

# DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2016 – 2021

## FOREWORD

CQUniversity has a proud tradition of being an inclusive and accessible university. We are fully committed to creating and maintaining a work and learning environment for our staff and students that embraces diversity and encourages innovation and collaboration.

The CQUniversity [Disability Action Plan \(DAP\) 2016 – 2021](#) provides a framework to implement objectives and strategies consistent with the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#). Consistent with CQUniversity's 'can-do' value, we aim to enable all students and staff to achieve their aspirations by actively eliminating barriers to participation and creating an environment which accommodates the different needs and potential of all individuals.

Our University community values diversity and aims to ensure the respect and participation of all members. By practising these values, CQUniversity will continue to deliver and improve quality higher education outcomes to our students and tangible benefits to the communities we serve. I encourage you to be involved in all aspects of the plan and provide further input. Ideas and suggestions related to the implementation of the various elements in this plan are also welcomed and can be directed to the Disability Action Plan Committee (DAPC) for further consideration.

Valuing diversity and inclusiveness is one of the ways CQUniversity will continue to be a great university as we work together to reinforce these values and continue to make positive changes both at CQUniversity and within our community.

**Professor Scott Bowman**  
Vice Chancellor and President

## POSITION STATEMENT – INCLUSIVE PHILOSOPHY

According to the [Australian Bureau of Statistics' Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers \(2012\)](#), 4.2 million Australians, or approximately 18.5% of the Australian population reported having a disability in 2009. This means that CQUniversity is likely to have a substantial number of its community with a disability; many of whom may choose not to disclose their disability.

The definition of 'disability' under the [Disability Discrimination Act \(1992\)](#) (the DDA) is broad. It includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities. Disability can be permanent or temporary. It includes some conditions not usually thought of as disabilities. An 'invisible' disability is a term used to cover a range of medical conditions such as chronic pain and those originating from neurological disorders or mental health issues.

All aspects of CQUniversity operations and services, its building design features, teaching and employment practices aim to be inclusive from the outset in order to respect the diversity of our University community and all visitors to campus, without the need for redesign or adjustment to meet individual needs.

## CONTEXT AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The DAP aligns with the value of 'Providing a Great Student Experience' in CQUniversity's Strategic Plan [2016 – 2021](#). The DAP has been developed in accordance with:

- [AVCC Students with a Disability Guidelines \(2006\)](#)
- [AVCC Guidelines on Information Access for Students with Print Disabilities \(2004\)](#)
- [Human Rights Commission Guidelines on application of the Premises Standards \(2010\)](#)
- [TEQA Provider Registration Standards Section 6](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education \(2005\)](#)

## **BENEFITS OF THE DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

Central Queensland University's Disability Action Plan has been developed to:

- minimise discrimination and avoid complaints;
- encourage broader participation;
- meet legislative requirements;
- raise awareness of disability issues;
- demonstrate a public commitment to eliminate discrimination;
- provide a systematic approach to managing the needs of students, staff and visitors with disability; and
- exert a positive influence on the access, retention and success of students with disability.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

The objectives of the plan are to:

- Fostering an inclusive workplace culture that supports staff diversity through relevant policies, programs and employment practices.
- Providing equitable access to CQUniversity courses through inclusive practices in learning, teaching and assessment that support the academic participation and success of all students and in doing so meet our legal obligations.
- Providing services, engagement and related best practices to ensure every part of the University experience is inclusive and accessible for staff, students (prospective and current) and on-campus visitors.
- Ensuring a built environment that enables the safe and equitable participation of people with disability in all aspects of campus life.
- Ensuring all students and staff have equitable access to CQUniversity's information technology services to support their learning experience and professional goals.

## **REVIEW OF DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

The plan incorporates evaluation strategies to ensure it remains responsive to the changing needs of students and staff. Building in review, evaluation and monitoring ensures the plan is effective according to the criteria outlined by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Evaluating the DAP objectives and strategies provides a mechanism for the University to demonstrate that it is not only meeting its obligations under the DDA but has best-practice standards in place.

CQUniversity has chosen to establish a Disability Action Plan Committee (DAPC) with responsibility for matters relating to disability while also recognising the multiple layers of equity that intersect with disability. The role of the DAPC therefore extends beyond the immediate scope of the DAP and recognises the changing nature of disability issues. It is envisaged that the DAPC will have the on-going capacity to respond to the diversity of our University community about how disability is managed and viewed at an institutional level.

