerings so that Deaf and hard of hearing students can participate fully in classes all elements; Health have rolled out Mental Health First Aid Training for staff; Exams and Timetabling coordinate reasonable adjustments required by particular students so they can undertake school-based and end-of-semester exams; Graduations cover the cost of providing Auslan interpreters when students, staff or members of the audience require them.

## Specialised support

- » Human Resources and Student Diversity and Inclusion (which includes Disabilities Service) have oversight of a number of key plans, policies and programs for staff and students with disabilities.
- » These areas provide valuable expertise that not only assists to identify areas of concern and potential solutions but also resolve issues in a timely manner for individuals and Group and Element levels.
- » These areas provide support and capacity-building to Groups and Elements levels. For example, ad hoc advice, disability awareness training and collaborative partnerships and projects to address barriers.



## Appendix 4: Benchmarking data - Students with disabilities

Data from Business Intelligence (BI) reported to the Department of Education tracks the numbers of students with disabilities enrolling at Griffith University and shows significant increases over time. Between 2008 and 2017 there has been a 146% increase in the number of student with disabilities. Between 2016 and 2017 the increase was 23.52% (See Table 1).

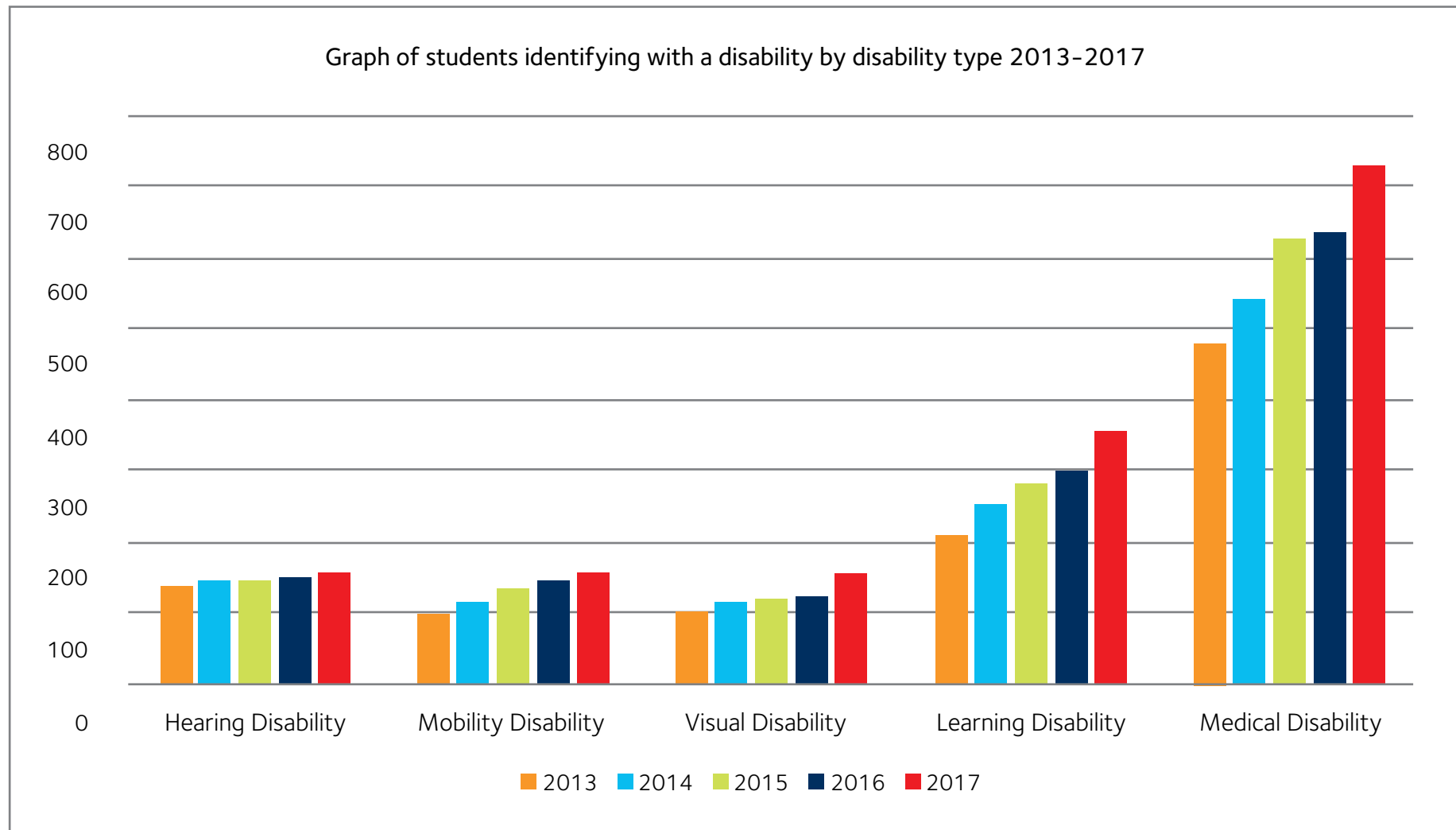
**Table 1: Number of Griffith University students disclosing a disability as reported to the Department of Education by Griffith University Business Intelligence – 2016\***

