



# Disability Action Plan 2015–2017

Inclusive practice for staff,  
students and the community



# Introduction

Griffith University's third Disability Action Plan (DAP) builds on the achievements of the earlier plans, reflecting the University's long-standing values and commitments articulated in our Strategic Plan 2013-2017 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 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."

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/speeches/right-belong>

Griffith's revised 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 revised 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 long-standing 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; and
- » 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. One of the functions of a re-established Disability Advisory Committee will be to 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; and
  - 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:

- » reconvening the University's Disability Advisory Committee (DAC) in accordance with the revised 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; and
- » 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 Equity Services and Associate Director, HR Strategy & Projects will provide regular updates against relevant performance indicators i.e. Griffith University Equity Targets articulated in Equity and Diversity Plan; 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:** Key Griffith Plans and Strategies (<https://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/governance/plans-publications>)

**Appendix 2:** Revised constitution for the Disability Advisory Committee

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

**Appendix 4:** Benchmarking data – Students with disabilities (*Information collated from various source*)

**Appendix 5:** Data on Griffith Staff with disabilities (*Information sourced from EEO disclosure data*)

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

Resource	Description	Location
<b>Equity, Diversity &amp; Inclusion website</b>	Overview of Griffith's mission and commitment to equity and social inclusion. Links to Equity and Diversity Plan 2014-2017 and Student Equity Services.	<a href="https://www.griffith.edu.au/equity">https://www.griffith.edu.au/equity</a>
<b>Equity and Diversity Plan 2014-2017</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="https://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/299407/griffith-university-equity-diversity-plan-2014-2017.pdf">https://www.griffith.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/299407/griffith-university-equity-diversity-plan-2014-2017.pdf</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 carers in education and employment.	<a href="https://www.griffith.edu.au/student-equity-services">https://www.griffith.edu.au/student-equity-services</a>
<b>Student Equity Services</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="https://www.griffith.edu.au/student-equity-services">https://www.griffith.edu.au/student-equity-services</a>



# Appendix 2: Disability Advisory Committee Constitution

Sub-Committee of the Equity Committee 2014/0005072

## 1: Establishment

The Disability Advisory Committee was re-established as a sub-committee of the Equity Committee at the 1/2015 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 Equity Services
  - Principal Adviser, Staff Engagement and Equity
  - A representative from each Groups, nominated by the Pro Vice Chancellor
  - Representatives from key Elements that have 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) members of academic staff who identify as having a disability
  - » one (1) members of the general staff who identify 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.
- » (3) 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





## Strategic level

- » Should address systemic issues that create barriers for people with disabilities across the university
- » Embed practices that reflect Universal Design principals and relate to compliance to the legislation and Standards.
- » Individual and community expectations have changed and increasingly people with disabilities, their supporters & 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). Thursday, 6 November 2014 13:30pm. ([http://www.mediaaccess.org.au/latest\\_news/web/legal-action-against-coles-over-website-accessibility](http://www.mediaaccess.org.au/latest_news/web/legal-action-against-coles-over-website-accessibility))
- » E.g. University Assessment Committee recommended the development 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: INS – have appointed an Assistive Technology Support Officer and allocate budget for Assistive Technology Projects on an annual basis.; Campus Life – Planning, Design & Construction are working on the redevelopment of campus-specific Access Maps; GBS – have collaborated with the DS to ensure access to its OUA B Business program which is delivered online, so that Deaf and hard of hearing students can participate fully in classes using Blackboard Collaborate; Exams & Timetabling coordinate some of the 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 Resource Management and Student Equity Services including the 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 assist to identify areas of concern and potential solutions but also resolve issues in a timely manner for individuals and Group & Element levels.
- » These areas frequently have to provide and fund services and support that should be improved at Group and Element levels – E.g. providing transcripts for learning materials that have been selected but which are not accessible.



## Appendix 4: Benchmarking data - Students with disabilities

- » Data from BIS tracking the numbers of students with disabilities enrolling at Griffith University from 2007 to 2014 reveal a 52.7% increase in the number of students from 1303 in 2007 to 1990 in 2014. (See Table 1)
- » Continuing this trend, the number of students identifying that they have a disability on enrolment for Semester 1 2015 shows a 16% increase in enrolments at the same time in Semester 1 2014 from 1856 to 2153 students.