# CQUniversity Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2016-2021

This Disability Action Plan (DAP), in conjunction with [CQUniversity's Disability Policy](#), sets out the University's approach to meeting its obligations and responsibilities under the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992* and the associated *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. The DAP takes account of the Universities Australia (formerly Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC)) [Guidelines on Information Access for Students with Print Disabilities](#) (November 2004) and [Guidelines Relating to Students with Disabilities](#) (May 2006) which were predicated on the following two key principles:

- (i) That universities will uphold academic standards such that students graduate with the requisite skills and knowledge associated with the qualification conferred; and
- (ii) That universities provide students with disabilities with the opportunity to realise their academic and social potential and to participate fully in university life.

Consistent with the University's commitment to creating an equitable and inclusive environment for people with disabilities studying and working at CQUniversity and the Key Strategies embodied within CQUniversity's Strategic Plan 2016-2021, the DAP details strategies and objectives and defines success indicators within the context of the following five primary objectives:

<b>Objective 1</b>	Fostering an inclusive workplace culture that supports staff diversity through relevant policies, programs and employment practices.
<b>Objective 2</b>	Providing equitable access to CQUniversity courses through inclusive practices in learning, teaching and assessment that support the academic participation and success of all students.
<b>Objective 3</b>	Providing services, engagement and related best practices to ensure every part of the University experience is inclusive and accessible for staff, students (prospective and current) and on-campus visitors.
<b>Objective 4</b>	Ensuring a built environment that enables the safe and equitable participation of people with disability in all aspects of campus life.
<b>Objective 5</b>	All students and staff have equitable access to CQUniversity's information technology services to support their learning experience and professional goals.

The Vice-Chancellor is the Responsible Officer for the University under the DDA. Responsibility for coordination of specific strategies is allocated to the heads of relevant areas (Divisions, Schools, Centres) or other responsible officers. The role of the University's Disability Action Plan Committee is to oversee and monitor the implementation of the DAP by coordinating initiatives across the University, and ensuring that the goals and strategies from the DAP continue to be aligned with the University's Strategic Plan 2016-2021.

**Objective 1: Fostering an inclusive workplace culture that supports staff diversity through relevant policies, programs and practices.**

**Success Indicators:**

- Staff aware of their rights and responsibilities in maintaining a workplace and learning environment that actively supports the inclusion of people with a disability.
- Planning for the employment, adjustment and support needs of staff with disability.
- Staff have opportunities for mental health education and development of skills and resilience
- Evidence that staff with disability are not impeded in career progression

Strategies:	To be implemented by:	To be supported by:	Targets:	Timeframes:
1.1 Provide new and existing staff with the opportunity to participate in disability awareness training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, People &amp; Culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Action Plan Committee</li> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International &amp; Services)</li> <li>• Deans &amp; Directors</li> </ul>	<p>By December 2018 100% of academic and frontline, Learning and Teaching Services staff will have completed online disability awareness training</p> <p>Disability awareness training is a mandatory component of the staff induction program by December 2017</p>	<p>July 2017: Complete development of the disability awareness module within the existing online staff induction program</p> <p>December 2017: All current Student Experience and Governance staff, and Learning and Teaching administration staff will have completed this training by</p> <p>December 2017: Training is a mandatory component of the Staff Induction process.</p>
1.2 In conjunction with policy owners, specifically address the mental health and wellbeing of students and staff in, the relevant policies and procedures.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance Directorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Owners</li> <li>• Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee</li> <li>• Academic Board</li> </ul>	Assigned members of the DAPC to have input into the review process of all policies that relate to student and staff health and wellbeing	<p>July 2017: Agreement established with Student Governance to include a process for DAPC to have input into the review of new and current policies and procedures.</p> <p>July 2017: All relevant policies will have ongoing input/ review from DAPC</p>

**Objective 2: Providing equitable access to CQUniversity courses through inclusive practices in learning, teaching and assessment that support the academic participation and success of all students.**

**Success Indicators:**

- Academic/teaching staff respond readily and confidently to the learning needs of students with a disability within their teaching practices.
- Students with disability make informed choices about their course of study.
- Inherent requirements of courses, including any that are specific to work placements or subsequent employment opportunities, are clearly articulated

