UTS Accessibility Resource Guide 2017

Diagram of some of the Universal Access Symbols

Working Together to make UTS accessible and inclusive

Table of Contents

Our Legal Obligations at UTS

Disability Discrimination Act, 1992

The Disability Discrimination Act, 1992 (the DDA) says that disability discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation, because of their disability. The disability could be temporary or permanent; a physical, intellectual, sensory, neurological, learning or psychosocial disability; a disease or illness; physical disfigurement; or medical condition or work-related injury.

The DDA also protects people with disability who may be discriminated against because they are accompanied by an assistant, interpreter or reader; or a trained animal such as a guide, hearing or assistance dog; or because they use equipment or an aid, such as a wheelchair, cane or hearing aid.

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of their disability either:

- by refusing to provide them with goods or services or make facilities available; or
- because of the terms or conditions on which, or the manner in which, the goods, services or facilities are provided.

Discrimination can be direct - meaning a person with disability is treated less favourably than a person without that disability in the same or similar circumstances. An example of possible direct disability discrimination is where a person is refused entry to a cafe because they are blind and have a guide dog.

Discrimination can also be indirect. Indirect disability discrimination can happen when conditions or requirements are put in place that appear to treat everyone the same, but actually disadvantage some people because of their disability. For example, it may be indirect discrimination if the only way to enter a lecture theatre is by a set of stairs, because people who use wheelchairs would be unable to enter that building.

Note: The legislation canvasses what is reasonable and what could be seen as an unjustifiable hardship for the person/organisation providing access. In practice, it is difficult for universities to claim unjustifiable hardship in relation to the cost of providing access.

For more information: http://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/guides/brief-guide-disability-discrimination-act

Disability Standards for Education 2005

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 elaborate further on the legal obligations of education providers to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students, and set out how education and training are to be made accessible to students with disability. They cover the areas of:

- · prospective students;
- · enrolment;
- · participation;
- · curriculum development, accreditation and delivery;
- · student support services; and
- · elimination of harassment and victimisation

Note: The Disability Standards for Education, and the 2015 review, offer a practical guide which aligns the principles of the Disability Discrimination Act with the educational context.

For more information: https://www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and was opened for signature on 30 March 2007. The Convention entered into force on 3 May 2008.

The Convention follows decades of work by the United Nations to change attitudes and approaches to people with disability. It changes the idea that people with disability were considered "objects" of charity, medical treatment and social protection, to considering people with disability as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society. It adopts a broad categorisation of people with disability, clarifies and qualifies how all categories of human rights apply to people with disability, and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for people with disability to effectively exercise their rights

Note: The CRPD guides thinking on the social model of disability and the focus on accessible environments, systems and processes for all. The sign language and easy read versions of the Convention are excellent examples of accessible formats.

For more information: https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

The Mindful Employer Charter

UTS is the first Australian university to sign the Mindful Employer Charter. The Mindful Employer (ME) Charter is a voluntary agreement by Australian employers who care about improving mental health in the workplace. The Charter is a statement of broad principles which employers work towards (not a formal set of standards or accreditation). The Charter is a demonstration of commitment to best-practice mental health and safety in the workplace.

The ME Charter

1. Promote good mental health in the workplace, and show a positive and enabling attitude to employees and job applicants who have, or who develop, mental health problems. This will include positive statements in recruitment literature.
2. Ensure that all staff involved in recruitment and selection are briefed on mental health issues and the Disability Discrimination Act, and given appropriate interview skills.
3. Make it clear in recruitment and supervision that people who have experienced, or who develop, mental health problems will not be discriminated against and that disclosure of a mental health problem will enable both employee and employer to assess and provide the right level of support or adjustment.
4. Not make assumptions that a person with a mental health problem will be more vulnerable to workplace stress or take more time off than any other employee or job applicant.
5. Provide non-judgemental and proactive support to staff who experience mental health problems or who care for a family member affected by a mental health problem.
6. Ensure all managers have information and training about managing employees affected by mental health problems or caring for someone affected.

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Note: Whether or however someone with a mental health condition chooses to identify or talk about their situation, exploring and identifying access requirements is part of offering support. JobAccess is able to provide assistance with access requirements in relation to mental health.

For more information: https://www.mindfulemployer.org/

What These Obligations Mean for UTS

The UTS Access and Inclusion Plan

The UTS Access and Inclusion Plan 2015 – 2019 sets out the vision and priorities for accessibility at UTS. Our Access and Inclusion Plan was developed with the aim that all staff share responsibility for the Plan. The Plan is reported on at the Equity and Diversity Committee, which in turn reports to the Provost.

