Supporting Students with Disability Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The University of Newcastle (University) is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and accessible environment for students with disability.

(2) The University aims to ensure that students with disability can participate fully in university life and have equal opportunities to succeed in their studies, in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth) and other relevant State and Federal legislation.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy:

a. ensures compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 across all University activities;
b. supports the needs of students with disability;
c. seeks to foster an inclusive environment that promotes respect for diversity and equitable and safe access to learning, services, and facilities; and
d. ensures that students with disability are provided with reasonable adjustments and support, allowing them to engage with all academic programs and services on an equal basis with other students.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies to:

a. all current and prospective students at the University who have a disability that may impact on their University studies;
b. all academic programs, teaching, assessments, professional experience and research activities;
c. access to campus facilities and services, including extracurricular and social activities; and
d. online learning environments and digital resources.

(5) This policy applies to domestic and international students, regardless of their mode of study (full-time, part-time, on-campus, or online).

Section 4 - Definitions

(6) In the context of this document the following definitions apply:

Defined Term	Meaning
Disability	As defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, includes a wide range of physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, and learning disabilities, as well as temporary or permanent medical conditions and mental health issues.
Reasonable Adjustment	A modification or adjustment made to academic or support services that enables a student(s) with disability to participate on an equal basis with other students, without compromising the inherent requirements or academic integrity of the course.
Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP)	A plan developed by the University's disability support service in consultation with the student, outlining reasonable adjustments that are tailored to the student's specific needs.

Section 5 - Policy

Equity and Inclusivity

(7) The University strives to ensure that students with disability are provided with equitable access to all University programs, services, and facilities. This includes the provision of reasonable adjustments to enable students to engage with their studies and university life on the same basis as students without disability.

Inherent Requirements

(8) Inherent requirements are the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours that students must demonstrate to meet the learning outcomes and professional standards required for completion of their program.

(9) Students with disability may seek reasonable adjustments to assist them in meeting the inherent requirements of their program, where such adjustments do not compromise the integrity of the inherent requirements.

Reasonable Adjustments

(10) The University will provide reasonable adjustments based on individual needs. Reasonable adjustments may include:

a. modifications to assessment deadlines and methods;
b. access to assistive technologies and learning resources in alternative formats;
c. modifications to physical environments (e.g. classrooms, laboratories);
d. provision of support services such as but not limited to interpreters, accessible transport, note taking software and participation assistants;
e. changes to the delivery of lectures and materials (e.g. online learning options where available);
f. alternative examination arrangements such as but not limited to additional time, rest breaks, alternative formats (e.g. oral exams, enlarged text, adjusted lighting).

(11) When determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, the University will consider relevant factors in accordance with the Disability Standards for Education 2005. This includes:

a. the effect of the adjustment on the student's ability to be successful in their studies;
b. whether the adjustment would compromise:
    i. the academic integrity of the program, course or assessment; and/or
    ii. the inherent requirements of the program;
c. whether the adjustments would cause unjustifiable hardship on the University; and
d. any implications of the adjustment for other parties, including the University, staff and other students.

Student Engagement

(12) Students with disability are encouraged to actively engage with AccessAbility to ensure their needs are addressed. This includes early registration and the provision of relevant documentation to ensure the University can provide timely support.

Collaborative Approach

(13) All University staff including academic, administrative, and support services, will work collaboratively with students and disability support services to implement appropriate reasonable adjustments, ensuring the integrity of academic programs while fostering an inclusive learning environment.

Section 6 - Responsibilities

Students with Disability

(14) Students are responsible for:

a. registering with AccessAbility as early as possible;
b. providing relevant and current documentation regarding their disability;
c. engaging with staff and support services to develop and implement their Reasonable Adjustment Plan;
d. communicating any changes in their circumstances that may affect their ability to engage in their studies or use services.

AccessAbility

(15) The University's AccessAbility service is responsible for:

a. providing an accessible and timely service to all students within the scope of this policy;
b. assisting students with disability to develop Reasonable Adjustment Plans;
c. liaising with academic staff and other relevant services to ensure the timely implementation of reasonable adjustments;
d. providing advice and training to staff to promote awareness and support for students with disability where appropriate.

