# Disability Action Plan

## 2014 - 2015

Equity & Equal Opportunity Office
equity@federation.edu.au

Review of progress as at 1 December 2014

**Federation** UNIVERSITY • AUSTRALIA

# Disability Action Plan 2014 - 2015

## Objective

Federation University Australia (FedUni) is committed to providing an inclusive learning and working environment for people with disability.

'Accessibility, inclusiveness and provision of a supportive learning and research environment are at the heart of Federation University Australia' (Charter 2015).

The University has achieved significant progress in the area of disability over many years. The University also recognises that there are still improvements to be made so that students and staff with disability can experience FedUni on the same basis as those without disability.

The FedUni Disability Action Plan 2014-15 provides clear actions and measurable targets for improvement, and will be used to engage the University community in making improvements across all areas of University operations, to continue to improve accessibility for people with disability in both study and employment and to ensure FedUni is a place where all staff and students can achieve and succeed.

The Plan is guided by the University's Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Policy which states, 'The University will provide reasonable adjustments to the learning and working environment as required, and will strive to apply the principles of inclusion in all of its activities, to ensure all people have equal opportunity to access and participate in University activities.'

## Priority Areas

Actions within this Plan have been grouped into three priority areas:

1. Access
   FedUni will aim to ensure that students and staff with disability have equitable access to facilities, services, information and events.

2. Participation
   FedUni will aim to ensure that students and staff with disability have the opportunity to participate equitably in study and employment.

3. Social Inclusive Culture
   FedUni will foster a culture that demonstrates respect and inclusion for people with disability.

## Consultation

The development of the Plan included information and consultation from various sources. An anonymous online survey was conducted in November 2013 to obtain staff and student input into areas for improvement. This survey was broadly advertised to the University community and to all students registered with the University Disability Liaison Unit. The Equity and Equal Opportunity Office consulted staff across the University to discuss priority areas and to develop actions.

# Disability Action Plan 2014 - 2015

## Next Steps

The *Disability Action Plan 2014-2015* will be communicated with students and staff and will be registered as a publicly available document with the Australian Human Rights Commission. Actions will commence immediately and the FedUni Social Inclusion Committee will review progress at regular intervals, the first being in December 2014. Progress reports will be available on the FedUni website in the Equity and Equal Opportunity section. Input from students and staff is encouraged at any time for the next iteration of the Plan. Please email equity@federation.edu.au

## Legislation and Associated Documents

The following legislation and documents have aided the development of the Federation University Australia Disability Action Plan:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cwth)
- Disability Standards for Access to Premises – Buildings 2010 (Cwth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Federation University Australia Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Policy
- Federation University Australia Social Inclusion Plan 2014-2015

## Definitions

The following definitions are relevant to the Disability Action Plan, as defined in the University's Equal Opportunity and Valuing Diversity Policy:

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| Discrimination | Refers to unfair or less favourable treatment based on the following actual or assumed personal characteristics as defined under Commonwealth and State laws: sex, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, breastfeeding, status as a parent or carer, sexual orientation, lawful sexual activity, race, disability, age, industrial activity, physical features, religious beliefs or activities, political beliefs or activities, criminal record, medical record or personal association with a person who has, or is assumed to have, one of these personal characteristics. This concept includes Direct and Indirect Discrimination. |
| Direct Discrimination: | Occurs if a person is treated less favourably than another person would be treated in the same or similar circumstances, on the basis of an attribute as listed above. |
| Indirect Discrimination: | Occurs if there is an unreasonable requirement, condition or practice that someone with an attribute cannot comply with and that a higher proportion of people without that attribute can comply with. |

| Harassment: | Refers to a wide range of deliberate and unintentional behaviours in the teaching, learning, research or workplace environment which may humiliate, intimidate or offend and which are unwelcome and uninvited. It includes behaviour which may be written, verbal, non-verbal or physical (including transmission of inappropriate electronic communications and display of inappropriate material from the internet) and is of a sexual nature or is based on attributes listed under 'Discrimination' above. Harassment has the effect of offending, humiliating or intimidating the person at whom it is directed. It makes the University environment unpleasant and sometimes even hostile. If a person is being harassed, their ability to study and to work effectively is affected. |
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| Disability: | Refers to a total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; a total or partial loss of a part of the body; the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour. It includes a disability that presently exists; previously existed but no longer exists; may exist in the future; is imputed to a person. |
| Reasonable adjustment: | A 'reasonable adjustment' is the term used to describe actions or changes which may be required to enable staff and student participation on the same basis as other staff and students. Lack of provision of reasonable adjustment might constitute discrimination. Adjustments might be necessary where the interaction between the learning and working environment and certain student/staff personal characteristics or circumstances has a negative impact on staff/student participation or achievement. Such characteristics and circumstances include having a disability, carer responsibilities, cultural or religious obligations, being Indigenous, having English as a second language. There is no set definition of what is a 'reasonable' adjustment. Each situation needs to be considered in its own circumstances and on its own merits |
| On the same basis: | In relation to 'reasonable adjustments', is where a person with a certain personal characteristic or circumstance has opportunities and choices that are comparable with those offered to other people. Being treated "on the same basis" may mean being treated differently, particularly where it is necessary to provide reasonable adjustments. |
| Principles of inclusion: | Is where learning, working and physical environments are designed to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design, taking into consideration the variety of abilities, disabilities, racial/ethnic backgrounds, and other characteristics of the student and staff body. |

