
Policy to Support Students With Disabilities

Note: The Council of the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE became the Board of the Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE in July 2007.

1. Introduction

The Council of Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE (NMIT) is committed to providing an educational environment that supports anti-discrimination legislation and which recognises and positively promotes equal opportunity for students with disabilities.

NMIT values the diversity of experiences, views, skills and abilities that students with disabilities bring to NMIT.

This policy has been formulated in accordance with relevant legislation, to ensure equal access, participation and opportunity for students with disabilities within NMIT.

NMIT will not tolerate unlawful discrimination, bullying, harassment or any form of offensive behaviour that adversely affects the capacity of students with disabilities to participate fully in both academic and non-academic spheres of student life.

This policy is available in the Student Services Department section of the Quality Assurance Manual located on the NMIT staff intranet, on the NMIT website for both prospective and current students (www.nmit.vic.edu.au/rules) and on the NMIT student intranet under institute rules and policies (www.class.nmit.vic.edu.au)

2. Relevant legislation

The Policy to Support Students with Disabilities reflects the following Commonwealth (Cth) and Victorian (Vic) legislation and /or initiatives:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 Cth
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986 Cth
- Equal Opportunity Act 1995 Vic
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 Cth
- Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) makes it unlawful for tertiary institutions to discriminate (in the provision of educational and employment opportunities, services and facilities) against people on the basis they have, or may have a disability.

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) are subject to the objects of the DDA. The Standards clarify and elaborate the legal obligations in relation to education.

3. Definitions

Adjustment means a measure or action taken by NMIT that has the effect of assisting a student with a disability.

Disability means any permanent or temporary condition that affects a student's ability to undertake his/her studies as a result of a physical, cognitive, psychiatric, sensory, neurological or learning disability. It also includes the presence in the body of organisms causing or capable of causing disease. The definition refers to disabilities that a person currently has, had in the past, may have in the future or which they are believed to have.

Harassment is any unwelcomed or unreciprocated behaviour that is reasonably likely in all the circumstances to offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate another person.

Prospective student means a person seeking to enrol in a course of study at NMIT.

Reasonable adjustment means that the adjustment made is reasonable in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected.

Student means an NMIT enrolled student or prospective student. It can also mean groups of students or prospective students.

Victimisation is when a person is treated unfairly because they have made a complaint of harassment or discrimination.

4. Principles

NMIT is committed to promoting equal opportunity for students with disabilities to pursue their studies, achieve appropriate educational outcomes, access services and facilities and participate in activities provided by NMIT.

NMIT is committed to developing a Disability Action Plan (DAP) to set out NMIT's goals and strategies to achieve access and inclusion for people with disabilities.

NMIT will actively seek to eliminate and prevent discriminatory practices, either direct or indirect, that hinder or limit the ability of students with disabilities to pursue their education and participate in student life.

NMIT is committed to inclusive practices and anti-discrimination accommodations for individual students that reflect the needs of all students based on commonsense and negotiated actions and outcomes.

NMIT will ensure that this policy and updated information on the integration of students with disabilities is disseminated to all areas of NMIT.

NMIT aims to provide and deliver support services to students with disabilities in a manner that respects and promotes their human dignity, rights and opportunities.

In providing support services to students with disabilities, NMIT aims to respect their rights to privacy and confidentiality.

NMIT aims to adequately resource the provision of disability support and implementation of this policy based on principles of inclusion and reasonable adjustment.

5. Compliance with the Disability Standards for Education

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 specify how education and training are to be made accessible to students with disabilities.

NMIT is committed to meeting its requirements as set out in the Standards, which cover:

- Enrolment;
- Participation;
- Curriculum development, accreditation and delivery;
- Student support services; and
- Elimination of harassment and victimisation.

6. Enrolment

Prospective students applying to study at NMIT will not be discriminated against based on their disability. Admission to courses is subject to students meeting the entry requirements, which apply to all students.

The enrolment form seeks self-disclosure of a disability. NMIT undertakes to assist students with disabilities in their studies, and will do so if students disclose the nature of their disability and seek appropriate support from the Disability Support Service.

7. Participation

NMIT will take all reasonable steps and make all reasonable adjustments to ensure equal access to services and participation in institute life for students with disabilities.

8. Curriculum Development, Accreditation and Delivery

NMIT endeavours to deliver programs in a manner that ensures that students with disabilities can participate in the learning experiences on the same basis as any other student. Reasonable adjustments will be made when necessary to accommodate students with disabilities and meet the necessary educational standards relevant to their course of study.

9. Student Support Services

Students can access a range of supports at NMIT to assist with personal and study related issues including counselling, study skills and careers advice. In addition to these services, the Disability Support Service can assist students who identify as having a disability and register with the service to access support. Students may be required to provide suitable evidence of the nature and extent of their disability so that appropriate support provisions may be negotiated.

TITLE: POLICY TO SUPPORT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



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PREPARED BY: Anne Bambrook
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Page: 4 of 4
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10. Elimination of harassment and victimisation

NMIT is committed to promoting equal opportunity for students and to maintaining an environment that is free of harassment. Students with disabilities who experience harassment or victimisation can access the Policy and Procedure for Equal Opportunity for Students and obtain support and assistance in dealing with the discrimination or harassment.