

Preparing for higher education

A Victorian guide for students with a disability

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Acknowledgements

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Further Copies

This handbook is electronically available for download on the NDCO Victorian state website at www.ndcovictoria.net.au

Further printed copies may be available from your local National Disability
Coordination Officer (see page 61)

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Definition of disability

The definition of disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) is quite broad and includes dyslexia, medical conditions, and mental illness. Universities and other providers of higher education recognise the formal definition of disability and provide academic and participative assistance for students who identify as having a disability in one of the following categories:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Psychiatric
- Sensory
- Neurological
- Learning disabilities
- Physical disfigurement
- The presence in the body of disease-causing organisms

Students who identify thus are not always supported through the secondary education system. It is important to know that the full definition of disability is recognised in the higher education sector, and services are in place to assist students across all categories of the definition of disability including chronic and temporary medical conditions and mental health disorders.

When you plan your university studies, consider whether you have to put in extra effort at school because of your disability or medical condition. If you do, it is important that you talk with the specialist disability services to find out about the range of academic and participative assistance, entry schemes, and funding that may be available at university to help you participate in and complete your studies.

Disability legislation and standards

Education providers are guided to facilitate access for people with a disability through the Disability Standards for Education 2005. The Standards make sure that providers of higher education:

- do not exclude people with a disability from course design, curriculum, and assessment processes
- provide student services for people with a disability
- prevent and appropriately respond to acts of discrimination and/or harassment against people with a disability
- provide accessible information about courses and enrolment procedures
- provide appropriate reasonable adjustments to facilitate opportunities for people with a disability to fully participate in their studies and in life on campus.

Under the Act and Standards, students with a disability are protected from discrimination while they participate in education.

Under the legislation, all providers of higher education have a legal obligation to ensure as far as possible that prospective and existing students with a disability have the opportunity to access higher education on the same basis as other students and achieve outcomes that are not dissimilar to those of their peers without a disability.

Complaints resolution

If you feel that you are being discriminated against or harassed because of your disability while you are studying at a university, you can seek advice from:

- a student services officer
- a teacher or course coordinator
- an access and equity officer
- a disability liaison officer.

Universities are committed to provide proper and fair avenues for resolving student concerns in a quick and effective manner. Each university has policies and procedures that outline the steps towards resolution. These policies and procedures are available to students.

If, after you access support through your university, you still feel that the matter has not been adequately resolved, you have the right to contact the advice line of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

Advice line	Weekdays from 9 am until 5 pm (Wednesdays from 9 am until 1 pm)
Phone	03 9281 7100
TTY	03 9281 7110
Email	complaints@veohrc.vic.gov.au

About higher education in Victoria

The Australian higher education system plays a vital role in Australia's future intellectual, economic, cultural, and social development. The Australian Government funds higher education through the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* which aims, among other things, to support students who undertake studies in higher education to experience a system which is 'characterised by quality, diversity, and equity of access' (www.austlii.edu.au).

The Australian Government's Department of Education, Employment, and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) has the responsibility to develop and administer policy and programs in higher education. Courses in higher education can be studied at:

- public universities
- private universities
- approved private providers of higher education
- open universities
- approved providers of vocational education training (VET), for example, Institutes of TAFE.

The government funds these providers differently.

Public universities

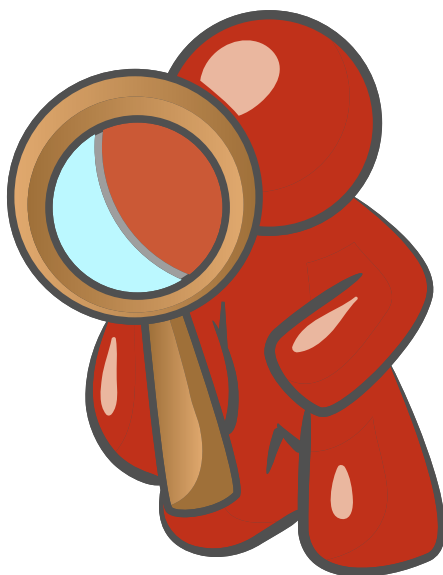
All public universities have Commonwealth-supported places. If you are a domestic student who is enrolled in an undergraduate degree at a public university, you have a Commonwealth-supported place and pay 'student contributions' rather than tuition fees. The government pays a portion of your fees. If you cannot afford your student contribution and provided you are eligible, you may be able to study now and pay later through a HECS-HELP loan to pay your student contributions.

Private universities and approved private providers of higher education

Private universities and approved private providers of higher education mainly offer full-fee-paying places and must be approved by the Australian Government to offer Commonwealth-supported places in areas of 'national priority'. Although the government does not contribute to the tuition costs of a full-fee-paying place, it does provide eligible fee-paying students the option to study now and pay later through a FEE-HELP loan to pay their tuition fees.

Open universities

Open Universities Australia (OUA) provides distance education to tertiary students and offers tertiary students a chance to undertake higher education studies regardless of their ATAR scores, previous education, or location. FEE-HELP loans are available to eligible students for undergraduate and postgraduate units of study undertaken through OUA.

