

# Students with Disabilities

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### 1.0 Purpose

This Policy outlines the University's commitment to increasing and enhancing opportunities for people with disabilities to access higher education and graduate employment.

### 2.0 Scope

This Policy applies to all Griffith University students who identify as having a disability, and to the whole University community who are teaching, supporting, or interacting with these students.

The term 'student' refers to all students of the University in all career levels, modes of study and locations, physical or digital, undertaking academic work/scholarship towards the completion of their program or more generally under the auspices of the University.

### 3.0 Policy statement

The University aims to provide a positive, safe, and supportive environment for students with disabilities ensuring equitable access to programs, services, and facilities, enabling full participation through:

- raising awareness of the requirements and rights of people with disabilities;
- respecting an individual's rights to privacy and confidentiality;
- creating an inclusive learning environment that maximises outcomes for students with disabilities by addressing barriers to access and participation;
- consult with students with disabilities to identify reasonable adjustments that may be required to facilitate access to and participation in programs and courses on the same basis as students without disabilities;
- identification and upholding of the essential academic requirements of its programs and courses;
- equitable access to support services, including specialised support services for students with disabilities so that they may negotiate reasonable adjustments.

The University is required to comply with the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld), the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth), and acts in accordance with the principles embodied in and requirements of other relevant legislation, standards and guidelines.

### 3.1 Disclosure of student disabilities and reasonable adjustments

The requirement for students with disabilities to disclose, through supporting documentation, the nature and impact of their disability / medical condition in the learning environment, particularly where reasonable adjustments will be required, is outlined in the *Students with Disabilities Disclosure Procedure*.

### 3.2 Availability, accreditation, and adaptation of academic programs

The University endeavours to make all its academic courses and research activities available to students with disabilities.

The University encourages academic staff to take account of the diversity within the University's student population in planning an academic program and particularly in the selection of teaching and assessment methods.

Academic Integrity requires that in providing for students with disabilities, the University continues to ensure the integrity of its courses or programs and assessment requirements and processes, so that those upon whom it confers an award are able to present themselves as having the appropriate knowledge, experience and expertise implicit in the holding of that particular award.

### 3.3 Community development

To facilitate the full participation of students with disabilities in the University, academic staff, general staff and fellow students will be given the opportunity to acquire the understanding and competencies necessary to meet the education, support, social and employment needs of these students through:

- student representation on University Committees such as the Disability Advisory Committee; Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee; and peer support groups for students with disabilities to enable development of advocacy voices;
- incorporation of issues related to students with disabilities in staff development activities or student gatherings;
- encouragement of staff research and scholarship in the area of disabilities;
- embedding, where appropriate, content which reflects issues around disability in the curriculum; and
- production of discussion papers and seminars on issues relevant to students with disabilities in higher education.

### 3.4 Language

The University discourages the use of discriminatory language in relation to people with disabilities and encourages thoughtful and intentional use of inclusive language.

The University has zero tolerance of discrimination. Staff behaviour is governed by the *Code of Conduct*, and student behaviour by the *Student Charter Framework*, both of which set out the expectation that they treat everyone with respect and courtesy and without discrimination and harassment.

### 3.5 Environment and systems

The University is committed to promoting the rights of people with a disability, ensuring that they are provided a safe and accessible physical and systems environment. Refer to the Staff Disability and Accessibility and Inclusion Procedure for a detailed outline.

## 4.0 Roles, responsibilities and delegations

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Manager, Disability and Accessibility	<p>Responsible Manager for advising on and facilitating reasonable adjustment requests for students following disclosure of disabilities.</p> <p>Drafting a plan for students considered under this policy and sharing with academic staff who enable the implementation of any identified reasonable adjustments.</p> <p>Student life and experience for students with disabilities.</p>
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education)	<p>Teaching and Learning strategy, student life and experience, curriculum and program coordination, strategy and design.</p> <p>Equity, Diversity and Inclusion related strategy.</p>
Director, Student Engagement and Success	<p>Resolving disputes and appeals relating to policy and supporting procedures.</p> <p>Ensure embedding of equitable practices in alignment with policy for students with disabilities in local strategy and practice (including complying with State and Commonwealth legislation).</p> <p>Student life and experience.</p>
Registrar	<p>Ensuring a university-wide system of effective administration from enrolment through to graduation for all students.</p>
Students	<p>Disclosure of any disabilities, through supporting documentation, the nature and impact of their disability / medical condition in the learning environment, particularly where reasonable adjustments will be required.</p>
Responsible academic staff	<p>See 5.0 Definitions of this policy and 3.3 Learning, teaching and research practices of Students with Disabilities Disclosure Procedure.</p>

