

Students with Disabilities Policy

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Description	This policy states the University's commitment to increasing and enhancing opportunities for people with disabilities to access higher education and graduate employment. It sets out the principles upon which the University's commitment is based.

Related documents

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#)
[Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
[Disability Action Plan 2018-2020](#)
[Undergraduate Programs Admission Policy](#)
[Inability to Complete Required Components of Professional Qualification](#)
[Student Charter](#)
[Student Review and Appeals Policy](#)
[Student Review and Appeals Procedures](#)
[Student Complaints Policy](#)
[Student Complaints Procedures](#)
[Student Misconduct Policy](#)
[Assessment Policy](#)
[Assessment Procedure for Staff](#)
[Assessment Procedure for Students](#)
[Reasonable Adjustments for Assessment – Students with Disabilities](#)
[Work-Integrated Learning Policy](#)
[Privacy Plan](#)
[Griffith University Disclosure Statement](#)

[\[Preamble\]](#) [\[Definitions\]](#) [\[Principles\]](#) [\[Outreach, admission and enrolment\]](#) [\[Making reasonable adjustments\]](#) [\[Availability, accreditation and adaptation of academic programs\]](#) [\[Learning, teaching and assessment practices\]](#) [\[Community Development\]](#) [\[Language\]](#) [\[Physical environment\]](#) [\[Access to employment\]](#) [\[Strategic oversight of policy and other strategic initiatives\]](#) [\[Disability Action Plan\]](#)

1. PREAMBLE

Griffith University is committed to increasing and enhancing opportunities for people with disabilities to access higher education and graduate employment. This commitment is based on a philosophy of equity and inclusion reflected in Griffith's Disability Action Plan which reinforces a contemporary model of disability which addresses barriers that exclude people with disabilities and provides practical and timely support as appropriate.

The University is required to comply with the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld), the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth). When fulfilling its obligations to students with disabilities, the University acts in accordance with the principles embodied in and requirements of other relevant legislation, standards and guidelines such as:

- *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010;*
- *World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes*

as well as privacy, freedom of information, workplace health and safety legislation and legislation governing professional bodies.

2. DEFINITIONS

In the context of this policy:

A student with a disability refers to an enrolled student of the University with a **disability** that in relation to a person means:–

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a **disability** that:

- presently exists; or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- may exist in the future; or
- is imputed to a person;

resulting in a reduced ability to access educational services provided by the University including assessment tasks and a requirement for reasonable adjustments and/or support services to address these barriers. A student who is pregnant and does not meet the above criteria is not a student with a disability.

An adjustment is a measure or action (or group of measures or actions) taken by the University that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability

- in relation to an admission or enrolment — to apply for the admission or enrolment; and
- in relation to a course or program — to participate in the course or program; and
- in relation to facilities or services — to use the facilities or services;

on the same basis as a student without a disability, and includes an aid, a facility, or a service that the student requires because of their disability.¹

An adjustment is **reasonable** in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected. The process for assessing whether an adjustment is reasonable is outlined in the Disability Standards for Education 2005 subsection 3.4.

¹ Disability Standards for Education 2005

Essential Learning Outcomes are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills that it is essential that a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning in a course or program to preserve the academic integrity of the University's qualifications. These are published on the Programs and Courses website in the form of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs).

Academic Integrity requires that in providing for students with disabilities, the University continues *to ensure the integrity of its courses or programs and assessment requirements and processes, so that those upon whom it confers an award are able to present themselves as having the appropriate knowledge, experience and expertise implicit in the holding of that particular award.*²

Responsible academic staff member is the Program Director who may act on the recommendation of the professional practice coordinator, or other academic staff member deemed appropriate by the Dean (Learning and Teaching).

3. PRINCIPLES

The University aims to:

- provide current and future students with disabilities and alumni with the opportunity to realise their potential for physical, social emotional and intellectual development through full participation in the University;
- raise the awareness of its community regarding the requirements and rights of people with disabilities;
- provide an appropriate level of resources for the implementation of this policy;
- respect an individual's rights to privacy and confidentiality when providing support services to current and future students with disabilities.

The University recognises its obligation to provide a safe physical environment in which students with disabilities can undertake their studies.

The University will:

- endeavour to create an inclusive learning environment that maximizes outcomes for students with disabilities by addressing barriers to access and participation;
- consult with students with disabilities to identify reasonable adjustments that may be required to facilitate their access to and participation in programs and courses on the same basis as students without disabilities;
- identify and uphold the essential academic requirements of its programs and courses;
- ensure that students with disabilities can access support services that it provides on the same basis as other students. In addition the University will provide specialised support services to students with disabilities so that they may negotiate reasonable adjustments;
- ensure the delivery of such support services to students with disabilities on the same basis as students without disabilities and without these students experiencing discrimination.