Data Type	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total Enrolments	37,954	41,027	43,639	43,010	43,497	44,857	47,397	48,499	48,750	49,629
Number of students with disabilities	1,247	1,278	1,428	1,478	1,578	1,755	2,036	2,310	2,492	3,078
Ratio of student with disabilities to total students	3.29%	3.12%	3.27%	3.44%	3.63%	3.91%	4.30%	4.76%	5.11%	6.20%

\*Data does not include OUA students.



Figure 1: Graph of students identifying with a disability by disability type 2013-2017\*



\*'Medical' can include chronic health conditions and 'Other' may include learning, neurological and psychiatric disabilities.

Griffith University is one of the largest providers of OUA (Open Universities Australia) courses in Australia. In 2017 over 11,000 students enrolled in OUA at Griffith. Table 2 shows that students with a disability enrolling in OUA consisted of 6.39% of Griffith's OUA enrolments which is lower as a percentage of all OUA students but still similar in numbers of students. The national benchmark for students with disabilities is 8%. OUA can provide students with disabilities greater flexibility in terms of access and participation but other barriers such as engagement and accessibility can be a factor in retention and success.

**Table 2: Numbers of students with disabilities enrolled in OUA Griffith study units**

	2013		2014		2015		2016		2017	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
OUA no disability	16,466	82.01%	13,037	83.30%	17,474	96.02%	10,275	91.75%	11,878	82.39%
OUA with disability	1,284	6.39%	932	5.96%	1,387	7.62%	923	8.24%	907	6.29%

(Source: OUA)

- » The rates of access and participation for students with disabilities accessing not only Griffith University but also the sector over a five years period are showing great improvement. This may be due to changes in policy such as removal of capped places, demand-driven system and widening participation activity.
- » Department of Education data presented in the 2015 Institutional Performance Portfolio show that Griffith's performance on access and participation is better than State indicators but slightly lower than performance across the whole sector.
- » The main concern for the sector is that performance on access, participation and attainment indicators rates fall well short of the 8% reference value for people with disabilities as a percentage of the Australian population (See Table 3).
- » Work also needs to be done to improve the retention rates for people with disabilities and ensure that students with a disability are retained at rate and ratios similar to broader student population.





**Table 3: Students with Disabilities - Equity Performance Data**

Performance Indicator	Organisation	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<b>Access Rate</b> Reference value = 8%	Griffith	4.02	4.14	4.57	4.66	4.64
	State	3.69	4.06	4.37	4.38	4.46
	Sector	4.50	4.75	4.98	5.33	5.63
<b>Participation Rate</b> Reference value = 8%	Griffith	4.21	4.35	4.77	5.11	5.23
	State	4.17	4.44	4.68	4.88	5.07
	Sector	4.98	5.20	5.46	5.84	6.14
<b>Retention Rate %</b>	Griffith	70.18	73.77	71.74	71.56	-
	State	69.56	73.51	73.38	73.78	-
	Sector	71.02	72.29	72.37	73.01	-
<b>Attainment Rate</b> Reference value + 8%	Griffith	3.98	3.46	3.90	3.91	3.94
	State	3.84	3.76	3.88	3.90	4.13
	Sector	4.18	4.35	4.48	4.86	5.05

Source: Department of Education, 2016 Institutional Performance Portfolio Appendix 5 ([education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2016-student-data](http://education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2016-student-data))



## Funding to support students with disabilities

The Commonwealth's Higher Education Disability Support Program (DSP) provides funding to eligible higher education providers to undertake activities that assist in removing barriers to access for students with disability.

Universities incurring high costs in support of students with disabilities can claim back these supports through the Additional Support for Students with Disabilities (ASSD) program.

An additional element of the DSP is performance-based disability support funding to encourage higher education providers to implement strategies to attract and support students with a disability. Table 4 and 5 outlines information related to these two components.



**Table 4: Additional Support for Students with Disabilities (ASSD) Funding Component**

Year	Total \$ claimed	\$ claimed for Ed Support	\$ claimed for Equip	Total \$ reimbursement	% of Ed Support	% of Equipment	Total # students for Ed Support	# of OUA students in claim	Total claims value in sector
2016	\$353,460	\$344,073	\$9,386	\$217,571	60.51%	100%	95	8	\$9.95 m
2015	\$311,573	\$303,159	\$8,414	\$190,090	59.93%	100%	71	3	\$9.9 m
2014	\$324,649	\$319,980	\$4,669	\$207,189	63.29%	100%	75	10	\$9.2 m
2013	\$443,141	\$424,981	\$18,160	\$265,440	58.19%	100%	81	12	\$9.4 m
2012	\$227,627	\$249,094	\$28,533	\$162,060	53.61%	100%	61	7	n/a

\*Students whose costs are under \$500, International or Griffith College students are not eligible to be claimed under ASSD.

Source: Griffith University ASSD Application

**Table 5: Disability Performance funding 2012 - 2016**

Year	Amount provided
2016	\$33,697
2015	\$32,956
2014	\$30,627
2013	\$32,051
2012	\$31,349

Source: Department of Education



**Table 6: 2016 Comparable university statistics – Queensland Universities**

University	Student with a disability*	OUA students with a disability	Total
Bond University	179	-	179
CQ University	943	-	943
<b>Griffith University</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>2891</b>
James Cook University	904	-	904
Queensland University of Technology	1762	-	1762
The University of Queensland	1222	-	1222
University of Southern Queensland	1632	-	1632
University of the Sunshine Coast	796	-	796
ACU (Multi state)	1572	-	1572

\*not including OUA students with a disability

Source: Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2016 Appendix 2.5 Equity Groups and data provided by OUA. (Data from Selected Higher Education Statistics are for domestic students only – not including International students enrolment data)



**Table 7: 2016 Comparable university statistics – all domestic students – IRU Universities**

University	Student with a disability*	OUA students with a disability	Total
Charles Darwin University	472	-	472
Flinders University	1586	-	1586
<b>Griffith University</b>	<b>1968</b>	<b>923</b>	<b>2891</b>
James Cook University	904	-	904
La Trobe University	2133	86	2219
Murdoch University	1309	241	1550
Western Sydney University	1566	-	1566

\*not including international or OUA students with a disability

Source: Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2016 Appendix 2.5 Equity Groups ([www.education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2016-student-data](http://www.education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2016-student-data))

## Staff with disability

As at October 2017, 87 staff had identified through the EEO data as having a disability.

The table below outlines this by gender.