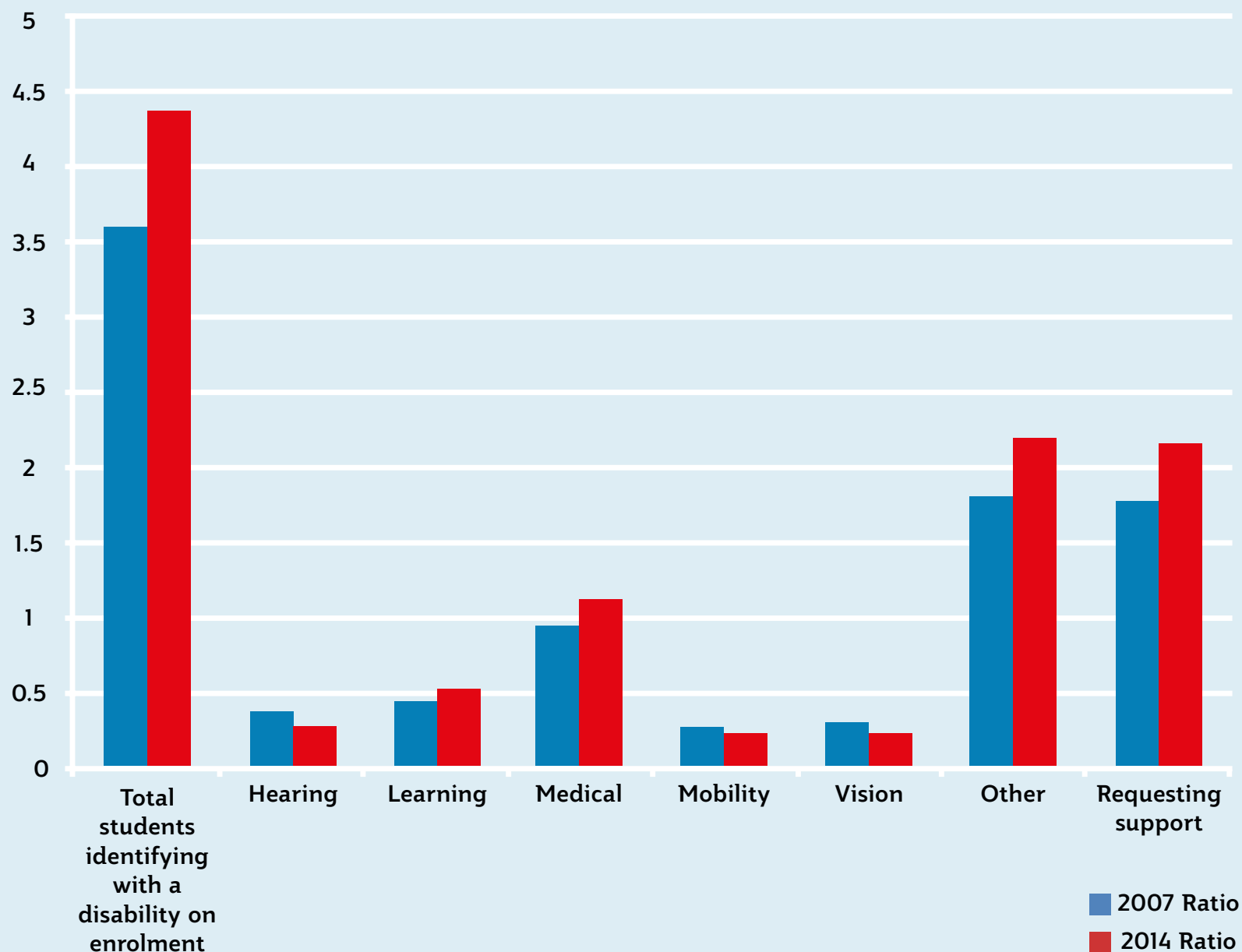
**Table 1: Number of students disclosing a disability as reported to the Department of Education by Griffith University Business Intelligence – 2014. Data for 2014 is preliminary only and does not include OUA students**

	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
<b>Total enrolments</b>	46,449	44,119	42,716	42,716	42,765	39,943	37,095	36,329
<b>Number of students with disabilities</b>	<b>1990</b>	1707	1549	1443	1398	1237	1202	1303
<b>Ratio of students with disabilities to total Griffith students</b>	<b>4.28</b>	3.87	3.63	3.42	3.27	3.1	3.24	3.59



**Figure 1: Graph of students identifying with a disability by disability type and also requesting support**

(Source: As reported to the Department of Education by Griffith University Business Intelligence – 2014)



**Table 2: Numbers of students with disabilities enrolled in OUA Griffith study units** (Source: OUA 2014)

	2013		2012		2011	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<b>Griffith students without a disability</b>	16,466	92.8	18,742	93	13,261	92.3
<b>Griffith students with a disability</b>	1284	7.2	1413	7	938	7.7
<b>No information</b>	0	0	0	0	2	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,750</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>20,155</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>14,201</b>	<b>100</b>

- » While there are increasing numbers of students with disabilities accessing not only Griffith University but also the sector, rates of access, participation and success show that there has only been an incremental improvement in the key performance indicators.
- » Department of Education data presented in the 2013 Institutional Performance Portfolio show that Griffith's performance on these indicators is higher than that of the State but slightly lower than performance in the sector.
- » The main concern for the sector is that performance on the access, participation and attainment indicators falls well short of the 8% reference value for people with disabilities as a percentage of the Australian population (See Table 3).
- » The retention rate indicates that while students with disabilities remain under-represented in the sector, they are retained at rate and ratios similar to broader student population.







