

SCOPE OF THE SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2008-2010

Unless otherwise stated, the Southern Cross University (the University) Disability Action Plan (the DAP) strategies refer to all of the University campuses and University centres.

The DAP has the following primary aims:

- A. To assist in promoting the University's Objectives and Principles as set out in the Policy on Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities, specifically Objective 1.2.3 which aims *"to ensure the provision of services that are provided in ways that promote in the University community a positive image of persons with disabilities and enhance their self-esteem"*. Furthermore, Principle 2.3 states that *"The University aims to raise the awareness of the University community regarding the needs and rights of people with disabilities"*. (Southern Cross University, Equity Services, Policy on Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities, April 1999, p1 & 2).
- B. To ensure the University complies with the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (the Act), the *Queensland Anti Discrimination Act 1991* the *NSW Anti Discrimination Act 1977*, the *NSW Disability Services Act 1993* and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 formulated under the Act. The Act recommends that developing an Action Plan will assist organisations to comply with the legislation and provides for lodging the plan with Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC).
- C. To ensure the University complies with the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC), now Universities Australia, Guidelines relating to Students with a Disability (May 2006).

The AVCC Guidelines under Section 3, Policy and Administration, indicate that:

The University has a Disability Action Plan which sets out strategies to enhance equal opportunity for students with a disability, identifies objectives and performance measures and monitors and reports progress towards achievement of these objectives. (AVCC Guidelines for Student with a Disability, May 2006, p4).

Underpinning the AVCC Guidelines are two key principles, the second aimed specifically at accommodations for students with disabilities where it says:

Universities provide students with a disability with the opportunity to realise their academic and social potential and to participate fully in university life. (AVCC Guidelines for Student with a Disability, May 2006, p3).

DEFINITIONS OF DISABILITY

The definition of disability addressed in developing this DAP is that as used in s.4 of the Act, that is:

"disability", in relation to a person, means:

- (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.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Equity Services

- Work collaboratively with Human Resource Services to support and provide appropriate workplace adjustments where necessary to staff with a disability.
- In consultation with Legal Services, monitor disability legislation and provide expert advice on University procedures and practices (eg, staff recruitment and promotion, performance management, grievance management) to ensure compliance with legislation and equity in employment for people with disabilities.
- Consult and work with other work units to ensure the University is an accessible and safe working environment for staff with a disability.

Human Resources

- Monitor application of Recruitment & Appointment Policy to ensure appropriate treatment of persons with a disability.
- Monitor application of Grievance Policy for University Staff and Bullying, Harassment and Discrimination Policy to ensure appropriate treatment of employees with a disability.
- Provide training and advice to staff in disability awareness.
- Ensure the timely and accurate collection of employee data relating to EEO.
- Assist the University in establishing and maintaining a safe place of work, safe work practices and the provision of safe plant, machinery and equipment for persons with a disability.

Legal Services

- Provide advice to staff to ensure existing practice in no way limits access to the University's goods, services or facilities for people with a disability.
- Consult and work directly with other areas of the University to ensure compliance with the DAP.
- Work collaboratively with other University work units, advise the Vice Chancellor and represent the University in the event a claim of discrimination is made.

Student Services

- Provide reasonable and appropriate services, adjustments, and/or auxiliary aids for students with disabilities.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality of records and communication concerning students with disabilities, except where the disclosure is required by law or authorised by the student.
- Provide students with disabilities information regarding policies and procedures, and ensure its availability in accessible formats upon request.

Heads of University Work Units

- Participate in the implementation of activities related to DAP strategies and objectives.
- Work in collaboration with Human Resource Services, Equity Services and Student Support Services in the provision of appropriate services and adjustments for staff and students with a disability.

COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION

Copies of the DAP will be held by Equity Services, Human Resources Services and Student Services, and will be made available to staff, students and the community upon request.

Copies of the DAP will be distributed to all work units within the University.

The DAP will be placed on the University's public website.

Future additions of the University's *Students' Handbook* will include information on the DAP, with copies being available in alternative formats.

Feedback from staff, students and the community is welcome and will be acknowledged.

The DAP will be given to AHRC within one month of its being adopted by Council.

Each Annual Report following the DAP's adoption by Council will include information on the progress made towards DAP strategies and objectives.

2008 – 2010 DISABILITY ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

Objective 1: Ensure implementation, monitoring and evaluation of strategies within the DAP.

	Strategy	Target Date	Responsibility	Performance Measure
1.1	Lodge the DAP with AHRC.	2009	Group Director, Student Services Manager, Student Support Services	DAP is successfully lodged.
1.2	Evaluation of DAP strategies across all campuses.	Ongoing	Equity and Diversity Committee	Annual report to the University Council.
1.3	Review of 2008-2010 DAP.	2010	Equity and Diversity Committee	Report to the University Council.

Objective 2: To eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability in the area of employment and to encourage staff with disabilities to enhance their skills and qualifications.

