



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

A Disability Action Plan for the University 2007 - 2011

'Core values / Shared responsibilities'

October 2007

Introduction

The University of Newcastle has a longstanding commitment to equity and social justice. That commitment is evident both in its Institutional Strategic Plan 2007-2011, *Building Distinction*, and other planning statements, and in its record of success in helping those who have been disadvantaged - including those who have a disability - to access education and employment.

This Disability Action Plan offers staff and students of the University a succinct statement of the University's goals, strategies and targets for assisting staff and students with a disability over the next five years.

Underlying Principles

In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act (1977), the University of Newcastle Strategic Plan and the Disability Action Plan, the University of Newcastle will consider the needs of staff and students with a disability in all administrative functions and in providing access to the University's buildings and facilities.

The University is committed to the following principles.

People with a disability have a right

- to be treated justly;
- to have their rights and responsibilities recognised;
- to be consulted about decisions that affect their lives;
- to be valued members of the community;
- to relevant and accessible information about matters which affect their lives;
- to work or study in an environment that promotes good health and to information about services that can assist this;
- to meaningful employment and training appropriate to their needs;
- to access a range of educational opportunities which will maximise their learning and assist them in personal and career development;
- to participate in cultural and artistic pursuits that maximise the opportunities for self-expression;
- to access accommodation that is safe, secure & affordable;
- to work or study in a safe and accessible physical environment.

Aims

- (1) To ensure that the University's enduring commitment to access and equity is put into practice for people with a disability who use the University
- (2) To ensure that all areas of the University comply with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)

Definition of Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act defines disability as:

- 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 malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of a 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 or reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

Present Status

Staff:

Statistics for 2007 indicate that 90 staff (4.1% of total staff) voluntarily identified as having a disability, and 1.1% required adjustment at work because of disability.

Students

In Semester 1 2007, 1,087 students – i.e. 5.1% of all students - identified as having a disability.

Disability Action Plan Objectives 2007-2011

1. Provide equitable learning opportunities for people with a disability
2. Provide equitable employment opportunities for people with a disability
3. Provide an inclusive culture and environment, and accessible facilities for people with a disability

Objective 1:

Provide equitable learning opportunities for people with a disability

Targets:

- (i) *Access, participation, retention and success rates for students with disabilities at the University of Newcastle will be on par with or better than the national averages for the Higher Education sector as measured by DEST*
- (ii) *Awareness of disability will be raised by incorporating issues into the design and delivery of curricula, and the provision of services to students*

Strategies	Monitoring and Evaluation	Primary Responsibility & Timeline	Others Responsible
Ensure that programs, training, resources and services provided to all students are fully accessible to students with disabilities	Access and participation rates of students with disabilities; Survey students with disabilities to ensure needs are met	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Comprehensive website established by June 2008 Annual survey by AR of registered students with disabilities in September	Assistant Deans (Teaching & Learning) Academic Registrar
Appoint an Academic Disability Adviser (ADA) in every School to support and assist students with a disability	Names of ADAs provided to University T&L Committee; annual survey of students with a disability to ensure there are formal channels for students to raise concerns and to expect that they will be addressed; number of complaints to Dean of Students and University Complaints Manager	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) ADAs appointed by June 2008 Annual survey by AR of registered students with disabilities in September	Assistant Deans (Teaching & Learning) Academic Registrar

Semester reports by Assistant Deans (T&L) to Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee on issues relating to students with a disability	Issues resolved in Faculty and outcomes provided to University T&L Committee for distribution to all Faculties	Assistant Deans (Teaching & Learning) 2008 and ongoing	Academic Disability Advisers
Continue to encourage students to identify as having a disability at enrolment by informing them about why data about disability is collected, who has access to it, and how this information will be used	Comprehensive web based guides for HUBS staff and enrolling students	Academic Registrar Pre-enrolment	HUBS staff
Include an invitation in all course outlines to students with a disability to identify themselves at the outset of each course to allow arrangement of accommodations	Modify template for course outlines	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) 2009 and ongoing	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning)
Reduce the number of complaints to ADAs and Dean of Students by ensuring that the needs of students with disabilities are considered when assessment tasks are designed and implemented	Number of complaints to ADAs, Dean of Students and University Complaints Manager	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) In place for DoS; review annually in February Establish baseline data for ADAs in 2008; review annually in February	Assistant Deans (Teaching & Learning) Dean of Students University Complaints Manager Academic Disability Advisers
Promote Guidelines for Inclusive Teaching	Promote Guidelines in CTL workshops and activities, and HRS workshops Uptake of Guidelines by academics reflected in teaching portfolios as part of application for promotion	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Immediate and ongoing	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) Director, Centre for Teaching and Learning Director, HR
Encourage awareness and sensitivity of non-discriminatory language in course design and delivery	Promote Guidelines in CTL workshops and activities, and HRS	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)	Assistant Deans (Teaching & Learning)

