Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) 2023 - 2026

30 March 2023

Contents

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

The University of Melbourne acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the unceded land on which we work, learn and live: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong peoples (Burnley, Fishermans Bend, Parkville, Southbank and Werribee campuses), the Yorta Yorta Nation (Dookie and Shepparton campuses), and the Dja Dja Wurrung people (Creswick campus).

The University also acknowledges and is grateful to the Traditional Owners, Elders and Knowledge Holders of all Indigenous nations and clans who have been instrumental in our reconciliation journey.

We recognise the unique place held by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the original owners and custodians of the lands and waterways across the Australian continent, with histories of continuous connection dating back more than 60,000 years. We also acknowledge their enduring cultural practices of caring for Country.

We pay respect to Elders past, present and future, and acknowledge the importance of Indigenous knowledge in the Academy. As a community of researchers, teachers, professional staff and students we are privileged to work and learn every day with Indigenous colleagues and partners.

We recognise that due to the impacts of colonisation, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are more likely to be living with disability and/or chronic illness compared to the rest of Australian society.

Introduction

"Disability is an evolving concept and disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."
(United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities). [1]

The University of Melbourne is pleased to release a new Disability inclusion Action Plan (*DIAP 2023-2026*) that, for the first time, encompasses students and staff within its remit. Development of this Plan is a priority identified in the University's *Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2030* which aims to ensure that our entire community is empowered and supported to pursue excellence with equal opportunities.

In addition to strategic commitments to improve the University's accessibility and inclusivity for people with disability[2], the University is also bound by the *Disability Discrimination Act* (DDA) and the *Disability Standards for Education* (DSE). This legislation stipulates that educational institutions must ensure students and staff with disability can participate on the same basis as others and make educational and workplace adjustments to facilitate this.

The *DIAP 2023-2026* articulates a renewed commitment to disability inclusion at the University of Melbourne and focusses on foundational actions from which the University can continue to improve. In publishing the DIAP, the University commits to champion, implement and resource actions to minimise or remove structural, systemic and cultural barriers to participation for people with disability. As this work matures, the University has an ongoing responsibility to work with the sector and Government to raise the profile and increase support for people with disability in higher education. To ensure accountability for our commitment is visible to our community, a monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework will be developed to accompany this plan.

Everyone in the University community is encouraged to contribute to the success of the new DIAP by playing their own part to be informed about and create an environment where all people with disability feel confident, empowered and supported to succeed.

This plan has been endorsed by the University of Melbourne's Diversity & Inclusion Sub-Committee, which reports to the University Executive. It was formally approved by University Executive on 30 March 2023.

---

[1] The University of Melbourne accepts the biopsychosocial model of disability from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

[2] Throughout this document the phrase 'people with disability' includes people who have lived experience of disability, chronic health condition, mental health condition, and/or their carers.

Focus Area 1: Organisational Culture and Attitudes

Goal: *The University is a safe, welcoming, supportive and engaging place for students, staff and visitors with disability, and demonstrates a commitment to becoming a leader in disability inclusion and accessibility.*

	EDUCATION AND RESOURCES	Indicative timeline to commence	Accountable for implementation
1.1 – Training program	Develop a comprehensive University-wide training program on disability inclusion including: a. Promote and increase staff uptake of currently available online module, *Introduction to Disability Awareness* b. New training in Disability Confidence for targeted groups of staff (including but not limited to student-facing roles, hiring managers, promotions panel members) c. Digital accessibility training for staff responsible for digital assets, website development and marketing and communications d. Professional development on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) for teaching staff e. Inclusive Leadership professional development for managers and senior leadership to build capacity and model best practice in relation to inclusion and accessibility. This will have a broad D&I focus with content on disability inclusion.	2023-2024	Director Diversity & Inclusion Chief Human Resources Officer
1.2 – D&I toolkit	Develop a diversity and inclusion toolkit available to all students and staff incorporating: a. Inclusive language guide b. Inclusive events guide c. Guidance on creating accessible documents and resources d. A directory to find resources and support. The resources in the toolkit will have a broad D&I focus with specific content relevant to disability inclusion.	2023	Director Diversity & Inclusion

