

# Reasonable Adjustments for Students with Disabilities Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose and Scope

(1) The purpose of this policy is to outline the processes by which the University assesses and implements reasonable adjustments for students with disability. It seeks to:

- a. ensure the provision of services that:
  - i. assist students with disability to achieve their maximum potential as members of the University community;
  - ii. further the integration of students with disability in the University community and complement services available generally to such persons in the local community;
  - iii. enable students with disability to achieve positive outcomes, such as increased independence and integration in the University community; and
  - iv. are provided in ways that promote a positive image of persons with disability in the University community and enhances their self-esteem;
- b. encourage innovation in the provision of services for students with disability; and
- c. ensure that approved services for students with disability are developed and reviewed on a periodic basis through the use of forward plans.

(2) This Policy supports SCU's compliance with the following Federal and State legislation in relation to the provision of support to students with disability:

- a. Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- b. Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (QLD)
- c. Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW)
- d. Disability Standards for Education 2005
- e. Disability Standards for Access to Premises 2010
- f. Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW)

### Scope

(3) This policy applies to all students and staff.

## Section 2 - Definitions

(4) For the purpose of this policy:

- a. Student with disability - is a student identified as having a disability as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).
- b. Reasonable adjustment - is a measure or action taken by the University which enables a student with disability

to participate in their studies on the same basis as a student without a disability. An adjustment is reasonable if it balances the interests of all affected parties.

- c. Inherent requirements - are the capabilities, knowledge and skills that are essential to achieve the core learning outcomes of a course or to satisfy curriculum requirements.

## Section 3 - Policy Statement

(5) Southern Cross University is committed to developing an institutional culture that optimises the participation, retention and success of students with disability while providing a study environment that is free from all forms of discrimination and harassment. This commitment is underpinned by the Southern Cross University [Disability Action Plan](#).

(6) Southern Cross University (SCU) recognises that students with disability have the same inherent rights as students without disability.

(7) SCU aims to provide a quality university experience for all its students, and to ensure that its services are delivered in a manner which upholds human rights and provides equal learning opportunities for all students.

(8) SCU will provide all reasonable academic adjustments to students consistent with the approved inherent requirements statements for SCU courses, and in manner which upholds the academic standards and intellectual integrity of the University.

## Section 4 - Procedures

### Student disclosure & substantiation of disability

(9) Students with disability should contact Student Access & Inclusion to discuss the nature and extent of their disability, including the functional limitations that it may pose, and to determine what, if any, supports or reasonable adjustments are required. It is the responsibility of the student to make the University aware of their disability in a timely manner.

(10) Students who seek reasonable adjustments under this Policy are required to provide documentary evidence to a Disability Advisor as to the nature and extent of their disability and the functional limitations this involves. This evidence:

- a. must include documentation from a medical practitioner, psychologist and/or other relevant health practitioner; and
- b. may contain recommendations as to appropriate reasonable adjustments.

(11) Documentation provided by the student will be retained by Student Access & Inclusion and will not be disclosed outside of the Student Access & Inclusion unless:

- a. the University has reasonable grounds for concern about the health or safety of the student or other persons; or
- b. the student has given express consent for the disclosure; or
- c. disclosure of the information is required by law; or
- d. it is necessary for the University to obtain legal advice.

(12) Information regarding the functional limitations of a student's disability will be included in the Learning Access Plan and shared with University staff solely for the purpose of implementing a reasonable adjustment.

## Provision of reasonable adjustments

(13) The University will provide eligible students with reasonable adjustments in accordance with the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth). Reasonable adjustments can include but are not limited to:

- a. changes to course design or method of delivery;
- b. modifications to the physical environment;
- c. provision of equipment or specialised services;
- d. changes to timetables or scheduling arrangements; and/or
- e. alternative methods of assessment or examination.

(14) An adjustment is not reasonable if it compromises the academic integrity of a course or contravenes the inherent requirements statements for the course.