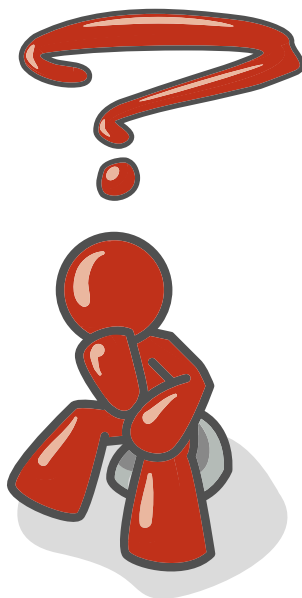


Approved providers of vocational education and training

Approved providers of vocational education and training, for example, Institutes of TAFE, are approved to offer VET FEE-HELP loans to eligible students who undertake higher-level VET qualifications (for example, diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate, and graduate diploma).

Additional support services

All public universities in Victoria have a department of student services and a disability liaison officer whose role is to provide support for students with a disability, medical, or psychiatric condition on behalf of the university. Private providers of higher education are still required to provide equitable access under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* in relation to student selection and participation but may not have a particular staff member or team whose role is dedicated to this.



Plan ahead

The first step in deciding whether or not you will go to university is deciding on the career path that you eventually want to follow. This decision needs to be based on your skills, abilities, and interests and on the industry you are considering.

Ask yourself the following questions.

- What am I interested in? What have I enjoyed at school?
- In what areas have I shown skill and ability?
- Which careers match these interests and skills?
- What are the hours, levels of pay, unemployment rates, and conditions related to that career?
- Am I able to work in that industry locally or do I have to re-locate?
- What are the specific tasks I perform when I work in this industry? What are the essential requirements of the job?
- What adjustments can be made for my disability? Seek advice on this as you may be surprised by the adjustments that are possible!
- Are there any essential requirements that cannot be adjusted to accommodate my disability?
- What formal qualifications do I need to work in this industry?

You do not have to negotiate your way through this process on your own. There are a number of ways to explore your options and find the answers to your questions before you make any decisions.

Talk to a careers advisor

The careers advisor at your school can help. You will have to give the careers advisor as much information about yourself as possible and ask questions so that you are clear about your direction and the next steps that you need to take. Some Institutes of TAFE and universities also offer this service free to prospective students.

Visit a Centrelink Career Information Centre

Centrelink's Career Information Centres offer a free service with information about different occupations and higher-education courses. There are currently two in Victoria (in Melbourne and Geelong) but advisors are happy to provide information over the phone or by mail.

For more information, please visit www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/services/career_centres.htm

Talk to people who work in the industry

People in the industry can tell you about what an average day at work involves and the pros and cons of the particular job. They can also tell you the skills that you need most to succeed in that career.

Talk to other graduates with a disability

Graduates with a disability may be able to tell you how they decided on their career paths and how they found out about the adjustments that could be made.

Talk with family and friends

Family and friends know you well and may see skills and abilities in you that you have not considered. Talk with them about the careers that they think suit you.

Check out some websites

The following websites provide career and transition information.

www.myfuture.edu.au

www.careertips.net.au/

www.imvc.com.au/content/broaden-your-horizons

www.gooduniguide.com.au

www.graduatecareers.com.au

www.studyassist.gov.au/sites/StudyAssist/

Match your career with a university pathway

When you have decided on a career, you need to think about how to reach it. There is often more than one way to gain entry to a particular career. You need to find out which qualifications are considered acceptable for entry into the career and, if the career requires registration, what that entails.

Kelly wants to be an architect.

She can apply for a number of university courses to do this, for example, Bachelor of Architecture, Bachelor of Design (majoring in architecture) or Bachelor of Environments (majoring in architecture). Each of these is a three-year undergraduate degree, designed to be followed by a two-year Master of Architecture, after which graduates are fully qualified.

Alternatively, Kelly can complete a double degree, for example, Bachelor of Design (Architecture) Bachelor of Construction Management, in five years.

Kelly may decide instead to enrol in a three-year Advanced Diploma of Building Design (Architectural) at her local Institute of TAFE, after which she can transfer to a Bachelor of Architecture at a university and receive credit for some of her three years of study.

It is a legal requirement in each Australian state and territory that anyone who uses the title 'architect' or offers services to the public as an architect must be registered with the Architects Board in that state or territory. To register, in addition to her qualification, Kelly needs to have a minimum of two years' recent practical experience and to have successfully completed the Architects Accreditation Council of Australia's Architectural Practice Examination (APE).

There are a number of questions to think about regarding your course options.

- What is the duration of the course?
- What is the level of the course?
- Am I interested in the course's content and subjects?
- Do I want to specialise or complete something more general?
- What are the prerequisites?
- Are any courses considered more favourably by employers than others?
- What study modes are available (for example, off-campus, part-time, online)?
- Which universities offer the course? At which campuses?
- Are there alternative entries into the course?
Alternative entry schemes are designed for applicants who do not use their VCE scores as the basis for their applications to enter university.
- Is there a bridging program?
- Are there courses in TAFE that can be credited towards this qualification?
- What are the costs involved (for example, fees, equipment costs, textbooks)?
- Does the course involve any practicum, field experience, or laboratory work? How much?
- How many face-to-face hours does the course involve each week?
How many hours outside class time am I expected to spend each week studying?

These questions can be talked over with a careers advisor or at careers days and university open days.

Study options

Courses in university are delivered in a range of ways.

On-campus learning

On-campus learning means that you attend face-to-face classes at the university campus. These classes may be lectures, tutorials, laboratory classes, or practical lessons. Often, courses that are delivered face-to-face also have components of online or flexible delivery built into them. Field placements are a requirement of some courses and are opportunities for you to experience the workplace under supervision.