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY		*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
1.3 Policies to support disability inclusion	Launch the new Disability, Accessibility and Inclusion Policy, and update University policies to align with this policy and the DIAP, including the Assessment and Results Policy.	2023	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People & Community) President of Academic Board
1.4 – Addressing feedback	Scope a mechanism for students and staff with disability to provide feedback, offer suggestions and solutions, raise concerns and barriers, and embed clear accountabilities to address concerns.	2023	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People & Community)
1.5 – Leadership role on disability inclusion	Establish a role to champion disability inclusion at the University, including advice around how the University can communicate a commitment to disability inclusion by: a. Increasing awareness of disability inclusion and promoting attitudinal change of staff and students b. Responding to the concerns of students and staff with disability c. Reporting on progress of disability inclusion work.	2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People & Community)
VISIBLE COMMITMENT		*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
1.6 – Visibility and communications	Celebrate and promote the pride and strength of people with disability by acknowledging days of significance, research and innovation, and individual achievements of students, staff and alumni.	2023	Director Diversity & Inclusion Director Strategic Communications

1.7 – Lived Experience Advisory Groups (LEAGs)	Formalise student and staff Lived Experience Advisory Groups (LEAGs) to provide an ongoing mechanism for consultation and engagement on the implementation of the DIAP.	2023	Director Diversity & Inclusion
1.8 – Awards and grant funding	Identify opportunities to leverage existing awards or grant funds to support work that progresses inclusion and accessibility for University students, staff and visitors with disability.	2025	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People & Community)

Focus Area 2: Digital and Physical Accessibility and Inclusion

Goal: *The University creates a place of belonging for students, staff and visitors with disability by uplifting the accessibility and inclusivity of its physical and digital environment.*

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY		*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
2.1 – Accessibility for digital procurement	Uplift accessibility standards for procurement of software, digital resources and platforms.	2023	Executive Director Business Services
2.2 – WCAG 2.1 AA audit	Audit digital and online resources against Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 AA and establish a plan for prioritising and addressing non-compliance.	2023	Executive Director Business Services
2.3 – Accessible templates and documents	Provide best-practice guidance for all brand assets, templates, student, staff and community marketing and communications, and social media to be provided in accessible and easily navigated formats.	2024	Executive Director Business Services Director Strategic Communications
2.4 – Accessibility in Learning Management System (LMS)	Develop best-practice guidelines, including examples, for LMS to support accessibility for students and staff.	2024	Executive Director Business Services Executive Director Student & Scholarly Services and Academic Registrar
2.5 – Access to inclusive technologies	Improve staff and student access to and awareness of inclusive technologies: a. Provide information about inclusive technology support available, known limitations of IT systems and methods of access	2025	Executive Director Business Services

	b. Scope feasibility of centrally managed access to inclusive technologies for staff, via the workplace adjustments process.		
PHYSICAL ACCESSIBILITY		*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
2.6 – Design standards beyond compliance	Adopt and embed leading practice approaches to disability inclusion beyond 'compliance' in design standards for new buildings, rectification works and major works.	2023	Executive Director Business Services
2.7 – Specialist knowledge on disability inclusion in the built environment	Strengthen specialist knowledge on disability inclusion in the built environment for Campus Services staff by: a. Resourcing access to external expertise b. Provision of professional development opportunities.	2023	Executive Director Business Services
2.8 – Wayfinding technologies	Review physical and sensory wayfinding technologies and identify a best practice approach to ensuring clear and accessible methods are available to staff, students and visitors to the University.	2023	Executive Director Business Services
2.9 – Campus accessibility auditing and rectification	Continue regular auditing, evaluation of priorities and rectification planning for all campuses and ensure that facilities meet the needs of people with disability. This will be inclusive of internal and external features, furniture and technology (e.g. ramps and hearing loops).	2023	Executive Director Business Services
2.10 – Personal Emergency Plans (PEPs)	Develop new template and guidance for Personal Emergency Plans (PEPs), accompanied by a communications strategy to increase uptake by staff and students requiring a PEP.	2023	Executive Director Business Services
2.11 – Reporting physical accessibility issues	Review and improve current processes for students, staff and visitors to report physical accessibility issues, and implement communications to raise awareness of the process.	2023-2024	Executive Director Business Services

