Students with Disability Policy

Section 1 - Preamble

(1) Charles Darwin University ('the University', 'CDU') supports the rights of students with disability to be involved in all facets of University life, including full and equitable participation in training, education, and research.

(2) The University will meet our obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Disability Standards for Education 2005 by enacting the requirements and spirit of the legislation and guidelines.

Section 2 - Purpose

(3) This policy outlines the principles for increased participation and the removal of barriers to training, education or research, and the describes the process for requesting reasonable adjustments and accessing support services.

(4) This policy will drive innovation, future improvements, and systemic changes in the provision of physical, learning, and social environments that are accessible to students with disabilities, along with carers of people with disability.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This policy applies to all applicants and students enrolled at the University, whether in award or non-award courses, and includes those studying with partner organisations.

a. Partner organisations will share the responsibility for the provision of appropriate services and reasonable adjustments for students with disability.

(6) A student with a disability or who is a carer of a person with disability can request reasonable adjustments or other support services.

Section 4 - Policy

(7) The University is committed to creating an inclusive environment where students with disability and carers of a person with disability can participate in all aspects of University life.

(8) To foster a positive learning and research environment, the University will:

a. Adopt inclusive practice in training, education, and research, removing or reducing barriers to access wherever reasonably practicable, and thereby reduce the need for students with disability to seek adjustments or individual services.
b. Use universal design principles to create equitable access to services, professional opportunities, events, facilities, and the campus environment (both physical and online).
c. Support staff to become informed about inclusive practice, providing resources, training opportunities and case management as required.

d. Support students with Access and Inclusion services, empowering students to participate in their studies and implementing reasonable adjustments as outlined in Access Plans.
e. Continuously improve accessibility by reviewing leading inclusion practices and incorporating these into course design, delivery, and assessment.

(9) The University acknowledges that a disability may be visible or hidden and can have minimal or substantial impact on a person's ability. As such, we recognise that students with disability are best placed to understand their needs and share the responsibility for identifying and implementing appropriate solutions to support participation in study. Therefore, applicants and students with disability have a responsibility to:

a. Familiarise themselves with the inherent requirements of the course in which they intend to enrol and the eligibility criteria for registration through professional registration boards.
b. Contact Access and Inclusion as soon as practicable if their disability is likely to impact on their studies.
c. Work together with the University to develop, implement, and review reasonable adjustments, recognising that this can be an iterative process.
d. Report any changes regarding the impact(s) of a disability on their capacity to study.

Admission to courses

(10) The University will implement flexible entry pathways to ensure that students with disability are not discouraged from applying or discriminated against by admission processes.

(11) The University recognises that students with disability may have experienced prior educational disadvantage because of their disability. This disadvantage may be taken into consideration by the University during admission processes.

(12) The University will provide all prospective students with clear information about the inherent requirements of courses, detailing the required specific competencies.

a. Where possible, students with disability will be provided with services and reasonable adjustments to meet the inherent requirements of a course. However, reasonable adjustments cannot compromise the inherent requirements or academic integrity of a course of study.

Disclosing information

(13) Applicants or students with disability do not need to disclose to Access and Inclusion that they have a medical condition or disability unless they require access to reasonable adjustments or other Access and Inclusion services.

(14) Applicants or students seeking reasonable adjustments or other Access and Inclusion services will:

a. be required to disclose that they have disability and/or a medical condition (without necessarily naming the disability/condition); and
b. need to describe its impact on their studies.

(15) All applications for reasonable adjustments must be supported by documentation from a relevant treating medical practitioner or allied health professional, unless otherwise approved by Access and Inclusion (see Applying for an Access Plan and reasonable adjustments in this policy).

(16) Disclosure of disability at admission does not automatically lead to the provision of services.

(17) Information regarding a student's disability will be treated confidentially by Access and Inclusion, and in accordance with the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Reasonable adjustment

(18) Reasonable adjustments refer to the measures taken by the University to enable full access and participation to education services on the same basis as students without disability or caregiving responsibilities.