Off-campus learning

Off-campus learning means you can study from home without needing to regularly attend face-to-face classes. It is sometimes called 'distance education' or 'open learning'. Your learning materials may be study guides and readings which are sent to you by mail. Alternatively, you may study online or in a combination of ways. There are some distance learning courses that also require attendance at residential schools. You sometimes have the choice to complete your whole course off-campus or to complete some or parts of it off-campus and some on-campus. Not all courses can be studied off-campus.

There are any number of reasons why you may be an off-campus student.

- Your work hours or commitments prevent you from attending scheduled lectures.
- The course that you want to study is only available with a provider that is an inconvenient distance from where you live.
- You have a disability which prevents you from attending classes.
- You cannot attend regular classes.
- You have transport difficulties.

Off-campus study can give you greater control over your learning.

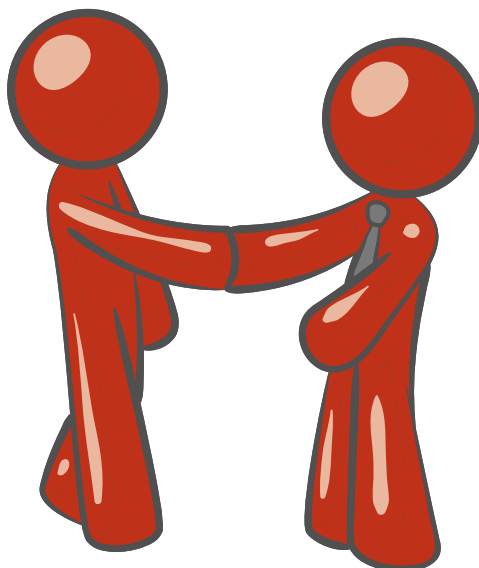
However, it does offer different challenges in that it requires you to be self-motivated. It is important that you talk with the student support staff and library staff at the institutions you are considering about the support that you can be provided as an off-campus student.

Residential schools

Residential schools are blocks of time when you are required to attend classes with other students who are enrolled in your course. A residential school is often a requirement of an off-campus course. Residential schools provide opportunities to:

- use specialised equipment and facilities
- meet and discuss issues with the academic staff
- meet and exchange ideas with fellow students
- visit the library.

If you select an off-campus course that requires your compulsory attendance at a residential school, make sure that you can take time away from your commitments, arrange and manage the travel, and financially plan for the associated meals and accommodation costs.



Online learning

Online learning is a way of providing flexible learning and teaching in a course, unit, or lesson that is accessed through the internet. Readings are made available online and often, online student chat rooms are also set up to facilitate student discussions and contact with the lecturers of the course. Some online courses may require you to attend parts of the course in person even when you are an off-campus student. Not all courses are available online.

Full-time and part-time studies

Full-time study

Full-time study is when you enrol in the 'normal full-time' load of subjects or units that make up a course. Many tertiary institutions consider this to be the minimum amount of subjects that you must undertake in order to complete your course within the minimum timeframe. This load can vary from course to course and between tertiary institutions but usually constitutes about four subjects a semester. Some courses may have more face-to-face class hours while others have more self-directed study. The term 'full-time' does not refer to the amount of class hours but to the number of units or credit points you are studying.

Centrelink will accept you as a full-time student if your course is considered full-time by your institution, your HECS loading is at least 0.375 for each study period, or you are studying 75 per cent of a full-time load.

Part-time study

Part-time study is very popular among students who often need to balance family and work commitments. Part-time study is when you enrol in less than 75 per cent of the 'normal full-time' load of subjects or units that make up a course. The number of subjects or units that you undertake when you study part-time depends on the structure of the course. Students who study part-time take longer to finish their

courses than the recommended minimum timeframe as they study fewer subjects per semester than do full-time students. Part-time study can be undertaken in on-campus, off-campus, online, and mixed modes of study.

Credit for prior learning

If you have relevant on-the-job experience, have undertaken informal training, or have completed studies in TAFE, at university, or at another post-school institution, then credit transfer or skills recognition may be your key to a fast-tracked qualification. Universities sometimes call this 'advance standing'. It essentially means that the university recognises your previous learning and counts it towards the course in which you are enrolled to reduce the amount of work you need to do to complete your current course.

Many universities in Victoria only recognise previous formal study and you may be required to provide evidence such as formal transcripts to support your application for credit. If you want to apply for credit transfer or skills recognition, please contact the university to discuss your options.

Comparing features and services of universities

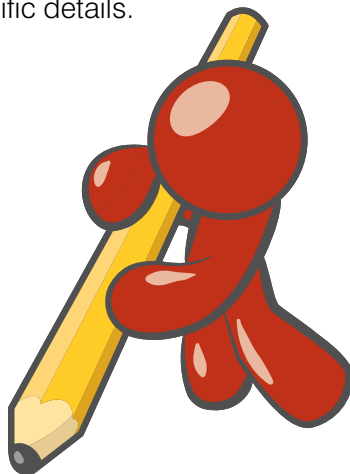
It is important to visit university websites, go to university open days, or visit university campuses to find out about the services that are available. This is especially important for people with a physical or visual impairment. Find yourself a copy of the 'Good university guide' which compares each university and campus using specific criteria and is available on the internet for a price. However, most school careers advisors and libraries have copies.

It is important to decide what campus features and services are important to you. Consider the following.

