

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT POLICY

Policy Code: RAP - 001

Version: 1.0

Effective Date: 2nd April 2018

PURPOSE

The College is committed to providing reasonable adjustments to ensure equal opportunity and participation for students with a disability, mental health condition, or other disorder that may affect the student's learning experience.

This Policy outlines ACOAE's RTO's commitment to support all students with a disability in accordance with the obligations outlined by the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the *Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

Definition of "College" – ACOAE's RTO, For the purpose of this policy, any reference to 'College' should be considered a reference to the ACOAE's RTO.

Use of the term "course" – for the purposes of this policy, the term course should be deemed interchangeable with the terms "training package" and "accredited course".

Use of the term "subject" – for the purposes of this policy the term "subject" should be deemed interchangeable with the term "unit of study" and incorporates units of competency within a unit of study.

Scope:

- All domestic and international students
- Campus (including online learning)
- Prospective students enrolling in the College
- All academic, training and student services staff (including contractors)

POLICY STATEMENT

The College recognises the individual needs of students and respects the rights of all students to participate inclusively and fully in all facets of the College experience in particular the access and

equity of student engagement outcomes. This applies to prospective students at admission and enrolment into study, participation of enrolled students in all subjects and courses, and the use of College facilities and services.

The College is committed to providing opportunities and access to students with a disability, mental health condition, or other disorder that are comparable to students without additional needs. The following Policy Principles are consistent with the College legislative responsibilities, and demonstrate the College commitment to access and equity for all students.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Access and Equity Handbook for VET students which outlines many of the processes referred to in this policy, and the Disability and Special Needs Policy, which outlines the College's commitment to support all students with a disability.

POLICY PRINCIPLES

The College is committed to:

- the provision of reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of students with a disability
- the promotion of and adherence to the principles of the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005
- providing all students access to the College Access and Equity Program (AEP) and Access and Equity Officers (AEO) located on each campus.

For information on reasonable adjustments for students with English as a Second Language, refer to the relevant English Proficiency Policy.

KEY TERMS DEFINED

Disability – The College defines disability in accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992. As used throughout this Policy, disability shall refer to all illnesses, disorders, and other conditions listed below.

In broad terms, a disability involves an alteration to a person's functioning and includes:

- Physical
- intellectual
- psychiatric
- sensory
- neurological
- learning disabilities
- physical disfigurement
- the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms.

Disability can be:

- temporary or permanent
- apparent or hidden
- slight, moderate, or severe
- existing in the past or present.

The College also recognises students with additional special needs that can affect learning such as:

- mental health conditions (e.g. anxiety, depression, PTSD)
- medical conditions or ongoing illnesses (e.g. chronic fatigue syndrome, acquired brain injury)
- temporary conditions (e.g. broken arm)
- learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, auditory processing disorder).

Reasonable Adjustment – The College defines *reasonable adjustment* in accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005:

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it achieves this purpose while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of:

- the student with the disability
- the education provider (the College) staff
- other students

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

Reasonable adjustments may be made to accommodate a student with a disability or special need and reduce the impact of a disability or special need on a student's academic success. Adjustments may include modifications to the learning environment, teaching method, or assessment conditions to increase the participation of a student without compromising the academic standard or the inherent course requirements.

Reasonable adjustments may be made to assist a student with a disability or special need to successfully complete a subject or course, however it may not be possible for the student to achieve 100% of the inherent course requirements. This means that while students with a disability or special need may receive provision for reasonable adjustments to achieve the inherent course requirements, it may not be possible to receive a passing grade in some circumstances.

It is important to note that all courses have inherent course requirements that are related to contact with a client in a practical setting. As a student progressing through the course, client contact increasing every year is an important preparation for practice and ensuring that the student is both confident and competent in their ability to treat members of the public. It is important that students understand these requirements at the beginning of their studies at the College. The College does not restrict enrolment on the basis of disability or discriminate against students with a disability; however if a student is unable to successfully complete some of the inherent course requirements they may fail an essential component of the course. Should this occur the student will not be able to graduate.

PROVISION OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

- Students with a disability or special need will discuss any potential need for reasonable adjustments with Student Services upon disclosure and registration with the Access and Equity Program.
- **Privacy note:** only Student Services and the College Manager will have access to personal information provided by participants in the Access and Equity Program; this may include medical information.
- Provision of reasonable adjustment is dependent on complete and adequate documentation being provided by the student to substantiate a disability and demonstrate need for individual accommodations.
- Prospective students who disclose a disability or special need on application to the College may require further consultation with the relevant manager to discuss inherent course requirements prior to enrolment. In such an instance, pertinent case details will be revealed to the manager in order to provide tailored appropriate support to the student.
- Students who register with the Access and Equity Program must meet with Student Services each teaching period to enrol in subjects, confirm ongoing adjustments, and to remain registered with the Access and Equity Program.

