Disability Access and Inclusion Plan
2017-2020
MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Deakin University has a strong commitment to creating an inclusive working and learning environment for its diverse population of students and staff, and in so doing contributes to the harmony, respect and tolerance in the communities we serve.

The Deakin Access and Inclusion Plan 2017–2020 updates the work undertaken by the University since its first Disability Discrimination Act Action Plan was lodged in 2000. This Plan updates the 2012 - 2015 Plan in response to feedback from students and staff, and takes into account current university initiatives.

Becoming a truly accessible and inclusive organisation requires changes to the way we go about our day-to-day business: our planning and decision making must be informed by the experiences of people with disability and our analysis of relevant data; the way we design and deliver our courses and support services must involve consultation and embrace leading practice. The overarching aim of the Plan is that people with disability will participate fully in the life of the University and will succeed on an equitable basis in their study or work.

Ultimate responsibility for the implementation of individual strategies rests with the Executive but the whole University community has an important role to play in building an inclusive culture.

Kean Selway
Chief Operating Officer, Deakin University
PURPOSE

The Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2017—2020 (the Plan) updates and replaces Deakin’s Disability Action Plan 2012 – 2015. The change in the naming of the Plan is a deliberate decision to emphasise how Deakin will include people with disability by the actions we take as a community and an organisation.

The Plan forms one of a number of interrelated plans developed by Equity and Diversity in consultation with, and on behalf of the University. It acknowledges the effect of disability intersecting with other inequities, and the benefit for all in implementing access and inclusion strategies.

The Plan is registered with the Australian Human Rights Commission. It demonstrates a commitment to inclusive policies and practices and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), and the related Disability Standards for Education 2005.

FRAMEWORK

The Plan is framed around goals for people, community and the organisation, to realise individual, group and systemic change.

GOALS

1. **People.** We listen and respond to people with disability to enable success and equitable outcomes

2. **Community.** We build capacity, develop partnerships and practice, and provide resources and support to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment.

3. **Organisation.** We develop and implement planning, policy and leadership that promotes access and inclusion for all.
The goals and strategies outlined in the Plan form a high level framework for 2017 – 2020. Specific actions are developed by those identified as responsible for each strategy, and monitored and reported on annually.

**REVIEW OF PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE 2012**

To guide the review and consultation process for the Plan, a small working group was formed to assist the Manager, Access and Inclusion with the review and development process. The working group considered progress since the 2012 – 2015 plan, available data and feedback from 2 surveys that specifically asked students and staff about our performance in relation to access and inclusion for people with disability.

The review process revealed the following achievements:

- Deakin has a strategic focus on access and equity, which is reflected in its policy framework, mission and core commitments.
- Deakin staff have a strong commitment to being welcoming, inclusive and supportive; they value diversity; and many have a high-level understanding of supporting a diverse student and staff population, including their legal responsibilities.
- Significant advances have been made to progress the key strategies of the 2012 – 2015 plan in the areas of environmental and digital access and inclusion, and supporting mental health for staff and students.

> ‘Focus on mental health. Within our team there is a move towards training our staff in mental health First Aid. The training is fantastic!’ (E&D Staff Survey 2016)

> ‘Great to see work on digital accessibility starting’ (E&D Staff Survey 2016)

> ‘I have noticed in the last couple of years a heightened focus by the university on equity and diversity issues and that is a very good move going forward. (DRC Student Survey 2016)

> ‘I have noticed easy access to buildings for wheel chairs has been put in place over the past few years.’ (DRC Student Survey 2016)

The review process also highlighted key opportunities to consolidate and progress work in:

- hearing more directly from people with disability, and making better use of data to inform our directions
- providing more direction, support, information and training on how to include and support people with disability as both students and employees
continuing to implement plans to improve the built environment and developing communication strategies to ensure people with disability are not disadvantaged during building works and maintenance

- continuing to progress digital accessibility and inclusion, particularly in teaching and learning
- improving retention, success and graduate outcomes for students with disability
- sharing research knowledge across the University and with the community

‘Ensure all staff engage in disability awareness training and communication training to guarantee that they deal with students in an appropriate, inclusive and supportive way’ (DRC Student Survey 2016)

‘Why not engage some of the talented academic staff from our own faculties, I am sure leaders in the field would have some great ideas for improvement.’ (E&D Staff Survey 2016)

RESPONSIBILITIES
The Plan is embedded in the University’s planning and reporting processes to ensure its implementation, monitoring and review:

- The time frame aligns with the Deakin University Strategic Plan ‘LIVE the Future, Agenda 2020’
- All members of the Executive are responsible for delivering specific actions, and will include these in operational plan targets for their area of responsibility for the life of the Plan
- Equity and Diversity will provide support to areas responsible to assist with the development and implementation of actions
- Equity and Diversity will coordinate documentation on progress of the Plan
- Equity and Diversity will report annually on progress to the Chief Operating Officer
- Equity and Diversity will facilitate the updating of the Plan as necessary in response to feedback and organisational and legal changes.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK ABOUT THE DISABILITY ACCESS AND INCLUSION PLAN
The Plan is published on the Deakin University website and is lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Deakin welcomes feedback on the Plan. Feedback may be provided to Equity and Diversity as follows:

Email: Manager Access and Inclusion drcentre@deakin.edu.au
Telephone: (03) 92446255
Web: deakin.edu.au/disability
GOALS, STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Goal 1 People: We listen and respond to people with disability to enable success and equitable outcomes.