- Accommodation officers who provide support to on-campus students and/or information about off-campus accommodation
- Bulk-billed medical and/or dental services
- Career guidance officers
- Chaplaincy services and places for worship
- Child care
- Closeness to other services, for example, shops, bank, post office, and so on
- Convenient campus location
- Counselling services
- Easy access to public transport
- Facilities, for example, swimming pool, gymnasium, bars, and cafés
- Financial assistance, for example, student loans, and information about HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP, and Centrelink benefits
- Learning and study support, for example, free workshops for students about essay writing, critical thinking, mathematics, and other study skills

- Learning centres where students can freely access computers and a quiet space to study
- Legal service, tenancy assistance, financial planning services
- Libraries
- On-campus accommodation and/or information about off-campus accommodation
- Parking available on or near campus/inexpensive parking costs
- Peer support or mentoring programs for first-year students
- Shuttle buses to train stations, around campus, and/or off-campus university accommodation
- Social club and/or other student groups/clubs
- Sporting activities and team competitions
- Welfare officers
- Wheelchair-accessible buildings, library, toilets, and general campus

Talk to university staff. Many universities have some type of ‘helpline’ that can give over-the-phone advice for prospective students. This is a good starting point for general information about courses and the university. The university’s website is another good starting point but you may need to speak to the university’s academic and/or support staff to find out more specific details.



Getting into university

Special provisions for VCE assessment

You are eligible for special provision for school-based assessment if your ability to demonstrate your achievement is adversely affected by:

- acute or chronic illness
- long-term disability or impairment
- personal circumstances.

You must apply to your VCE coordinator if you think that you may be eligible for special provision. Applications close in the first week of March of each year so contact your coordinator before you begin VCE or immediately after you start. Long-term impairments/disabilities require a medical statement or evidence of recent intellectual and educational testing (learning disability) and a record of how you have been assisted at school over the years.

If you are eligible, your school can help you to complete assessments by:

- rescheduling assessment tasks
- setting alternative or substitute tasks
- allowing more time to complete a task
- allowing the use of different arrangements to complete an assessment.

Currently, special examination arrangements may only include:

- rest breaks
- extra reading time in addition to the official reading time
- extra writing time in addition to the official writing time.

For more information, please visit www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/exams/specialprovision/specialprovision.html

Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre

The Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) accepts applications for:

- tertiary/university courses
All course applications through VTAC are submitted online using VTAC's course application process.
- the special entry access scheme
- admissions tests including the Special Tertiary Admissions Test (STAT) and the DULSAT (Deakin University law school admission test)

The STAT is required by some universities if you have not met all the minimum requirements or are applying under the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS). There are no courses in the VTAC guide that require STAT or DULSAT results for current year 12/VCE students not applying for special consideration. However, there are a number of interstate courses that require current year 12 students to sit the STAT, so check carefully.

- scholarships.
VTAC administers applications for scholarships at many Victorian universities and interstate universities that participate in the VTAC system.

For more information, please visit www.vtac.edu.au

Admission process

Institutes of TAFE and universities do not always have a position for each person who applies to enrol. After you apply, you must wait to be selected before you can be assured of a place at the university.

Students finishing year 12 must apply through VTAC

To apply for a course at university, you must complete and lodge an application with the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC) and

pay the application fee. You will be asked to choose a number of courses/universities and to list these in order of preference (from your first choice to your last choice).

The university selects students to fill their quota of places

Each course has a limited amount of places, known as a quota. The quota for a course is broken down into sub-quotas which hold a certain number of places for people from different categories who apply. For example, a course may have 100 places of which 70 are set aside for year 12 students and 30 are for people who transfer from TAFE or other tertiary courses.

You are then sent one 'letter of offer'

You may be eligible for more than one course. However, you will only be given one offer in Victoria. This will be the highest-listed preference on your VTAC preference list. That university will send you a 'letter of offer'. The letter of offer will tell you how to accept the offer. If you decide to take up the university place offered to you, you must inform the university before the deadline that you are accepting the place in the course or the place will be offered to another applicant in the 'second round offers'.

You inform the university that you accept the offer and then select your subjects

If you accept the offer, the university will then ask you to choose which subjects you want to study. There is a wide range of choice in some courses while all subjects are compulsory in others. The university may provide staff from relevant departments to advise you about subject choice and you may also be able to seek advice from the university's disability liaison officer if your questions about subject choice relates to the impact of your disability.

Think about whether you want to study full-time or part-time (if part-time study is an option for your course) before you enrol, so that you know how many subjects you have to choose.

Round offers

There are a number of different offer rounds through the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre (VTAC).

Some institutions make early offers to timely non-year 12 applicants for some undergraduate courses. For a list of participating courses, check the VTAC website in mid-November. Note that supporting documentation is due to VTAC at an earlier date if you want to be considered for early offers. See 'Important dates'.

If you receive an 'early' offer, you will be notified in late November (current year 12 applicants are not considered for early round offers). If you receive an early offer, the offered course will be moved to become your lowest preference, which allows you to be considered for all other preferences in round one.

If you receive a 'round one' offer, you will be notified in late January.

If you are not offered a place in any course in the first round of the VTAC offers in January, you still have some options.