# Disability Action Plan 2014 - 2015

## Access

FedUni will aim to ensure that students and staff with disability have equitable access to facilities, services, information and events.

| Number | Action | Progress Target | Action Officer/s | Progress as at 1 December 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | An agreed disability access guideline is developed and implemented for all new buildings, minor works and refurbishments. | A guideline is developed and adhered to for all new buildings, minor works and refurbishments. | • Manager, Equity & Equal Opportunity<br>• Manager, Strategic Capital, Infrastructure and Projects<br>• Director, Facilities Services<br>• Executive Director, ICT Services<br>• Project Coordinator, Dual Sector Project, Disability Liaison Unit | Plan to commence in 2015. A loose consultative process is in place. |
| 2 | Update campus maps to include a statement on how to arrange a campus tour to suit individual access needs. | A statement including contact details is included on all campus maps. | • Equity Officer<br>• Disability Liaison Officer | Commenced. This project has been further developed to produce disability access maps for campuses. Mt Helen, SMB and Camp Street maps are in progress, intended for release in Jan 2015. Maps for other campuses planned to commence in 2015. |
| 3 | Develop an improved method for communication of buildings and grounds works that impact on access routes. | An improved method of communication is developed and implemented. | • Equity Officer | Plan to commence early 2015. |
| 4 | Include disability considerations in the signage and way-finding project managed by Strategic Capital, Infrastructure and Projects (SCIP) in 2014. | Disability considerations are communicated to the Project Manager and Project Consultants as part of the Way-finding and Signage Project. | • Manager, Equity & Equal Opportunity<br>• Equity Officer<br>• Director, Student Connect | Disability considerations have been communicated with Project Consultants including need for signage for disability access routes and lifts. Ultimately, these were not included in the final outcome, however they have formed the basis of new disability access maps. Refer Action Item 2 |
| 5 | Conduct a review of recruitment processes to determine if any improvements are necessary to support prospective staff with disability. | A review is conducted and recommendations made to the Director, HR. | • Manager, Human Resources<br>• Manager, Equity & Equal Opportunity<br>• Equity Officer | Scheduled to commence early 2015. |

# Disability Action Plan 2014 - 2015

| Number | Action | Progress Target | Action Officer/s | Progress as at 1 December 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | Ensure that the Federation University Australia website is as accessible as possible. | Achieve AA rating using the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 by the end of 2014. | • Director, Centre for eResearch & Digital Innovation (CeRDI) | In progress. Template changes made to improve accessibility. Further changes are required. |
| 7 | Provide training and resources for web publishers on the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 | Training is offered at Ballarat and Gippsland campus. | • Coordinator, Web Development | Accessibility training commenced in 2014. To be extended in 2015. |
| 8 | Web accessibility guidelines are regularly reviewed to ensure information adheres to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 | Guidelines are reviewed annually. | • Coordinator, Web Development | Complete for 2014. Next review will occur in 2015. |
| 9 | Software programs/applications that improve website accessibility compliance are investigated. | Install upgraded version of Content Management System which includes accessibility auditor. | • Corporate Web Team | Complete. Content Management System was upgraded to include an accessibility auditor. |
| 10 | Review Moodle default configurations to ensure compliance with the Web Compliance Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 | Default configurations are reviewed and findings implemented by December 2014. | • Manager, Learning Futures and E-learning | Completed, with ongoing processes in place to ensure compliance with future upgrades. |
| 11 | Increase diversity in marketing materials and publications including students with disability. | Marketing materials and publications reflect diversity including age, disability, ethnicity, physical appearance. | • Manager, Marketing and Communications | All publications will be reviewed by Marketing as they are reprinted to ensure a suitable diversity is evident. |
| 12 | Conduct a review of student recruitment and marketing materials that are available to students and prospective students to ensure disability services information is included. | Materials have been reviewed and disability services information is included where required. | • Manager, Marketing and Communications | All publications will be reviewed by Marketing as they are reprinted to ensure disability services information is included where required. |