The Access and Inclusion Plan focuses on four areas:

Learning:
UTS will enhance the learning experience of students, enriching the accessibility and inclusiveness of enrolment, learning and assessment practices.

Access:
UTS will ensure all services, facilities and amenities are inclusive, accessible and optimise the experience of students, staff and visitors to UTS.

Employment:
UTS will facilitate a diverse and equitable workforce, removing barriers to employment and career development for people with access requirements.

Culture:
UTS will nurture a culture of inclusiveness and respect, celebrating the value and contributions that people with access requirements make to the University

Accessibility is not something you can set and forget. Technologies change, new facilities are built, and staff and students with different access requirements join our university. This means accessibility is an on-going agenda and something we constantly need to think about. It is also important to consider that you may not know the specific access requirements of the staff and students you work with, which is why we focus on universal access, safety and respect at UTS.

We can all take a range of simple steps to build accessibility into our business as usual. Small steps go a long way to making UTS accessible for all.

Note: Here are a few questions worth considering when starting your access journey:
1. Have you got a line in your budget for providing accessible formats, communications, events, and services? And do you have preferred suppliers / staff with expertise?
2. Do all of your events and booking templates include a question around access requirements? Do you know what people need to attend / when they attend meetings?
3. Can you include accessibility as content for discussion as well as process to follow? Are you able to report progress in your work area according to the UTS Access and Inclusion Plan?
4. Have you actively employed staff with access requirements in your team?

For more information: http://www.uts.edu.au/about/equity-and-diversity/overview

Accessible Environments: Getting through the door

The analogy of getting through the door means different things to different people. For some, the access requirement might be a flat level surface free from steps, a lift, an automated door wide enough for an electric wheelchair, and accessible parking and amenities in close proximity. For others it could be wayfinding tools within the environment, the existence of quiet spaces, digital information, an environment free from strong perfumes, or information about the building and its spaces before arriving.

UTS Accessible Environments Policy

The Accessible Environments Policy (AEP) provides a strategic overview of the principles that inform the UTS Access Guidelines. The AEP ensures that access for everyone, including persons with disability, older people, and other campus participants is provided to and within all UTS facilities and student accommodation. The AEP is found within section 24 of the UTS Design Guidelines.

The purpose of the AEP and UTS Access Guidelines is to promote and implement equitable, inclusive and accessible environments in response to the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), relevant legislation, codes and requirements (such as the Australian Standards). DDA complaints can be lodged in relation to existing and / or proposed buildings and services.

The policy considers the design, construction and maintenance of all the physical facilities of the University. This includes:

- access, egress and circulation for continuous accessible pathways of travel within and between premises and satisfactory linkages with transport;
- amenities, such as seating, toilets, furniture and equipment, that are suitable for everyone including people with disability;
- communications, including hearing augmentation, lighting and signage to adequately meet the needs of people with disability.

Generally, ensuring accessibility of new developments, and the implementation of the Access Guidelines is the responsibility of the Facilities Management Operations (FMO). The **Accessible Environments Advisory Group** sits 3 – 4 times a year to assist FMO to review and monitor UTS environments.

Note: To report repairs and maintenance, or request upgrades to facilities according to accessibility, please fill out a building maintenance request form via Staff Connect, or speak to Equity and Diversity Unit about the Accessible Environments Advisory Group.

For more information:
https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/Design_Guidelines_160608.pdf
https://forms.uts.edu.au/web/index.cfm

Location of accessible facilities

Information about the location of a number of accessible facilities at UTS for staff, students and visitors is available via the UTS website. Facilities include accessible parking available for staff, students and visitors with disability, accessible toilets, ramps, and lifts.

To park in accessible parking at UTS you need to get a UTS accessible parking permit. To get a UTS accessible parking permit:

- **UTS staff** should contact the Equity and Diversity Unit for an application form, via email equity@uts.edu.au or phone 9514 1084
- **UTS Students** should contact the Accessibility Services in Student Services Unit, via email accessibility@uts.edu.au or phone 9514 1177
- **Visitors should** contact the Security Office, via email security.general@uts.edu.au or phone 9514 1192.

For more information: http://maps.uts.edu.au/map.cfm?point=944

Work Environments

Making your work environment accessible may involve a number of environmental considerations, flexibility of work practices, and specific access requirements addressed in team systems and processes. The **UTS workplace adjustments procedures** document describes the application process. Workplace adjustments can be permanent or temporary and may include:
- provision of adaptive or modified equipment
- job redesign
- modification of a work area or common areas
- training or retraining (yourself or your colleagues)
- changes to a staff member's work hours

Step one is to see if you are eligible for the **JobAccess Employment Assistance Fund.** It is recommended that you contact JobAccess for a workplace assessment as soon as possible. Their phone number is 1800 464 800, or you can fill in their online enquiry form.