- Wait until VTAC's second-round offers are sent out in early February.
- Apply for an irregular offer for a course that is not listed as part of your preferences.
- You may receive a VTAC supplementary offer (mid-February) if you have given VTAC permission to release your application to all courses with vacancies after round two, and you have not received an offer in a previous VTAC offer round (early round, round one, or round two).
- Apply in May for the university's mid-year intake, and start your course in July.
- Consider applying to a TAFE course in the same field that may gain you credit towards the university qualification of your choice.
- Explore the option of completing a university preparatory course or bridging program

Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS)

People with a disability, chronic medical condition, or psychiatric disorder are encouraged to use SEAS when they apply for courses in higher education through VTAC.

SEAS is VTAC's online system for making an equity admissions application to higher education in Victoria. SEAS is only available for Australian citizens, permanent residents, and permanent humanitarian visa holders.

After making your VTAC application online, you can then apply for SEAS online using VTAC's website. As part of your SEAS application, you will need to provide information about how your circumstances have affected your access to education. You will also need to provide documentation for each category for which you apply under SEAS. Documentation needs to be sent to VTAC by the closing date (visit www.vtac.edu.au) as VTAC will not accept documentation after this date. To find out the documentation that is needed for each category, please visit www.vtac.edu.au

When you apply under SEAS, you make a statement about how your circumstances have affected your access to education. In your applicant statement, you will also need to discuss your capacity to study successfully in higher education. This may include discussion about previous work experience in relation to the area of study for which you are applying, as well as any other courses you may have completed.

Note that this consideration only applies if you meet each university's minimum entry requirements and the specific prerequisites of the course for which you are applying. SEAS does not change your educational results or qualifications. It enables course selection officers to recognise that your results may have been affected by educational disadvantage, and to consider the effects of that disadvantage. Consideration of SEAS may relax some aspects of the specific requirements but does not make them exempt.

Applications close around September/October, so remember to apply early online through VTAC's website. For further information, please visit www.vtac.edu.au

Many universities in other states also have special entry schemes. If you are applying interstate, be sure to ask your university if they have a special entry scheme and how to apply for it.

University preparatory courses or bridging programs

Many universities offer bridging programs into courses. These courses are available to people who did not gain the entry score needed to enter their chosen course, completed their year 12 studies but did not undertake tertiary entrance exams, or did not finish secondary school and will be 20 years of age or older during in the year of their admission.

Bridging programs aim to better prepare you for undergraduate studies. Successful completion of a bridging program can then assist you to gain entry into your chosen course. Not all courses have a bridging program as an alternative pathway to entry. Ask at the university you are considering about the availability of bridging programs and how they can help you gain entry into your course of interest.

Selection into a course and your rights

According to the Disability Standards for Education 2005, providers of higher education must ensure that, as a prospective student with a disability, you are able to seek admission to and enrol in a course on the same basis as a prospective student without a disability.

In doing so, representatives of the university must consult with you to determine whether the disability will affect your ability to fulfil the course requirements. Based on the outcome of this consultation, the university representatives must then decide if adjustments need to be made to make sure that you can participate on the same basis as a student without a disability. This is often done in consultation with you and the university's disability liaison officer (DLO).

It is also important to understand that not all applicants to a course will automatically receive admission to that course. Most higher education courses:

- have essential minimum entry requirements
- base their selection on an expectation that students will successfully complete the course
- have a limit to the number of places that are available in each course.

Selection may also be based on academic results, prior work or life experiences, other abilities, or a combination of these. Selection decisions cannot:

- exclude you on the basis of your disability
- exclude you based on the cost of providing appropriate support services for you (unless to do so would cause unjustifiable hardship to the educational provider)
- be based on the likelihood of your future employment after you have completed your chosen course of study.

However, you may be precluded if you cannot meet the minimum entry requirements or undertake the inherent requirements of the course.

Disclosing your disability

Disclosure is a dilemma that most students with a disability face. It is important to know that universities are committed to promoting an environment where diversity and difference are valued and respected.

In a higher-education environment, confidentiality is taken very seriously. University staff understand that they must seek your permission to tell anyone else about your disability and why.

For example, the DLO may want to inform the teaching department to make sure that appropriate reasonable adjustments (for example, alternative exam arrangements or extended time to complete assessment tasks) are put in place for you so that you can complete your studies. By talking with the DLO, you can make sure that the exact nature of your individual needs is kept confidential but you still receive appropriate accommodations.

It is important to realise that you are not obliged to disclose your disability. However, if you choose not to do so, university staff may not be able to meet your specific needs as they will not know what your needs are.

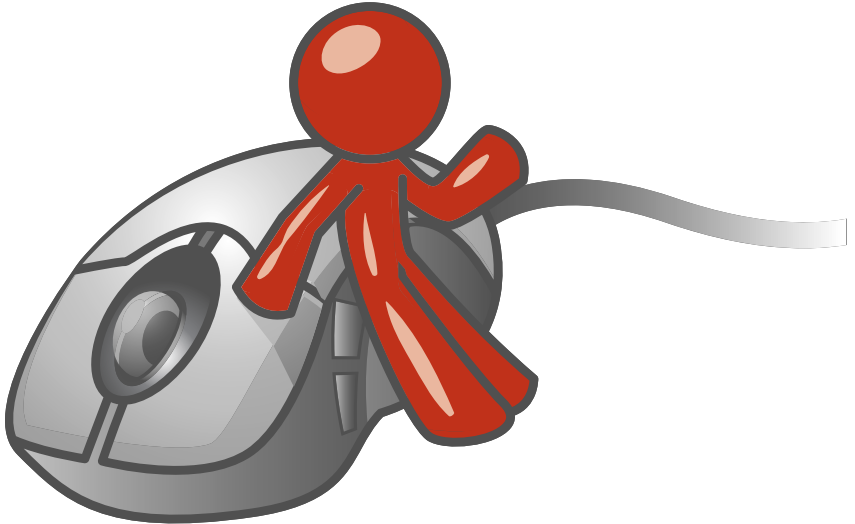
It is also important to think about what you want to achieve by disclosing and to whom you want to disclose your disability. How much you tell university staff and others about your disability is up to you! This should be on a 'need to know' basis. People do not need to know about your disability or medical condition if it does not impact on your learning. You do not need to disclose anything that is not relevant to your learning needs.

