
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Preamble

The ACD aims to provide students with disabilities with the opportunity to realise their individual capabilities through access to and participation in ACD courses. In doing so the ACD aims to ensure that interactions with students with disabilities are characterised by respect of their rights to dignity, privacy, confidentiality and equality.

Legislation/Standards

Commonwealth Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986

Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992

Disability Standards for Education 2005

South Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1990

Delegations

The ACD Board has delegated to the ACD Executive Officer the responsibility for the implementation of this policy in the ACD and ATCC. The Board has delegated to the principals of ACD member colleges the responsibility for the implementation of this policy within their colleges.

Approvals

This policy was approved by the ACD Board/ACD President on 5 November 2007 and updated January 2011.

Associated Documents

Equal Opportunity Policy

Grievance Procedures

Admission, Enrolment and Graduation

Assessment Exercises and their Presentation

Academic Review of Student Progress

Privacy of Information Guidelines

Provisions

1. The ACD is committed:
 - to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against in admission to a course or enrolment in a unit;
 - to provide assistance in preventing, minimising or overcoming barriers to fuller participation in academic activities;
 - to make reasonable adjustments in modifying, substituting or supplementing curricula, course or unit work requirements, timetables, teaching methods and materials, and assessment procedures to meet the needs of students with disabilities, without compromising academic standards;
 - to respect the rights of students with disabilities to privacy and confidentiality and to promote their human dignity, rights and opportunities.
2. The ACD and ATCC will not discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability in any educational process or activity including admission, teaching, assessment, except where the provision of services or facilities would impose unjustifiable hardship on the ACD or ACD member colleges or the ATCC.
3. The ACD and ATCC consider that harassment and victimisation of students with disabilities on the basis of the disability, or of associates of students with disabilities on the basis of the disability, is unacceptable behaviour.
4. The ACD and the ATCC are committed to providing a physical environment that can reasonably accommodate people with disabilities enabling staff and student participation in the academic life of the Campus.

Procedures

Special Consideration in Admission

5. The ACD will give special consideration to applications to vary the standard entry requirements for people with disabilities where they can demonstrate educational disadvantage as a result of disability with appropriate documentation.

Disclosure

6. The ACD will encourage students with disabilities to declare such disabilities at enrolment on the ACD enrolment form and to appropriate staff such as college academic advisers and unit coordinators. Any such disclosures will be treated as confidential and private by staff. Students may be asked to supply documentation about the functional implications of their disability relevant to academic access so that appropriate support provisions can be negotiated. Documentation provided by a student about the student's disability will be kept confidentially by the Executive Officer in the student's file.

Teaching and Assessment

7. Assessment of a student's progress through a course or unit will be based on academic performance, however reasonable adjustment to courses/units in aspects of the delivery and method of assessment will be made for students with disabilities. Such adjustments will not compromise the essential content of a course/unit or the requirements to demonstrate essential skills and knowledge.
8. The ACD has adopted Flinders University principles for reasonable adjustment to assessment and teaching methods for students with disabilities (refer Appendix A of Flinders Assessment Policy at www.flinders.edu.au/students/current/policies.html). The principles are as follows:
 - 8.1 Reasonable adjustment to assessment refers to special conditions/considerations in examinations and other assessment exercises, including placements, for students with disabilities. Reasonable adjustment to teaching methods refers to variations in the way that courses/units are taught in order that they are accessible to students with disabilities. Examples of reasonable adjustments to teaching methods include: reading aloud overheads for students who are blind, ensuring audio-visual materials are accompanied by transcripts or subtitles for deaf students, using accessible teaching venues for students with a physical disability, negotiating suitable placements for students with a variety of health issues.
 - 8.2 Reasonable adjustments to assessment and teaching methods are made using the following principles:

- 8.2.1 Students with disabilities are subject to the standard rules and policy on assessment and teaching methods, and assessment is only varied where a student can demonstrate with appropriate documentation that he/she is disadvantaged as a result of disability.
- 8.2.2 The nature of reasonable adjustments is such that they are designed to minimise the disadvantage experienced by students with disabilities, rather than provide students with a competitive advantage.
- 8.2.3 Moreover any adjustments to assessment for a student with a disability are to be made in such a way as to ensure that the fundamental nature of the assessment remains the same ie students with disabilities are still required to demonstrate a pre-determined level of ability in relation to essential course/unit requirements.

Academic Review of Student Progress

9. Unit coordinators who consider a student with disabilities to be 'at risk' of not meeting the academic requirements of their unit will discuss with the student appropriate support that may assist. Students with disabilities who are considered to be making unsatisfactory progress by the ACD Examinations Committee or CMin Assessment Committee will be asked to talk to their college academic adviser to discuss whether appropriate assistance can be provided.

Support to Students

10. The ACD seeks to provide a reasonable level of support services to students with disabilities in the interests of equality and educational opportunity, in particular alternative ways of accessing information and expressing knowledge. The ACD may, in particular circumstances, be unable to provide the level of support services, access and/or facilities required by a student with a disability on the grounds that to do so would impose unjustifiable hardship on the ACD or ACD/ATC colleges or the ATCC.

Library

11. The Adelaide Theological Library will provide support to users with disabilities that enable them to access library and information resources and facilities for their study, teaching and research. Library staff can assist with: retrieving items from shelves; searching for information; photocopying (including print enlargement); and retrieval of material from other Libraries. Special loan conditions may also be negotiated.

Communication

12. Staff and student awareness of the issues relating to students with disabilities will be promoted through:
- disseminating information, for example at Faculty days
 - including information in staff induction and student orientation
 - publishing this policy in the ACD handbook or Orientation Manual and on the ACD website
 - encouraging staff to use inclusive teaching and assessment methods
 - including inclusiveness of students with disabilities in evaluation of courses and units
 - encouraging students to discuss their individual requirements with the Executive Officer and/or college academic adviser and/or course/unit coordinator.

Physical Environment

13. The Campus has
- minimal internal barriers
 - lift access to classrooms, Library, staff offices, meeting rooms and staff common room
 - appropriate toilet facilities in accessible locations.
14. The ACD and ATCC will ensure that disability access considerations are taken into account in the ongoing maintenance of buildings and grounds, and that evacuation procedures are in place for students and staff with disabilities.

Appendix

Support Resources

Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET): up to date and comprehensive information about inclusive teaching, learning and assessment strategies, accommodations and support services for people with disabilities in post secondary education and training at www.adcet.edu.au/default.aspx and www.adcet.edu.au/cats/

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission: information on education issues and the Disability Discrimination Act at www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/education/education.html