

ECU Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (DAIP) 2016-2021



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Background

The University

Edith Cowan University (ECU) is a large public university serving communities in Western Australia as well as enrolling international students from more than 90 countries. The University has two metropolitan campuses in Joondalup and Mount Lawley and also serves Western Australia's South West region from a campus in Bunbury.

ECU incorporates the world-renowned Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, the oldest and most popular School of Education in Western Australia, the largest Nursing program in the State and Kurongkurl Katitjin, ECU's Centre for Australian Indigenous Education and Research.

In 2015 over 27,000 students were enrolled at ECU and the University employed almost 1,700 staff. 6.0% of ECU students and 2.1% of ECU staff identified as having a disability.

Functions, facilities and services

ECU delivers quality tertiary education through courses that have a strong focus on providing real life solutions to real life problems. The University's main functions and services include:

- Teaching and learning;
- Research and creativity;
- International and commercial;
- Industry and community engagement;
- Academic support services;
- Administrative support services.

Commitment

ECU is an inclusive university that values diversity and aims to create for students, staff and the broader community an environment free from discrimination. ECU is committed to increasing access and providing opportunities for students who face barriers to higher education.

A whole-of-university approach – with multiple areas responsible for the plan outcomes – has been taken to encourage and support prospective and current students, as well as staff and the broader community, to reach their potential.

ECU is committed to inclusive course design and delivery which gives everyone the opportunity to succeed. Clear communication and flexibility are essential elements of inclusive teaching and assessment practices.

This plan relates to ECU students and staff with any continuing condition that restricts everyday activities. The *Disability Services Act (1993)* defines 'disability' as meaning a disability which:

- Is attributable to an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or a combination of those impairments;
- Is permanent or likely to be permanent;
- May or may not be of a chronic or episodic nature;
- Results in substantially reduced capacity of the person for communication, social interaction, learning or mobility and a need for continuing support services.

Progress since 2006

ECU's first DAIP was developed in 2006 and evolved from earlier plans regarding disability and access, including the *Disability Action Plan 2004-2008*.

This is ECU's third DAIP. Appendix A contains a detailed summary of progress against ECU's *DAIP 2011-2016*.

Development of the DAIP

Consultation and approval

Formal development of the new DAIP commenced with a workshop on Overcoming Barriers held at the Joondalup Campus to coincide with ECU's celebration of the International Day for People with Disability on 28 October 2015.

The event attracted representatives from not-for-profit organisations, community partners and disability service providers, as well as ECU academics, policy makers and students. Feedback from participants at the event indicated that ECU does many things well in ensuring accessibility and inclusion of people with disability, however the following themes were identified as requiring continued focus:

- Ensuring web accessibility;
- Providing information to prospective students about support for people with disability;
- Improved training on diversity and accessibility for staff;
- Adopting universal design to ensure all course materials and teaching practices are accessible;
- Providing career advice to students with disability;
- Providing services to people with intellectual disability;
- Equipping staff members to provide support and assistance to students and staff with mental health issues;
- Improved signage;
- Improved use of assistive technology to aid students and staff with disability.

ECU's *DAIP 2016-2021* was developed with the above feedback in mind and in consultation with individual staff responsible for various aspects of the University's service provision.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Sub-Committee played a key role in overseeing the development of the revised DAIP. This committee comprises both professional and academic from across the University, and student and staff representatives with disability.

The University's Equity Committee was then consulted on the draft Plan. The Equity Committee then recommended that the Vice-Chancellor approve the Plan.

Responsibility for implementing the DAIP

The Vice-Chancellor has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the objectives of the DAIP are implemented. However, ECU considers it the responsibility of all staff to be informed of their responsibilities under the DAIP, with senior staff having a particular responsibility in supporting and facilitating access and inclusion and providing an environment free from discrimination.

