

Southern Cross University

Disability Action Plan 2014-2017

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:

- (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 judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

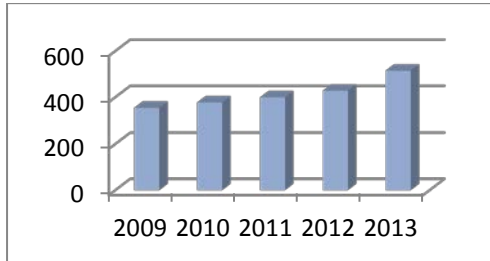
- (h) presently exists; or
- (i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
- (j) may exist in the future; or

(k) is imputed to a person.

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.

	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).

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%

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

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	Executive Heads 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

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

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

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

Strategy	Target Date	Responsibility
Document and publish the inherent requirements of degree programs offered by SCU	2015	Head, Counselling & Disability Support Services Director, Student Experience Team Heads of Schools Head, Communications & Publications Chair Academic Board
Circulate disability newsletter to staff on a regular basis, with information related to disability support for students	Ongoing	Head, Counselling & Disability Support Services Manager, 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 Services Director, International Office Director, Student Experience Team University Lawyers, Governance Services
Develop a Teaching Practice Online module in disability support to be offered by Teaching & Learning	2016	Director, Teaching & Learning Head, Counselling & Disability Support Services
Ensure all fieldwork and practicum placements are as inclusive as possible to students with disability	Ongoing	Heads of Schools Manager, Equity & Disability Services
Provide academic staff with guidelines to further assist in the implementation of academic adjustments	2014	Head, Counselling & Disability Support Services Manager, Equity & Disability Services
Ensure marketing and promotional materials aimed at prospective students incorporate information about disability support and services	Ongoing	Head, Communications & Publications Head, Marketing & Recruitment
Identify issues faced by first year students with disability	2016	Manager, Student Engagement & Retention Team Head, Counselling & Disability Support Services

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

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

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 Resources Head, 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 Resources Head, Equity & Diversity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 Services Director, 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 Services Manager, Equity & Disability Services Manager, DRCLR

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

Strategy	Target Date	Responsibility
Provide students and staff utilising assistive technology with appropriate training and support	2015	Director, Technology Services Manager, Equity & Disability Services Director, Human Resources
Conduct a review of the University's current assistive technology resources	2015	Director, Technology Services Head, 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 Services Head, Counselling & Disability Support Services

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

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

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

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 Services Manager, 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 Resources Head, 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 Resources Manager, Workplace Health & Safety
Update campus maps to include facilities and services for people with disability	2017	Head, Communications & Publications

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