

The University of New England

Policy on Students with a Disability



<http://www.une.edu.au/eo>

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This policy can be found on the web at:

<http://www.une.edu.au/eo/accessequity/dispolicy2001.html>

UNE POLICY ON STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY

DEFINITION

For the context of this policy, a disability is a temporary or permanent impairment which has the potential to adversely affect a student's ability to study, access University resources or fully participate in University activities.

Disabilities may include:

visual impairment; hearing impairment; mobility impairment; speech impairment; specific learning disabilities; psychological or psychiatric conditions; recovery from substance abuse; 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).

THE LAW

The Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992, makes it unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate in certain specified ways against a student or proposed student on the grounds of disability. In accordance, and in keeping with the spirit of the Act, the University will not discriminate against a person on the grounds of a person's disability or a disability of any of that person's associates:

- by refusing or failing to accept the person's application for admission as a student; or
- in the terms or conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student; or
- by denying the student access, or limiting the student's access, to any benefit provided by the University; or
- by subjecting the student to any other detriment; or
- by excluding the student because of their disability (eg excluding a student who is HIV positive).

GRIEVANCE HANDLING

The staff of the Equity Office and the Disability Contact People are available to facilitate access and equitable treatment for students with disabilities. If, a student believes they have been discriminated against on the basis of their disability or special needs, the Equity Office will endeavour to assist the student to resolve the conflict through the normal lines of responsibility. If a resolution is not possible, and the complaint is formally made, in writing, the matter will be referred to the Director of Equal Opportunity at the University of New England for review. The University acknowledges the student's right to directly access the Disability Discrimination Commission or other avenues of conflict resolution.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

The University encourages students with disabilities to follow their educational and vocational aspirations and is committed to assisting them in this process within the limits of its resources.

The University expects students with disabilities, with additional support where necessary, to fulfil all the inherent requirements of their course of study and to meet all the academic standards of the University relevant to these requirements.

University staff will endeavour, when making decisions regarding individual students with disabilities, to consult with the student concerned and to maintain the strictest confidentiality of personal medical details.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The University will strive to comply with the minimum provision for disability access required by law. The University will endeavour to incorporate at the building stage optional features which also enhance the access and learning conditions of students with disabilities. The development of educational resources (libraries, computer laboratories etc.) will take into account the needs of students with disabilities. The University's refurbishing program will upgrade the physical access and facilities to existing buildings in consultation with the Student Access and Equity Committee.

RECRUITMENT AND ADMISSIONS

Students with disabilities or special needs will not be excluded on the basis of pre-judgements about their ability to cope with the demands of the course or of their potential employability.

The same conditions and procedures will apply to the admission of students with a disability as to all other students. However, potential students who believe they have been disadvantaged in attempting to reach the required level for a course are entitled to request special consideration. Students with disabilities will be informed of this option in general recruitment literature and, when appropriate, during school visits and admission information sessions.

An opportunity will be given to all enrolling students to declare disabilities and to discuss their special needs with an appropriate officer of the University.

DISABILITY AWARENESS

All staff have a responsibility to offer appropriate assistance to students with disabilities in a courteous and sensitive manner.

Staff development opportunities in the area of disability awareness will be made available to University staff on a regular basis.

Students with disabilities seeking assistance from the University are encouraged to co-operate in the awareness process and assist in resource allocation by notifying the University of their special needs on the UNE enrolment registration form and in follow-up questionnaires. They are encouraged to make themselves and their needs known to appropriate staff.

SUPPORT SERVICES

The University acknowledges that students with disabilities have a right to seek additional support from the University relative to their needs and such requests will be responded to in a courteous, expeditious manner. Such support may include the provision of a notetaker, Braille course material, Auslan interpreter, etc. In some cases an appropriate response may be to refer the student to another officer or service, or even to advise the student

that the requested support is unavailable. The University still has an obligation to act quickly on the matter.

A Special Needs Adviser is employed to advise students with disabilities on University services and to co-ordinate arrangements for their use where appropriate.

Each Faculty and other student-contact areas of the University (for example, the Library, Admissions Unit, Examinations Unit and Teaching and Learning Centre) will designate a staff member (a Disability Contact Person) to liaise with the Special Needs Adviser and staff of the Equity Office to facilitate the meeting of special needs of individual students using that area.

TEACHING

Reasonable accommodation will be made to ensure that students with disabilities have equality of access to education: This may involve:

- making some adjustments to methods of class preparation
- ensuring that lectures and tutorials are held in accessible venues
- arranging for lecture notes to be available in an appropriate format
- liaising with Disability Contact People and staff of the Equity Office

Where assistance is required in determining a reasonable accommodation, advice will be provided by the Equity Office.

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Students with disabilities will be expected to meet normal course requirements for the units in which they are enrolled. This includes assignments, examinations, seminar participation, tutorials etc. Alternative examination centres or assessment procedures, specialised equipment, extensions of time or variation of presentation methods will be considered to accommodate special needs where an appropriate certificate is supplied to support these requests.

RESIDENTIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS

The University requires the same level of attendance at compulsory Residential Schools from students with disabilities as from any other external student. In exceptional or unforeseen circumstances, the University will endeavour to offer alternative arrangements where possible.

Full consideration will be given to the needs of students with disabilities at all Residential Schools and all reasonable efforts will be made to provide special arrangements for students with medical documentation to support their requests.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Both the Access and Equity Officer and the University's Student Access and Equity Committee will be responsible for making policy recommendations relating to students with disabilities. Policies will be ratified by the Vice-Chancellor.

The Access and Equity Officer will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the University's Policy on Students with Disabilities.

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