



**The University of Sydney**

# **Disability Action Plan**

**2006–2010**

## **PREAMBLE**

The core functions of the University of Sydney are to create, preserve, transmit and apply knowledge through teaching, research, creative works and other forms of scholarship. In carrying out this role, the University is committed to:

- institutional autonomy, recognition of the importance of ideas, intellectual freedom to pursue critical and open inquiry, and social responsibility;
- understanding the needs and expectations of those whom it serves and striving constantly to improve the quality and delivery of its services and access to those services; and
- tolerance, honesty and respect as the hallmarks of relationships throughout the University community and underpinning high standards of ethical behaviour.

The University of Sydney Strategic Plan sets out strategic goals and objectives for the immediate future. The Strategic Plan is complemented by further plans, such as this Disability Action Plan 2006–2010, that translate these goals and objectives into detailed operational strategies. This Plan should be read in conjunction with the University’s EEO/AA Management Plan, Equal Opportunity in Education Policy, and the University’s Harassment and Discrimination Prevention Policies.

The University’s first Disability Action Plan was developed and lodged with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in 1999. The aim of the first Plan was to formalise existing practice by explicitly recognising the importance of disability issues in the University’s formal planning documents. The Plan represented an important step in consolidating the University’s endeavours to provide systematic and effective support for students and staff with disabilities.

The University has made substantial progress under the Plan since that time. Principal achievements include: the development of an Online Access Map for use by staff and students with a disability; development of an interactive website for staff with a disability; amendments to the University’s advertising protocols for positions vacant; the provision of identified funds to support access for students with a disability in the University’s Computer Access Centres; and physical barrier removal, which receives targeted annual funding for dealing with existing infrastructure and is also incorporated into all new building and renovation work at the University.

Progress under the Disability Action Plan has been overseen and endorsed by the University’s Equity Advisory Committee. In accordance with the original Disability Action Plan, the University has also established a Disability Consultative Committee (as a sub-committee of the Equity Advisory Committee) with direct responsibility for implementation of the Plan. Key stakeholders, including students and staff, are represented on the Committee.

At the request of the Equity Advisory Committee, and under the auspices of the Disability Consultative Committee, the University has now undertaken a review of the first Disability Action Plan. The aim of the Disability Action Plan 2006–2010 is to consolidate and build on the University’s achievements under the original Plan by identifying new challenges (such as those posed by the development of an on-line teaching and learning environment) and developing ongoing strategic initiatives designed to provide systematic and effective support to students and staff with disabilities.

Like the first Plan, this Disability Action Plan 2006–2010 comprises a comprehensive catalogue of measures that the University plans to take during the life of the Plan to ensure equitable participation by people with a disability in the life of the University. Specifically, the Plan addresses: physical access; the provision of services; disability awareness, training and education; employment processes; and student admission and progression. As such, the Plan forms part of a suite of strategic objectives that are designed to reflect the University's overall mission and goal. It outlines specific activities, time frames and performance measures for actions and, importantly, assigns responsibility for those actions to particular University officers.

In addition, the Disability Action Plan 2006–2010 incorporates the new standards for education providers, as set out under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* in its *Disability Standards for Education (2005)*.

The University of Sydney is committed to equal opportunity in education and employment for people with a disability. Students and staff of the University are invited to regard this Plan as a measure of that commitment, and to use it as a tool for change within their own work or study environment.

## I GENERAL

<b>Objective 1:      Ensure implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of Disability Action Plan ('DAP')</b>
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STRATEGIES	RATIONALE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
1.1    Designate overall responsibility for implementation of the DAP to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International)	The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) currently has responsibility for equal employment opportunity and student equity.	Plan endorsed by Vice-Chancellor and noted by Senate.	Completed.	Vice-Chancellor & Principal
1.2    Establish a Disability Consultative Committee.	<p>The Disability Consultative Committee is a sub-committee of the Equity Advisory Committee. The Disability Consultative Committee will provide advice to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International) on request, provide a means of consultation with the relevant stakeholders and networks, and oversee, evaluate and monitor the Disability Action Plan.</p> <p><b>Constitution</b>                      Director, Student Services                      Academic Board nominee                      Director, Staff and Student Equal Employment Opportunity or nominee                      Head, Counselling Service                      Head, Equity Support Services                      Director, University Health Service                      Director, Human Resources or nominee                      Occupational Health and Injury Manager                      Director, Facilities Management and Planning or nominee                      President of SRC or nominee                      President of SUPRA or nominee                      President of NTEU or nominee                      President of CPSU or nominee</p>	Disability Consultative Committee established.	Completed.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International)
1.3    Conduct an annual review of services and facilities provided to students and staff with disabilities against current disability policy framework.	The University needs to monitor constantly the services and facilities it provides and prepare a report of services on an annual basis.	Report submitted on time.	By 31 August each year.	Disability Consultative Committee (coordination role)  Director, Student Services