Costs of implementing workplace adjustment, depending on the nature of the adjustment, will usually be funded through:
- JobAccess Employment Assistance Fund
- Faculty or unit budgets, within an agreed budget limit
- UTS Workplace Disability Fund
- Facilities Management Unit minor works program.

However bear in mind that some workplace adjustments may have no cost, and be simple tools and tricks of human interaction to make the work environment more accessible.

Note: On Staff Connect there is a Request for Workplace Adjustments form that can be used between staff and supervisors to discuss and sign off on workplace adjustments. Human Resources Unit is also a good source of support for safety and wellbeing in the workplace.

For more information:
https://staff.uts.edu.au/topichub/Pages/Doing%20my%20job/Working%20with%20a%20disability/working-with-a-disability.aspx

https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/

Supporting Colleagues in the Work Environment

All senior managers have equal opportunity key performance indicators in their role responsibilities. This means that if you are managing a staff member with access requirements, it is important to familiarise yourself with all aspects of accessible environments. If you are working in a team or on a project with staff with access requirements, you may also like to familiarise yourself with the tips in this resource guide.

Note: UTS has an organisation membership to the Australian Network on Disability (AND). This network has a wide range of resources and check lists in the membership area that may be of benefit. Staff of UTS can use the organisational log- in details for the membership area – for our login username and password contact the Equity and Diversity Unit.

For more information: https://www.and.org.au/

Digital Environments

The digital environment is equally important in terms of accessibility as the built environment. Not being able to access information and the online world for some people is the equivalent of not being able go through the door. The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) explains that all goods and services must be accessible, including online platforms, content, back and front ends of digital systems, and social media. Some scholars have described inaccessible digital environments as a digital apartheid. All organisations are at risk of complaints under the DDA if their digital environments are inaccessible.

UTS aims to comply with the **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, AA standards** (WCAG2.0AA). This means that we intend to make our platforms and content accessible for people who use screen readers, screen magnifiers, speech recognition software, captions, audio description, and use plain English. The guidelines assist us to think about the user perspective of people who experience barriers to accessing information and communication. They are the key to increasing digital accessibility at UTS.

Here is a brief summary of the WCAG 2.0 guidelines. If these guidelines intersect with the work that you do, whether it is about a digital invitation to an event, making a video, posting on social media, designing an app or website, or setting a timer for an online form, for example, then it is important to meet these principles.

1. **Perceivable** - users must be able to perceive the information being presented
    • Provide text alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other forms people need, such as large print, braille, speech, symbols or simpler language
    • Provide alternatives for time-based media
    • Create content that can be presented in different ways (for example simpler layout) without losing information or structure
    • Make it easier for users to see and hear content including separating foreground from background.

2. **Operable** - users must be able to interact with your website
    • Make all functionality available from a keyboard
    • Provide users enough time to read and use content
    • Do not design content in a way that is known to cause seizures
    • Provide ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are

3. **Understandable** - the content or operation of your website cannot be beyond the understanding of the user
    • Make text content readable and understandable
    • Make Web pages appear and operate in predictable ways
    • Help users avoid and correct mistakes

4. **Robust** - users with a wide variety of assistive technologies must be able to use your site now, and in the future as technologies evolve.
    • Maximize compatibility with current and future user agents, including assistive technologies

Note: There are several organisations who do access audits of websites, and who can assist with making content accessible under WCAG2.0. Some of these companies include Accessibility Oz, Media Access Australia, and Vision Australia.

For more information:
https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/
https://www.and.org.au/data/Members_Only/Guidelines_and_Checklists/Making_your_Website_accessible.pdf
https://mediaaccess.org.au/
http://www.visionaustralia.org/digital-access-wat
http://www.uts.edu.au/about/utsweb-statements/accessibility-statement

Accessible Social Media

Social media allows anyone with internet access to connect with other people and publish their own content. Social media is also an increasingly important part of organisational engagement and branding strategies. However, for people with particular sensory and learning access requirements, social media websites and applications can present both a vehicle to reduce social isolation and at the same time, present a range of barriers.

Media Access Australia published a report "*SociAbility: social media for people with a disability*" in 2011, which is an interesting read. However, the social media landscape changes rapidly and some tools decline or disappear, others add useful new features, and some new tools surge ahead in popularity out of nowhere. As a consequence, Media Access Australia undertook a recent update of all their advice on social media and accessibility in 2016.

