

INTRODUCTION

This Guide has been prepared for students who are new to studying at the University of New England (UNE). The University acknowledges the rights of all people to education opportunities and is committed to providing access to higher education for students with Disability/medical conditions.

What follows is a summary intended for students who have disabilities or medical conditions and who may require 'adjustments' or 'accommodations' in order to reasonably participate in academic and campus life at UNE. By 'adjustment' or 'accommodations' we mean reasonable changes can be made to examination conditions, course materials and course conduct in order to facilitate access for disabled students

LAW

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (the Act) came into effect in March 1993. The Act clearly focuses on eliminating, as far as possible, discrimination against people with Disability. Under Section 22 of the Act, it is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability or a disability of any associates of that person.

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 defines a disability, in relation to a person, as:

- (a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- (g) 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:
 - (h) presently exists; or
 - (i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
 - (j) may exist in the future; or
 - (k) is imputed to a person.

One of the main focus points of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 is to ensure that education providers make reasonable adjustment to ensure that students with Disability are able to participate in education and training, on the same basis as students without Disability.

The University is also subject to the provisions of State and Commonwealth Equal Opportunity and Anti-Discrimination legislation. Further information about this legislation is available at <http://une.edu.au/eoo/legislation/legislation.php>

Therefore, the University has an obligation to ensure that reasonable accommodations are made available to students, with disability/medical conditions, who are wishing to pursue tertiary qualifications.

PART 1 REGISTERING WITH THE DISABILITY UNIT

Students with Disability or medical conditions need to notify the Disability Unit of their circumstances. Students do this by indicating on their enrolment forms that they:

1. have a Disability or medical condition
2. need support to access higher education

When the enrolment form is processed, the details of those who indicated that they require support will be communicated to the Disability Unit. The Disability Advisor will then send out a Special Needs Form (SNF) that asks the student to provide further details and medical documentation to the Disability Unit.

A disability/medical condition may include:

Visual impairment; hearing impairment; mobility impairment; speech impairment; specific learning disability; psychological or psychiatric conditions; long-term illness (eg cancer, diabetes, AIDS); short-term medical conditions (eg glandular fever); short-term physical impairment (eg limb fracture); and allergies (eg light or chemical sensitivity).

If you choose not to disclose your disability/medical condition on your initial UNE enrolment form, and later you wish to do so, go to the Student Assist web site (www.une.edu.au/student_assist/) and complete the Special Needs Form (SNF) which can be found under the 'Disability and Special Needs Support' link. If at any time students are unclear about what to do, they should contact Student Assist.

Important: A student must return the completed SNF to the Disability Unit prior to any accommodations or adjustments being arranged by the Unit. The Disability Unit must have completed and signed medical documentation in hand prior to putting any accommodations or adjustments in place.

MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION

In order to register, students with Disabilities or medical conditions must provide evidence from their medical practitioner, regardless of whether they are requiring short or long term assistance. Most of the SNF needs to be completed by the student's medical practitioner or health professional. Once the SNF is completed, the form should be returned to:

Disability Adviser
Student Assist
University of New England
Armidale NSW 2351

The Disability Unit is unable to accommodate any changes to a student's study conditions until this form has been properly completed and lodged with the Unit.

The SNF is available for printing at:
<http://www.une.edu.au/disability-support/#item2>

For information to assist medical practitioners to complete the SNF see:
<http://www.une.edu.au/disability-support/#item12>

Further information relating to students with a disability may be found at:
<http://www.une.edu.au/disability-support/>

CONFIDENTIALITY

The medical and other information collected on the Special Needs Form will be available to the Disability Unit only. Information about the student's condition is **not** communicated to other University staff, including unit coordinators. The Disability Advisor only confirms a student's registration with the Unit in order to arrange accommodations and adjustments and gives no further details. If additional information is required, the student must request the information be passed on, and authorise this with written permission. On occasion, the Disability Advisor will need to consult with a student's doctor, but this will not occur without the student's explicit permission and written authorisation. The collection, storage and disposal of personal information is in accordance with the NSW State Records Act 1998 and the State Records Regulation 2005.