## I GENERAL

- Objective 2:**
- A. Ensure that new buildings and facilities are designed with provision for access for people with disabilities**
  - B. Improve access to existing University Buildings for people with disabilities**
  - C. Improve the pathways on University campuses to assist people with disabilities to move around the campuses**

STRATEGIES	RATIONALE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
2.1 Ensure that new buildings and refurbishments comply with the Building Code of Australia.	Meet legal obligations and improve access by students and staff with disabilities.	Buildings conform to Building Code.	Continuing.	Director, Campus Property & Services
2.2 Develop a plan for remedial works based on information gathered in the annual audit of facilities.	The University must plan remedial works in order of priority and need as determined by the annual audit of facilities.	Plan submitted on time.	A strategy plan identifying priorities will be submitted annually to the Capital Development Program Coordinating Committee.	Director, Campus Property & Services
2.3 Allocate monies from the Capital Program to implement the access policy and strategies in accordance with priorities identified by annual audits.	Priorities identified by the annual audits must be assured of adequate funding and must be balanced with other priorities/demands on the Capital Program.	Funds allocated annually.	Review and update annually.	Chair, Infrastructure Advisory Committee
2.4 Maintain and review Access Master Plan for an accessible path of travel around University campuses.	The Access Master Plan identifies where work has to be done to develop an accessible path of travel. The Access Master Plan Committee identifies alternative paths, where for various reasons, access cannot be effected.	Plan developed.	Needs based review and reporting on progress.	Director, Campus Property & Services

## I GENERAL

<b>Objective 3:      Ensure that all websites are accessible</b>
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STRATEGIES	RATIONALE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
3.1    Ensure all new websites have accessible design.	Meet legal obligations and improve access by students and staff with disabilities.	Websites conform to appropriate standards.	Continuing.	Chief Information Officer
3.2    Ensure that all existing University websites are reviewed to ensure that they have accessible design.	Meet legal obligations and improve access by students and staff with disabilities.	Review and amendment of sites takes place as required.	By 31 December 2006.	Chief Information Officer
3.3    Design accessible computer based learning materials.	Meet legal obligations and improve access by students and staff with disabilities.	On line course materials accessible.	Ongoing.	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)

## II STUDENTS

**Objective 4: Increase the successful participation of students with disabilities at the University of Sydney**

STRATEGIES	RATIONALE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
4.1 Continue development of a system of faculty based Student Disability Liaison Officers (“SDLO”).	To coordinate assistance to students within faculties.	Student Disability Liaison Officers appointed and trained as vacancies arise.	Ongoing.	Director, Student Services  Deans
4.2 Provide training for central and faculty student administration staff.	To ensure that all contacts with prospective and enrolled students are positive, encouraging satisfaction with University services, and to not act as a deterrent to applications from students with disabilities.	Training provided.	Ongoing.	Registrar  Deans
4.3 Provide an informative website and brochures for students with disabilities dealing with application, special admissions, facilities, and reasonable accommodation.	To ensure that students and potential students are informed about relevant policies, facilities and accommodation. Processes are designed to accommodate reasonable needs of students with disabilities.	Website and brochures available and accessible.	Ongoing.	Director, Student Services
4.4 Monitor enrolment procedures for students with disabilities.	To ensure that students with disabilities are provided with appropriate support to facilitate the enrolment process.	Students able to enrol without disadvantage.	Ongoing.	Registrar  Deans
4.5 Establish methods for consulting with prospective and current students with disabilities about the University’s policies, services and processes to support successful participation.	To ensure students with disabilities are consulted about access and support provided through relevant University policies, services and processes.	DCC receives and acts on regular feedback from student representatives.	Ongoing.	Chair, Disability Consultative Committee  Student representatives, Disability Consultative Committee

## II STUDENTS

**Objective 5: Provide reasonable accommodation within the learning environment for students with disabilities to ensure equal opportunity and access to education**

STRATEGIES	RATIONALE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
5.1 DCC to advise Equity Advisory Committee on measures to achieve reasonable adjustment for students with disabilities.	To meet the equity goals of the University as articulated in the University Plan.	Advice provided.	Ongoing.	Chair, Disability Consultative Committee
5.2 Procedures for students and University staff to follow for requesting assistance, access to facilities or services reviewed and promulgated.	An established process will assist students with disabilities to make an application for assistance and will comply with the Disability Standards set out. It will also ensure that assistance is provided equitably, that students are consulted about reasonable adjustments, that a letter stating the University's decision and reasons for that decision is given to students where requested accommodations cannot be made as soon as practicable after the decision is made, and that mechanisms for dealing with grievances arising from the process are established.	Review and promulgation of procedures within the University.	Ongoing.	Director, Student Services
5.3 Promote disability awareness to teaching staff.	Staff need to be aware of appropriate teaching methods for students with disabilities. Staff need access to information regarding alternative appropriate teaching methods, including adjustments that can be made. Reasonable accommodation/adjustments to learning environment in accordance with legislation of Disability Standards.	Staff awareness increased.  Academic staff make reasonable adjustments to teaching and assessment.	Ongoing.	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)  Deans
5.4 Publish a website guide to assist University staff to teach students with disabilities.	University teaching staff need to be aware of particular methods of teaching and the technology available to assist students with disabilities. University teachers also need to be aware of the facilities and services that the University is able to provide to students with disabilities.	Staff aware of appropriate teaching strategies.	Ongoing.	Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
5.5 Review and determine the University's technological needs in respect to providing assistive adaptive technology to students with disabilities.	The University must keep abreast of technological developments and acquire technology in a cost-effective manner for use by students with disabilities.	Timely advice to Equity Advisory Committee.	Ongoing.	Chief Information Officer