Note: The things to keep in mind when posting on social media, is how can we make the verbal visual, and the visual verbal or text based? That is, how can we ensure that:

- all videos and audio is captioned/transcribed for the Deaf and hard of hearing communities; and

- that all visuals within videos are audio described (including text on screen within videos, like facts, figures, titles and credits); images have a text narration/description; and that platforms are screen reader / smart device text-to-speech friendly, for the blind and partially sighted communities .

For more information:

https://staff.uts.edu.au/howdoi/Pages/Learning%20and%20Teaching/Using%20technology%20in%20teaching/Accessible%20course%20documents/Prepare-social-media-resources.aspx

https://mediaaccess.org.au/web/social-media-for-people-with-a-disability

Learning Environments

Students have a range of abilities, cultural backgrounds, learning styles and educational needs. For students with disability, education is not inclusive if access hasn't been secured first. UTS aims to support the development and implementation of an inclusive educational environment in which students with disability can access, participate and ultimately succeed in university education. It is important to consider accessibility and universal design learning in relation to both formal university teaching and learning, and less formal learning environments. For students with disability, access and inclusion in the social environment and extracurricular activities is equally important.

The Accessibility Service (formally Special Needs Service) is the University's central contact point for students with disability, medical and mental health conditions. The Accessibility Service provides assistance and support to access services, and to make requests for assessment arrangements and reasonable adjustments.

The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) provides extensive information, advice and resources to disability practitioners, academics, teachers and students on inclusive practices within the post-secondary education sector.

In brief, the best way to think about inclusive teaching is to think about ways to make course content, delivery, assessment, participation and group work accessible for as many students as possible.

Curricula and course material is considered to be universally designed if:

- Students can interact with and respond to curricula and materials in multiple ways
- Students can find meaning in material (and so motivate themselves) in different ways
- Course material (including web-based material) is accessible to all
- Information is presented in multiple ways.

The UK **Equality Challenge Unit** (ECU) provides excellent information about inclusive practice in the higher education setting. The ECU suggests a range of ways in which teaching can be made more accessible across the spectrum of teaching from developing programs, through inclusive teaching practice, to assessment.

Note: To keep up to date with the latest skills and information around accessibility, teaching and learning, sign up to receive information from the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, and join one of their informative webinars.

For more information:
http://www.adcet.edu.au/inclusive-teaching/

http://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/teaching-and-learning/learning-and-teaching/diversity-classroom

https://futures.uts.edu.au/blog/2017/04/05/access-101-know-students-needs/

http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/disability-legislation-practical-guidance-for-academic-staff-revised/

https://www.uts.edu.au/current-students/students-with-accessibility-requirements/accessibility-service

https://www.learntechlib.org/p/173190/proceeding_173190.pdf

http://www.hindustantimes.com/health-and-fitness/role-playing-disability-not-effective-promotes-distress-and-discomfort/story-XnzTXfncXHWzxYVUwdSEvM.html

https://medium.com/@MonicaElla/make-learning-about-accessibility-more-accessible-78850502b917

Resources on Staff Connect

UTS has done a lot of work around creating resource guides on how to run accessible events, and how to make accessible documents with alternative text for screen readers, accessible PDFs and accessible social media.

For more information:
https://staff.uts.edu.au/topichub/Pages/Campus%20systems%20and%20facilities/Managing%20online%20content/accessibility/accessibility.aspx

Accessible Documents

Commonly, documents at UTS are created in Microsoft office programs such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. Some of the key issues to address in making documents accessible include:

- Using accessible typeface – at least 12 point, sans serif font
- Including alternative text with all visuals and tables (visual content includes pictures, clip art, SmartArt graphics, shapes, groups, charts, embedded objects, ink, and videos)
- Ensuring hyperlink text is meaningful
- Ensuring that colour is not the only means of conveying information
- Using sufficient contrast for text and background colours
- Using built-in headings and styles, which allow people to navigate documents
- Using simple table structures and specify column header information

Portable Document Format (PDF) can be made fully accessible, however the lack of support for PDF in mobile environments, means it is still not considered an independent accessible format.

It is also important to remember that if you're planning to convert your accessible Word document to PDF, simply clicking the "Save as" function will not result in an accessible PDF.