PART 2 REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

University staff do not assess the student's diagnosis, so it is important that the information provided by the medical practitioner is comprehensive and supports the student's request for specific accommodations or adjustments. The information should include:

- a brief summary of the student's diagnosis
- a brief account of the limitations caused by the condition
- whether the condition is permanent or temporary
- what adjustments and accommodations, in the medical practitioner's view, would support the student's capacity to study

Students need to be aware that the Disability Unit cannot offer assistance to a student without supporting information from the medical practitioner.

STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

In completing the Special Needs Form, the student has to decide exactly what they wish to disclose to the Disability Unit. The more information the Disability Adviser has the better service the Disability Unit can

provide. Students who are concerned about disclosure can discuss the matter with the Disability Advisor, the Student Access and Equity Officer, or a Counsellor. Students should contact Student Assist to make an appointment with any of these people.

It is also important that students keep the Disability Adviser informed of any changes in their condition, especially when accommodations might need to be changed. To notify the Disability Unit of any changes, students should complete a Special Needs Amendment Form available at <http://www.une.edu.au/disability-support/#item2> and provide new medical documentation.

The provision of accommodations and adjustments requires substantial organisation and students are asked to notify the Disability Unit as soon as they are aware of a need for changes. Wherever possible the Disability Unit staff will attempt to provide for changes to accommodations and adjustments, but cannot always guarantee the provision of the requested service on short notice. In such instances, the Disability Advisor will assist the student however possible. Students in this circumstance should contact the Disability Unit as a matter of urgency to discuss what can be done.

Accommodations include but are not restricted to the following:

- Alternative format (Course material) may include large print, coloured paper, Braille, computer disk and CDs, photocopying (conditions apply)
- Alternative formats (Examinations) may include additional time, use of a sign language interpreter, reader, scribe, ergonomic furniture, rest breaks, etc.
- Peer Note takers
- Sign language interpreters (Auslan)
- Accommodations relating to practical laboratory work and fieldwork
- Accessibility to buildings

PART 3 COURSE MATERIAL—ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

Due to the varying degree of the special needs of individual students it may be necessary to provide all or some of the course material in alternative formats. Some of these formats may be as simple as providing material on coloured paper or enlarging the print. However, there are times when a book is required to be in electronic form, or translated into Braille, and these requests require lengthy lead times which could be as long as three (3) months. Other material which is requested in either audiotape or CD format may also take some time to produce.

E-BOOKS

Dixon Library has purchased a small selection of new electronic books available through Ebook Library (EBL), a new e-book hosting and lending platform that delivers electronic copies of academic texts.

EBL offers texts across all subject areas, and users can read the texts online or offline. Titles which have been purchased by UNE can be 'borrowed' by readers, and several users can access the same title concurrently. Prospective readers even can browse the text for a limited time before deciding to borrow.

If the student requires an e-book which needs to be ordered from an external provider the lead time from placing the request to delivery may be quite substantial. It is therefore necessary for the student to advise the Disability Unit as soon as possible.

PART 4 EXAMINATIONS

ALTERNATE FORMAT

Accommodations sought during the examinations periods may be different from those sought for course material.

Accommodations include but are not restricted to the following:

- Additional time (reading, or rest breaks)
- Use of a Scribe
- Use of a Reader
- Use of laptop computer
- Enlarged text

- Braille
- Use of ergonomic equipment and furniture
- Oral assessment
- Separate Room

The Disability Adviser may wish to consult with the student making the request to confirm that what is being requested is in fact what the student requires.