(19) When determining if an adjustment is reasonable, the University will consider:

a. the effect of the adjustment on the person's ability to be successful in their studies;
b. the costs and benefits of making the adjustment; and
c. the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student, the University, and other students and staff.

(20) In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the University may not be able to make reasonable adjustments where:

a. the adjustments cause unjustifiable hardship on the University;
b. because of the disability, the student would be unable to fulfil the inherent requirements of the course;
c. adjustments will compromise the academic integrity of course, assessment, or accreditation process; or
d. a student with disability has an infectious disease or other condition that requires isolation or discrimination to protect the welfare of others.

Applying for an Access Plan and reasonable adjustments

(21) Students who would like to engage support services and/or seek reasonable adjustments are required to register with Access and Inclusion.

a. Students can involve a disability support person(s) at any stage of the process, including bringing them to meetings.

(22) Students will need to discuss with Access and Inclusion the impacts of their disability and the types of supports and reasonable adjustments that they may require to participate in University activities.

(23) Students will also need to provide current supporting evidence from a relevant treating medical practitioner or allied health professional, outlining:

a. the circumstances affecting the student;
b. the impact(s) on the students' studies and/or other staff and students; and
c. recommendations for reasonable adjustments.

(24) Based on individual circumstances, Access and Inclusion may modify or waive the evidentiary requirement.

(25) Students may be requested to provide further or updated information where necessary, including from a treating medical practitioner or allied health professional.

Developing an Access Plan

(26) An Access Plan is developed collaboratively through discussions between the student and Access and Inclusion. The Access Plan outlines the relevant agreed reasonable adjustments to learning, assessment, and examinations.

(27) Access Plans may include adjustments and supports needed for practicums, work placements, field trips, study at other institutions or study abroad as appropriate.

a. Students may be required to meet fitness tests for work placements or provide evidence from a medical

practitioner about their fitness to study overseas.

(28) When determining reasonable adjustments, Access and Inclusion may need to liaise with the Course Coordinator or nominated academic staff member and will take into account information provided by the student in their application for support or in subsequent meeting and evidence supplied by the student from a relevant medical practitioner or allied health professional.

(29) Adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

a. adjustments to physical access,
b. more time in exams or to complete assessments,
c. study materials in a different format, and
d. Assistive technology and software.

(30) Where the relevant health professional indicates that the nature or extent of a person's disability has the potential to create a health and safety risk to themselves or others, the Access and Inclusion team will work with the student and the relevant health professional to minimise the risk where possible, with assistance from Work Health and Safety.

Approval and implementation of an Access Plan

(31) Depending on the nature of the disability, the Access Plan will either be approved for the duration of the course or for a specific time period as outlined in the Access Plan.

a. Students will receive a copy of the Access Plan once it has been approved.
b. Access Plans will be reviewed periodically, however students are encouraged to contact Access and Inclusion at any stage to seek advice or to request changes to their Access Plan as appropriate.

(32) Staff and students are responsible for the implementation of the Access Plan in a reasonable timeframe.

a. Students are to provide a copy of their Access Plan to Lecturers and Unit Coordinators in a timely manner for each semester of study, noting that Access and Inclusion can share an Access Plan on a student's behalf where they do not feel comfortable doing so.
b. Where relevant, Access and Inclusion will notify Timetabling and Examinations and Results of the reasonable adjustments to be implemented during the student's examinations.

(33) Where the implementation of reasonable adjustments may take time to implement (e.g. changes to physical access), the student will be kept informed of the expected timeframe of completion.

Concerns raised about a student by a third party

(34) Where there are concerns about a student's wellbeing or safety or a student's impact on the wellbeing or safety of others, a University employee may respond to provide support and advice to the student.

(35) Where appropriate and necessary, the University may require evidence or impose conditions as a result of concerns being raised.

(36) Such concerns are to be managed in accordance with the Fitness to Study Procedure or the Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedure, as applicable.