Making documents accessible in Word, Acrobat, InDesign and Illustrator is not difficult once you learn the basics and incorporate accessibility as a habit when making a document. Essentially the three things to remember are that:

1. Screen readers can't read images, which is why we send html or text based invitations instead of JPEG or scanned invitations in our emails, and write alt text for images within documents and websites (right click on the image in Word-format picture-alt text- enter a description).
2. Plain English suits everybody, and so does dyslexia-friendly layouts
3. Everybody can test for accessibility through opening the document on an Apple iPad or iPhone and switching on the accessibility text to speak functions, by downloading the free screen reader software called NVDA, or using an accessibility checker

For more information:
https://staff.uts.edu.au/howdoi/Pages/Campus%20systems%20and%20facilities/Managing%20online%20content/accessibility/create-accessible-pdf-documents.aspx

http://www.altformat.org/index.asp?pid=344

https://www.nvaccess.org/

http://www.scopeaust.org.au/service/accessible-information/

Accessible Events

All work areas across the university hold events, from small team meetings to major international conferences. It is important to think about access and participation when you plan an event; identify features that make it impossible or difficult for people with disability to access your event; understand what you can do to ensure the best possible access; and understand your responsibilities under anti-discrimination laws.

When hosting events for both internal and external audiences, it is critical that you ask about accessibility requirements in advance. It is also important in room booking forms that we ask about the access requirements of the hirer of the space. Examples of language you might use are:

"Do you have any access or dietary requirements?"

"Do you have any access requirements as a hirer using the room, or do any of the event attendees have any access requirements in terms of room set up?"

Note: The UTS Accessible Events Guide is attached in an appendix to this document. If you are involved in organising an event, taking bookings, running meetings, or preparing content for events, please have a look.

For more information:
https://staff.uts.edu.au/howdoi/Pages/Doing%20my%20job/Communication%20and%20promotion/Event%20management/make-sure-my-event-is-an-accessible-event.aspx

http://www.meetingsevents.com.au/downloads/Accessible_Events_Guide.pdf

http://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/article/downloads/accessible_events.pdf

Employing People with Disability

The statistics at UTS for staff with disability are very low, which echoes the very concerning national trend of declining rates of employment for people with disability. UTS is committed to being an equal opportunity employer, however to ensure this in practice, there are a number of considerations to make around accessibility in the recruitment and on-boarding stages.

Job Descriptions and Applications

Job descriptions should focus on the inherent requirements of the role. When advertising for a job, the information and application process must be accessible. This involves making application forms and other material available in accessible formats, on an accessible website. For prospective staff, UTS lists the UTS Access and Inclusion Plan 2015 – 2019 on our public website (Equity and Diversity Unit page), as well as on the Australian Human Rights Commission website, and we have a public statement on equal opportunity employment. There is no legal obligation for an employee to disclose a disability unless it is likely to affect their performance in a role. However, it is good practice to explain UTS's diversity policies to applicants. To increase the rate of employment of people with disability, you may want to consider promoting job vacancies within the disability community.

Interviews

For some people with disability, an interview may not be the best way to demonstrate their skills. Some may be nervous about interviews, particularly if they have been unemployed for some time. A person with disability may have the skills to perform the job but not interview well. In this instance, there are alternatives to consider. Adjustments may involve offering work for a contractual period, or an alternative means of assessing an applicant's suitability. This could include a work trial, or offering the applicant the opportunity to have a support person attend with them.

If a candidate discloses their disability upon application, ask them what access requirements they may need for the interview. Your building and interview room need to be accessible, as do your processes. If any paper work needs to be completed during the interview, make sure they are available in alternative, accessible formats.

Members of recruitment and selection panels need to be disability aware and confident. Ask the applicant the same questions that you would anyone else. Ensure the questions address the inherent requirements or job essentials. Open ended interview questions that can be helpful include things like:

- What motivated you to apply for this position?
- Please tell us what skills you can bring to this role?
- Please tell us about a project you have done?
    - What was the project?
    - How did you manage the project to deliver its outcomes (results)?
    - What worked well, what didn't?
    - What did you learn?
- Please give us an example where you have [something related to the job]?
- How would you go about [something related to the job]?
- How do you manage yourself and what support do you need?
- When can you start?

- Do you have any questions for the panel?

The only questions an employer can lawfully ask about a disability or injury relate to:
- Any adjustments required to ensure a fair and equitable interview/selection process.
- How the person will perform the inherent requirements of a job.
- Any adjustments that may be required to complete the inherent requirements of the job.

Any other questions about an individual's disability are inappropriate, including questions about:

- How the individual acquired their disability
- Specific details of the individual's disability.
- How the disability will impact ability to perform aspects of the role

And remember your interview etiquette:
- Don't patronise people with disability. Treat adults as adults.
- Don't be embarrassed if you use common expressions such as "see you later" to a person who is blind or partially sighted
- If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Be prepared for your offer to be refused.
- Use a normal tone of voice when extending a welcome. Do not raise your voice unless asked.
- Speak directly to the person with disability, rather than through a companion, interpreter or aid if they are present.
- Allow sufficient time for an applicant to respond to questions.
- Never pretend to understand if you don't. Instead, repeat what you have understood and allow the person to respond. The response will guide your communication.