Academic and Professional Staff

(16) Staff members are responsible for:

a. ensuring that reasonable adjustments specified in a student's Reasonable Adjustment Plan are implemented in a timely manner;
b. fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students;
c. consulting with AccessAbility when concerns arise regarding the implementation of reasonable adjustments;
d. maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of students with Reasonable Adjustment Plans in accordance with the requirement of the University's Privacy Management Plan and Privacy Policy.

Section 7 - Support Services

Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP)

(17) Following registration with AccessAbility, a RAP will be developed in consultation with the student. The RAP will specify the agreed-upon reasonable adjustments.

(18) Students will be encouraged to regularly review their RAP to ensure that their needs are being met effectively.

Physical Access and Facilities

(19) The University is committed to ensuring that campus facilities, including classrooms, libraries, transport and recreational spaces, are accessible. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate any specific physical access requirements that arise.

Section 8 - Associated Documents

(20) This policy should be read in conjunction with the guidelines, procedures, and other relevant University policies, including but not limited to:

a. Academic Appeals Policy;
b. Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Policy and Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure;
c. Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy;
d. Complaint Management Policy and Complaint Management Procedure;
e. Course and Programs Performance Procedure;
f. Course Design and Management Manual;
g. Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2024 – 2025;
h. Equity Diversity and Inclusion Policy;
i. Equity Diversity and Inclusion 2023 – 2025 Strategy;
j. Enrolment Manual;
k. Health and Safety Guidelines;
l. Higher Degree by Research Policy, Higher Degree by Research Procedure and Confirmation Guidelines for HDR Candidates;
m. JMP – Student Support for Professional Practice Procedure;
n. Program Management Manual – Coursework;
o. Student Academic Progress Procedure;
p. Student Conduct Rule;
q. Supporting Students with Disability Policy;
r. Work Health and Safety Policy.

Section 9 - Complaints

(21) Students who believe that their needs have not been adequately addressed, or that reasonable adjustments have not been properly implemented should contact their Course Co-ordinator, AccessAbility Advisor or the Senior Manager, AccessAbility and Support to resolve the concern. If an adequate resolution cannot be found students may lodge a formal complaint in accordance with the University's Complaint Management Policy and its associated procedure.

Section 10 - Confidentiality and Privacy

(22) The University is committed to protecting the privacy of students with disability. Personal information and health information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis, in compliance with privacy legislation under the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). Personal information and health information collected under the terms of this document must be managed in accordance with the University's Privacy Management Plan, the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 NSW (PPIPA) and the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002.

Section 11 - Review and Continuous Improvement

(23) This policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier, if necessary, to ensure compliance with legislative changes and alignment with best practices. Feedback from students, staff, and disability advocacy groups will inform these reviews.

Section 12 - Non-Compliance

(24) Non-compliance with a Reasonable Adjustment Plan is considered a serious matter. Staff who do not comply with the requirements of this Policy may be subject to the provisions of the misconduct / serious misconduct clauses of the applicable Enterprise Agreement or employment contract.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	19th June 2026
Review Date	19th June 2029
Approval Authority	Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Approval Date	1st June 2026
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	Scott Laing Associate Director, Student Wellbeing Student Central

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Academic staff" - A person employed as an academic staff member or appointed as an academic honorary appointee (including adjunct, clinical conjoint, visiting, honorary and conjoint appointments), but does not include persons who are employed solely as teachers or professional staff.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Personal information" - Has the same meaning as in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Health information" - As defined in the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002, or any replacing legislation.

"Learning outcome" - In accordance with the AQF definitions, the expression of a set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the

University.

"International student" - A student (as defined by the University) who is not an Australian citizen, Australian Permanent Resident or New Zealand citizen (or dual citizenship holders of either Australia or New Zealand). This includes students who will be studying offshore and those who will be studying onshore and have a student visa, provisional residency, temporary residency, bridging visa, or any other category of non-permanent visa for Australia.