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| Southern Cross University |
| Disability Action Plan 2014-2017 |
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# Legislative Framework

The Disability Action Plan (DAP) supports Southern Cross University’s (the University) commitment to providing students and staff with disability with an accessible and inclusive work and study environment, free from all forms of discrimination and harassment.

Unless otherwise stated, the DAP strategies refer to all of the University Campuses and University Centres.

The following legislative instruments and policies have influenced the development of the DAP.

* *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth)
* *Fair Work Act 2010* (Cth)
* *Anti Discrimination Act 1991* (QLD)
* *Anti Discrimination Act 1977* (NSW)
* *Disability Standards for Education 2005*
* *Disability Standards for Access to Premises 2010*
* *Disability Services Act 1993* (NSW)
* *United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*
* AVCC Guidelines relating to students with a disability 2006
* AVCC Guidelines on information access for students with a disability
* SCU Policy on Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities
* SCU Guide for the employment of people with a disability
* SCU Employees with Disabilities Policy

# Definition of disability

The definition of disability used throughout the DAP is that used in s.4 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), as follows:

“disability”, in relation to a person means:

1. total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions; or
2. total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
3. the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
4. the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
5. the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body; or
6. a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
7. a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

1. presently exits; or
2. previously existed but no longer exists; or
3. may exist in the future; or
4. is imputed to a person.

# Snapshot of Disability at SCU

#### Students

The number of students with disability studying at SCU has increased significantly over the last 5 years. The table below indicates the number of students admitted into a degree (new admissions) with a disability. It is important to note that disability disclosure is not compulsory.

Mental health conditions, temporary impairments, learning disabilities and mobility impairments remain the most commonly reported disability types. Additional disability classifications were added into SCU student data collection in 2013 (indicated with an \* in the table below) which will provide further clarity into the type of impairments/disabilities experienced by our Students.

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|  | **ADHD\*** | **Anxiety Disorder\*** | **Autism Spectrum Disorder\*** | **Chronic Disease or Illness\*** | **Cognitive Disorder\*** | **Degenerative Condition\*** | **Dissociative Disorders** | **Hearing Impairments** | **Learning Disabilities** | **Mobility Impairments** | **Mood Disorders\*** | **Other Disability or Condition** | **Personality Disorders\*** | **Physical Disability\*** | **Psychotic Disorders\*** | **Sleep Disorders\*** | **Temporary Medical Conditions** | **Visual Impairments** |
| **2009** |   | 10 |   | 1 |   |   |   | 24 | 54 | 49 | 1 | 97 |   | 2 | 1 | 1 | 185 | 24 |
| **2010** | 1 | 8 |   | 2 |   |   |   | 26 | 54 | 63 | 2 | 127 |   |   |   | 1 | 167 | 17 |
| **2011** |   | 18 |   | 2 |   |   |   | 24 | 58 | 55 | 4 | 116 |   |   | 2 | 3 | 178 | 45 |
| **2012** |   | 16 | 2 | 6 | 2 |   |   | 26 | 63 | 47 | 7 | 116 |   | 1 | 2 | 5 | 206 | 19 |
| **2013** | 7 | 51 | 5 | 18 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 29 | 76 | 50 | 28 | 173 | 7 | 15 | 8 | 11 | 179 | 38 |

#### Staff

The 2012 Annual Report (excerpt below) indicates that the University is currently below the benchmark for the employment of people with a disability requiring work-related adjustment (1.3% in 2012).

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| Academic Staff | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
| People with a disability | 7% | 8% | 8% | 5.1% | 5.8% |
| People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment | 1.7% | 1.4% | 1.0% | 0.5% | 0.8% |

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| Professional Staff | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 |
| People with a disability | 7% | 5% | 5% | 3.5% | 3.8% |
| People with a disability requiring work-related adjustment | 0.6% | 0.4% | 0.4% | 0.2% | 0.3% |

# Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

Responsibility for the implementation of the DAP objectives lies with the Head, Counselling & Disability Support Services in collaboration with the following areas of the University:

* SCU Executive
* Heads of University Work Units
* Equity & Diversity
* HR Services
* Student Experience Team
* School of Health & Human Sciences
* Facilities Management & Services
* Technology Services
* Communications & Publications
* Marketing & Recruitment
* Student Engagement & Retention Team

The progress of DAP objectives will be monitored and evaluated by the Equity & Diversity Committee in consultation with key stakeholders and reported through the SCU Annual Report to University Council.