STRATEGIES

- Provide opportunities for input and feedback on access and inclusion from students and staff with disability
- Improve collection, analysis and reporting from current and new sources of data to contribute to planning and improvement
- Monitor and communicate trends and issues relating to the implementation of reasonable adjustments for students and staff with disability to inform practice
- Improve resources and support for the implementation of reasonable adjustments for students with disability
- Develop strategies to improve the retention and success of students with disabilities
- Develop strategies to improve employment outcomes for students with disability

‘What about asking - what do we want?’ (DRC Student Survey 2016)

‘The university provides the learning access plan which is a great way of bridging the gap between students and teaching staff without the continuous explanations and doctors certificates which can be very stressful.’ (DRC Student Survey 2016)

‘Staff surveys highlighting issues facing those who may have been discriminated against.’ (E&D staff survey 2016)

‘I never feel as if I am defined by my conditions while at University, or that success in my course is defined by my conditions as well.’ (DRC Student Survey 2016)

‘The University understands that students with disability can still perform well and provides necessary support to students to cope with Uni studies.’ (E&D Staff Survey 2016)
Goal 2 Community: We build capacity, develop partnerships and practice, and provide resources and support to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment.

STRATEGIES

- Continue to improve Deakin’s online and digital environment to be as accessible and inclusive as possible
- Continue to review, develop and support inclusive teaching and learning practice
- Actively increase the contribution to government and community initiatives relevant to people with disability and promote Deakin’s research in inclusion and disability, exploring further opportunities for partnerships
- Continue to implement plans to improve the built environment and develop communication strategies to ensure people with disability are not disadvantaged during building works and maintenance

‘There is a very inclusive philosophy in general at Deakin University which is very heartening. Not just for people with a disability but for people in general which is something that Deakin can be really proud of.’ (DRC Student Survey 2016)

‘We can improve, for example with access to forms for people with a vision impairment and online access to the cloud etc.’ (E&D Staff Survey 2016)

‘Providing flexible working arrangements, such as working from home, can assist staff with a disability.’ (E&D Staff Survey 2016)

‘I always wished there was some kind of bean bag room where people can just chill out. Those on the autism spectrum, with anxiety/depression or other illness would really adore a place that stays silent through the day.’ (DRC Student Survey 2016)

‘They make me feel welcome, even with my mental health issues. This is great.’ (DRC Student Survey 2016)
Goal 3 Organisation: We develop and implement policy, planning and leadership that promotes access and inclusion for all.

STRATEGIES

- Implement and monitor the Higher Education Standards Guidelines for Equity and Diversity
- Develop a system to consider access and inclusion when reviewing and developing relevant policies, procedures and guidelines
- Extend the personal and professional learning of the University’s leaders in disability access and inclusion
- Promote Deakin as an inclusive environment for all people with disability – students, staff and visitors

‘Deakin University incorporates the rights and opportunities of people with disability in all policies and planning. Deakin University provides broad leadership to the community in developing an inclusive Australian society.’ (DRC Student Survey 2016)