Strategies:	To be implemented by:	To be supported by:	Targets:	Timeframes:
2.1 Academic and teaching staff have access to resources, information, professional development and research opportunities that develop their awareness of inclusive learning and teaching practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provost (or nominee)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deans</li> <li>Deputy Director, Student Life and Wellbeing Centre</li> </ul>	School Operational Plans to include participation targets	<p>By September 2017 Inclusive Practice resources developed DAPC to hold meetings with Deans of all schools prior to development of 2018 operational plans</p> <p>December 2017 All School operational plans for 2018 include staff participation targets</p>
2.2 Negotiate with the Office of Learning and Teaching to include information relating to inclusive practice in professional development opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provost (or nominee)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deans</li> <li>Director, Student Experience Directorate</li> <li>Deputy Director, Student Life and Wellbeing Centre</li> </ul>	Review of existing training content. Update and add to professional development regarding inclusive practices	September 2017
2.3 Collaborate with Deans of Schools and Program Coordinators to identify and articulate inherent requirements of courses and programs for all students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provost (or nominee)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Higher Education)</li> <li>Deans</li> <li>Deputy Director, Student Life and Wellbeing Centre</li> </ul>	Inherent Requirement Statements will assist current and potential students to make informed decisions about their programs and course selection.	<p>December 2016 IR are finalised for all programs</p> <p>December 2017 All IRs are listed in handbook and marketing materials</p>

<p>2.4 In collaboration with Deans and Schools new programs will be required to demonstrate inclusive practices in learning, teaching and assessment,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provost (or nominee)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deans</li> <li>• Deputy Director, Student Life and Wellbeing Centre</li> <li>• Academic Board</li> </ul>	<p>A DAPC representative will be included on all relevant committees such as the Higher Education Program Review Committee and Academic Board</p> <p>New courses and programs demonstrate how inclusive learning and teaching practices are embedded into course content and assessment</p>	<p>July 2017 Negotiation to get a DAPC representative on program committees New concept proposals that go to VCAC will include how inclusive practices will addressed</p> <p>December 2017 nexus will include a section that requires course and unit developers to demonstrate how courses and units address inclusive practices</p>
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**Objective 3: The university experience is inclusive and accessible for staff, students (prospective and current) and on-campus visitors.**

**Success Indicators:**

- CQUniversity has an inclusive and welcoming environment for people with a disability: students, staff, visitors and community members.
- Processes in place and regularly reviewed for encouraging early identification, appropriate referral mechanisms and support for commencing students with disability.
- Enrolment and program information is fully accessible and available in alternative format upon request.
- All frontline staff in the Student Experience Directorate have specific training in disability support services.
- Clear referral processes are developed for students wishing to access disability support services. University staff are aware of referral processes and relevant policies and procedures.

Strategies:	To be implemented by:	To be supported by:	Targets:	Timeframes:
<p>3.1 Instigate pre-event planning for disability access at graduation, cultural, sporting and recreational events held on-campus including accessibility of on-campus commercial services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deputy Director, Student Life and Wellbeing Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director, Marketing</li> <li>Director, Facilities Management</li> </ul>	<p>All CQUniversity events are accessible.</p> <p>Campus maps indicating accessibility features are promoted in all marketing materials.</p> <p>Nominate a responsible officer to take responsibility for disability access at major events.</p> <p>Ensure that campus maps highlighting accessibility features are available to the public online and other digital media</p>	<p>July 2017 Corporate event planning template to include a section on disability access and provision of access information to guests/attendees</p> <p>December 2017 Accessibility Audits conducted at each CQUniversity campus and maps amended as necessary</p> <p>July 2018 CQUniversity website includes accessibility maps and specific information for people with disability in the community attending events on campus</p>
<p>3.2 Comprehensive online information and resources to be made available and accessible to students with a disability via Counselling and Disability Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director, Student Experience Directorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chief Information Officer, ITaD</li> </ul>	<p>All online information and resources are accessible to students with a disability</p> <p>Web-based feedback facility in place</p>	<p>Timeframes as above</p>

<p>3.3 Students and staff with disability are given the opportunity to contribute to the improvement of services and support for people with disability on CQUniversity campuses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, People &amp; Culture</li> <li>• Director, Student Experience Directorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International &amp; Services)</li> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience &amp; Governance)</li> <li>• Director, Facilities Management</li> </ul>	<p>Student survey of Disability Services conducted every 3 years</p> <p>Staff survey conducted annually to gauge awareness of Support Services</p> <p>Feedback from staff and students with disability via surveys and Students and staff with disabilities at CQUniversity</p>	<p>First surveys to be completed by December 2016</p>
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**Objective 4: The CQUniversity built environment enables the safe and equitable participation of people with disability in all aspects of campus life.**