For more information about disclosure, please visit www.uws.edu.au/ndco/disclosure

Enrolment

Most universities ask a disability-related question on their enrolment forms. This information is used to assist with appropriate planning and budgeting for the supports needed to help students with a disability during their studies. Statistics are sent to the relevant government bodies but you are not identified in any way as having a disability in any of the university's administrative functions.

Identifying your disability on your enrolment form is also a good way of alerting the university that you may require some adjustments in the learning and teaching environment. The earlier that disclosure occurs, the earlier the relevant adjustments can be put in place to support your learning and participation.



Disability support and the DLO

Each university in Victoria employs at least one DLO. DLOs are responsible for making sure that universities provide learning and teaching environments where students with a disability are able to study, free from discrimination or harassment. The DLO works closely with students with a disability who require reasonable adjustments or other support to fully participate in their studies and campus life.

The DLO also helps students and teachers to determine and provide appropriate reasonable adjustments, for example, by modifying or adapting assessment tasks, extending the time allocation for exams, and providing materials in alternative formats such as text in MP3 audio files, in Braille, or in enlarged print. The DLO works closely with teachers and course coordinators, supporting them to provide an inclusive learning and teaching environment.

If you believe that you will need help while you are studying at university, it is important that you discuss your situation with a DLO as soon as you can, so that you can be provided with the best possible assistance. Try to contact the DLO before your course commences. This increases your chances of having adjustments in place early.

The DLO will work with you, your course coordinator, and your teachers to determine the appropriate reasonable adjustments that will minimise or remove barriers so that you can participate fully in your chosen study area.

Reasonable adjustments

A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action that is taken to help a student with a disability to participate in education and training on the same basis that other students are able to participate.

If a person with a disability needed to have adjustments made in order to participate equally in university life, and that adjustment could reasonably have been provided but was not, then a finding of indirect discrimination can occur.

You have every right to expect that reasonable adjustments will be made to assist you to undertake your studies so that you can achieve the expected course outcomes. Determining what constitutes a reasonable adjustment is often quite difficult. There is no simple way to define reasonable changes to assessment and course work, given the broad range of possible disabilities and the diverse range of skills required to undertake and/or demonstrate competencies in university courses.

Determining appropriate adjustments often requires negotiation and interpretation between you, the course coordinators, teachers, and the DLO about what is reasonable. At times, industry experts may also be consulted. There are no hard and fast rules.

In determining whether an adjustment is reasonable, consideration is given to:

- your disability and your views
- the effect of the adjustment on you, including the effect that it has on your ability to achieve the learning outcomes of the course, to participate in courses or programs, and to achieve independence
- whether the adjustment will lower the academic standards of the course
- the effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including the educational provider, staff, and other students
- the costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

The following are some examples of reasonable adjustments provided by universities to students with a disability.

- Modification of the physical environment, for example, provision of a ramp
- Change to course design, for example, substitution of non-essential elements of a course for more appropriate elements
For example, a LOTE subject can be exchanged for another elective in an undergraduate arts degree for a student who is hearing-impaired because the LOTE unit is not essential to the course
- Change to class schedules and arrangements, for example, relocation of classes to an accessible venue
- Modification of computer equipment and provision of assistive computer equipment, for example, a trackball mouse or a large screen
- Provision of assistive technologies such as voice-to-text software, or screen and/or text-reading software
- Provision of information or course materials in an accessible format, for example, text in audio, Braille, large print, or electronically
- Change in teaching practices, for example, teachers may wear an FM microphone to allow a student to hear lectures
- Provision of a class assistant, note-taker, research assistant, tutor, or sign interpreter
- Extension of time and facilitation of exams in alternative venues which may be quieter and smaller, with fewer distractions

- Alteration to the format of assessments, for example, a 1000-word essay may be divided into three 300-word essays, or exams may be replaced with assignments
- Provision of oral assessments so that students with a disability are able to give their answers verbally rather than in writing

Disability support workers in higher education

The DLO supervises a team of disability support workers who are employed to provide direct assistance to you. The support that you receive is directly aligned with the reasonable adjustments that have been determined to best meet your needs.

The role of the disability support worker has a number of different dimensions which include note-taker, class participation assistant, reader, library assistant, personal assistant, sign interpreter, adaptive technology support person, alternative format support person, tutor, and mobility and orientation guide. The disability support role varies and depends on your academic support needs. Some of the support roles that are most often provided are outlined here.

Assistive technology assistant

Assistive technologies can overcome many access barriers in education for students with a broad range of disability. Disability support workers are trained to understand how assistive technology works and can teach you how to use a range of software.

Many universities have a technology area where you can receive one-on-one tutoring in the use of assistive technology.

Note-taker

A note-taker not only provides you with notes but also enables you to devote your full attention to the teacher, classroom discussions, Auslan interpreter, and other learning activities.