The Disability Access and Inclusion Sub-Committee, which reports to the Vice-Chancellor's Equity Committee, plays a key role in monitoring the DAIP and promoting ongoing review of the Plan, as well as raising matters which impact on the access and inclusion of people with disability.

Review and evaluation mechanisms

The University is responsible for providing an annual statement to the Disability Services Commission on the achievement of objectives within the Plan. A report on achievement against the DAIP is also included in the University's Annual Report.

Should changes to the DAIP 2016-2021 be required, a copy of these amendments will be lodged with the Disability Services Commission.

Agents and contractors

Any agents and contractors engaged by the ECU will be informed of their obligations under the DAIP through:

- A DAIP clause included in the *General Conditions of Contracts for Goods and/or Services*;
- A reference to the DAIP in all tendering processes.

Comments on ECU's DAIP

Feedback and comments on the draft *DAIP 2016-2021* were encouraged during its development.

The DAIP 2016-2021 was available for viewing at the ECU website at <http://www.ecu.edu.au/about-ecu/welcome-to-ecu/commitment-to-equality-and-diversity>.

Members of the broader community were notified of the consultation process for the DAIP via newspaper notices in *The West Australian* on 30 March and 2 April 2016.

ECU advertised the availability of the DAIP to the WA public in *The West Australian* and thereafter made it available online via:

- Strategic and Governance Services Centre website;
- Staff professional development programs;
- Staff induction programs;
- Staff and students newsletters.

The *DAIP 2016-2021* is available in alternative formats on request, in electronic format, hard copy format in both standard and large print, in audio format and by email.

Comments on the *DAIP 2016-2021* are welcome at any time via the following email address: sgscadmin@ecu.edu.au.

Strategies for improving access and inclusion for people with disability

This plan articulates a number of strategies that will guide the University's disability access and inclusion activities over the next five years. Each strategy has a timeframe, a responsible officer/s and an indicator (or indicators) of success. The indicators will form the basis of reports against the *DAIP 2016-2021*.

ECU categories

In the ECU context the following five categories are intertwined with the eight prescribed outcomes:

1. Visible commitment to people with disability;
2. Accessible facilities and services for people with disability;
3. Accessible events and activities for people with disability;
4. Accessible teaching and learning;
5. Employment of people with disability.

In the following table, the second column shows how each strategy in this plan maps to the five ECU categories.

Outcome 1 Services and events

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the University.

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
1.1 Encourage dialogue between prospective students with disability and the University prior to admission.	1	Ongoing	D BGD	Include information in student recruitment presentations and events about supports for students with disability.
1.2 Encourage dialogue between students with disability and staff prior to commencement of each unit.	1	Start of each semester and ongoing	ADs (T&L) D SL	Include and update a generic clause in all course and unit outlines to encourage early contact with the Student Equity, Diversity and Disability Service. Develop a template for inductions including information on support for students with disability.

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
1.3 Ensure student orientations support the disclosure of a disability and promote services that are available.	4	Start of each semester and ongoing	D SL ADs (T&L) UL	Orientations include information on services available to students with disability. A process is developed for providing school based induction support and mentoring to students with disability. Campus and library tours include an introduction to the Assistive Technologies room.
1.4 Provide timely information to staff to make reasonable adjustments to the learning program.	4	Ongoing	ADs (T&L) D SL	Information on reasonable adjustments to be made available to staff in a timely manner.
1.5 Promote awareness of the support available to students with disability when undertaking workplace integrated learning (WIL).	4	Start of each semester and ongoing	D SL ADs (T&L)	Course/unit induction to include information on reasonable accommodations that can be made for students with disability during WIL placements.
1.6 Provide resources and equipment required for students with disability to participate in educational activities.	4	Start of each semester and ongoing	D SL UL	Resources, equipment and alternative conditions arranged. Assistive Technologies room is maintained and improved to meet the needs of users.
1.7 Ensure all University events incorporate accessibility requirements in the planning stages.	3	Ongoing	D BM	Corporate events adhere to standards in Disability Services Commission's <i>Guidelines for Creating Accessible Events</i> . Checklist provided to other parts of the University holding events.
1.8 Support volunteers in assisting students with disability.	1	Annual	D SGS	An insurance policy is maintained to cover non-ECU staff, or students who provide unpaid assistance to students with a disability where they don't already have personal accident insurance cover.