Review of decision / complaints

(37) A student may request a review of a decision made under this policy within ten (10) working days of issue of the approved Access Plan. The outcome of such a review will be final.

(38) A student who is not satisfied with the quality or delivery of a University service, or who believes they have experienced unfair treatment can submit a complaint in accordance with the Student Complaints Policy.

Promotion

(39) Information and educational resources regarding this policy will be included in staff induction and reinforced in annual programs of professional development.

(40) Signposting to this policy will be included in handbooks, course guides and student diaries, in the Library and Student Central, and on the University's website. Promotion of the policy to students will be available in a range of languages.

Records

(41) Confidential records relating to student Access Plans will be retained by Access and Inclusion and held separately from student academic records. Records will be disposed of according to the relevant Retention and Disposal Schedules.

Section 5 - Non-Compliance

(42) Non-compliance with governance documents is considered a breach of the Code of Conduct - Employees or the Code of Conduct - Students, as applicable, and is treated seriously by the University. Reports of concerns about non-compliance will be managed in accordance with the applicable disciplinary procedures outlined in the Charles Darwin University and Union Enterprise Agreement 2025 and the Code of Conduct - Students.

(43) Complaints may be raised in accordance with the Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure - Employees and Complaints Policy - Students.

(44) All staff members have an individual responsibility to raise any suspicion, allegation or report of fraud or corruption in accordance with the Fraud and Corruption Control Policy and Whistleblower Reporting (Improper Conduct) Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	13th October 2025
Review Date	8th May 2028
Approval Authority	Vice-President Governance and University Secretary
Approval Date	13th October 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Sarah Fletcher Director Student Engagement
Implementation Officer	Marnie Bruce Associate Director Student Support
Enquiries Contact	Marnie Bruce Associate Director Student Support --- Student Engagement

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Disability support person" - A person that a student can nominate to provide them with emotional support and advocacy. This may include a parent, spouse, relative, carer or assistant.

"Health Professional" - Refers to a person who is registered as a health professional with the Australian Health Practitioner Regulatory Agency.

"Inherent Requirements" - The abilities, knowledge, and standards of conduct and performance that are essential for a student to achieve the learning outcomes of a course or unit. These may include compulsory standards set by professional registration, or accreditation bodies.

"Reasonable adjustments" - Adjustments that can be made to enable a student with disability to participate in education on the same basis as students without a disability. An adjustment is reasonable if it successfully balances the interests of all parties affected and does not compromise the academic standards or inherent requirements of a unit or course.

"Partner organisations" - An organisation, in conjunction with whom the University offers a program of study or a component of a program of study.

"Universal design" - Tthe design of products and environments to be usable by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or of specialised design. In education, this means developing course content, teaching materials and delivery methods to be accessible to and usable by students across the broadest diversity ranges. Unjustifiable hardship is an exception outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 that allows an organisation to refuse to make an adjustment. In determining what constitutes unjustifiable hardship, all relevant circumstances of the particular case are to be taken into account, including: the benefits and disadvantages that would be caused by making the reasonable adjustment; and the effect of the disability of the student concerned; and the financial cost of making the reasonable adjustment in the context of the organisation's financial circumstances.

"University" - Charles Darwin University, a body corporate established under section 4 of the Charles Darwin University Act 2003. The University is comprised of the various faculties, CDU TAFE, organisational units, and formal committees, including the governing University Council and Academic Board.

"Governance document" - means policy or procedure published in the Governance Document Library. Policies and procedures are collectively called ‘governance documents’ and are often referred to as ‘policy’ or ‘University policy’.

"Disability" - Disability is defined by the University in line with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and includes students with: any physical, sensory, neurological, intellectual, learning disability, psychological or psychiatric condition, and includes physical disfigurement, the presence in the body of disease-causing organisms and total or partial loss of part of the body or a bodily function, and a temporary, permanent, current, past or future disability, and chronic health conditions which may not commonly be considered disabilities.