A note-taker is provided for a range of reasons. For example, you may:

- have a physical disability and be unable to write
- be hearing-impaired and need to watch the interpreter
- have a learning disability and have difficulty writing.

Orientation and mobility guide

Disability support workers can provide mobility guide assistance if you are unable to independently navigate your way around campus or move quickly between different locations. Successfully guiding a person with vision impairment requires specific training which is provided for disability support workers who undertake this task.

Participation assistant

The participation assistant is responsible for providing high-quality support for you that is broader than just note-taking. Tasks assigned to this role vary and can include research and library assistance, one-on-one tutoring, preparing the learning environment, and providing emotional support if you experience extreme anxiety.

Sign interpreter

Sign interpreters facilitate communication between a person who is hearing-impaired and a hearing person by translating (voicing) spoken English into Auslan (signing) and vice versa.

Disability access plans

Disability access plans are also sometimes referred to as learning access plans or disability support plans. The disability access plan provides information to teaching and support staff so that they can adapt their learning and teaching approaches to accommodate your needs.

The DLO will work with you, your course coordinator, and sometimes your carer or parent to develop an appropriate access plan for you. It is important that all of your teachers are kept informed about your needs. The disability access plan is one way that this can happen.

You are the most important person in this process. It is important that you discuss any concerns you have as soon as they arise. It is also your responsibility to disclose your needs and to work with staff to address these needs.

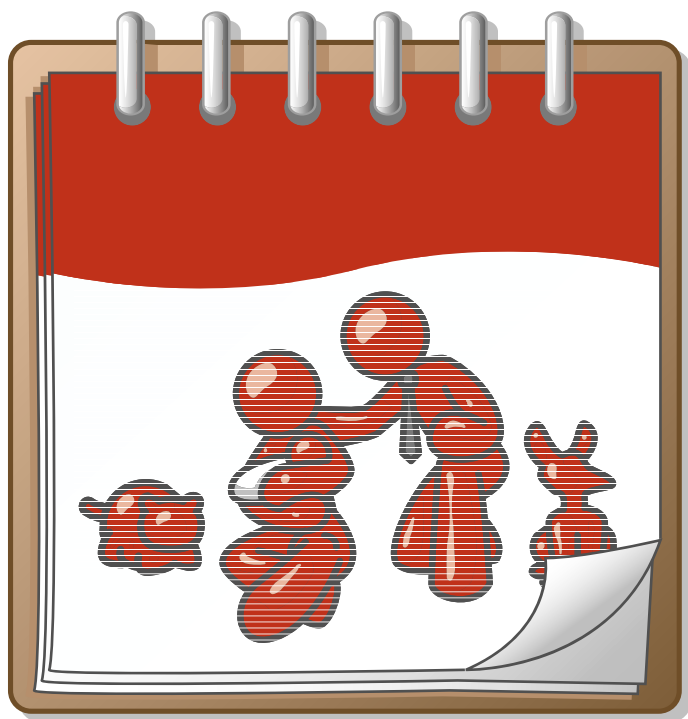
All the information in the disability access plan is confidential and does not contain any information regarding the nature of your disability. It only contains information about the impact that your disability may have in the learning environment and information about how teachers can make reasonable adjustments to ensure that you have the same opportunities to succeed in your studies as do students without a disability.

For the DLO to be able to generate a disability access plan, you will be asked to provide current documentation from a relevant health professional to confirm that you have a disability and what its impact is on you in relation to your studies. This information can be from a professional of your choice, for example, a general practitioner, a medical specialist, or an allied health professional.

You also need to give some thought to the assistance that you think you will require while you study at university. You often know best what adjustments will work for you in the learning environment.

Universities are providers of adult education. Therefore, the person who has the major responsibility for your welfare is you. Although university staff will assist you to achieve your goals in any reasonable way, it remains your responsibility to make sure that the disability access plan process works for you. If you feel it is not working for you, it is important that you contact the DLO to discuss your concerns and any changes to your plan.

If your course coordinator and teachers are concerned that the supports provided through the disability access plan are not adequately supporting you, they may also want to talk with you and may ask to meet with the DLO to explore alternative ways of providing the best support for you.



Your responsibilities

Studying at university requires a much higher level of personal responsibility and organisation than is expected at school. Some of your responsibilities include the following.

Apply and enrol

Make sure that you apply appropriately, accept your offer on time, and choose your subjects wisely when you enrol.

Advocate for yourself and your needs

Determine what you need and what has worked for you when you have studied in the past. Know how to communicate this to others. Unlike school, where support may have been organised for you and teachers advised about your disability without your direct request, at university you will need to look for support from the staff of your university and the DLO and advise them of your needs if you require support or accommodations.

Early disclosure (before you start your course) will allow the time needed for the arrangement of appropriate support or strategies. DLOs are even happy to meet with you before your acceptance into a course. You may be required to provide documentation about your disability.

Manage your own study schedule

Lectures may be offered only once a week but a range of tutorial times may be provided from which you choose a time that best suits you. You often have hours between lectures and tutorials and can expect around 12 to 16 hours of classes a week if you are a full-time student. It is also recommended that students at university plan for approximately two to three study hours outside class for every hour in class. So, if you have 12 hours of class you may have 24 to 36 hours of readings and class tasks to complete outside class each week.

There is often an attendance requirement associated with the course, for example, students must be present at eighty per cent of lectures. It is important to know the guidelines for your course.

