

## University of Queensland Disability Action Plan for Staff and Students 2007-2009

### Introduction:

The University of Queensland has a number of policies that support its commitment to ensuring staff and students with a disability have equitable access to employment and study, and to fully participate in the life of the University in their role as employees or students. This has been demonstrated through the work of the previous Vice-Chancellor's Disability Reference Committee, now replaced by the Disability sub-committee; a sub-committee of the Senate Equity, Diversity and Status of Women Committee. The University's Equity Office has a designated role in the facilitating the development and review of relevant policies and strategic initiatives, as well as a monitoring and reporting role related to staff and student equity and diversity matters.

The University has had a Disability Action Plan since 1999, which has been reviewed and updated on a regular basis. This new Disability Action Plan aims to maintain the process of continual improvement in University performance in this important area of operations, and for the first time, incorporates goals related to staff with disabilities. It has been developed following a process of consultation with key stakeholders, including students and staff with disabilities and will require commitment from all parties, staff and students in working cooperatively and collaboratively with the University, to successfully implement the Plan.

The intent of the UQ Disability Action Plan, 2007-2009 is to focus on those areas which have been identified through the consultative process as requiring attention or enhancement. Accountabilities have been assigned to senior officers whose role it will be to oversee the implementation of those actions assigned to their portfolio and report on these through The Equity Office, to Senate. The Plan will be reviewed and updated biennially.

The Disability Action Plan 2007-2009 is informed by the following legislation and guidelines, and closer examination of these is recommended. Extracted relevant information is included in the Appendices.

1. [Anti-Discrimination Act \(Q/d\) 1991](#)
2. [Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
3. [AVCC Guidelines relating to Students with a Disability](#) 2006
4. [AVCC Guidelines on Information Access for Students with Print Disabilities \(2004\)](#)
5. [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)

Reference should also be made to relevant University Policies:

- [University Disability Policy](#)
- [Provision of Alternative Academic Arrangements for Students with a Disability](#)
- [Arrangements for Reasonable Adjustment in Examinations for Students with a Disability](#)

and to [Procedures for setting Appropriate Learning and Assessment Modes for Students with a Disability – Student Access Plan \(Disability\)](#).

## Strategic Area

### University Community

**GOAL 1: Ensure that the University's Disability Action Plan is implemented, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
1.1 Monitor the University's overall performance in relation to facilitating equitable access and participation for students and staff with disabilities.	Director, The Equity Office
1.2 Review and update the Disability Action Plan on a biennial basis.	Director, The Equity Office
1.3 Consult with staff and students with disabilities about the services and facilities provided.	Director, Student Services Director, Human Resources

**GOAL 2: To communicate the policies and programs of the Disability Action Plan to the University community and the specific responsibilities for those policies and programs to the relevant University personnel.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
2.1 Communicate responsibilities and time frames for Actions identified in the DAP to responsible officers.	Director, The Equity Office
2.2 Promulgate in electronic and hard copy the Disability Action Plan after each review to all stakeholders.	Director, The Equity Office
2.3 Consult with Accountable Officers annually to discuss progress in implementing Actions.	Director, The Equity Office
2.4 Provide information to students and staff regarding their rights and responsibilities in relation to disabilities.	Director, Human Resources Academic Registrar
2.5 Include reference to the Disability Action Plan in Staff Induction programs.	Director, Human Resources

**GOAL 3: Monitor the University's grievance resolution procedures to ensure that they appropriately address issues related with disability.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
3.1 Ensure that the university community is informed about the obligation not to harass or victimise students or staff with disabilities, or their associates.	Director, Human Resources Academic Registrar
3.2 Publicise throughout the university student and staff grievance procedures related to disability discrimination.	Director, The Equity Office

**GOAL 4: Provide equitable access to all University buildings and facilities.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
4.1 Ensure that all new buildings and refurbishments of existing buildings comply with the Building Code of Australia.	Director, Property and Facilities
4.2 Consult with Access Consultants when plans for refurbishments and new buildings are being developed to ensure that all access issues are considered.	Director, Property and Facilities
4.3 Conduct regular access audits of campuses and sites to identify and prioritise alterations to buildings and facilities.	Director, Property and Facilities
4.4 Provide a reasonable funding allocation each year for ongoing maintenance and improvements to facilitate accessibility to buildings and facilities.	Chief Financial Officer
4.5 Develop access maps for all campuses and make these available in accessible formats on the web and in hard copy by request.	Director, Property and Facilities
4.6 Ensure that the needs of people with a disability are incorporated into evacuation procedures, and that staff and students are informed of these procedures through regular drills and appropriate signage.	Director, Property and Facilities
4.7 Monitor the use of special parking spaces for people with a disability on all campuses and ensure that an adequate number of spaces are provided and in particular where existing spaces are affected by construction works.	Chief Financial Officer
4.8 Ensure that arrangements are in place to cater for students with mobility disabilities to equitably travel between campuses.	Academic Registrar