**Success Indicators:**

- Access maps available which enable staff, students and visitors to review accessibility features of the campus before entering the premises.
- Improved accessibility of existing infrastructure and signage for people with a disability.
- Feedback regarding accessibility of buildings and facilities will be acted on in a timely and appropriate manner and/or suitable space alternatives scheduled.

Strategies:	To be implemented by:	Responsibility delegated to:	Targets:	Timeframes:
4.1 Develop online campus access maps that show identified car parking for people with disability, accessible routes, wheelchair access, distance between buildings, all accessibility services and assistive technologies installed in on-campus buildings and grounds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Facilities Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate Vice-Chancellor (Campus)</li> <li>• Director, Student Experience Directorate</li> </ul>	Maps of each campus highlighting accessibility features are available for all visitors to campus as well as staff and students	July 2018: Accessibility Audits conducted on each CQUniversity campus
4.2 A DAP representative is to be included in the planning discussions for new and upgraded facilities (building, renovations etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Facilities Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International &amp; Services)</li> <li>• Associate Vice-Chancellor (Campus)</li> <li>• Director, Student Experience Directorate</li> </ul>	DAP representation on planning committees/working groups charged with building development and upgrades.	Ongoing
4.3 Establish and maintain procedures for students, staff and visitors to notify Facilities Management Division of accessibility issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Facilities Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associate Vice-Chancellor (Campus)</li> <li>• Director, Student Experience Directorate</li> </ul>	Formalise a procedure for the reporting of a clear process for reporting and attending to barriers related to the built environment is implemented and promoted throughout the university	July 2018

**Objective 5: All students and staff have equitable access to CQUniversity’s information technology services to support their learning experience and professional goals.**

**Success Indicators:**

- Online unit materials are accessible to students with a disability.
- Students with a disability have the same access to information technology services as other students or have access to an appropriate alternative service or modification of the online information.
- Students with disability can readily request and access unit material in alternative formatting when required.

Strategies:	To be implemented by:	Responsibility delegated to:	Targets:	Timeframes:
5.1 Facilitate a review of online learning resources to ensure accessibility and develop ‘prompts’ within proposals and review processes for incorporating inclusiveness into future online course design.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Information Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provost (or nominee)</li> <li>• Director, People and Culture</li> <li>• Director, Student Experience Directorate</li> <li>• Deputy Director, Student Life and Wellbeing Centre</li> </ul>	Audit of online learning resources conducted and changes made to ensure accessibility where required.	December 2017
5.2 Identify a first point of contact within ITD and Learning and Teaching Services for assistive technology purchase, maintenance and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Information Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deputy Director, Student Life and Wellbeing Centre</li> </ul>	An assistive services technology officer in ITD provides advice and training to staff and students on how to use accessible technology including learning and teaching supports	December 2017: Assistive Technology Services Officer position established
5.3 Allocate and promote lab access which provides assistive technologies for students with a disability across campuses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Student Experience Directorate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director, Information Technology</li> <li>• Provost (or nominee)</li> </ul>	All CQUniversity computer labs are equipped with specific software to support speech to text/text to speech functionality	December 2017: Funding for purchase of software roll out in CQUniversity computer labs is secured December 2017: Assistive Technology Services Officer considered.

## REFERENCES

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Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee
Administrator	Director, Student Experience
Next Review Date	17/08/2019

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	Vice-Chancellor and President 1/11/2012
Amendment Authority and Date	Administrative updates University Secretary 7/08/2013; Vice-Chancellor and President 17/08/2016; Editorial Amendments 26/03/2020.
Notes	This was previously known as the Inclusive Practices Disability Plan 2012 – 2015