DETERMINATION OF REASONABLE ADJUSTMENT

Wherever practical, reasonable adjustment to ACOAE's RTO policy or procedure will be made to meet the needs of a student with a disability or special need. To determine if an adjustment is reasonable, the following must be considered:

- A student's disability, and any barriers, needs, or challenges that may affect that student throughout a subject or course
- The views of the student or the student's advocate
- Whether the adjustment will impact on the academic standards or inherent course requirements
- Whether the adjustment creates an undue advantage for the student, or an undue disadvantage for another student

- The costs and benefits to all parties of making the adjustment including possible impacts on College capital expenditure and/or operational budgets
- The 'willingness to pay' the costs association with the adjustment on behalf of either party.

ACOAE's is not obligated to make any adjustment or accommodation that may impose an unjustifiable hardship on the College. Students with a disability or special need may be required to provide additional medical or specialised documentation to substantiate the reasonableness of the adjustment.

The bearing of costs associated with reasonable adjustment will be negotiated with the student at the time of the Reasonable Adjustment Plan being established. In general, if the student requires a support person in a classroom or regular clinic situation (e.g. as a note-taker), any costs associated with the appointment of that support person will be borne by the student; however if the student requires such a support person in an assessment situation on campus (e.g. exam, practical skills assessment), the support person will be supplied by the College and the costs associated with the appointment of that support person will be borne by the College to ensure integrity of assessment is upheld.

Where there are multiple options for reasonable adjustment determined, the option that is least costly to the College will be determined the most appropriate to implement.

GUIDELINES

Students with a disability or special need may be entitled to reasonable adjustments to learning resources, learning environment, teaching method, or assessment conditions.

- Reasonable adjustments to learning resources or teaching methods may include providing a student with a visual impairment with larger font handouts.
- Reasonable adjustments to learning environment may include using accessible teaching settings for students with a physical disability.

- Reasonable adjustments to assessment conditions may include extended time for theory-based exams or alternate arrangements for practical assessments.

Negotiation of reasonable adjustments will occur through consultation with the student, the student's advocate, Student Services and College Manager or other relevant College staff.

EXCEPTIONS

- The College is not obligated to provide adjustments for a student who chooses not to disclose a disability or special need and register with the Access and Equity Program.
- The College is not obligated to make any adjustment or accommodation that may impose an unjustifiable hardship on the College.
- The College cannot compromise the academic standards or inherent course requirements.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The College maintains its responsibility to:

- Ensure that this Policy is accessible to all staff and students.
- Ensure that this Policy is implemented and applied consistently including its online learning environment.

COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE

Students who have a complaint or grievance, academic or non-academic, should refer to the relevant *Grievance Policy*.

Students who have a complaint or grievance related to disability or reasonable adjustment should first contact the Student Support Officer on campus.

- Students who are not satisfied with the outcome or conduct of a complaint or grievance related to disability or reasonable adjustment may appeal to an external agency as per the relevant Grievance Policy

RELATED PROCEDURES

N/A

Definitions:

Advocate – A representative appointed by the student to assist in consultation with the College to determine appropriate support and reasonable adjustments for the student. An advocate could be a family member, close friend, carer, medical professional, or other party chosen by the student.

Inherent Course Requirements - The documents outlining the specific skill, knowledge, performance or behavioural requirements that a student must meet in order to successfully complete each higher education course offered by the College and to enable graduates to register with professional associations or licensing bodies.

Special Circumstances / Consideration – Students may apply for Special Circumstances / Consideration when a decision has been made by the College upon application of the relevant policy that may require reassessment due to extenuating circumstances. For example, students may apply for an extension of a written assessment or deferral of an examination if a situation occurred that was beyond the student's control which affected the student's participation in study. For further information refer to the relevant *Special Consideration Policy* –or *Special Circumstances Policy*.

Student – is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at the College. The individual person is that who appears on the College documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.

Support – The College connects students with a disability to specialised services or adjustments with the aim of assisting them to achieve personal and educational goals at the College. This support enables the College to meet its access and equity commitments as well as disability legislative requirements under Commonwealth law. For further information refer to the *Disability and Special Needs Policy* and the *Access and Equity Handbook*.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Related Policies:

- Assessment Policy
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Disability and Special Needs Policy
- English Proficiency Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Special Circumstances Policy

Supporting Research and Analysis:

- Australian Human Rights Commission <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/>
- Australian Network on Disability <http://www.and.org.au/>
- Australasian Network of Students with Disabilities www.answd.org/

Related Documents:

- Access and Equity Student Handbook
- Grievance Procedure
- Inherent Course Requirements

Related Legislation:

- Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005
- NSW - Disability Services Act 1993

Policy Author:	Student Services, College Manager
Policy Owner:	College Manager
Endorsing Body:	College Manager
Approval Body:	College Manager, Training Manager
Policy Status:	New – split out from Disability & Special Needs Policy
Responsibilities for Implementation :	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Services • Compliance • College Manager
Key Stakeholders:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Services • Compliance • College Manager
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