Outcome 2 Buildings and facilities

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the University.

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
2.1 Improve accessibility in ECU laboratories.	2	2017	D FSC	Develop planning guidelines for the renovation of laboratory spaces that include consideration of accessibility issues. Renovations delivered according to these accessibility guidelines.
2.2 Upgrade Campus West site cognisant to best accessibility guidelines.	2	2017	D FSC	Upgrades to Campus West site delivered according to best accessibility practice.
2.3 Fully implement Changing Place concept at Ngoolark (Building 34, Joondalup).	2	Dec 2016	D FSC D SL DoS D FSC	Changing Place is fully upgraded with all necessary equipment. Changing Place is promoted (particularly to students). Accreditation for the Changing Place in Ngoolark is finalised.
2.4 Continuously improve ECU's access and mobility maps.	2	Annual	D FSC	Access and mobility maps for each campus are reviewed and updated, where required, in consultation with users. Increase promotion of access and mobility maps.
2.5 Complete new signage project.	2	Dec 2016	D FSC	Develop accessible way finding signage on each campus.

Outcome 3 Information

People with disability receive *information* from the University in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
3.1 ECU's online services aim to meet best accessibility practice and will comply with standards in areas where they are stipulated.	1	2017	D BM	Conduct a web accessibility audit of web authored pages. Continuing progress made for ECU authored webpages to comply with WCAG 2 AA.
		2018	Directors and DoS	Action recommendations of the web accessibility audit.
		2018	D SGS	Conduct an accessibility audit of student information systems incorporating user testing.
		Ongoing	D ITSC	The assessment process for procurement of IT software and services includes accessibility requirements and scope for negotiations on accessibility improvements.
3.2 Ensure staff are knowledgeable in the provision of information in accessible formats.	1	Ongoing	DVC (E)	The learning platform homepage contains a link to current guidelines on creating accessible information.
			ADs (T&L)	Teaching and learning guides are reviewed and updated with the latest information in inclusive curriculum design.
			D HRSC DVC (E)	Academic and professional staff training is developed on accessible and inclusive content, including showcasing good practice.
3.3 Make learning resources available in alternative and accessible formats.	4	Ongoing	UL ADs (T&L)	Significant texts purchased in electronic versions where available. Permission is gained from publishers to change the formats of purchased texts to allow use by screen readers.
3.4 ECU's phone services aim to meet best accessibility practice.	2	Ongoing	D BGD	Staff aware how to operate the National Relay Service.

Outcome 4 Level and quality of service

People with disability receive the same *level and quality of service* from the staff of the University as other people receive from the staff of the University.

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
4.1 Raise awareness of disability among staff including around mental health and other hidden disabilities.	4	2017	D HRSC	Develop training that will assist staff to interact with students and staff with a range of disabilities, and refer to appropriate support services. Deliver mental health training for managers and supervisors.
4.2 Ensure legislative changes are incorporated in policies and plans.	3	Ongoing	D SGS	DAIP and relevant policies are reviewed and updated as required.

Outcome 5 Complaints

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make *complaints* to the University.

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
5.1 Ensure complaints processes are accessible.	3	Ongoing	D SGS	A centralised complaints website is available that meets ECU's web content accessibility standards. Alternative options are available to students or staff wishing to make a complaint.

Outcome 6 Public consultation

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any *public consultation* by the University

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
6.1 Provide stakeholders with an opportunity to provide comment on ECU's DAIP.	3	Ongoing	D SGS	ECU's <i>DAIP 2016-2021</i> is made available for comment on ECU's website in alternative and accessible formats.
6.2 Oversee the implementation of ECU's DAIP and monitor progress of DAIP objectives.	3	Annual	D SGS	An annual DAIP report is lodged with the Disability Services Commission by the due date.

