

Students with a Disability Policy and Procedure

1. Introduction

The Australian Performing Arts Conservatory (APAC) Students with a Disability Policy and Procedure provides an overarching commitment to diversity, fair treatment and equity for students, staff and the higher education community at APAC.

1.1. Purpose

The intent of this document is to provide a framework for the provision of an accessible, inclusive, safe and supportive learning environment for students with disabilities and the provision of reasonable adjustments to learning to support the participation of students with a disclosed disability.

1.2. Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all members of APAC's higher education community, including prospective students.

1.3. Principles

- Staff, students and clients have a right to work and study in an organisation that is committed to providing fair treatment, an inclusive environment, and equitable access and opportunities for both staff and students.
- Enabling students with a disability to access and participate fully in educational and related activities at APAC is an organisational priority.
- Facilities and learning resources are accessible to students with a disability to enable full participation in their educational experience.

2. Policy Statements

2.1. Work and Study Environments

All reasonable steps will be taken by APAC to create work and study environments, both on campus and online, that promote and foster equity, diversity and wellbeing for staff and students. Practices and processes will align with the TEQSA Diversity and Equity Guidelines to actively take responsibility for fostering an environment of inclusion for its staff and students.

2.2. Admissions Processes

APAC will ensure that their admissions processes will provide prospective students with a disability equitable access to higher education. Any decisions about admission and enrolment are made on the basis that reasonable adjustments will be made where necessary so that the student with a disability is provided with opportunities and choices that are comparable with those available to students without disabilities.

2.3. Reasonable Adjustments

APAC will provide reasonable adjustments of resources and learning to support students with a disability where the disability has been disclosed. Reasonable adjustments facilitate the access, participation, retention and success equivalent to that enjoyed by students without disabilities.

2.4. Evidence

To assist with the identification of appropriate reasonable adjustments, APAC requires students seeking adjustments to supply supporting documentation about the nature and impact of their disability in the learning environment. APAC may not be able to assess and/or determine the provision of a reasonable adjustment if supporting evidence is not provided.

2.5. Privacy and Confidentiality

APAC will keep confidential all disclosed information relating to disability or other requests for support or reasonable adjustments to learning in accordance with the APAC Privacy Policy and Procedure. The right to privacy and confidentiality will be respected in providing support services to students with a disability.

2.6. Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

APAC will respond to and manage the needs of students with a disability in compliance with education provider obligations under the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005.

2.7. Complaints and Appeals

If a student enrolled at APAC is dissatisfied with any aspect of a decision related to this policy and procedure, they may lodge a complaint through the process outlined in the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

Under Section 32 of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) (DDA), it is unlawful for a person to contravene a Disability Standard. An aggrieved person or someone on their behalf can make a complaint to the Human Rights Commission (AHRC) about non-compliance with the DDA. This includes complaints about non-compliance with a Disability Standard.

2.8. Monitoring and Review

APAC will regularly review its approach to students with a disability, including through feedback from and consultation with staff and students, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of its strategies, processes and actions supporting students with a disability.

3. Procedure

3.1. Admissions

In accordance with the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and Disability Standards for Education 2005, APAC commits to non-discriminatory, transparent admissions procedures that are based on merit for making decisions about:

- student selection, from among persons who seek to enrol with APAC; and
- the treatment of students.
- For students with a disability, APAC will:
 - provide information on its website about its courses/programs and its admission requirements and processes in a format that takes into consideration good practice accessibility guidelines.
 - assist students with a disability regarding admissions and enrolment processes if necessary.

3.2. Reasonable Adjustment of Learning

Assessment of Applications

The Teaching and Learning Committee is responsible for determining reasonable adjustment of learning requests and considering the interests of all parties who may be affected. The Committee should ensure that it considers:

- The circumstance of the student/s and consults with them throughout their studies.
- The extent of the adjustment and if it still allows the student to achieve the learning outcomes for the unit and program.
- Professional requirements for the program and whether they can still be met.
- Whether the proposed adjustment would adversely affect any other parties.
- The costs associated with the adjustment and the benefits.
- Whether expert advice is needed to make the adjustment or to make a decision.

Students should make an application for reasonable adjustment of learning prior to enrolment, or as soon as the circumstances are known. The Committee will provide its decision to the applicant within ten (10) business days of receiving the application.

Adjustments

The types of adjustments that may be made could include, but are not limited to:

- Extensions to assessment, examination due dates or timeframes.
- Alternative arrangements for assessment.
- Alternative modes of delivery and resources.

- Provision of an assistant.
- Adaptation of equipment or facilities.

4. Responsibilities

4.1. The Board of Directors

Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and regulatory requirements through the oversight of APAC activities and the development, monitoring and review of policies and practices and initiating prompt action where compliance is deemed to have lapsed.

Ensuring students and staff are treated equitably, and that their wellbeing is fostered.

4.2. Director of Higher Education

The Director of Higher Education is responsible for implementing support and liaising with all academic, administrative and support staff to ensure that students' welfare is treated holistically and confidentially.

4.3. Staff and Students

All APAC staff and students are responsible for create a welcoming, inclusive, non-discriminatory and safe learning environment, in which students with disabilities can enjoy a positive and productive student experience.

5. Relevant Documents

- Admissions and Onboarding Policy and Procedure
- Anti- Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Higher Education Support Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)
- Privacy Policy and Procedure
- Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- TEQSA Guidance Note: Diversity and Equity October 2017
- The Privacy Act 1998 (Cth)

6. Definitions

- **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, staff, and other students.

- **Disability** in the context of this policy and procedure is someone who has temporary or permanent disabilities; physical, intellectual, sensory, neurological, learning or psychosocial disabilities, diseases or illnesses, physical disfigurement, medical conditions, or work-related injuries.
- **Disclosure** in the context of this policy and procedure is where an individual confides in someone else that they have a diagnosed disability.

Version Control and Document Owner

Policy Category	Operational	Approval Date	19 October 2022	
Document Owner	Director of Higher Education	Approval Authority	The Board of Directors	
Audience	Staff and Students	Review Date	October 2022	
Revision History				
Version	Author	Change Summary	Date Approved	Date Effective
1.0	APAC	New document.	09 June 2017	
2.0	APAC		14 July 2020	
2.1	APAC	Minor changes; v2.1 until finalised.		
3.0	DVE Business Solutions Pty Ltd	Review and update of policy and procedure.	19 October 2022	