2.12 – Demonstrate commitment in the built environment	Demonstrate the University's commitment to creating an inclusive environment through: a. Clear and consistent signage (e.g. font size and colour contrast, braille, tactile, consistent colouring) b. Infrastructure to support accredited assistance animals c. Improving access to accessible parking on all campuses d. Reporting on progress of infrastructure works to the University community.	2024	Executive Director Business Services

Focus Area 3: Learning, Teaching and Research

Goal: *The University of Melbourne provides an inclusive learning experience, supports and promotes the success of researchers with disability, and demonstrates best practice disability inclusion and accessibility principles in teaching and research.*

	LEARNING AND TEACHING	*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
3.1 – Improve accessibility of curriculum and assessment	Design and implement approaches to improve accessibility of curriculum and assessment, for instance through broader adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and other inclusive pedagogies. This will be enabled by: a. Convening a Community of Practice to develop staff capabilities, share ideas and showcase best practice b. Support for teaching staff to adopt inclusive pedagogies through provision of training, advice and recognition.	2023	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)
3.2 – Framework for inherent requirements	Establish a University-wide framework for the articulation of inherent requirements[3] for award courses.	2023	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) President Academic Board
3.3 – Accountability processes for teaching staff	Provide guidance and implement accountability processes to ensure that teaching staff comply with the University's legal obligations (*Disability Discrimination Act, Disability Standards for Education*) around provision of educational adjustments.	2023	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People & Community)

---

[3] Inherent requirements, in the study context, are the fundamental tasks of a program/course/subject that require students to demonstrate their abilities during any learning activities. They are not entry requirements, accreditation requirements, learning outcomes or legal, ethical or health requirements.

		Indicative timeline to commence	Accountable for implementation
3.4 – Guidelines for student internships	Develop and promote best practice guidelines for supporting students with disability in internships and compulsory practice placements.	2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
RESEARCH SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION		*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
3.5 – Facilitate expert advice on University projects	Facilitate collaborations (e.g. a Community of Practice) to enable internal disability experts to promote innovation and leading practice across the University. This may include projects in University operations, research, community engagement, teaching and learning.	2023	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People & Community)
3.6 – Support for researchers with disability	Develop an approach to support researchers (graduate researchers and staff) with disability to engage in research on an equitable basis with their peers.	2025	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Focus Area 4: Student Recruitment, Support and Employability

Goal: The University of Melbourne is an inclusive and accessible place where students with disability, chronic health conditions, mental health conditions and/or their carers are supported to thrive and succeed.

STUDENT SUPPORT		*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
4.1 – Review of Student Equity and Disability Support (SEDS)	Undertake a review of Student Equity and Disability Services (SEDS) to: a. Review and report on the current suitability, function and fit of the University's ongoing registration and tangible supports for students b. Recommend future supports, including system requirements, process recommendations, staff resourcing and skills/expertise requirements to ensure that SEDS is able to meet current and future student needs.	2023	Executive Director, Student & Scholarly Services and Academic Registrar Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People & Community)
4.2 – Support for Academic Adjustment Plans (AAPs)	Support provision of Academic Adjustment Plans (AAPs) by: a. Auditing the implementation of AAPs and review eligibility requirements b. Establishing a transparent, timely and robust process of review for AAPs denied by faculties.	2023	Executive Director, Student & Scholarly Services and Academic Registrar Deans
4.3 – Academic Equity Support in faculties	Establish an Academic Equity Support role in faculties as point of local contact for informed advice and support for students and staff on academic adjustments and related academic matters (e.g. upskill an academic staff member).	2023	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People and Community)
4.4 – Student access and training on inclusive technologies	Provide students with disability with information about and access to training and support to use inclusive technology and software.	2023	Executive Director, Student & Scholarly Services and Academic Registrar