Current or future students with disabilities who believe that they will require any reasonable adjustments will be required to disclose the nature of their impairment/medical condition and provide appropriate supporting documentation about its impact on them in the context of the learning environment in a timely manner and to the appropriate staff.

4. OUTREACH, ADMISSION AND ENROLMENT

The University encourages future students with disabilities to disclose the nature of their disabilities and discuss their requirements during its outreach, admission and enrolment procedures.

² Ibid.

4.1 Outreach

The University shall provide access for people with disabilities to its outreach activities.

Outreach encompasses all of the University's activities (e.g. schools liaison, brochures, preparatory courses, information on the University's website etc.) which are designed to make people aware of their opportunities to enter higher education, whether directly from high school or after leaving school.

Outreach is one of the keys to accessing higher education. Future students with disabilities are advised to discuss any specific requirements that they may have in undertaking university study while participating in outreach activities.

4.2 Admission

The University is committed to ensuring that prospective students with disabilities are able to seek admission to the University on the same basis as prospective students without a disability and without experiencing discrimination.

Admission may occur via one of the admission pathways or schemes specified in the *Undergraduate Programs Admission Policy*. In assessing applications from people with disabilities, the University will give due consideration to the fact that such an applicant may have experienced educational disadvantage because of their disability.

Other admission options – postgraduate

For each postgraduate program, the admission criteria shall be specified as part of the program information available on Study and Degree Finder website. Through postgraduate admission, the University seeks to provide access to persons who have experienced educational disadvantage and in assessing applications from people with disabilities, will give due consideration to the fact that such an applicant may have experienced educational disadvantage because of their disability.

4.3 Enrolment

The enrolment process allows for self-disclosure of a disability. While the University undertakes to assist students with disabilities in their studies, it can do so only if students identify and actively engage in a process to negotiate reasonable adjustments.

5. MAKING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

The University will provide reasonable adjustments to students with disabilities consistent with the Disabilities Standards for Education 2005.

To assist with the identification of appropriate reasonable adjustments, the University requires students with disabilities seeking adjustments to supply supporting documentation about the nature and impact of their disability/medical condition in the learning environment.

The *Student Charter* states that the University expects students to disclose relevant information about circumstances that may impact on their capacity to undertake their studies for the purpose of making reasonable adjustments. Such evidence must be an accurate reflection of the person's current disability/medical condition and may include medical or other professional advice, reports from previous educational institutions and/or government and community agencies.

In some instances a detailed independent expert assessment may be required in order to determine the nature of adjustments that are appropriate for an individual student enrolled in specific programs/courses.

The purpose of disclosure is not to exclude students from opportunities but to enable access to a safe environment, with appropriate adjustments, minimising their exposure to risk and risk to others. Students need to be clear about the reason for making the disclosure and what they are required to disclose to receive the support they require. Students have the right to disclose only to disability support staff for the purpose of identifying and implementing appropriate education-related adjustments without having to disclose a disability to all relevant teaching staff. Students in exercising their duty of disclosure are to advise staff in a timely manner of their needs in relation to their disability, including assessment related adjustments.

If the University is not advised in a timely manner, then it may be unable to provide a student with specialised support.

6. AVAILABILITY, ACCREDITATION AND ADAPTATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The University endeavours to make all of its academic courses and research activities available to future students with disabilities.

Students with disabilities shall have access to all the University's academic courses, unless in the accreditation of a particular program/course the Academic Committee receives appropriate expert advice that the curriculum could not be adapted to provide students with particular disabilities the opportunity to meet the essential learning outcomes of the program/course.

The University will attempt to adjust existing academic courses to accommodate the range of disabilities that students may have, providing such adjustment does not compromise the academic integrity of the qualification and the essential learning outcomes of the program.

The University encourages academic staff to take account of the diversity within the University's student population in planning an academic program and particularly in the selection of teaching and assessment methods.

7. LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

The Disabilities Service within Student Services will act as a point of contact for students with disabilities and the University. If necessary/requested, they will liaise with academic staff to negotiate reasonable adjustments for individual students; however students with disabilities need to engage in the process.

In consultation with the Manager, Student Diversity and Inclusion or the Disabilities Service, the Heads of Schools shall be responsible for -

- academic counselling services for students with disabilities;
- the supervision and review of the progress of students with disabilities;
- the development of teaching and assessment methods appropriate to students with disabilities.

