

Draft Disability, Accessibility and Inclusion Policy

In the Diversity and Inclusion Policy Review undertaken in late 2019, disability and accessibility were identified as a key policy gap at the University of Melbourne. The development of a policy was approved by the [Diversity and Inclusion Steering Committee](#).

The resulting draft is a product of extensive pre-drafting and post-drafting consultation with key stakeholders from across the University.

Some of the key features of the new Policy include:

1. *Universal Design (UD) principles:*

There is a significant emphasis on UD principles in the Policy, and how these principles can apply to accessibility broadly, not only in the upgrading and building of physical structures. For example, whether they can be extrapolated to course and assessment design and delivery, assistive technologies, and the provision of services.

2. *Reversing the onus of accessibility:*

This is premised on the idea that the University should be proactive in engaging with the community and with individuals, and seek to act to prevent the need for individuals to have to escalate issues. Rather than the onus being on the individual to get the University (as a large, sometimes intimidating, institution) to make changes, the onus should be on the University to identify what it can do to improve accessibility.

3. *The definition of disability*

The definition in use is the one employed in the Disability Discrimination Act (Cth) and the Disability Standards for Education. An additional definition of 'persons with disability' has been added to partially take into account the social model of disability.

The Policy will ultimately supplement other actions identified for further consideration some of which will be subsumed in the University's broader Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan.