



# **Accessibility and Learning Support (ALS) Policy**

**PCY133**

**Effective: November 2021**

**Version: 3**

Note: this document is available in alternative formats upon request including electronic format, hard copy (standard and large print) or audio format.

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All policy and procedural statements contained within this document are lawful orders for the purposes of section 80(a) of the Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA) and are therefore to be observed by all College employees

## Policy Statement

North Metropolitan TAFE (NMTAFE) is committed to facilitating the inclusion of people with disability through the improvement of access to its information, services and facilities.

NMTAFE's Accessibility and Learning Support (ALS) office will work across all campuses to coordinate and implement support for students with disability, whether temporary or permanent, to ensure they have access to its facilities and services on the same basis as students without disability.

The ALS office will work with training portfolios, students and staff to develop and implement support services and reasonable adjustments that are based on the medical documentation supplied and/or information disclosed to ALS by the student. Support services and reasonable adjustments provided to students with disability will not compromise the inherent requirements of a training product or cause unjustifiable hardship to the college.

## Scope

This policy applies to North Metropolitan TAFE (NMTAFE) students with a disability, regardless of when the disability was acquired.

## Principles

North Metropolitan TAFE will endeavour to:

- Ensure that all its services meet the needs of people with disability
- Ensure that access to facilities and buildings meet the needs of people with disability
- Provide information in alternative formats to meet the communication needs of people with disability
- Promote and facilitate high levels of staff awareness and understanding concerning the needs and rights of people with disability
- Provide reasonable adjustments to course content and delivery to enable students with disability to access and participate in their chosen course
- Provide an environment where people with disability have the opportunity to participate in relevant decision-making processes with the TAFE

## Background

### Disclosure of Disability

All students are encouraged to disclose disability but there is no legal obligation for a student to make such a disclosure.

Where a student has not disclosed disability, North Metropolitan TAFE is **not responsible** for providing adjustments related to education and training or work.

As outlined in the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*, once a disclosure has been made by a student, appropriate responses must be considered, including education adjustments to support the person with a disability.

## Reasonable Adjustment

Reasonable adjustment refers to the actions taken to provide a person with a disability with the same educational opportunities as other students. It is not to give students with a disability an advantage over others, to change training product requirements, or to override the student code of conduct.

Reasonable adjustment to training delivery methods refers to variations in the way that accredited courses, units of competency or modules are taught so that they are accessible to students with disabilities. Examples of reasonable adjustment to training delivery methods may include: access to alternative formats for learning materials (audio, large print, subtitles), provision of Auslan interpreters, using accessible teaching venues for students with physical disabilities, and access to adaptive technologies and equipment.

Reasonable adjustment to assessment practices, including in-class assessments, assignment tasks, and practical placements, can be made to accommodate students with disabilities, and must be appropriate to the student's skill level and physical and psychological capabilities.

Reasonable adjustment will be offered to all students with a disability providing the necessary disclosure requirements are met, and appropriate medical documentation outlining the functional impacts of the disability is obtained from a qualified health practitioner.

Reasonable adjustment will be recommended by the Accessibility and Learning Support Coordinator, in consultation with the relevant training portfolio where necessary. Any adjustments will be communicated to the training portfolio through the student's Learning Support Plan, and subsequent changes to adjustments can be made as required.

Reasonable adjustment will depend on the impact of the disability, the requirements of the training package, and the resources available to the student and the college. The adjustments need to be reasonable, appropriate and responsive to the student with a disability in a particular situation and can occur:

- during the admission or enrolment process
- when participating in a course or program
- when using facilities or services

Prior to North Metropolitan TAFE making any reasonable adjustment, the student or a nominated associate of the student **must** be consulted. Reasonable adjustment cannot be considered without:

- disclosure of the student's disability; and
- relevant medical documentation as outlined in the medical documentation guidelines

Judgements about what is reasonable adjustment for a student or a group of students with a particular disability may change over time. In assessing what is a reasonable adjustment for a student, all relevant circumstances and interests should be considered, including:

- the nature and impact of the student's disability
- the views of the student
- the impact of the adjustment on the student, including:
  - ability to achieve training outcomes; and
  - ability to participate in courses or programs; and
  - independence
- the effect of the proposed adjustments on anyone else affected, including North Metropolitan TAFE as a provider, their staff and other students;
- the costs and benefits of making the reasonable adjustment

## Medical Documentation

In order to be eligible for Accessibility and Learning Support at North Metropolitan TAFE, a student will need to provide current evidence from an authorised health professional who has had comprehensive training and experience in the field of disability or health condition. This documentation will need to outline the person's diagnosis, the impact of the disability or health condition, and the functional limitations related to TAFE studies or work. This health professional must be independent of the person and not related to them.

### • Medical Documentation Validity

Documentation needs to be relevant to the student's current function with the following timeframe of validity:

- In the last two weeks for a temporary condition
- In the last six months for a fluctuating condition
- After the age of 16 years old, or in the last three years for a learning disability
- No date is required for a permanent disability

### • Medical Documentation Requirements

In order to receive assistance through Accessibility and Learning Support at North Metropolitan TAFE, we require:

- A clear statement of the condition, including a diagnosis against specific criteria if applicable e.g.:
  - ADD/ADHD – diagnosis based on the criteria in the DSM-IV/V (APA)
  - Autism Spectrum Disorder – diagnosis based on the criteria in the DSM-IV/V (APA)
  - Mental Health Conditions – diagnosis based on the criteria in the DSM-IV/V (APA)
  - Specific Learning Disorders – A diagnostic clinical assessment report with testing results from a relevant professional that includes information on the functional impacts of the specific learning disorder on academic achievement and recommendations
- Description of the severity of the condition as outlined above (e.g. temporary, fluctuating, permanent)
- Description of current symptoms
- Description of current treatment (if applicable)
- Current impacts of the condition on academic performance
- Recommended strategies for reasonable adjustments and strategies to support academic performance
- Recommended assistive technology specific to the condition

Documentation must be written on letterhead and signed/dated by a qualified health professional not related to the student. Alternatively, the North Metropolitan TAFE Health Practitioner Report Form (available from Accessibility and Learning Support Office) can be completed by the relevant professional.

### • Relevant Qualified Health Professionals

The table below outlines the suggested health professionals who can provide medical documentation dependent on the health condition or disability.

Condition/ Disability	Suggested Health Professional
<b>ADD/ ADHD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Registered Psychologist</li><li>• Psychiatrist</li></ul>
<b>Autism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paediatrician</li></ul>

Condition/ Disability	Suggested Health Professional
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> </ul>
<b>Chronic Illness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Specialist</li> </ul>
<b>Deaf or Hearing Impairment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Audiologist</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Disability</b> <b>e.g.</b> Dyslexia Dyspraxia Dyscalculia Dysgraphia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered Educational or Neuro Psychologist with training and experience in testing for a learning disability</li> </ul>
<b>Medical Condition</b> <b>e.g.</b> Chronic Fatigue Diabetes Digestive Disorders Fibromyalgia HIV/AIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant Medical Specialist</li> <li>• General Physician with evidence of a clinical history with the student</li> </ul>
<b>Mental Health Condition</b> <b>e.g.</b> Anxiety Bipolar Disorder Depression Eating Disorder Gender Dysphoria Post-Traumatic Stress Schizophrenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registered Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> <li>• General Physician with evidence of a clinical history with the student</li> </ul>
<b>Neurological Conditions</b> <b>e.g.</b> Acquired Brain Injury Cerebral Palsy Epilepsy Multiple Sclerosis Spina Bifida	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neurologist</li> <li>• Neuro Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> <li>• General Physician</li> </ul>
<b>Physical Disabilities</b> <b>e.g.</b> Amputation Arthritis Cancer Cystic Fibrosis Quadriplegia Paraplegia Spinal Cord Injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical Specialist</li> <li>• General Physician</li> <li>• Physiotherapist</li> <li>• Occupational Therapist</li> </ul>
<b>Temporary Condition or Injury</b> <b>e.g.</b> Broken bone/s Musculoskeletal injury affecting fine and/ or gross motor function Surgery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Practitioner</li> <li>• Specialist</li> <li>• Relevant Health Professional</li> </ul>
<b>Blind or Vision Impairment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optometrist</li> <li>• Ophthalmologist</li> <li>• Specialist Vision Testing Service</li> </ul>

If the student feels they have a disability or medical condition that is affecting their studies, but it has not been diagnosed, they are encouraged to seek assistance from the above medical professionals.

## **Definitions and Acronyms**

### **Disability**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) defines disability as:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes disability that:
  - presently exists
  - previously existed but no longer exists (e.g. cancer)
  - may exist in the future (e.g. a condition that runs in the family which may develop in the future)
- is imputed to a person (meaning it is thought or implied that the person has disability but does not – e.g. someone may believe a gay man has HIV/AIDS).

### **Reasonable adjustment**

Reasonable adjustment refers to a measure or action taken by the college that assists a student with a disability with respect to: admission and enrolment; undertaking a course, and accessing facilities or services that balances the interests of all parties affected.

### **Same basis**

Same basis refers to the college providing students with a disability opportunities and treatment comparable to those offered to students without a disability, achieved through the use of reasonable adjustment.

### **Unjustifiable hardship**

Unjustifiable hardship refers to a situation where the college, attempting to comply with the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth), incurs unwarrantable costs with respect to making reasonable adjustments.