(15) The provision of reasonable adjustments under this Policy does not include assistance in understanding content. Students who need assistance with study skills should contact Academic Skills.

(16) Students who may require a reasonable adjustment to participate equitably in university activities must contact [Student Access & Inclusion](#). If students seek reasonable adjustments from other University staff member they will be referred to [Student Access & Inclusion](#).

(17) Following the substantiation of a student's disability, a Disability Advisor will consult with the student and/or their associate, other relevant University staff, and the inherent requirements statements for the course to determine what, if any, reasonable adjustments are required to support the student's equal participation.

- a. As noted, reasonable adjustments may redress disadvantage to individual students but must not act so as to lower the academic standard required to pass that unit.
- b. Where approved inherent requirements statements are not yet available for the particular course, the Chair of Academic Board will determine cases where the Disability Advisor and relevant Academic staff disagree as to whether the desired adjustment would undermine the academic integrity of the course (and is therefore unreasonable).

(18) Where reasonable adjustments are required, the Disability Advisor will complete a Learning Access Plan to document the required adjustments which are to be implemented and provide this to all relevant staff. These adjustments may be reviewed periodically to ensure their appropriateness and efficacy, and additional supporting documentation may be requested.

(19) Each academic staff member with responsibility for a unit will be responsible for ensuring that students within their units (who have been notified to them as having a disability approved by Student Access & Inclusion) have access to the reasonable adjustments approved by the Disability Advisor.

(20) The academic staff member responsible for the unit will also be responsible for ensuring that students with disability are not disadvantaged by the format of assessment items. Whilst it is acknowledged that one academic standard must prevail for all student there can be flexibility in the arrangements made to assess these standards in order to ensure that all students are dealt with equitably. Information on alternative forms of assessment can be sought from [Student Access & Inclusion](#) and [Teaching and Learning](#).

(21) If students do not receive the adjustments which have been negotiated, they should immediately report the matter to [Student Access & Inclusion](#) who will investigate.

(22) Students who believe that their needs are not being met under this policy may appeal to the [Director, Clinical Services](#).

## **Where reasonable adjustments cannot be provided**

(23) If a reasonable adjustment cannot be made to ensure equitable participation within the boundaries of [inherent requirements](#), the student may be offered:

- a. medical leave;
- b. course transfer;
- c. early exit from the course (with an exit award if permitted under course rules); or
- d. an opportunity to continue the elements of the course they can complete within the boundaries of [inherent requirements](#), on the basis that:
  - i. they acknowledge it is unlikely they will be eligible to graduate;
  - ii. no risk is presented to themselves or other students; and
  - iii. course progression rules allow.

(24) Medical leave will be treated as a leave of absence under the [Rules Relating to Awards Rule 2](#). Approval from the Course Coordinator should not be withheld for medical leave.

## **Cultivating a Culture of Non-discrimination**

(25) The University will provide relevant information regarding students with disability to relevant staff.

(26) The University will provide staff development and training opportunities to all staff members, to enable them:

- a. to competently meet the educational, support and vocational needs of students with disability; and
- b. to raise the awareness and responsiveness of staff to the needs of students with disability.

(27) Everyday usage of the English language includes a number of derogatory and discriminatory terms for people with disabilities. Many of these terms have evolved through the misuse or colloquial use of terms ascribed to particular disabilities. The University has guidelines on non-discriminatory language use, and does not condone the use of discriminatory language relating to people with disability.

## **Physical Access**

(28) New buildings will be designed for access and use by students with disability in accordance with the University's plans and the [Disability Action Plan](#) in particular. The University aims to improve access to older buildings which do not meet current standards and will undertake modifications.

(29) The Equity and Diversity Committee will monitor physical access matters, which impact on people with disability.

(30) The University will continue to provide adequate special parking facilities for persons with disability.

## **Section 5 - Guidelines**

(31) Nil.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
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