	Strategy	Target Date	Responsibility	Performance Measure
2.1	Designate a Disability Contact Officer in HR Services to liaise with University Equity Manager regarding assistance, training and development for staff with a disability.	2008	Director, HR Services	Disability Contact Officer designated.
2.2	Develop a Disability Employment Strategy, with appropriate policies and procedures where necessary for the employment of people with a disability.	2009	Director, HR Services Manager, Equity Services Disability Contact Officer	Strategy developed and implemented.
2.3	Increase the University's percentage of employees with a disability (in recognition of the NSW Government's employment equity benchmark of 12% of the workforce for employees with a disability) through appropriate strategies, and continued commitment to the collection of voluntary EEO information.	Ongoing	Director, HR Services Manager, Equity Services	Increased percentage of employment of people with a disability. Increased response rate of EEO data from staff.
2.4	Deliver Disability Awareness Training to staff on an annual basis.	Ongoing	Manager, Student Support Services In-house Solicitor, Legal Services Director, HR Services	Disability awareness training is delivered to all members of staff.
2.5	Incorporate disability awareness into staff selection and interview skills training.	2009	Director, HR Services	Staff selection training material is updated.

Objective 3: To promote a university environment that supports the access, participation and success of students with disabilities.

	Strategy	Target Date	Responsibility	Performance Measure
3.1	Continue to expand and enhance the Disability Outreach Project as part of the University's Equity Outreach Program	Ongoing	Manager, Equity Services Manager, Student Support Services Student Equity and Disability Officer	Successful set up of project
3.2	Establish a Disability Contact Officer in each University faculty, school and department.	2008	Manager, Student Support Services Student Equity and Disability Officer	Disability Contact Officer nominated and trained in disability awareness.
3.3	Conduct regular Client Satisfaction Surveys of staff and students with a disability.	Bi-annually	Director, HR Services Manager, Student Support Services Research Officer, Office of Planning Quality and Review	Survey is conducted bi-annually and outcomes reported to the Equity and Diversity Committee.
3.4	Ensure that students are aware of the complaints and grievance procedures.	Ongoing	Student Equity and Disability Officer	Annual report to Equity and Diversity Committee on complaints and grievances related to disability.
3.5	Ensure contractual arrangements with learning and development providers include the ability to deliver programs to students with disabilities	Ongoing	Group Director, Student Services Manager, Student Support Services Director, International Office	Written confirmation from appropriate organisation providing service.
3.6	Circulate staff disability newsletter on a regular basis, with information related to disability support for students.	Ongoing	Student Equity and Disability Officer	Newsletter is produced and circulated.

Objective 4: To ensure all areas of the University's campuses, particularly its buildings, are designed to be accessible by people with disabilities.

	Strategy	Target Date	Responsibility	Performance Measure
4.1	Seek feedback with regard to physical access issues from staff and students with disabilities.	Annually	Facilities Manager Manager, Student Support Services Student Equity and Disability Officer	Report to the Equity and Diversity Committee on feedback and action taken where necessary.
4.2	Undertake site access audits at all campuses using an external provider if necessary.	2009	Facilities Manager Manager, Student Support Services	Report to the Equity and Diversity Committee on audit outcomes.
4.3	Ensure new structures and existing building upgrades comply with Australian Building Standards.	Ongoing	Facilities Manager	Compliance noted and reported back to the Equity and Diversity Committee regarding specifics. Major upgrades to existing buildings should ensure compliance to the Building Code of Australia (BCA) and AS 1428.
4.4	Review lifts, fire alarm systems and evacuation procedures to ensure they cater for people with disabilities.	2009	Facilities Manager Director, HR Services Manager, Workplace Health and Safety	Report to the Equity and Diversity Committee on review outcomes.
4.5	Update campus maps to include facilities and services for people with disabilities.	2008	Director, Marketing and Media Website Management Committee	Updated maps available in hard copy and on the SCU website. Website maps are accessible for people with disabilities.
4.6	Continue to monitor parking facilities at all campuses to ensure people with disabilities have access to designated disabled parking spaces.	Ongoing	Facilities Manager Manager, Safety and Security	Report on findings; recommend changes to the Equity and Diversity Committee. Ensure disabled parking provisions comply with AS 2890.0 and .6 and are evenly distributed around campus.

4.7	Continue to monitor University residential accommodation to ensure it caters for the individual needs of students with disabilities.	Ongoing	Manager, Student Support Services	Residential accommodation is accessible for students with disabilities.
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Objective 5: To ensure the provision of services necessary to enable staff and students with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential as members of the University community.

	Strategy	Target Date	Responsibility	Performance Measure
5.1	Continue to update University website to incorporate World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) Guidelines and the AHRC <i>World Wide Web Access: Disability Discrimination Act</i> Advisory Notes.	2009	Website Management Committee Group Director, Student Services Manager, Student Support Services	Website complies with W3C and HREOC guidelines.
5.2	Conduct an annual review of services and facilities available to people with disabilities, including feedback from staff and students with a disability.	Annually	Manager, Student Support Services Student Equity and Disability Officer	Report to the Equity and Diversity Committee on review outcomes and action taken.
5.3	Continue to monitor electronic information terminals across all campuses to ensure they are accessible by people with disabilities.	Ongoing	Manager, Student Support Services Student Equity and Disability Officer	Information terminals are readily accessible by people with disabilities.
5.4	Information regarding services for students with disabilities is available in alternative formats.	Ongoing	Manager, Student Support Services Student Equity and Disability Officer	Information is readily accessible by students with disabilities.