**Objective 5: Provide reasonable accommodation within the learning environment for students with disabilities to ensure equal opportunity and access to education..... cont'd**

STRATEGIES	RATIONALE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
5.6 Identify a funding source(s) for reasonable accommodation, including the identification, purchase and maintenance of appropriate equipment for use by students with disabilities, eg, computers, computer programs, assistive technology.	It is essential that actions that flow from policy decisions and guidelines are adequately funded. Possible sources of funding are the Equity Fund and the Information Technology budget.	Budget line established.	Budget line established, ongoing.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International)
5.7 University Library identifies, acquires, maintains and manages specialist equipment for use by students with disabilities.	The Library is the appropriate place to acquire and manage equipment so that it is available to students with disabilities in a central and accessible location.	Effective access and use of Library and specialist equipment by students with disabilities.	Ongoing.	University Librarian Director, Student Services Chief Information Officer
5.8 Design accessible Library online resources.	The Library is providing increasing online resources that need to be accessible to students with disabilities.	Effective access and use of Library resources by students with disabilities.	Ongoing.	University Librarian

### III STAFF

**Objective 6: Increase the successful participation of people with disabilities in employment at the University of Sydney**

STRATEGIES	RATIONALE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
6.1 Improve University database on staff with disabilities.	At present the University does not have sufficient information to effectively identify where staff needs are.	Database in place.	Ongoing. Continuous improvement of the HR Management System will assist the University to collect data.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)
6.2 Designate a member of each HR Team as a Staff Disability Contact Officer.	A designated person can develop specialised knowledge and become a central point from which information about additional needs can be obtained. This officer will liaise with the Risk Management Office and the Equal Employment Opportunity Unit.	Member designated.	Appointment and training as required.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)  Director, Human Resources to coordinate.
6.3 Train HR Teams to give appropriate information to applicants who have disabilities.	Recruitment staff are the first point of contact for potential employees of the University and provide information to University managers when they employ staff. Accordingly, they should be able to give relevant information to applicants about University policies, facilities, or services.	Training provided by Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit.	Ongoing.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)  Director, Human Resources
6.4 Review recruitment policies so that people with disabilities are not disadvantaged.	The University is an equal opportunity employer and employs on the basis of merit. Accordingly all policies should support and reflect these principles.	Review periodically as defined in individual policies.	Ongoing.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)  Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity
6.5 A recruitment policy statement and other relevant information to be provided to applicants with a disability.	Applicants with a disability need information about University policy prior to applying for a position.	Statement provided to relevant applicants.	Ongoing.	Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity  Director, Human Resources

### III STAFF

**Objective 7 Provide reasonable accommodation within the working environment for staff with disabilities to ensure equal access and opportunity in employment**

STRATEGIES	RATIONALE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
7.1 Disability Consultative Committee to advise Equity Advisory Committee on measures to support staff with disabilities.	To meet the equity goals of the University as articulated in the University Plan.  Proper consideration must be given to the standards that will be applied in the provision of support to people with disabilities.	Advice provided.	Ongoing.	Chair, Disability Consultative Committee
7.2 Identify a funding source for the purchase of equipment, assistive technology and job redesign.	To ensure that policy decisions are supported with adequate funding.	Budget line established.	Budget 2006.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)
7.3 Develop a website for staff with disabilities.	To provide information about facilities, equipment, recruitment, and opportunities within employment.	Website live.	Ongoing.	Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity  Director, Human Resources

## IV STAFF AND STUDENTS

**Objective 8**      **Provide strategies and programs to prevent discrimination against and harassment or victimisation of staff and students with disabilities, including mechanisms for handling complaints of discrimination, harassment, or victimisation**

STRATEGIES	RATIONALE	PERFORMANCE MEASURE	TIME FRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
8.1 Establish, promote and review University policy on harassment and discrimination prevention and complaints resolution.	To ensure staff and students understand their rights and responsibilities in terms of discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of disability.	Policies promoted and reviewed.	Ongoing.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)  Director, Staff and Student Equal Opportunity