On-boarding

When a person with access requirements is hired for a UTS job, keep in mind the critical on-boarding and induction elements of arranging workplace adjustments, provisions for access requirements, JobAccess applications and PEEPs (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans). Many managers and staff with disability don't know that PEEPs exist. If a staff member has either a temporary or permanent access requirement at the time of an emergency and needs specific arrangements to guarantee safe evacuation, then a PEEP can record conversations and ensure these arrangements occur.

Employees can arrange their Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans by contacting the Emergency Manager, Jennifer Le, via email jennifer.le@uts.edu.au or phone 9514 7221.

Disability Projects Fund

Small grants are available to UTS faculties, units, institutes, centres, and individuals for projects that will assist people with disability at UTS. Key features of the fund include:

- All UTS staff and students are eligible to apply.
- Projects must be to the direct benefit of students or staff with disability at UTS.
- The grant does not fund individual accommodations or projects which are an existing obligation under the Disability Discrimination Act or where projects are already within an existing budget.
- Minimum application $300, maximum application $7,000.
- Projects must be completed before end of the calendar year.
- Priority is given to applicants who can demonstrate a disability-led approach

More information about the Fund is available from the Equity and Diversity Unit.

For more information:

https://www.uts.edu.au/staff/jobs-uts/applying-uts/people-disabilities

www.jobaccess.org.au

http://www.uts.edu.au/about/equity-and-diversity/accessibility-and-inclusion

Appendix A: Accessible Learning Environments

Program Development

When developing programs, it is useful to consider:

- What are the inherent requirements of the program?
- How can learning outcomes or competence standards be expressed in a non-discriminatory way?
- Have the needs of students with disability been taken into account when designing programs of study?
- What is the justification for using particular assessment methods?
- Are the course delivery methods sufficiently flexible to enable all students to succeed?
- How do program templates prompt staff to consider disability and wider diversity issues?

Lecture Preparation and Delivery

Examples of inclusive practice in lecture preparation and delivery include:

- proactive reminders to students at the start of courses about the resources available, their rights as students with disability, and where they can access additional support

- availability of briefing notes and/or handouts in advance of lectures

- preparation of handouts in a standardised, accessible typeface (a minimum of 12 pt, preferably 14 pt, sans serif font), on coloured paper to enhance contrast

- PowerPoint presentations free from overcrowded text and distracting visual gimmicks

- accessible reproduction of charts, graphs and other images, with small diagrams printed one slide per page, as opposed to the more commonly used format of three slides to a page; diagrams and other pictorial aids are verbally described by the lecturer

- staff training in presenting to a diverse range of students, and in the use of technical support such as hearing loops, or in the production of podcast lectures.

- recording lectures and making them available to all
- developing accessible chatrooms for each subject module, with the ability to caption
- providing students with study methods training, including how to manage deadlines.

Practical Classes

For practical classes, academic staff need to analyse carefully the purpose of the practical session as a chosen learning, teaching and assessment method, so that suitable reasonable adjustments can be made if necessary.

Examples of inclusive practice in practical classes could include:

- undertaking health and safety/risk assessments of practical sessions at the planning stage of courses
- developing virtual or observation alternatives where appropriate
- developing equipment to take into account various needs – for example, rubber grips may be added to various items of equipment for those with physical access requirements
- anticipating the needs of students with access requirements when purchasing equipment and furniture – for example, by ordering adjustable-height workbenches along with ordinary benches for a new laboratory; or by purchasing only those videos/DVDs with subtitles, captions, audio description and other audio formats
- ensuring additional equipment, such as screen readers, is available where computers are necessary
- considering flexible timetabling – some students may need longer to carry out practical work
- providing safety instructions, outlines of class content, and room maps before class
- including support staff and technicians in staff development and disability awareness
- checking that safety equipment is accessible.

Group Work

Significant barriers can arise in group work for some students with disability because the requirement to interact with group members can be difficult for people with social communication access requirements. It is important that academic staff take care to ensure group work is a positive learning experience for all students, and that you ensure that opportunities do not exist for harassment of students with disability in a group setting.

Group work often includes a presentation of findings, and this can be an issue for some students with disability. In this situation, alternative assessment methods should be employed, such as video recordings of presentations.

Examples of barriers that students undertaking group work include:

- some students may find the dynamics of group work hard or impossible to understand – to them, group work may not be a useful learning experience
- students who are Deaf and hard of hearing may find group work difficult if it is not properly managed, for example in terms of turn-taking, or reducing the number of multiple conversations and interruptions

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- Students who are blind and those with partial sight may find it difficult to make a spontaneous response to texts or other materials that they have not received in advance

- students with dyslexia may experience stress if they are asked to scribe for a feedback session, speak spontaneously to a group, or read materials in a short period

- students with unseen disabilities may be reluctant to seek reasonable adjustments in group settings, as this may breach their desire for confidentiality.