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
6.3 Ensure Survey Services build accessibility into the planning of all surveys.	3	Ongoing	D SGS	ECU surveys meet or exceed legislative standards in survey accessibility.

Outcome 7 Employment

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain *employment* with the University.

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
7.1 Encourage and support job applications from people with disability.	5	Ongoing	D HRSC	Disability employment agencies are provided with information about ECU's employment opportunities.
7.2 Develop workplace practices to support the ongoing employment of people with disability.	5	Ongoing	D HRSC	Training on selection practices includes information on responding to the needs of applicants with disability.
		2018	D HRSC	Support structure for schools and centres is developed to identify jobs that are suitable for people with disability and a customised placement program is implemented.
		Dec 2016	D HRSC	The online induction project is completed to ensure a smoother onboarding process for people with disability.

Outcome 8 Inclusive culture

The University promotes an *inclusive culture* that values diversity, does not tolerate harassment or discrimination and encourages a secure and safe environment for all students and staff.

Strategy	Category	Timeline	Responsibility	Indicator/action
8.1 Fund, organise and promote key events on significant days.	1	Annual	D BM	International Day of People with Disability event held and attended by a cross section of the ECU community. Mental Health week events held and attended by a cross section of the ECU community to promote the services in mental health provided by ECU. Events promoted on screens around campus.
8.2 Identify, encourage and promote the work of disability related researchers.	1	Annual	D BM D RS	A regular report from RS to Corporate Communications is developed which details publications in the disability field.

Acronyms

ADs (T&L)	Associate Deans, Teaching and Learning
D BGD	Director, Business Growth and Development
D BM	Director, Brand and Marketing
D FS	Director, Facilities and Services
D HRSC	Director, Human Resources Service Centre
D ITSC	Director, Information Technology Services Centre
D RS	Director, Research Services
D SGS	Director, Strategic and Governance Services
D SL	Director, Student Life
DoS	All Deans of School
DVC (E)	Deputy-Vice-Chancellor, Education
UL	University Librarian

Appendix A: Progress achieved against ECU's DAIP 2011-2016

Outcome 1 Services and events

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the services of, and any events organised by, the University.

- Updated the Course Management System to enable staff to enter details on inherent course requirements;
- Developed principles for inclusive curriculum design which were embedded in units of professional development recommended to academic staff;
- Developed and distributed an inclusive curriculum checklist;
- Included accessibility services in the student prospectus and advertising lift-outs;
- Included a clause in all course and unit outlines promoting reasonable adjustments to the learning program for people with disability;
- Made information on reasonable adjustments available via ECU's website;
- Made provisions to support note takers in assisting students with disability;
- Profiled the benefits of appropriate disclosure and services that are available to students with disability during student orientations and inductions;
- Improved internal procedures and processes to ensure all corporate events adhere to disability standards.

Outcome 2 Buildings and facilities

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to access the buildings and other facilities of the University.

- Developed and finalised Access and Mobility Maps for the ECU Bunbury, Joondalup and Mount Lawley campuses;
- Undertaken feasibility assessments for the provision of accessible bus stop points and shelters for each campus;
- Upgraded a bus stop at ECU's South West Campus to improve its accessibility;
- Installed an accessible bus stop on the Joondalup Campus;
- Updated ECU's *Planning and Design Guidelines* to incorporate Australian Human Rights Commission guidelines;
- Commissioned a report to provide innovative design ideas, which are above Australian standards, for ECU's new Building 34 at the Joondalup Campus;
- Made improvements to accessibility in ECU buildings, including going beyond minimum access standards in the construction of the University's new student services building;
- Completed construction of Ngoolark (Building 34) at the Joondalup Campus including accessibility features that go beyond minimum access standards;
- Reviewed and updated ECU's Access and Mobility Maps to include new facilities and campus developments;
- Lobbied for improved public transport options for people with disability, particularly involving the breakdown of lifts at local train stations.