# Disability Action Plan 2014 - 2015

| Number | Action | Progress Target | Action Officer/s | Progress as at 1 December 2014 |
|--------|--------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 13 | Implement a process where prospective students and guests with disabilities can register for adjustments/needs for University events. | A process is developed and implemented by Marketing (Events) in the first instance. | • Manager, Marketing and Communications | A process and wording for advertising events has been agreed by Marketing, Disability Liaison Unit and Equity & Equal Opportunity. |
| 14 | A guideline for accessible events and activities is developed. | Guidelines are developed in consultation with, and provided to, Marketing, Public Relations, Student Connect and Campus Life for the initial roll-out. | • Equity Officer | Plan to commence in 2015. |
| 15 | Disability services information is available to students prior to enrolment. | Information on accessing disability services is available prior to enrolment. | • Project Coordinator, Dual Sector Project, Disability Liaison Unit<br>• Admissions Coordinator, Student Management & Systems | Complete. 'Accepting an offer' information is web based. Prospective students are provided with a web link to student home page to access information on support services including disability.<br><br>A revamp of the disability enquiry on Campus Solutions has occurred. Can now capture all students registered with the Disability Liaison Unit across both sectors. |

# Disability Action Plan 2014 - 2015

## Participation

FedUni will aim to ensure that students and staff with disability have the opportunity to participate equitably in study and employment.

| Number | Action | Progress Target | Action Officer/s | Progress as at 1 December 2014 |
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| 16 | Implement Learning Access Plans for students requiring reasonable adjustments to improve communication and timeliness between the student, academic staff and the Disability Liaison Unit. | Learning Access Plans are implemented for all Disability Liaison Unit clients. | • Project Coordinator, Dual Sector Project, Disability Liaison Unit | Learning Access Plans have been implemented for all clients since March 2014. The Disability Liaison Unit is currently surveying students – preliminary results reveal high satisfaction from students. |
| 17 | Investigate centralised disability adjustment funding for staff, similar to the maternity leave central fund. | Decision is made on whether to implement a centralised disability fund for staff. | • Manager, Equity & Equal Opportunity | Plan to commence in 2015. |
| 18 | Establish a process for staff to request reasonable adjustments for disability. | A process is developed and communicated with staff. | • Senior Human Resources Advisor<br>• Manager, Equity & Equal Opportunity<br>• Equity Officer | Plan to commence in 2015. |
| 19 | Review current processes for enabling participation by staff with disability in internal professional development activities and develop recommendations for improvement. | Current processes are reviewed and recommendations (if any) are made to relevant responsible areas. | • Manager, Equity & Equal Opportunity<br>• Equity Officer | Plan to commence in 2015. |
| 20 | Develop a process for employing large numbers of casual staff in the Student Futures Program that is inclusive to people with disability. | A process is developed and implemented for the commencement of 2015. | • Coordinator, Student Futures Program | A full recruitment review was undertaken in consultation with HR, Equity & Equal Opportunity and Student Advisory Service. New recruitment processes for casual staff have been developed to ensure processes are inclusive to people with a disability. |
| 21 | Review existing Moodle training resources for academic staff to ensure they contain information on web accessibility. | A review is conducted and findings implemented by December 2014. | • Manager, Learning Futures and E-learning | In progress. New resources being developed highlight accessibility, and a systematic review of existing resources is being conducted during 2015. Estimated to be completed 2015. |

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| Number | Action | Progress Target | Action Officer/s | Progress as at 1 December 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 22 | Promote disability services to students within Moodle. | A link to the Disability Support webpage is visible to students using Moodle. | • Manager, Learning Futures and E-Learning | Completed. A link has been created in the Moodle menu to the current student websites which contains disability and support services information. The Moodle menu will be reviewed for functionality, with the potential to include a direct link to the disability support menu. |
| 23 | Develop a process for Partner Providers to use when implementing reasonable adjustments for students with disability. | A process is established and communicated with Partner Providers. | • Project Coordinator, Dual Sector Project, Disability Liaison Unit | A flow chart has been developed for Partner Providers to consider special consideration vs Learning Access Plans. The 'Partner provider disability adjustment form' and process is on hold until clause is finalised by legal for new agreements. |
| 24 | Provide information to Partner Providers to ensure they are aware of their obligations to provide reasonable adjustments to students with a disability and any relevant FedUni processes that need to be used. | The operating manual / handbook for Partner Providers includes information on equal opportunity, discrimination and disability responsibilities and processes. | • Manager, Partner Relationships<br>• Equity Officer | The 2015 Operational Manual for Partner Providers (PP) includes information on PP responsibilities relating to discrimination, harassment, disability, reasonable adjustments. The document is emailed to PP and is available on the Moodle shell for all Partner stakeholders.<br>In 2015, further work is planned for establishing and communicating FedUni processes relating to reasonable adjustments. Group training sessions for PP in 2015 will include information on Learning Access Plans. |
| 25 | Review the provisions for achievement relative to opportunity in the Academic Promotions Procedure from a disability perspective. | The provisions in the Academic Promotions Procedure are reviewed and recommendations (if any) are made to the Director, Human Resources (Policy Sponsor). | • Manager, Equity & Equal Opportunity | Plan to commence in 2015. |