On-line learning

Having e-learning elements in teaching can offer a range of advantages for students in terms of being:

- portable
- flexible in terms of time
- effective in immediacy of communication
- empowering to the student
- active as a learning method
- able to meet the needs of a diverse range of students with different learning styles.

While most students are adept at using mobile phones and laptops, inexperience in the use of these technologies can still be a barrier to learning for some. Study skills support in advance of the course may help ensure the learning methodology does not deter from a student's learning experience. Inclusive practice can help to ensure the development, implementation and evaluation of e-learning elements to courses are accessible from the start. It is important to ensure that material is provided in accessible formats (for example, ensuring web pages and uploaded documents are accessible; providing alternatives to scanned documents (which cannot be read with screen readers); including captioning and audio description on videos) can help support dynamic and innovative program design that is accessible to all.

Assessment

In relation to assessment, academic staff should consider:

- flexible deadlines for those with variable conditions
- support in researching booklists for those unable to 'browse' in the library
- adjustments to assignments, such as allowing a student to submit a piece of work on video rather than in writing
- provision of study skills support covering essay writing or dissertation skills
- comments/ feedback on course work in alternative formats
- adjustments to the design or delivery of an examination
- altering the mode of an assessment if a particular method, for example an examination, sets up unnecessary barriers.

Appendix B: Accessible Events Guidelines for UTS Events

This document aims to help you plan a more accessible event for people with disability who may be attending as presenters, participants or sponsors.

To ensure that your event can be accessed and enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities it is important to consider the items listed on this checklist.

At a minimum, at all events you should always:

- On the invitation or registration, ask if anyone has any access requirements to attend the event. A sample registration form can be found at the end of this document.
- Make sure there is universal access to the venue (i.e. a venue that is flat, has lifts or ramps to the stage and seats etc)
- Ensure all staff are aware of disability access considerations and are briefed as to how best to assist anyone with disability.

Planning

❒ Have you allocated resources to ensure accessibility? Resources include conscious decision making, creative solutions, human assistance, financial, information provision, and access services

❒ Are you using an accessible venue? What are your options?

❒ Have you created an event agenda that allows for equal participation? Consider more time to complete interactive exercises for example

❒ Have you and your key staff working on the event attended accessibility awareness training, or contacted specialists for advice?

❒ Have you created an event that is inclusive of disability culture, including considerations of representation, diversity, and process?

❒ Is the event coordinator aware of the emergency evacuation procedures for attendees with access requirements?

Marketing and Communications
Text

❒ Have you used a plain sans serif font?

❒ Is the contrast between the text and background appropriate?

❒ Is all text a minimum of 12 point size?

❒ Have you considered the spacing between letters and sentences, use of standard mixed cases rather than all capitals, and avoided Italics?

❒ Have you created a text –based electronic document and embedded alt text for images?

Content

☐ Did your invitation or promotional material state whether the venue is physically accessible? (flat level entry, lifts, ramps to the building and internal spaces such as the stage)

☐ Did your invitation include information about the accessible facilities at the venue such as the location of parking, toilets or nearest transport drop off area?

☐ Have you encouraged your invited guests to identify whether they have any access requirements such as accessible parking, hearing augmentation, audio description, live captioning, social interpreters or Auslan interpreters?

☐ Have you included in the invitation a contact mobile number and email address so guests have alternative ways of communicating their attendance and requirements beforehand and on the day?

☐ Have you provided a digital map of the campus that highlights the location of the event?

☐ Have you considered using universal access symbols on marketing and promotions collateral, including on website pages?

Distribution

☐ Have you used an accessible email distribution format and accessible event registration page, with a link to an online html version at the top of the email template?

☐ Have you considered targeted marketing to the access community?

Pre-event and Post-event Audio Visual Materials

☐ Is your video closed captioned, including indications of sounds such as laughing and clapping, within the transcript?

☐ Are your captions burnt into the video or embedded into Youtube or Vimeo with a closed caption button appearing in the functions bar within the player?

☐ Is your video audio described or verbally narrated, including verbal descriptions of all key visual information such as location, physical actions, images, diagrams, titles, definitions, statistics, and credits?

☐ Are you using audio description on the primary video (if the event is for all staff or students), or do you have a separate audio described version that is easy to find?

☐ Have you considered these access features within the development of the audio visual material, rather than at the end?

☐ Have you included a transcript for any audio-only recordings?