**GOAL 5: All information published by the University, whether in print or electronic format, should be fully accessible to people with a disability.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
5.1 Ensure that materials provided in accessible formats for students with a print disability are compliant with the AVCC Guidelines on Information Access for Students with a Print Disability.	Director, Student Services
5.2 Develop timelines for the preparation of reading lists to ensure course materials can be made available in accessible formats in sufficient time to facilitate equitable participation for all students.	Executive Deans
5.3 Ensure that the University's website, recruitment and employment information, and all online student services are fully accessible and comply with W3C accessibility guidelines.	Director, Office of Marketing and Communications

**GOAL 6: All Library information and services are accessible to students with a disability**

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
6.1 Provide specialised equipment to facilitate equitable access for students with disabilities to library materials.	University Librarian and Director of Learning Services
6.2 Provide library resources in accessible formats.	University Librarian and Director of Learning Services

**GOAL 7: Accommodation services provided by the University address the needs of students with a disability.**

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
7.1 Modify at least one fully accessible bedroom and a bathroom facility for use by students with mobility impairments at the Halls of Residence, Gatton campus.	Manager, Gatton Campus
7.2 Ensure that at least one of the university-owned rental houses at each campus is modified to cater for the needs of residents with a <i>mobility</i> disability.	Academic Registrar

**GOAL 8: Ensure resource allocation mechanisms for providing reasonable adjustments for fee paying students comply with the specifications of the Higher Education Funding Act 1988.**

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
8.1 Factor into tuition fee-levels costs associated with providing services to fee-paying students with disabilities.	Executive Deans Director, Institute for Continuing and TESOL Education Dean, Graduate School

## Strategic Area

### STUDENTS

One of the key features of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 is consultation between students with a disability and those responsible for making reasonable adjustments. This principle should underpin strategies for students and staff with disabilities (refer to *AVCC Guidelines Relating to Students with a Disability*).

**GOAL 9: To ensure that prospective and enrolling students with a disability are aware of the services and facilities provided by the university, and the processes required to access these.**

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
9.1 Advertise services for students with a disability through outreach activities and at recruitment events.	Academic Registrar Director, Office of Marketing and Communications
9.2 Ensure that all images used in promotional materials are inclusive and do not present stereotypical portrayals of people with a disability.	Academic Registrar
9.3 Ensure that enrolment advice and materials promote the services and adjustments for students with a disability and encourage students with a disability to disclose at the time of enrolment.	Academic Registrar
9.4 Provide appropriate training so that all staff involved with student recruitment and/or outreach are aware of relevant university policies and legislation, and the university services for students with a disability.	Academic Registrar Director, International Education Directorate Director, Office of Marketing and Communications
9.5 Ensure that University publications and web based information are accessible to students with a disability and available in alternative formats upon request.	Academic Registrar Director, Office of Marketing and Communications
9.6 Ensure that enrolment procedures are accessible for students with a disability.	Academic Registrar

**GOAL 10: To facilitate partnerships between academic and student service units in relation to managing information on, and the responsibilities of providing services and academic adjustments to, students with a disability.**

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
10.1 Ensure that all program and course profiles contain the statement: “any student with a disability who may require alternative academic arrangements in the course is encouraged to seek advice at the commencement of the semester from a Disability Adviser at Student Services.”	Academic Registrar
10.2 Ensure that for those programs leading to	Academic Registrar

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
<p>professional registration, program and course profiles will contain the additional statement: "While it is the responsibility of the relevant faculty to liaise with professional and registration bodies regarding the acceptability of any adjustment to an academic program, the University Health Service can arrange appropriate advice and assistance on personal and public health issues."</p>	
<p>10.3 In consultation with the student concerned, the Director, University Health Service, will have the ability to bring together a panel of experts to determine practice guidelines for students in Practical settings if necessary; the panel will give advice on whether information on a student should be disclosed to an individual or body external to the University.</p>	<p>Director, University Health Service</p>
<p>10.4 Executive Deans, through the Director of Studies will be a party to the implementation and review of the Student Access Plans (Disability).</p>	<p>Executive Deans Dean, Graduate School</p>
<p>10.5 Encourage all staff to attend sensitivity and other training related to disability discrimination issues.</p>	<p>Executive Deans Directors all supervisors</p>
<p>10.6 Ensure that flexible learning materials as provided by academic staff to Student Services are provided in accessible formats for students with a disability in a timely manner.</p>	<p>Director, Student Services</p>
<p>10.7 Develop guidelines for academic staff which (i) outline the procedures that the University follows in relation to teaching students with a disability; and (ii) list references to resources available to assist the academic provide an inclusive curriculum and with teaching students with a disability.</p>	<p>Director, Student Services</p>

**GOAL 11: To utilise staff and resources to develop and deliver support services and related infrastructure to students with disabilities that are compliant with AVCC guidelines.**