# Communication and Promotion

It is important that all SCU staff and students are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the DAP.

The Southern Cross University Disability Action Plan 2014-2017 will be:

* lodged with the AHRC within one month of its approval
* distributed to all work units within the University
* placed on the University’s public website in an accessible format
* linked to relevant websites and referenced in relevant policies
* promoted to staff and students, including the promotion of updates and achievements of the DAP
* reported on annually to the Public through the SCU Annual Report

# Planning, Policy & Governance

##### **Goal 1** Inclusion & accessibility will be key principles underpinning all planning & policy development at SCU

Objective 1.1 Ensure the University’s strategic planning processes consider the implications for staff and students with disability, while supporting social and educational inclusion

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Ensure that high level operational plans for work units/Schools are inclusive of students and staff with disability and align with the objectives of the DAP | 2015 | ExecutiveHeads of University Work Units |

Objective 1.2 Ensure the development of University policies and procedures is inclusive of and accessible to, staff and students with disability

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Educate staff and students of their rights and responsibilities under disability discrimination legislation | Ongoing | Head, Counselling & Disability Support ServicesDirector, Human Resources |
| Actively encourage feedback on policy development from staff and students with disability | Ongoing | Head, Counselling & Disability Support ServicesPolicy Writer & Analyst |
| Ensure that procedures and policies relating to students and staff with disability are provided in an accessible format | Ongoing | Policy Writer & AnalystHead, Communications & Publications |
| Ensure that students are aware of the complaints procedures | Ongoing | Director, Student Experience TeamHead, Counselling & Disability Support Services |

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| Performance Indicators |
| * Operational plans are inclusive and consistent with the objectives of the DAP
* Formal consultation mechanisms for staff and students with disability to provide feedback into policy issues have been established
* Staff and students are aware of their rights and responsibilities under disability discrimination legislation
* SCU policies and procedures relating to students and staff with disability are communicated in an accessible format
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# Access & Participation

##### **Goal 2** We will increase the access & participation in education of people with disability by providing an inclusive and accessible learning environment which supports the principles of universal design

Objective 2.1 Continue to promote a university environment that supports the access, participation and success of students with disability

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Document and publish the inherent requirements of degree programs offered by SCU | 2015 | Head, Counselling & Disability Support ServicesDirector, Student Experience TeamHeads of SchoolsHead, Communications & PublicationsChair Academic Board |
| Circulate disability newsletter to staff on a regular basis, with information related to disability support for students | Ongoing | Head, Counselling & Disability Support ServicesManager, Equity & Disability Services |
| Ensure contractual arrangements with learning and development providers include the ability to deliver programs to students with disability | Ongoing | Head, Counselling & Disability Support ServicesDirector, International OfficeDirector, Student Experience TeamUniversity Lawyers, Governance Services |
| Develop a Teaching Practice Online module in disability support to be offered by Teaching & Learning | 2016 | Director, Teaching & LearningHead, Counselling & Disability Support Services |
| Ensure all fieldwork and practicum placements are as inclusive as possible to students with disability | Ongoing | Heads of SchoolsManager, Equity & Disability Services |
| Provide academic staff with guidelines to further assist in the implementation of academic adjustments  | 2014 | Head, Counselling & Disability Support ServicesManager, Equity & Disability Services |
| Ensure marketing and promotional materials aimed at prospective students incorporate information about disability support and services | Ongoing | Head, Communications & PublicationsHead, Marketing & Recruitment |
| Identify issues faced by first year students with disability | 2016 | Manager, Student Engagement & Retention TeamHead, Counselling & Disability Support Services |

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| Performance Indicators |
| * Inherent requirements of SCU award programs are published on the web
* Teaching practice module in disability support is offered to academic staff
* Academic staff have access to guidelines to assist in implementing approved academic adjustments for students with disability
* Consideration is given to fieldwork and practicum requirements for students to ensure they are as accessible as possible for students with disability
* Positive images of students with disability are included in SCU promotional materials
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# Employment

##### **Goal 3** We will continue to improve the engagement and retention of staff with disability by ensuring that the workplace is free from discrimination and harassment

Objective 3.1 Increase the number of people with disability employed by the University

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Incorporate disability awareness into staff selection and interview skills training | 2014 | Director, Human Resources |
| Increase the promotion of work placement programs for people with disability | 2017 | Director, Human ResourcesHead, Equity & Diversity |
| Ensure SCU’s online vacancies reference the University’s commitment to the inclusion of people with disability | 2014 | Director, Human Resources |
| Actively encourage the provision by new employees of voluntary EEO information | Ongoing | Director, Human ResourcesHead, Equity & Diversity |