# Disability Action Plan 2014 - 2015

## Social Inclusion Culture

FedUni will foster a culture that demonstrates respect and inclusion for people with disability.

| Number | Action | Progress Target | Action Officer/s | Progress as at 1 December 2014 |
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| 26 | Communicate accessibility information and requirements to web publishing and University community through quarterly newsletters, targeted training sessions, email communications, inclusion of accessibility into web publishing guides, FedUni news and events. | Accessibility information is communicated to web publishing and University community. | • Coordinator, Web Development | Ongoing. Each quarterly newsletter has included articles on accessibility. Newsletters are distributed to staff on FedNews and are available on web publishing area of the corporate website.<br>Web support issues have been identified and communicated to web publishers.<br>Accessibility information has been reviewed and updated in the web publishing area of website. |
| 27 | Professional development of Web Team staff includes web accessibility training. | Three team members attend training delivered by Vision Australia in 2014. | • Director, Centre for eResearch & Digital Innovation (CeRDI) | Complete. Three staff members have attended training delivered by Vision Australia. |
| 28 | Provide staff information/education relevant to the implementation of Learning Access Plans. | Professional development is offered formally and informally across campuses. | • Project Coordinator, Dual Sector Project, Disability Liaison Unit | Ongoing. Disability Liaison Officers are providing information/education on an individual basis rather than in a formal training environment. |
| 29 | Develop a training module for staff that covers Learning Access Plans and DLU processes. | A training module is developed and implemented by February 2015. | • Project Coordinator, Dual Sector Project, Disability Liaison Unit | A training schedule/module for academic support workers has been written. Will be delivered during March 2015.<br>Early discussions have commenced with CLIPP relating to professional development on Learning Access Plans for staff. |
| 30 | Promote awareness of student rights and responsibilities in relation to reasonable adjustments with Partner Providers and students. | Partner Providers are provided with information for students on Student Rights and Responsibilities which includes equal opportunity, discrimination and reasonable adjustments. | • Manager, Partner Relationships<br>• Equity Officer | Student rights and responsibilities brochures have been sent to Partner Providers (PP) to be available to students at enrolment centres. An additional electronic version has been created for 2015, this will be distributed to PP via email, newsletter and Moodle for PP to distribute to students. |

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| Number | Action | Progress Target | Action Officer/s | Progress as at 1 December 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 31 | Staff in the Student Careers and Employment Service will participate in professional development to be more proactive and responsive to students with disabilities. | Staff have participated in professional development relevant to students with disabilities. | • Manager, Careers & Employment | Selected staff attended The Australian Network on disability conference in Geelong 31 July 2014, and the NAGCAS Diversity event in Melbourne on 24 October 2014. Third person learning has been implemented for staff who did not attend the events. Open discussions have been had across the team about supporting students with disabilities and increased cross referral and support through the DLU has resulted. |
| 32 | Provide 2 day training sessions for staff and students in Mental Health First Aid. | Training sessions are offered to staff and students across FedUni campuses in 2014. | • Counselling and Mental Health Programs Coordinator | In 2014, Counselling has delivered Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training to over 60 staff from the Mt Helen, SMB, Camp St and Horsham campus. MHFA training has been delivered to over 100 students across all campuses, with a trial for embedding the course into programs. In 2015, MHFA training will continue to be available to staff at all campuses. The 2015 focus will be on increasing the number of students accessing MHFA training to 200 students. |
| 33 | Employees in the Student Futures Program participate in training relating to equal opportunity, disability and reasonable adjustments. | Initial roll out in mid-2014 with full implementation by February 2015. | • Coordinator, Student Futures Program | Staff who work as PASS Leaders and Student Academic Leaders will be required to undertake full Equity & Equal Opportunity training as of 2015. Mentors, who only work across 6 weeks of the semester will be required to undertake a scaled down Moodle Equity & Equal Opportunity module, which is currently in development.  Full implementation is expected to occur on time in 2015. |
| 34 | Continuing and fixed-term staff to complete Equity training which includes disability and reasonable adjustments. | 85% of all continuing and fixed-term staff have completed the online equity training. | • Equity Officer | Ongoing. Completion rate is currently at 83%. |

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| Number | Action | Progress Target | Action Officer/s | Progress as at 1 December 2014 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 35 | Implement a monitoring system for the Disability Action Plan. | The Disability Action Plan is reviewed annually and an update is published on the Equity website. | • Social Inclusion Committee | Commenced. The FedUni Social Inclusion Committee has approved a schedule to regularly review progress on the Disability Action Plan. |