4.5 – Check-ins for students with disability	Establish a system to: a. Establish outreach via Student Equity and Disability Services (SEDS) to students with disability, to ensure that they are well-supported in the implementation of their academic adjustment plans b. Enable faculty oversight of compliance with academic adjustment plans.	2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Executive Director, Student & Scholarly Services and Academic Registrar
STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND EMPLOYABILITY		*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
4.6 – Entry pathways for students with disability	Review student entry pathways and implement process changes to reduce barriers to participation for students with disability.	2023	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Executive Director, Student & Scholarly Services and Academic Registrar
4.7 – Scholarships for students with disability	Review the availability and communication of scholarships, and scope opportunities to increase targeted scholarship programs for current students with disability (at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels).	2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Executive Director, Student & Scholarly Services and Academic Registrar
4.8 – Internships for students with disability	Establish and promote internship opportunities for students with disability, both within the University and with external partners. This could include: a. Promotion of external opportunities, e.g. Australian Network on Disability student internship program b. Actively consider and seek students with disability for internal internship opportunities connected with their faculty/discipline c. Specific allocation of work experience places for students with disability, including paid internships.	2024	Executive Director, Student & Scholarly Services and Academic Registrar Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

Focus Area 5: Staff Recruitment, Support and Development

Goal: *Prospective, new and current staff with disability, chronic health conditions, mental health conditions and/or their carers feel confident, supported, and passionate about working at the University.*

	STAFF SUPPORT	*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
5.1 – Workplace Adjustments Support	Develop a supportive and centralised process to provide workplace adjustments to staff with disability.	2023	Executive Director Business Services
5.2 – Payment for workplace adjustments	Establish: a. A budgetary mechanism to support timely provision of workplace adjustments for staff with disability b. Guidance for managers on their responsibilities regarding workplace adjustments, and availability of budgetary mechanism.	2024	Chief Financial Officer Director Diversity & Inclusion
	POLICIES AND STAFF DEVELOPMENT	*Indicative timeline to commence*	*Accountable for implementation*
5.3 – HR policies and procedures	Review HR policies, procedures and management guidelines to improve disability inclusion and access, prioritising: a. Recruitment: Ensuring that candidates with disability are not disadvantaged, are proactively supported, unconscious bias is minimised and discrimination eliminated b. Flexible work: Specify availability of adjustments/accommodations for people with disability, and those with carer responsibilities for people with disability c. Workload: Guide and facilitate determination of staff workloads to accommodate additional activities undertaken by staff with disability.	2023	Chief Human Resources Officer

5.4 – Prioritise requests from staff with disability	Implement a system to prioritise requests from staff with disability, where the request relates to the removal of a barrier to access and inclusion.	2024	Executive Director Business Services
5.5 – Career progression for staff with disability	Promote career progression for academic and professional staff with disability by: a. For academic staff: Proactively support career development and embed informed knowledge of performance relative to opportunity into confirmation, performance reviews, career development and promotion processes b. For professional staff: Proactively support career development and career enrichment, and guidelines on assessing performance relative to opportunity for staff with disability.	2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (People & Community) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Chief Human Resources Officer
5.6 – Data collection and reporting	Explore and assemble a mechanism to collect data to monitor shifts in recruitment, retention, progression and experience of staff with disability.	2024	Chief Human Resources Officer