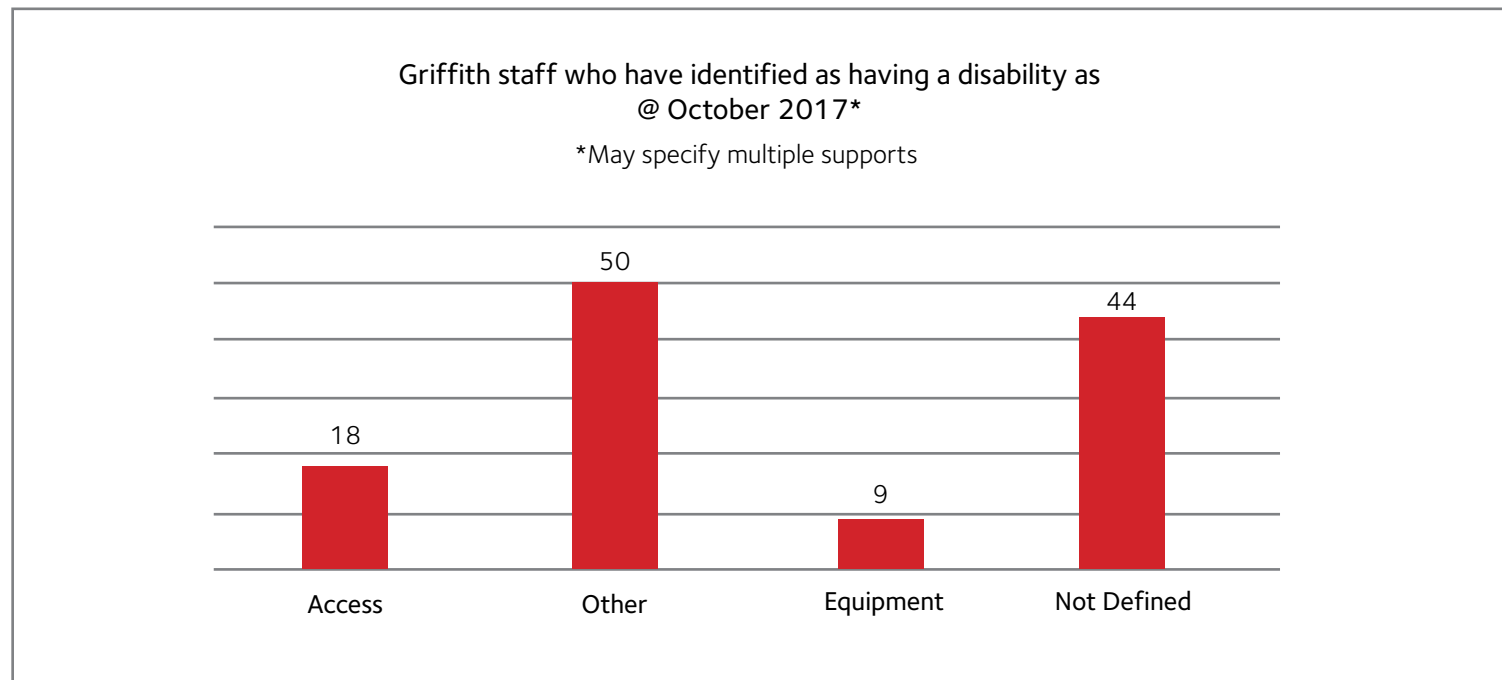
	2014	2015	2016	2017
Female	47	46	43	58
Male	17	20	21	29
Total	64	66	64	87

Source: Griffith University Human Resources Department

### Griffith staff who have identified as having a disability @ October, 2017

Griffith's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy provides staff with an opportunity to identify as a member of one of four groups in relation to need: assistance or provisions required to enable physical access; assistive equipment or technologies; and/or other supports; or not defined.

As at October 2017, 87 staff had identified through the EEO data as having a disability and required one or more supports as outlined below.



Source: Griffith University Human Resources Department