‘I recall the Vice Chancellor announcing at a Town Hall presentation, that if Deakin’s teaching facilities were accessible for disabled students, then they would be accessible for all students. I think it is positive that Deakin’s leaders expect and communicate such equity.’ (E&D Staff Survey 2016)
‘Three years ago, I became very ill with a chronic condition. I have been enormously grateful for the support of the university, which has allowed me to adjust my work practices to continue being a productive full-time employee. I have been able to continue producing quality teaching and research, and I feel a real commitment to the university. I have often experienced the same thing with the students for whom I am responsible - young people going through difficulties, given a modicum of support, flexibility and understanding, can be steered from personal crisis and dropping out to being happy and productive and successfully graduating. I have seen this many times’
**Goal 1 People:** *We listen and respond to people with disability to enable success and equitable outcomes.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>2018 Actions</th>
<th>Areas responsible and assisting and timeline</th>
<th>Executive Responsible</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Provide opportunities for input and feedback on access and inclusion from students and staff with disability | • Work with DUSA to develop a disability network  
• Collect information through E&D staff survey | E&D, September 2018 | Chief Operating Officer |          |
| Improve collection, analysis and reporting from current and new sources of data to contribute to planning and improvement | • Consolidate and systematise reporting on students with disability | E&D with SIPU, September 2018 | Chief Operating Officer |          |
| | • Review the process for analysing data re staff with disability | E&D with HRD, December 2019 | Chief Operating Officer |          |
| Monitor and communicate trends and issues relating to the implementation of reasonable adjustments for students and staff with disability to inform practice | • Develop reporting from new Deakin Access Plan system | E&D, Ongoing | Chief Operating Officer |          |
| | • Implement regular workshops with faculties, institutes and other areas | E&D, Ongoing | Chief Operating Officer |          |
| Improve resources and support for the implementation of reasonable adjustments for students with disability | • Develop and implement Access and Inclusion Knowledge base, including development of resources | E&D, Ongoing | Chief Operating Officer |          |
| | • Review process for reasonable adjustments for staff with disability | E&D with HRD, June 2018 | Chief Operating Officer |          |
| Develop strategies to improve the retention and success of students with disabilities | • Contribute to Learning and Experience Plan ‘Learning and Achieving’ | E&D, Ongoing | Chief Operating Officer |          |
| Develop strategies to improve employment outcomes for students with disability | • Develop specific strategies for students with disability | Deakin Talent with E&D, Ongoing | Pro Vice Chancellor (Graduate employment) |          |
| | • Contribute to Learning and Experience Plan ‘Connected and Employment Ready’ | E&D, Ongoing | Pro Vice Chancellor (Graduate employment) |          |
**Goal 2 Community:** *We build capacity, develop partnerships and practice, and provide resources and support to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Areas responsible and assisting and timeline</th>
<th>Executive Responsible</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Continue to improve Deakin’s online and digital environment to be as accessible and inclusive as possible</td>
<td>• Develop and implement roadmap for learning resources, identifying areas responsible</td>
<td>E&amp;D with DLF and Faculties, June 2018</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education), Chief Digital Officer, Executive Deans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implement updated digital accessibility policies</td>
<td>E&amp;D with policy owners, June 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop process and responsibilities for delivery of digital accessibility advice and resources</td>
<td>E&amp;D with eSols and DLF and other areas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ensure all public facing materials meet WCAG 2 AA</td>
<td>Marketing team with E&amp;D, June 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to review, develop and support inclusive teaching and learning practice</td>
<td>• Embed learnings and resources from the Inclusive Curriculum and Capacity Building project</td>
<td>E&amp;D with DLF and faculties, June 2018</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education), Exec Deans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Contribute to Learning and Experience Plan ‘Learning and Achieving’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively increase the contribution to government and community initiatives relevant to people with disability and promote Deakin’s research in inclusion and disability, exploring further opportunities for partnerships</td>
<td>• Contribute to exploration of research in access and inclusion</td>
<td>Chair Disability and Inclusion with E&amp;D, December 2018</td>
<td>Exec Dean (Health), Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Chief Operating Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Implement revised access and inclusion guidelines in Deakin Design Standards</td>
<td>Facilities with E&amp;D, June 2018</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue to implement plans to improve the built environment and develop communication strategies to ensure people with disability are not disadvantaged during building works and maintenance</td>
<td>• Develop improved communication strategies</td>
<td>Facilities with E&amp;D, December 2018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Goal 3 Organisation:** *We develop and implement policy, planning and leadership that promotes access and inclusion for all.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Areas responsible and assisting and timeline</th>
<th>Executive Responsible</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement and monitor the Higher Education Standards Guidelines for Equity and Diversity</td>
<td>• Develop actions with Academic Governance and Standards</td>
<td>Academic Governance and Standards with E&amp;D, Ongoing</td>
<td>Deputy Vice Chancellor (Education)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a system to consider access and inclusion when reviewing and developing relevant policies, procedures and guidelines</td>
<td>• Work with policy unit to develop a process</td>
<td>E&amp;D with Policy Unit, June 2018</td>
<td>Office of the Vice Chancellor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extend the personal and professional learning of the University’s leaders in disability access and inclusion</td>
<td>• Contribute to leadership training provided by HRD</td>
<td>E&amp;D with HRD, Ongoing</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extend the professional development offerings for staff from E&amp;D</td>
<td></td>
<td>E&amp;D, Ongoing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promote Deakin as an inclusive environment for all people with disability – students, staff and visitors</td>
<td>• Work with marketing to improve and implement access and inclusion messages</td>
<td>Marketing with E&amp;D</td>
<td>Deputy Vice Chancellor (Global Enterprise)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contribute to Learning and Experience Plan ‘Choosing Deakin’</td>
<td></td>
<td>E&amp;D, Ongoing</td>
<td>Chief Operating Officer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>