Outcome 3 Information

People with disability receive *information* from the University in a format that will enable them to access the information as readily as other people are able to access it.

- Provided all digitised reserve readings in OCR format to assist vision impaired students.
- Updated all Blackboard sites to conform to accessibility guidelines.
- Included information on accessibility and inclusivity in the *Teaching@ECU: The Little Red Book*;
- Provided an Accessible Technologies Room in the ECU libraries, at both the Joondalup and Mount Lawley campuses featuring a range of equipment to help students with disability;
- Updated the *Writing for the Web* guide to include a section on accessible content;
- Made progress towards Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA compliance across ECU authored webpages;
- Installed a hearing loop service in Lecture Theatre 3.101 at ECU's Mount Lawley Campus;
- Revised Teaching and Learning guides for with updated and expanded information on accessibility and inclusive curriculum.

Outcome 4 Level and quality of service

People with disability have the same *level and quality of service* from staff as other people receive from staff of the University.

- Delivered Disability Awareness Training with attendance from key customer service areas, including the Library, Student Services Centre and IT Services Centre;
- Delivered a series of mental health workshops;
- Delivered *Responding to Hidden Characteristics of the Class* Workshops;
- Mandated anti-discrimination training for staff in the area of disability through the Equal Opportunity Online training program;
- Complied with emergency procedures legislation relating to evacuation of people with disability.

Outcome 5 Complaints

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to make *complaints* to the University.

- Updated the complaints process to require referral of the complaint to a senior member of staff within the relevant area;
- Implemented an integrated complaints mechanism for ECU;
- Produced a report highlighting opportunities to improve the visibility of the University Contact Officer (UCO) network;
- Maintained, trained and supported the UCO and Ally networks;
- Created a Blackboard community site for UCOs and Allies;
- Developed a centralised complaints website conforming to University website accessibility requirements;
- Updated the student complaints website to include details of the support that is available to students with disability in lodging complaints.

Outcome 6 Public consultation

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to participate in any public consultation by the University.

- Published ECU's five year *DAIP 2011-2016* on the Planning, Quality and Equity Services website for public consultation along with each DAIP Annual Implementation Plan;
- Ensured ECU's standard survey software complied with US section 508 accessibility requirements;
- Analysed ECU's 2012 staff survey results to examine differences in views expressed by those staff who identify themselves as having a disability;
- Invited a City of Joondalup representative to ECU's Disability Access and Inclusion Sub-Committee to discuss local disability issues.

Outcome 7 Employment

People with disability have the same opportunities as other people to obtain and maintain employment with the University.

- Launched an online recruitment system eRecruit which features accommodations depending on the type of disability that is disclosed;
- Updated ECU's Staff Kiosk to include functionality for staff to update equal employment opportunity (EEO) details, including the option of disclosing a disability;
- Included definitions for disability in ECU's Staff Kiosk;
- Checked staff records systems to ensure disability details, if disclosed, are being correctly recorded;
- Been in regular contact (monthly) with leading disability agencies discussing positions that are being advertised.

Outcome 8 Inclusive culture

The University promotes an *inclusive culture* that values diversity, does not tolerate harassment or discrimination and encourages a secure and safe environment for all students and staff.

- Held annual events to celebrate International Day of People with Disability and Mental Health Week;
- Produced a *Timeline Fact Sheet* during Mental Health Week highlighting the impact of mental health issues and legislation on Indigenous Australians;
- Included EO Online (Equal Opportunity) training in the Role Based Capability Framework as a core activity;
- Integrated mental health skills training in new manager/supervisor training from 2013;
- Identified over 20 disability experts and placed them on the media experts database.