through use of Non-Discriminatory Language Guidelines. See http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000797.html	workshops Course evaluation and feedback from individual students	Immediate and ongoing	Director, Centre for Teaching Learning Director, HR
Ensure curricula and content of our academic programs are inclusive and sensitive to the needs of students with a disability	Course/program proposals and reviews to include questions regarding provision for students with disabilities Random monitoring and annual report to Teaching & Learning Committee on compliance	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) 2008 and ongoing	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) for course and program reviews Manager, Quality Assurance & Improvement for random monitoring and reporting
Develop resources to raise the awareness of academic staff to specific issues impacting on participation in group work by students with disabilities	Web based resource package	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) December 2007	Academic Registrar Manager, Equity & Diversity
Develop and implement disability awareness sessions for academic staff, ensuring coverage of best practice in teaching and assessment of students with particular types of disabilities Integrate disability awareness into existing academic training programs e.g. Graduate Certificate in the Practice of Tertiary Teaching, sessional teacher training	Promote Guidelines in CTL workshops and activities Course evaluation and feedback from students with disabilities registered with Student Support Services	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) 2008 and ongoing	Director, Centre for Teaching & Learning Manager, Equity & Diversity

Objective 2:***Provide equitable employment opportunities for people with a disability*****Target:*****Work towards achieving the NSW Premier's Department Office of Employment Equity and Diversity (OEED) target of 7% representation of people with a disability requiring workplace adjustment in employment***

Strategies	Monitoring and Evaluation	Primary Responsibility & Timeline	Others Responsible
Work to improve the response rate and accuracy of data obtained through staff EEO survey and to address staff concerns about confidentiality and potential discrimination in the workplace	HRS to monitor biannually and to follow up with new staff who have not provided EEO status Data reported to OEED annually	Director, Human Resources Review biannually in September and April	Manager, Equity & Diversity
Provide detailed information on distribution and employment outcomes for people with disabilities	Distribute to Senior Executive for operational planning Include in Annual Report to OEED	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Annually in July	Manager, Equity & Diversity
Review recruitment practices relating to people with disabilities and identify proactive approaches for circulating vacancies to disability networks	HRS to monitor positions targeted to people with a disability Data reported to OEED	Director, Human Resources February 2008 and ongoing	Manager, Human Resource Services
Ensure HROs undertake regular training on disability awareness and employment-related disability discrimination issues	HROs feedback from training & written/verbal feedback from applicants	Director, Human Resources February 2008 and ongoing	Manager, Equity & Diversity
Include a segment on disability issues in staff selection training for recruitment interview panel members	Numbers of staff on appointment committees who have completed training	Director, Human Resources November 2007	Associate Director, Organisational Development
Require all managers and supervisors to complete modules 1 & 2 of EO Online	Level of compliance by Faculty & Division reported to Executive	Vice-Chancellor September 2007	Manager, Equity & Diversity Unit

	Committee		
Conduct regular workshops / training in disability issues to enhance the sensitivities and skills of administrative staff with a major role in providing services to students with disabilities	Number of participants, participant feedback , number of complaints	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) 2008 and ongoing	Director, Human Resources Manager, Equity & Diversity
Collaborate with Castle Personnel, the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service and other agencies to place at least 4 people with a disability in work experience/ training placements or short term vacancies in the University annually	Numbers placed and numbers moving to contracts or ongoing positions	Director, Human Resources 2008 and ongoing	Manager, Occupational Health & Safety
Maintain our commitment to employing teams of people with a disability under the current contractual gardening arrangement	Continuation of arrangement	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services)	Director, Facilities Management
Support staff with a disability and provide appropriate workplace adjustment where necessary via the Health and Safety Team within Human Resource Services	Number of staff requiring adjustment monitored and reported annually to OEEED	Director, Human Resources	Manager, Occupational Health & Safety