ALTERNATE FORM OF ASSESSMENT

AN ALTERNATE FORM OF ASSESSMENT WILL NOT BE AUTOMATICALLY GRANTED AND ANY REQUEST MUST BE FULLY SUPPORTED BY THE MEDICAL PRACTITIONER OR REGISTERED HEALTH PROFESSIONAL REPORT WHICH FORMS PART OF THE DISABILITY/MEDICAL CONDITION SPECIAL NEEDS FORM.

Determination will be made on a case by case basis where there are exceptional circumstances.

NOTIFICATION

Alternate Format—the Disability Adviser will confirm to the student (in writing) the outcome of their request, keeping in mind the following timeframes:

- Students studying in Australia, within two (2) weeks of the form being received at the beginning of each semester
- Maximum of four (4) weeks of the forms being received during the semester
- Students studying overseas, within four to six weeks of the form being received.

It is important for students to note that every effort will be made by staff to ensure a prompt reply to students; however, there will be no guarantee that the accommodations will be met for the next examination period.

Alternate Assessment—the Disability Adviser will confirm to the student (in writing) the outcome of their request only after approval has been received from the Unit Co-ordinator.

PART 5 PEER NOTE TAKERS

A peer note taker is a student who attends the same lecture/s or tutorials as a person with a disability/medical condition who may not be able to take their own lecture notes. The note taker will receive \$10.00 per lecture hour and an additional \$5.00 for each additional photocopy (excluding file copy) taken by the Disability Unit. Lecture notes are to be presented on a weekly basis to the Disability Unit, and payment is made to the note takers after 10 sets of lecture notes have been received. The note taker and the recipient student are not identified to each other.

PART 6 SUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

STUDENTS SHOULD NOTE THAT HAVING A DISABILITY/MEDICAL CONDITION, IN ITSELF, DOES NOT CONSTITUTE THE BASIS FOR AN AUTOMATIC EXTENSION OF AN ASSIGNMENT DUE DATE.

All students receive learning material for each unit they are enrolled in. This material outlines assignment topics and the due dates of each assignment. There are procedures for requesting an extension to the set due dates, and these procedures are currently Faculty specific. Students will receive information about how to request extensions in their course material, but generally requests for extensions are made to the Unit Coordinator and must be made prior to the due date for the assignment.

If requested, the Disability Advisor can confirm that the student is registered with the Disability Unit.

ADDITIONAL TIME REQUESTED

If the student is still not able to submit the assignment after receiving the initial extension of time, then the student will need to contact the Student Centre, and request additional time. This request will need to have supporting evidence, usually in the form of a current medical certificate.

PART 7 SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS (Including AUSLAN)

A student requiring the services of a sign language interpreter should notify the Disability Unit at least eight (8) weeks prior to the service being required. This service is generally not available at short notice as external providers need to be contracted.

PART 8 RESOURCE ROOM—DIXSON LIBRARY

The Resource Room in Dixson Library is available to all students with a disability/medical condition who are currently registered with the Disability Unit. The room is accessible during library opening hours only. For services available in Dixson Library access the library's web site at:
<http://www.une.edu.au/library/services/disabilities/>

For security of equipment this room is locked, and students wanting to use the facilities are required to sign in at the Information Desk (Dixson Library) where they will be issued with a key and at the end of each use, the student must return the key to the Information Desk.

Usage of the room is monitored and students will not be issued with a key on a permanent basis. If the student does not return the key after each use, future access may be restricted.

A current list of facilities is available through the Disability Unit.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students must ensure that:

- they sign out the Disability Resource Room key from the Information Desk (Dixson Library)
- when they leave the room, the door is locked and the key is returned to the Information Desk. The time of return will be recorded in the book.
- the key is not to be passed on from student to student without going through the sign on/off procedures
- all maintenance issues are to be reported to the Disability Adviser as soon as possible so that timely repairs might be carried out
- access to the room may be limited, or even withdrawn if a student does not use this room for the purposes intended, ie. the room is not intended as a place for a group of friends to gather.
- a fellow student, who may be accompanying a student with a disability, must not use other disability allocated equipment, unless it is to assist the student who has a disability
- they are respectful, at all times, of the rights of other students using this room
- under no circumstances are students to remove the key from Dixson Library

PART 9 EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE THROUGH THE DISABILITY UNIT

The Disability Unit does not provide specialty equipment for study purposes, however, equipment will be supplied, where available, during residential school or for emergency use only.