Getting to the Venue
Some people with disability require a continuous, even, path of travel. An accessible path of travel means there are no obstacles in the internal or external environment such as revolving doors, kerbs or steps.

Accessible Parking Bays and Accessible Path of Travel

☐ Are there accessible parking bays and pick-up/drop-off areas? For UTS events, please contact Equity and Diversity Unit, or Security, to arrange

☐ Is the venue close to public transport?

☐ Is the entry free from steps or is there an alternative, such as a ramp/lift?

☐ Is there a handrail for all steps? Are there tactile indicators and are the steps lined with a colour contrasting strip?

☐ Is the entrance and exit clearly visible?

The Venue

☐ Is the entrance door easy to open?

☐ Are the doorways wide enough for people who use a wheelchair (800mm is the recommended minimum width)?

☐ Are tables and tea/coffee accessible for people with disability? Consider the table height, and where items are placed.

☐ Have spaces for people who use wheelchairs been provided throughout the seating area of the venue?

☐ Is the stage area accessible if required? Consider lighting for an interpreter, screens for live captions, flat levels / ramp for access, lining the edges of any steps / stage

☐ Is there adequate circulation space for people who use a wheelchair?

☐ Is there a quiet room provided and is this location information provided during registration?

Toilets

☐ Does the venue have an accessible toilet?

☐ Is the accessible toilet situated on the same floor as the function? If not, are there clear directions to the toilets on other floors?

☐ Does the door have a clear space of 800mm or 850mm (preferred)?

Signage

☐   Does the venue have clear, directional signage to:

- the function room?
- the toilets?
- the lifts?

☐   Have you provided this location information in a digital format?

☐   Have you placed personnel in appropriate places to assist, and are they easy to identify?

The Event
It is important that all guests are able to see the stage, hear speeches and understand the training or messages being delivered.

Communication and Presentations

☐   If an attendee requests an Auslan interpreter or note taker, has this been organised?

☐   If you are organising a major public event, have you considered in your budget the cost of an Auslan interpreter, note taker, audio describer or live captioning?

☐   Is reserved seating available at the front of the venue for people who have sensory access requirements such as close proximity and a clear line of sight in relation to visual material, Auslan interpreters etc?

☐   Is there a visible position with enough light to ensure that both the Auslan interpreter and presenters are clearly visible?

☐   Does the venue have hearing augmentation? *(Hearing loops serve to augment the hearing capacity of those people who use hearing aids, and are integrated in most UTS venues. Check with the AVS to ensure your venue has this capability. If it does, arrange a time with AVS to check the hearing loop before the date of the event.)*

☐   Is the background colour of your slides light in colour?

☐   Is there enough contrast between the background colour of your presentation and the text?

☐   Are you screening any videos, and if so, do these have captions and would the video need audio description so people who are blind or partially sighted can understand the intent of the video?

☐   If you are using 360 / VR technology, have you provided a version with captions, audio description, audio enhancement, and / or personnel support to access the interactive nature / equipment?

☐   Have you scheduled regular breaks? (Breaks should occur at least every two hours)

☐   Are alternative formats of your presentation available upon request? Electronic copies, hard copy print outs etc.

Stallholders/ Exhibition Displays

☐   Have you ensured that the height of the stall is not greater than 850mm to assist a person in a wheelchair to view goods that are on sale/display?

☐   Have you ensured that goods for sale will not impede access or pose a hazard for people with disability?

☐   Have you ensured that the stall location is as level as possible, to allow safety and ease of mobility by a person using a wheelchair?

☐   Have you ensured that the area immediately around a stall is clear of boxes and other obstructions that may impede the passage of people with disability?

☐   Have you ensured that a clear unobstructed path of travel is provided from the stall to adjacent stalls and to the main accessible pathway of travel within the stallholder area?

☐   Is signage clear with good colour contrast?

☐   Are stallholders briefed on providing accessible service, to ensure all attendees are treated with dignity and according to their communication access requirements?

Event Feedback

☐   Are you using an accessible feedback or survey design and platform to collect feedback information?

☐   Do you have alternative methods of collecting feedback, such as human assistance to fill out the survey, if required?

Access Service Suppliers

Auslan Sign language interpreters: www.deafsocietynsw.org.au

Auslan Sign language interpreters: http://auslanservices.com

Live captioning services: www.ai-media.tv

Braille or other print alternatives: www.visionaustralia.org.au

Hearing Augmentation systems: www.deafnessforum.org.au

Audio Description: http://thesubstation.com.au/

Sample Registration Form

First Name: _____ Surname: _____

Position Title: _____

Organisation: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ State: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Email:_____

Do you have any dietary or access requirements to participate?

_____

_____

_____

Please contact (email address) if you would like to discuss your requirements.