ACTIONS	ACCOUNTABILITY
<p>11.1 Monitor the staffing levels for the Disability Support program and ensure it is adequate to meet the needs of students with a disability on all campuses of the university</p>	<p>Academic Registrar</p>
<p>11.2 Review procedural guidelines which have been developed for implementing Student Access Plans</p>	<p>Academic Registrar</p>
<p>11.3 Ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are considered when developing</p>	<p>Academic Registrar</p>

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
and delivering support services for students in general and that these services are accessible to students with disabilities.	
11.4 Ensure staff providing enrolment and program advice for students undertake appropriate sensitivity training.	Academic Registrar
11.5 Encourage staff to utilise the principles of universal design in the development of teaching and learning resources.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
11.6 Develop initiatives to assist the transition to employment or postgraduate study of students with a disability.	Academic Registrar

## Strategic Area

### STAFF

The University recognises its responsibility to ensure that people with a disability have equitable access to employment and are provided with opportunities to fully participate in the life of the University on an equal footing with their colleagues. In combination with existing relevant policies, the priorities identified in this Disability Action Plan aim to facilitate these overarching aims.

#### **GOAL 12: Increase the participation of people with a disability in employment at UQ**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
12.1 Ensure that staff employment advertising is inclusive to encourage the widest pool of applicants.	Director, Human Resources
12.2 Provide opportunity for short listed applicants with a disability to request adjustments for the interview and selection process if required.	Director, Human Resources
12.3 Ensure that recruitment and selection training covers disability discrimination, reasonable adjustments, and inclusive employment strategies.	Deputy Director, Human Resources

#### **GOAL 13: Provide inclusive work environments that support people with disabilities by ensuring the development of University policies and practices such that staff with a disability can effectively gain training, professional development, promotion and transfer within the University on an equitable basis with other staff.**

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
13.1 Develop appropriate funding mechanisms to provide reasonable adjustments for staff with a disability.	Director, Human Resources
13.2 Ensure that staff with a disability receive equitable access to staff development opportunities.	Director, Human Resources
13.3 Provide awareness training for managers and supervisors covering relevant legislation and university policies, privacy issues, and the provision of reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities.	Director, Human Resources
13.4 Develop guidelines for staff and supervisors to clarify procedures for facilitating reasonable adjustments to the work environment.	Director, Human Resources
13.5 Ensure that flexible work options are promoted and made available to assist staff with disabilities.	Director, Human Resources
13.6 Ensure that opportunity is provided to staff with disabilities and University Officers in relevant positions (e.g. Director, The Equity Office, Staff Support and Rehabilitation Officer,	Director, Human Resources

<b>ACTIONS</b>	<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>
Associate Director Occupational Health and Safety) to have timely input to review and/or development of related policies.	
13.7 Establish a link from the Current and Future Staff web pages to information about a range of disability issues.	Director, Office of Marketing and Communications
13.8 Ensure that commencing staff are provided with information about the services and facilities available to support people with a disability.	Director, Human Resources

## **Appendix 1: How does the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 define disability?**

The definition of disability for the purposes of the DDA is

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

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of a disability

- which he or she has
- which he or she used to have
- which he or she may have in the future
- which is imputed to him or her
- of an associate, such as a friend, partner, carer or family member of the person.

Discrimination is also unlawful where it occurs because a person with a disability

- uses a palliative, therapeutic or assistive device
- is accompanied by a carer, interpreter, reader or assistant
- is accompanied by a guide or hearing dog or other trained assistant animal.

A person does not gain any special rights or benefits by coming within the definition of disability under the DDA – only the right not to be discriminated against.

The definition of disability in the DDA only applies for the purposes of the DDA. It does not change the definition of disability regarding eligibility for benefits or services under other legislation, such as the Disability Services Act, the Social Security Act or workers' compensation legislation.

The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of a disability that she or he has now, once had, may have in the future or is assumed to have. It also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis that her or his associate (partner, carer, friend, family member or work colleague) has a disability.

## **Appendix 2: Legislative requirements for action plans**

It is not a requirement of the DDA that service providers prepare and implement Action Plans. If, however, an institution decides to prepare an Action Plan, the DDA specifies that the Plan must include certain things.

### ***Disability Discrimination Act 1992***

Provisions of action plans:

#### **SECTION 61**

The action plan of a service provider must include provisions relating to:

- a. the devising of policies and programs to achieve the objects of this Act; and
- b. the communication of these policies and programs to persons within the service provider; and
- c. the review of practices within the service provider with a view to the identification of any discriminatory practices; and
- d. the setting of goals and targets, where these may reasonably be determined against which the success of the plan in achieving the objects of the Act may be assessed; and
- e. the means, other than those referred to in paragraph (d), of evaluating the policies and programs referred to in paragraph (a); and
- f. the appointment of persons within the service provider to implement the provisions referred to in paragraphs (a) to (e) (inclusive).

Action plans may have other provisions:

#### **SECTION 62**

The action plan of a service provider may include provisions, other than those referred to in section 61, that are not inconsistent with the objects of this Act.