ALL registered students wishing to borrow equipment must book equipment through the Disability Adviser and complete the 'Student Agreement to Borrow Equipment' form **prior** to borrowing equipment. All breakages, etc. must be recorded on return of equipment. If the equipment is lost or stolen, then it is up to the student to report the loss. If the loss occurred in college, then it must be reported to the Head of College, to the Security Office and to the Disability Adviser as soon as the incident is noticed.

Types of equipment requested may include:

CASSETTE RECORDERS AND TAPES

Currently there are eight (8) cassette recorders available

FM PERSONAL HEARING LOOP

Currently there are two (2) available

COPY HOLDERS

Currently there are two (2) available (one light weight and one heavy-duty timber frame)

COMPUTERS—LAP TOP

A number of laptops are available for examinations. One computer has Jaws software installed.

ERGONOMIC FURNITURE

Students requiring ergonomic chairs and other furniture will need to notify the Disability Adviser as early as possible so as to allow for acquisition.

Also available is an electronic scooter, a screen enlarger and coloured plastic. To contact the Disability Advisor, email Disability.Unit@une.edu.au or phone 6773 2897.

PART 10 PRACTICALS, LABORATORY AND FIELDWORK

Completion of practicals, laboratory and fieldwork units are often essential components of courses being undertaken. If the student believes that because of their disability/medical condition the completion of these might be difficult, then the student should consult their course material for the exact details, arrange to meet with their respective unit coordinators and then contact the Disability Adviser if necessary.

PART 11 RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Many external units have **mandatory or compulsory residential schools**. There are generally four residential school periods throughout the year.

Information relating to attendance at residential school is provided in the learning material sent to students and is also available in the Course and Unit Catalogue available at:
<http://www.une.edu.au/courses/2008>

Full timetable details for residential schools are available at:
<http://www.une.edu.au/timetable/>

NOTIFICATION

All students registered with the Disability Adviser and attending residential schools must confirm their attendance with the Disability Adviser **a minimum of four (4) weeks** prior to the commencement of their residential school. There may be occasions when this length of notification is not possible, i.e. a student may have had an accident a day or two prior to the commencement of the Residential School.

If a student has a disability and/or a medical condition, and requires support during residential schools, they must firstly complete a Disability/medical Condition Special Needs Form attaching supporting documentation from a Registered Medical/Health Professional. This form must be received by the Disability Adviser prior to any support being afforded the student.

PEER NOTE TAKERS DURING RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

It is often difficult to arrange for a note taker once the recipient of the notes has commenced the Residential School, especially where the class numbers tend to be small.

Students are advised to contact the Disability Adviser a minimum of four weeks prior to the commencement of the Residential School confirm their attendance at the School.

If a student has had an accident, or similar emergency, close to the commencement of the Residential School, and is not already registered with the Disability Unit, then that student needs to contact the Disability Adviser as soon as possible to make arrangements.

In some circumstances, it may not be possible for the recipient to receive a complete set of notes prior to the cessation of the Residential School. The Disability Unit will endeavour to have the notes to the recipient within two (2) weeks of the Residential School ceasing.

EQUIPMENT USE DURING RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

Students requiring specific equipment should arrange, with the Disability Adviser, a specific time for collection prior to the commencement of lectures.

If a Residential School commences on a weekend, then the student will need to arrange for the equipment to be made available at a location other than Student Assist. These arrangements can be made by contacting the Disability Advisor.