## 5.0 Definitions

For the purposes of this policy and related policy documents, the following definitions apply:

**Disability:** Griffith University supports the social model disability outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities definition of disability, which describes people with disability as people who have physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The social model of disability ... views disability as stemming from communities, services and spaces that are not accessible or inclusive. In the social model of disability, it is society that places limits on a person, not their disability (from Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan 2022-2026).

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) also defines disability in the following way:

- in relation to a person;
- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- 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:

- presently exists; or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
- is imputed to a person;

To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.

A student who is pregnant and does not meet the above criteria is not a student with a disability.

A **student with a disability** refers to an enrolled student of the University with a **disability** as defined in The Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

**Impairment** means a diagnosed condition of a person with a disability.

Griffith University acknowledges that each student will have their own preference regarding how they identify. For example, some are protected under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and have rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, but may not identify as a person with disability, or use the term 'impairment' to refer to a diagnosed condition. We encourage all staff to be flexible and adapt when the students' preferences are known.

**An adjustment** is a measure or action (or group of measures or actions) taken by the University that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability:

- in relation to an admission or enrolment — to apply for the admission or enrolment; and
- in relation to a course or program — to participate in the course or program; and
- in relation to facilities or services — to use the facilities or services;

on the same basis as a student without a disability, and includes an aid, a facility, or a service that the student requires because of their disability.

An adjustment is **reasonable** in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected. The process for assessing whether an adjustment is reasonable is outlined in the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* subsection 3.4.

**Essential Learning Outcomes** are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills that it is essential that a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate as a result of learning in a course or program to preserve the academic integrity of the University’s qualifications. These are published on the Programs and Courses website in the form of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs).

**Responsible academic staff member** is either:

- in the case of undergraduate or postgraduate coursework students the Program Director and/or Course Convenor who may act on the recommendation of the professional practice coordinator, or other academic staff member deemed appropriate by the Dean (Learning and Teaching);
- or in the case of a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) candidate, HDR Convenor, or other staff member deemed appropriate by the Dean (Research) or nominee.

## 6.0 Information

Title	Students with Disabilities Policy
Document number	2024/0000014
Purpose	This Policy outlines the University's commitment to increasing and enhancing opportunities for people with disabilities to access higher education and graduate employment.
Audience	Staff
Category	Academic
Subcategory	Student Services
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	This document aligns with Sustainable Development Goal/s: 10: Reduced Inequalities 4: Quality Education 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
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Policy advisor Manager, Student Disability and Accessibility, Student Life

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Approving authority Academic Committee

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## 7.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation

- Disability Discrimination Act (Cth) 1992
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
- Disability Services Act 2006
- UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) 2006
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986
- Human Rights Legislation Amendment Bill (No.1) 1999
- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 Sept 2023

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Policy

- Admission Policy
- Student Review and Appeals Policy
- Student Complaints Policy
- Student Misconduct Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Work-Integrated Learning at Griffith
- Inability to Complete Required Components of Professional Qualification
- Student Charter Framework
- Role Statement Higher Degree Research Convenor
- Role Statement Program Director
- Role Statement Course Convenor

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Procedure

- Student Review and Appeals Procedure
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Assessment Procedure for Staff
- Assessment Procedure for Students

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Students with Disabilities Disclosure Procedure  
Higher Degree by Research Admission Procedure  
Higher Degree by Research Academic Progress Procedure  
Higher Degree by Research Examination Procedure

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Local Protocol

Privacy Statement

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Forms

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