The University supports reasonable adjustments in assessing the outcomes of academic courses undertaken by students with disabilities through the use of alternate strategies, when such students are prevented by their disability from participating in the same manner as other students under standard assessment conditions. Alternative strategies for assessment may include the mode of questioning, mode of response, the use of specific equipment, use of separate examination rooms and allowing extended periods of time for undertaking assessment. Exemptions or exclusions from assessment tasks on the basis of disability is not a reasonable adjustment as the University is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program, and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature.

8. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

To facilitate the full participation of students with disabilities in the University, academic staff, general staff and fellow students will be given the opportunity to acquire the understanding and competencies necessary to meet the education, support, social and employment needs of these students.

These competencies are to be developed via the provision of training activities, continuing education, interactions with students with disabilities and specialist staff.

The University recognises the important role students play in supporting one another, and the need to raise awareness of the specific requirements of students with disabilities.

Mechanisms for raising the consciousness and responsiveness of staff and students to the requirements of students with disabilities may include -

- incorporation of issues related to student with disabilities in staff development activities or student gatherings;
- encouragement of staff research and scholarship in the area of disabilities;
- embedding, where appropriate, content which reflects issues around disability in the curriculum; and
- production of discussion papers and seminars on issues relevant to students with disabilities in higher education.

9. LANGUAGE

The University discourages the use of discriminatory language in relation to people with disabilities and encourages thoughtful and intentional use of [inclusive language](#).

10. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The University aims to provide an environment which facilitates quality physical, social, emotional and intellectual experiences for students with disabilities.

The University requires that all new buildings are designed for access and use by students with disabilities in accordance with the appropriate Building Code and design standards. In addition, the University shall develop its own design standards for the construction of buildings to improve access and use by students with disabilities.

The University shall endeavour to improve access to older buildings which do not meet these standards.

The University shall endeavour to schedule lectures, workshop sessions and tutorials for courses in which students with disabilities are enrolled in readily accessible places and at times appropriately spaced enabling students with mobility impairment(s) to move at their own pace to the next scheduled activity.

The University provides accommodation on Nathan and Mt Gravatt campuses which is able to be accessed by students with disabilities.

11. ACCESS TO WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING, PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PLACEMENTS AND EMPLOYMENT

The University facilitates access to training and placement opportunities which will enable its students, graduands and graduates with disabilities to develop appropriate work skills. As more programs incorporate professional placements and/or work integrated learning activities, particular attention will need to be paid to ensuring that students with disabilities can participate in these activities on the same basis as students without disabilities.

Future and current students enrolled in programs are informed of any requirements to undertake mandatory work-integrated learning or professional practice components as a program component via the Programs and Course website. Program information is to include details of any special prerequisites for work placements, such as medical checks, registration of the student by a professional body, police checks or immunisations and academic requirements.

Students enrolled in a professional program who in undertaking learning activities display a disability or health condition that impairs their capacity to undertake a placement may be deemed in the opinion of a responsible academic staff member after consultation with the Disabilities Service to be *unfit to practice* at that time. In such cases the responsible academic staff member may restrict the student from undertaking or continuing the required professional practice component. In making such a decision, the responsible staff member in exercising an educational judgement is to have formed the view that it is not possible to make a reasonable adjustment without compromising the academic integrity of the program, the health and safety of the student and the welfare of others, and the duty of care of the University, involved in providing the professional practice. Refer to *Inability to Complete Required Components of Professional Qualification*.

The University provides all students with a Disclosure Statement for the purpose of advising the relevant Program Director and Course Convenors of any risks to their own health and wellbeing and/or risks they may pose to others in undertaking learning activities within a program. Students are encouraged to review the resource [Choosing your Path, Disclosure: It's a personal decision](https://pubsites.uws.edu.au/ndco/disclosure/) prior to completion of the Disclosure Statement. When a Disclosure Statement is made, wherever possible, necessary and 'reasonable', adjustments are made to accommodate such students in undertaking learning activities. However in cases where students require special services or facilities that in the circumstances cannot reasonably be made available and without which they are unable to continue to participate in the course the outcome is likely to be an administrative withdrawal from the course without academic or financial penalty.

The University shall develop strategies to take full advantage of funding initiatives aimed at providing employment opportunities for its students, graduands and graduates with disabilities.

12. DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

The University has a [Disability Action Plan](#) that outlines strategies to address issues that may impact on the access and participation of people with disabilities in programs at Griffith University.