The student will be required to complete and sign a Request to Borrow Equipment form and the equipment is to be signed back into the Disability Unit prior to the student's departure from campus.

The student will be responsible for the equipment, and therefore expected to take care of the equipment and not leave equipment unattended at any time. The equipment is not to be taken off campus at the cessation of the Residential School.

Students borrowing lap top computers will not be able to take them off campus.

If equipment is damaged in any way during the Residential School, the student, whose signature appears on the Request to Borrow Equipment Form, is to report the incident to the Disability Adviser at their earliest convenience. If it is at all possible a replacement will be issued, however, this will only occur if equipment is available on campus.

Lost or stolen equipment must be reported by the student, whose signature appears on the Request to Borrow Equipment Form, to the Disability Adviser at their earliest convenience. If the student is staying in a College, the incident should be reported to the College Office, and to Security Office.

If it is at all possible a replacement will be issued, however, this will only occur if equipment is available on campus.

EXAMINATIONS/ASSESSMENTS HELD DURING RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

If the student is aware that an examination or assessment will be undertaken during a residential school, then the student should contact the Disability Adviser for appropriate accommodations to be organised. Last minute requests may not be possible to organise.

PART 12 CAMPUS FACILITIES

The University strives to comply with the minimum provision for disability access as required by law, and endeavours to incorporate at the building stage optional features which also enhance the access and learning conditions of students with disability/medical conditions.

Access to some venues does remain a problem however. The University's refurbishing program will upgrade the physical access and facilities to existing buildings over time and further information may be found at: <http://une.edu.au/fms/>

PARKING

Traffic and Parking Rules and motor vehicle entry fees are in force on campus and apply to all members of the University community and others.

Students who currently hold a Disabled RTA Permit (The RTA issues these permits to persons who meet the RTA mobility criteria), or equivalent, must display the appropriate information when parking in the disabled parking bays.

Students with temporary mobility problems, who are not eligible for assistance under the RTA Mobility Parking Scheme, should consult the following web site:

<http://www.une.edu.au/policies/pdf/tempmobilityparking.pdf>

A copy of the Rules including details of vehicle entry fees arrangements are provided to all students as part of the enrolment process.

Essentially the Rules require that persons who seek to bring a motor vehicle, including motor bikes, onto the campus apply for a Vehicle Parking Permit and pay the appropriate vehicle entry fee. In so doing, applicants undertake to abide by the Traffic and Parking Rules and are subject to prescribed penalties for infringements.

The NSW Police Service processes parking infringements issued on the University campus on behalf of the University and penalties applied are those provided for under the NSW Road Transport (General) Act 1999 (as amended from time to time).

It is essential that staff and students who wish to bring a vehicle onto the campus apply for the appropriate permit, pay the prescribed fee, make themselves aware of the Rules, and abide by them.

For information in relation to UNE parking go to the following web site link:

<http://www.une.edu.au/fms/campus-services/parking/>

CONTACTS

Robyn Smith
Disability Adviser
Student Assist
<http://www.une.edu.au/disability-support/>
Email: disability.unit@une.edu.au
Telephone: 02 6773 3487
Facsimile: 02 6773 3763

Eliza Kent
Student Access and Equity Officer
Student Assist
<http://www.une.edu.au/student-equity/index.php>
Email: Student.Equity@une.edu.au
Telephone: 02 6773 3369
Facsimile: 02 6773 3763

Student Assist
Reception
Located between the café and the newsagent
<http://www.une.edu.au/student-assist>
Telephone: 02 6773 2897
Facsimile: 02 6773 3763

Student Centre
The University of New England Student Centre, located in the TC Lamble Building provides a single point of contact for all administrative information and supports students' academic progression from Admission through to Graduation. Many standard forms are available on the Student Centre website.
<http://une.edu.au/studentcentre/>
Telephone: 02 67734444

Dixson Library
<http://www.une.edu.au/library/>
Telephone: 02 6773 2458