**Table 3: Students with Disabilities - Equity Performance Data** (Source: Department of Education, 2013 Institutional Performance Portfolio)

Performance Indicator	Organisation	2012
<b>Access Rate</b> Reference value = 8.0%	Griffith	4.02%
	State	3.67%
	Sector	4.50%
<b>Participation Rate</b> Reference value = 8.0%	Griffith	4.21%
	State	4.17%
	Sector	4.99%
<b>Retention Rate</b> Relates to 2011 data	Griffith	76.01%
	State	75.93%
	Sector	77.59%
<b>Attainment Rate</b> Reference value + 8.0%	Griffith	3.98%
	State	3.86%
	Sector	4.19%

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

(Source: Griffith University ASSD Application 2014 for 2013 Academic Year)

Year	Total \$ claimed	\$ claimed for Ed Support	\$ claimed for Equip	Total \$ reimbursement	% of Ed Support	% of Equipment	Total # students claimed for Ed Support	# of OUA students in claim	Total value of claims from sector
2015	311,573	303,159	8,414	190,090	59.93%	100%	71	3	\$9.9m
2014	324,649	319,980	4,669	207,189	63.3%	100%	75	10	\$9.2m
2013	443,141	424,981	18,160	265,440	58.19%	100%	81	12	\$9.4m
2012	227,627	249,094	28,533	162,060	53.6%	100%	61	7	na

**Table 5: Disability Performance (DP) funding 2012 - 2014**

(Source: As advised by the Department of Education)

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







**Table 6: 2013 Comparable university statistics – Queensland Universities**

(Source: Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2013 Appendix 2 Equity Groups (<https://education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2013-student-data>) and data provided by OUA. (Data from Selected Higher Education Statistics are for domestic students only – not including International students enrolment data)

University	Students with a disability (not including international or OUA students with a disability)	OUA students with a disability (data provided by OUA)	Total
Bond University	187	0	187
CQ University	746	0	746
Griffith University	1461	1284	<b>2745</b>
James Cook University	840	0	840
QUT	1374	0	1374
The University of Queensland	1061	0	1061
University of Southern Queensland	1325	0	1325
University of the Sunshine Coast	622	0	622
Non-University Higher Education Institutions	300	0	300
ACU (Multi state)	1354	0	1354

## Table 7: 2013 Comparable university statistics - IRU Universities

(Source: Selected Higher Education Statistics – 2013 Appendix 2 Equity Groups (<https://education.gov.au/selected-higher-education-statistics-2013-student-data>) and data provided by OUA. (Data from Selected Higher Education Statistics are for domestic students only – not including International students enrolment data)

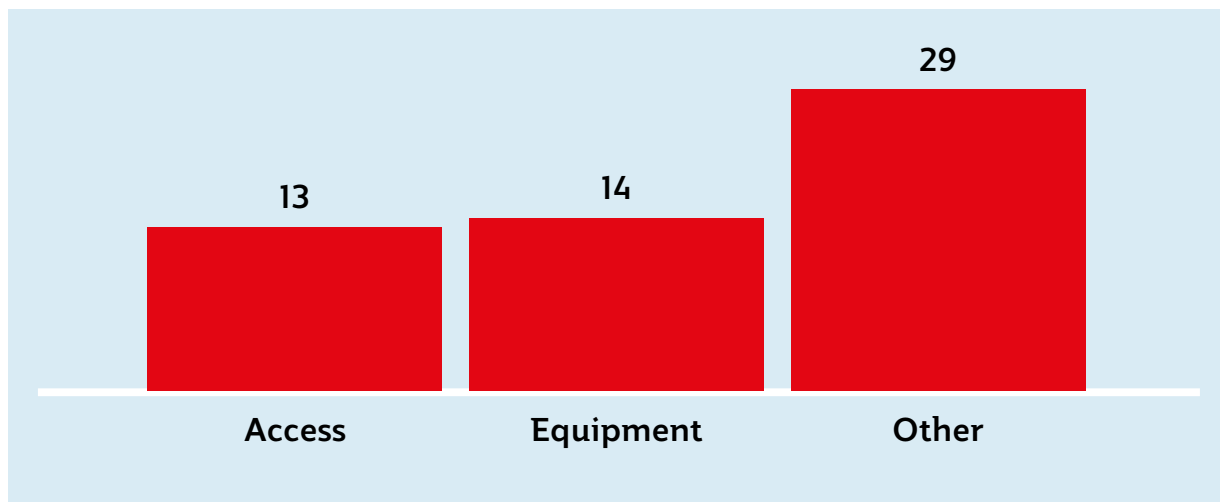
University	Students with a disability (not including international or OUA students with a disability)	OUA students with a disability (data provided by OUA)	Total
Charles Darwin University	547	9	556
Flinders University	1232	0	1232
Griffith University	1461	1284	<b>2745</b>
James Cook University	840	0	840
La Trobe University	1719	0	1719
Murdoch University	1138	424	1562



## Appendix 5: Data on Griffith staff with disabilities

Griffith's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy provides staff with an opportunity to identify as a member of one of three groups, based on assistance or provisions required to enable physical access, assistive equipment or technologies, or other aspects. As at 30 June 2015, 46 staff had identified through the EEO data as having a disability.

**Griffith staff who have identified as having a disability @ 30 June 2015**











## Disability Action Plan 2015–2017

Discover more at [griffith.edu.au/accessibility](http://griffith.edu.au/accessibility)