Objective 3.2 Ensure the retention of staff with disability through the provision of reasonable adjustments and other appropriate services

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Establish a mechanism for staff with disability to provide feedback on employment barriers | 2015 | Director, Human ResourcesHead, Equity & Diversity |

Objective 3.3 Increase the understanding of staff of their rights and responsibilities under disability legislation

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Offer disability awareness training to staff through annual workshops | Ongoing | Head, Counselling & Disability Support ServicesManager, Equity & Disability ServicesDirector, Human Resources |
| Incorporate disability awareness into staff induction processes | 2014 | Director, Human Resources |

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| Performance Indicators |
| * Encourage staff with a disability to seek a work related adjustment if required
* Staff have access to disability awareness training on an annual basis
* SCU recruitment website contains positive messages about the University’s commitment to the inclusion of people with disability
* Staff involved in the recruitment and training of new staff are aware of their responsibilities under disability legislation
* Mechanisms to collect feedback from staff with disability on employment barriers at SCU have been established
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# Communication & Information Access

##### **Goal 4** We will strive to be a leader in the provision of accessible information and learning materials to students in the higher education sector

Objective 4.1 Ensure that information published by the University is accessible to people with disability

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Continue to update, and work with our suppliers to update, the University’s web facing systems to incorporate World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Guidelines and the *AHRC World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act* Advisory Notes | 2014 | Head of Counselling & Disability Support ServicesDirector, Technology Services |
| Incorporate W3C Guideline compliance as a consideration in the selection of new web facing University systems | 2014 | Director, Technology Services |
| Provide academic staff with guidelines to assist in the provision of accessible learning materials | 2014 | Head of Counselling & Disability Support ServicesManager, Equity & Disability ServicesManager, DRCLR |

Objective 4.2 Affirm the University’s commitment to providing accessible ICT systems to students and staff with disability

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Provide students and staff utilising assistive technology with appropriate training and support | 2015 | Director, Technology ServicesManager, Equity & Disability ServicesDirector, Human Resources |
| Conduct a review of the University’s current assistive technology resources | 2015 | Director, Technology ServicesHead, Counselling & Disability Support Services |
| Increase the spread of the assistive technology across all campuses to prevent the isolation and segregation of students with disability | 2016 | Director, Technology ServicesHead, Counselling & Disability Support Services |

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| Performance Indicators |
| * Web facing systems, including the SCU Website, comply with W3C and HREOC Guidelines
* Academic staff have access to guidelines to assist in providing students with accessible learning materials
* Students and staff have access to training in the use of assistive technology
* A review of assistive technology at SCU is conducted
* Students have increased access to assistive technology
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# Physical Access

##### **Goal 5** All SCU Campuses and Facilities will be fully accessible to people with disability

Objective 5.1 Ensure that new and existing buildings are fully accessible to people with disability

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Ensure that new structures and existing building upgrades comply with the Australian Building Standards | Ongoing | Executive Director, Information & Physical Resources |
| Ensure University staff involved in maintenance and construction activities have access to relevant information and training | Ongoing | Executive Director, Information & Physical Resources |

Objective 5.2 Ensure that all University facilities (including parking and residential facilities) are designed to be accessible to people with disability

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| Strategy | Target Date | Responsibility |
| Seek feedback with regard to physical access issues from staff and students with disability | Ongoing | Executive Director, Information & Physical Resources Head, Counselling & Disability Support ServicesManager, Workplace Health & Safety |
| Continue to monitor parking facilities at SCU campuses to ensure that people with disability have access to designated disabled parking spaces | Ongoing | Executive Director, Information & Physical Resources Heads of Campus |
| Undertake site access audits at SCU campuses  | 2017 | Executive Director, Information & Physical ResourcesHead, Counselling & Disability Support Services |
| Review lifts, fire alarm systems and evacuation procedures to ensure they cater for people with disability | Ongoing | Executive Director, Information & Physical ResourcesManager, Workplace Health & Safety |
| Update campus maps to include facilities and services for people with disability | 2017 | Head, Communications & Publications |

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| Performance Indicators |
| * SCU buildings (including new structures) are compliant with the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and AS 1428
* Disability parking provisions comply with AS 2890 .0 and .6 and are evenly distributed
* Residential accommodation is accessible to students with disability
* Site access audits are conducted and findings reported to the Equity & Diversity Committee
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