**APPENDIX A:**  
**Institutional responsiveness to student mental health: A 7-point Strategic Checklist**

Strategic priority	Potential institutional responses
1. Does your institution delegate responsibility for student mental health issues to appropriate staff?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overt responsibility included within senior staff member position description.</li> <li>• Inclusion of student mental health focus within terms of reference of a committee.</li> </ul>
2. Does your institution policy architecture adequately consider student mental health issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrete student mental health policy.</li> <li>• Inclusion of student mental health within range of student policies.</li> <li>• Policies targeted at student mental health such as quarantining of place on mental health grounds.</li> </ul>
3. Does your institution offer support services and reasonable adjustments for students experiencing mental ill-health?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presence of disability services where students with mental ill-health are eligible for services.</li> <li>• Presence of counselling services.</li> <li>• Mechanisms for provision of reasonable adjustments.</li> </ul>
4. Does your institution promote mental health and wellbeing?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health promotion programs which may include mindfulness, positive psychology and mental health first aid.</li> </ul>
5. Is your institution adequately prepared to manage a mental health crisis or critical incident?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critical incident and emergency management policies encompass the psychosocial needs of institutional community.</li> <li>• Establishment of a Campus Threat Assessment program.</li> </ul>
6. Are your staff and students adequately informed about mental health issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclusion of mental health information during student orientation and staff induction.</li> <li>• Inclusion of mental health information on institutional websites.</li> </ul>
7. To what extent can your institution evaluate the success of mental health promotional activity or inclusion of those experiencing mental ill-health?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey instruments targeted at those experiencing mental health issues.</li> <li>• Survey instruments incorporating consideration of mental health issues.</li> </ul>

**APPENDIX B:  
Consultation and Development process**

<b>March 2010</b>	The Student Support Centre (SSC) undertook a survey of students registered with a disability at CQUniversity in order to investigate current services offered to students with a disability.
<b>July 2010</b>	A report was prepared for SSC which recommended areas for improvement in the provision of University services, facilities and support.
<b>Dec 2010</b>	VCAC endorsed the review of the DAP, establishment of a working party for this purpose and recommended consultation process.
<b>March – June 2011</b>	The DAP Working Party was formed and met fortnightly with representatives from the People & Culture Directorate, Facilities Management and Student Centres who were directly involved in the provision of services and support for students and staff with disability. The aim of the DAP Working Party was to review the University's DAP in response to legislative changes and its relevance to inclusive services, planning, programs and policy frameworks for both students and staff at CQUniversity with reference to best practice in the tertiary sector.
<b>November 2011 – April 2012</b>	<p>The DVC (University Services) authorized further consultation throughout the CQUniversity community with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faculty</li> <li>• People and Culture Directorate;</li> <li>• Library Directorate;</li> <li>• Facilities Management Directorate;</li> <li>• Student Centres;</li> <li>• Office of Learning and Teaching;</li> <li>• Academic Learning Services Unit;</li> </ul> <p>Meetings were scheduled with Executive from Directorates, Faculties and responsibility areas and/or their nominees and representatives of the DAP working party.</p>
<b>June – September 2012</b>	Completed revision and rewriting of the DAP, renamed DAP for university-wide comment.

## **APPENDIX C: Executive Summary of Report – Assessment of Disability Services at CQUniversity: Results of the Disability Feedback Survey 2010**

The study identified that the majority of students on the disability register expressed no concerns when reporting their disability through QTAC or when going through CQUniversity directly for the enrolment process. It became evident that most respondents were aware of the services that the Student Support Centre offers, although the majority stated that they did not make enquiries about disability support prior to commencing their studies at CQUniversity.

Amongst the many services that are offered by the Student Support Centre; the consultation and disability registration process, in order to establish what type of assistance the individual student may require, had a very positive response with the majority of the SSC registered students being satisfied.

Perhaps one of the most encouraging outcomes of this study showed that most respondents perceived CQUniversity to be an inviting place of study that offers good support to persons with a disability.

The findings also highlighted a number of issues that need attention through either an improvement process or raising general awareness amongst students and/or members of staff:

- Awareness of existing University policy on disability amongst students;
- Awareness of what to do in an emergency situation amongst students;
- General awareness of all staff of people with a disability and their needs;
- An improved communication process between students and academic staff:
  - Train academic staff on assessment and teaching strategies;
  - A more personal approach when contacting students;
- Awareness and emphasis amongst both students and staff on the benefits of networking having a positive outcome of studies;
- Awareness and emphasis amongst both students and staff on the benefits of staff support having a positive outcome of studies.

Overall this study identified that the majority of students with a disability were satisfied with most services in place, providing a good support and that the Student Support Centre appears to be on track with its policies and systems in place.