## Procedure

Process Activity	Who is responsible for activity?	What do I need to do?	What are the resources I need?
<p><b>Enrolment:</b> when a student has disclosed they have a disability and require support for their studies (in person, or on enrolment form)</p>	<p>Client Services staff</p> <p>ALS Office</p>	<p><b>Client Services staff</b> give the student the contact details for ALS and encourages the student to make contact with ALS.</p> <p><b>Accessibility and Learning Support (ALS) Office</b> will download the ETL report for the students with disability that indicate they require assistance at the beginning of each Semester.</p> <p><b>ALS Office</b> will make contact with the students that indicate they require assistance and invite the student to meet with the ALS Coordinator to discuss support requirements.</p> <p><b>ALS Office</b> cannot disclose the student's disability to other staff without the written consent of the student or their guardian (where relevant).</p>	<p>ALS flyer or contact details (business cards)</p> <p>Enquiry Form (Webform/ Print)</p> <p>ALS Office: 94271314  <a href="mailto:Access.Support@nmtafe.wa.edu.au">Access.Support@nmtafe.wa.edu.au</a></p>
<p><b>During the course of study:</b> when a student discloses that they have a disability</p>	<p>Lecturing staff</p> <p>ALS Office</p> <p>Student</p>	<p><b>Lecturing staff</b> member discusses support options with student and provides the student with ALS contact information for the student to decide if they want to register. Staff member can provide student contact details to the ALS office to make contact with the student, with the student's consent.</p> <p>If student rejects support, and <b>Lecturing staff</b> member has OH&amp;S or duty of care concerns that there is a risk to the student or others, then the staff member consults with Portfolio Manager and ALS Office as to whether the student can continue with the course (Eg: severe, uncontrolled epilepsy in a dangerous environment (for example, roof tiling), where the student may need to get medical clearance to continue with the course).</p>	<p>ALS flyer or contact details (business cards)</p> <p>Enquiry Form (Webform/ Print)</p> <p>ALS Office: 94271314  <a href="mailto:Access.Support@nmtafe.wa.edu.au">Access.Support@nmtafe.wa.edu.au</a></p> <p>Medical Documentation Information for students (Form)</p> <p>Health Practitioners Report (Form)</p>
<p><b>Registration meeting with student with a disability who requires support</b></p>	<p>ALS Office</p> <p>Student</p>	<p><b>ALS Coordinator</b> will meet with and register a student for support, if deemed eligible.</p> <p>The provision of all support services, facilities and reasonable adjustments will be based on the medical documentation supplied to ALS</p>	<p>Registration template</p> <p>Medical documentation outlining the student's</p>

Process Activity	Who is responsible for activity?	What do I need to do?	What are the resources I need?
		and information disclosed to ALS by the student.	diagnosis and the functional impact related to TAFE studies
<b>Development and implementation of a Learning Support Plan (LSP) for a student with disability</b>	ALS Office Lecturing staff Student	<p><b>ALS Coordinator</b> will initiate development of the Learning Support Plan (LSP), which outlines the support requirements and adjustments, based on the registration meeting with the student and the provided medical documentation.</p> <p>ALS Coordinator will consult with the Academic staff, ensuring student confidentiality, when the adjustments require input from the learning area.</p> <p><b>Student</b> must review their LSP, and approve in writing to their ALS Coordinator.</p> <p><b>ALS Coordinator</b> will email the LSP to relevant academic staff, once approved by the student.</p> <p><b>Lecturing staff</b> who receive a student's LSP must consider and implement the reasonable adjustments for the student.</p> <p><b>Lecturing staff</b> should discuss with <b>ALS Coordinator</b>, if the suggested support requests and reasonable adjustments compromise the inherent requirements of the course.</p> <p><b>Lecturing staff</b> who receive a student's LSP must not, for reasons of confidentiality, divulge any information contained in a LSP to any other party without the written authorisation of the student.</p>	LSP template
<b>Storage of private medical information</b>	ALS Office Lecturing staff	<p><b>ALS Office</b> will store a student's private medical information on a secure database, accessible only to approved staff members.</p> <p><b>Lecturing staff</b> that receive any confidential information relating to a student's private medical information (e.g. a student's LSP) must file and store the information securely.</p>	Access to secure database
<b>Promoting ALS</b>	ALS Office Lecturing staff All College employees	<p><b>ALS Office</b> shall be available to explain the services and provision of ALS to staff and students as required.</p> <p><b>Lecturing staff</b> to invite ALS to orientations to explain the services and provision of ALS to students.</p> <p><b>All college employees</b> are encouraged to promote the services of the ALS service.</p>	ALS flyer and contact details (business cards)  Access to ALS Intranet page

## Related Policies and Other Relevant Documents

- [North Metropolitan TAFE Disability Access and Inclusion Plan \(DAIP\) 2017 – 2022](#)
- Government of Western Australia, Department of Training and Workplace Development publication, Reasonable Adjustment: A guide to working with students with disability (2013)
- North Metropolitan TAFE Health Practitioner Report Form (available from ALS Office)
- Medical Documentation Information for Students (available from ALS Office)

## Relevant Legislation

- [Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
- [Review of Disability Standards for Education 2005 Discussion Paper 2010](#)
- [Western Australia Disability Services Act 1993](#)
- [WA Equal Opportunity Act 1984](#)

## Review Date

November 2024

## Contact Information

Manager, Accessibility and Learning Support

## Revision History

Version No.	Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date	Approval Authority	Amendments
1.0	approved	11/09/2017	GM Org Services	
2.0	approved	18/11/2020	Corpex	
3.0	Approved	02/11/2021	Director Profile and PSS	Name change to A&LS