Objective 3:

Provide an inclusive culture and environment, and accessible facilities for people with a disability

Target:

(i) Equitable access to services and facilities for students, staff and visitors with disabilities on all University of Newcastle campuses

(ii) Awareness of disability will be raised by incorporating issues into the provision of services

Strategies	Monitoring and Evaluation	Primary Responsibility & Timeline	Others Responsible
Ensure that graduation venues used by the University are fully accessible	Audit of venues and report to Senior Executive	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) December 2007	Director, Facilities Management
Make available electronically access maps of both Callaghan and Ourimbah campuses	Availability of access maps on the University's website	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) June 2008	Director, Facilities Management
Ensure all University web sites are accessible for people who are blind or have a vision impairment or print disability	Number of complaints to Student Support Services, Dean of Students and University Complaints Manager about accessibility of web sites reported annually to Executive Committee	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services)	Chief Information Officer Academic Registrar University Complaints Manager Dean of Students
Develop an implementation plan for the Physical Access Audit Report of the University's campuses completed in 2004	Action plan of priorities and timelines reported to Senior Executive	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) December 2007	Director, Facilities Management
Ensure that people with a disability have input into, and are consulted with respect to access arrangements for new buildings or for proposed refurbishments to existing buildings	Establishment and implementation of consultation protocols	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) December 2007	Director, Facilities Management

Improve accessibility to the Mathematics Building by installing a lift	Inclusion in Master Plan priorities	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) 2010	Director, Facilities Management
Provide access to ergonomic furniture in classrooms for students with a disability	Inclusion in Master Plan priorities	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) 2008	Academic Registrar (to determine need) Director, Facilities Management (for practical arrangements)
Maintain the current ratio of parking places for people with a disability at Callaghan Campus and ensure the location of parking places for people with a disability allows ready access to facilities	Monitor proportion of staff and students who require designated parking and adjust accordingly	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) Annually in April	Director, Facilities Management
Investigate the location and availability of parking spaces for people with a disability at the Ourimbah Campus	Establishment of additional parking spaces	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Services) April 2008	Director, Facilities Management
Continue to provide a full range of student support services including health, counselling, accommodation, chaplaincy, student loans, careers advice, disability support and promote these to students and staff	Student Support Services annual report	Academic Registrar In place, review annually in December	Deputy Academic Registrar (Student Support Services)
Provide specific orientation targeted to the needs of students with disabilities, including international students and postgraduate students	Feedback from students on orientation and experiences through survey each semester of students registered with Disability Support Service	Academic Registrar 2008 and ongoing	Deputy Academic Registrar (Student Support Services)

<p>Make available and continually update staff resources on disability e.g. Creating Accessible Teaching & Support (CATS) currently available from the Equity and Diversity Unit and published on the University's Homepage: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/equity/resources/index.htm</p>	<p>Positive feedback on resources</p>	<p>Manager, Equity and Diversity Unit December 2007</p>	
<p>Promote the achievements and experiences of staff and students with disabilities by preparing articles for publication both on campus and in the community and by ensuring images in University publications reflect the diversity of the University's community</p>	<p>Articles and images reflect the valuing of diversity</p>	<p>Director, Marketing & Public Relations</p>	<p>Associate Director, Marketing & Public Relations Manager, Media & Public Relations</p>
<p>Provide a learning and working environment in which equity related complaints are responded to promptly at a point as close as possible to the issue; monitor disability discrimination complaints and ensure action is taken to address systemic issues identified</p>	<p>Number of type of complaints included in annual report from University Complaints Manager to University Council and Executive Committee</p>	<p>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) In place, review annually in March</p>	<p>University Complaints Manager Manager, Equity & Diversity Unit</p>