Ask lecturers and teaching staff if you need more information

Lecturers and tutors may not check your responses to the weekly readings set and will assume the set tasks have been successfully completed unless you ask for clarification. Staff may not remind you of incomplete work or upcoming deadlines. It is expected that you have read your subject outline which outlines what is expected of you for the subject including assignment topics and deadlines. Lecturers are helpful and approachable but it is expected that you will initiate contact if you require assistance or further explanation.

Identify important features of a lecture or presentation and make notes for your own revision

Lectures do not always follow the textbook and may simply highlight or illustrate a point for your consideration or provide background information or research. Often, there is an expectation that you have done some reading before the lecture to enable you to link what you have read to the information presented in the lectures. It is important to take good notes that identify the significant points or have a note-taker do this on your behalf.

Student services in higher education

Each university campus has different services and facilities. Universities provide a range of additional services for students while they study at university, including services for:

- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students
- students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- mature age students who are returning to study
- international students
- students with a disability.

Universities may assign a staff member or team to help each of the above groups of students engage successfully with and complete their courses. The DLO provides assistance with reasonable adjustments and support specifically for students with a disability.

Talk with the university's student services staff to find out about the specific services that are available at your university and how to access them.

Steps to university

Making the move from school to university is a big change for anyone. Success often depends on good planning and preparation. It is important to plan ahead for any assistance you may need to support your participation.

Step 1 Select a course

Thoroughly explore the courses that interest you.

Talk with careers counsellors and find out exactly what the course involves. Consider your abilities and strengths and explore how these can be used to help you to succeed. There are several websites that are designed to help students think about their directions and goals after school.

- careertips.net.au was designed especially for students with a disability.
- myfuture.edu.au allows you to explore future career and study options by helping you to identify your personal strengths and preferences.

You can also contact a university near you to find out if there are information sessions or opportunities to attend taster/orientation days to really explore different vocational areas. These may also help you to decide on an area of interest. Remember that universities have careers counsellors who can assist you to find the right course for you.

Step 2 Decide if you need assistance

When you have decided about a course, you need to identify the areas where you may need assistance. The first question to ask yourself is, 'Will I need to talk to a DLO or will I manage independently of support?'

Complete the following checklist to help you decide if you will benefit from talking with a DLO at university about assistance.

Will I need ...	Yes	No
assistive software or equipment to support my studies, for example, screen or text-reading software, voice-to-text software, modified track balls, ergonomic equipment?		
learning materials in alternative format, for example, in large print, Braille, electronic, or audio format?		
mobility orientation to the campus?		
to make use of accessible parking?		
a sign interpreter?		
a note-taker in class?		
a personal reader or reading materials provided in audio format?		
assistance to research and use the library facilities?		
the university to provide hearing loops or FM radio communication systems for teachers?		
accessible classrooms, laboratories, and walkways?		

Will I need ...	Yes	No
alternative examination arrangements, for example, a reader and scribe, extended time, exams on computer?		
additional assistance with learning, for example, one-on-one tutoring or access to additional group tutor sessions?		
alternative assessment options such as oral or visual presentations instead of an essay format?		
to alert someone of my medical condition to ensure appropriate actions are taken if I become unwell?		
to store medication on campus?		
access to handouts and other learning materials before classes are held?		
assistance to communicate with others?		
personal support such as toileting, assistance at the cafeteria?		
alarms installed in toilets to alert others if I need assistance?		
special consideration if I need time off from studies because of poor health, anxiety, or stress related to my condition?		
a safe place to retreat to if I am feeling high anxiety or stress?		
Am I uncertain about whether or not I will need assistance?		

Step 3 Meet the DLO

If you answered 'yes' to any of the questions in the checklist, you are advised to make an appointment with the DLO as soon as you can. This will ensure an appropriate access/support plan is put in place, enabling you to fully participate while you study at university. A list of contact numbers for DLOs in Victorian universities is provided elsewhere in this guide.

If you did not answer 'yes' to any of the questions in the checklist, you may still like to talk with the DLO just to have a support person with whom you can touch base during your studies. You may feel that you do not need any form of assistance, in which case you do not need to contact the DLO.

Make a list of your needs before you meet with the DLO. Work through all of your daily activities. Make particular note of the activities with which you must have assistance. Some questions that you may want to ask the DLO during your first meeting follow.

Chronic illness or medical conditions

- What documentation do I need to provide about my condition?
- What alternative arrangements can I make if I am unable to complete my assignments or assessments on time?
- What do I need to do if I am unable to attend classes?
- What happens if I need a break?
- Are there first aid officers on campus?
- Can I store medication safely on campus?
- Is there someone who can coordinate my emergency care plan?

Hearing impairment

- Is the lighting in classrooms adequate?
- Are hearing loops, FM systems, or amplifiers available in classrooms and lecture theatres?
- Are Auslan interpreters available? If not, is there an alternative service provided?
- Can I make arrangements to have note-takers in my class?
- Are video learning materials captioned?
- Do I have access to personal readers?

Learning difficulty or disability

- Is a note-taker available if I need one?
- Are printed learning materials and course materials available in accessible formats?
- What assessment considerations are available?
- What computer software is available?
- What types of alternative assessments are available?
- What learning support will be available to me on campus?

Mental health and psychiatric illness

- Who can I talk to if I just need to talk?
- What do I do if I need a break?
- Who do I talk to if I need some time out?
- Where can I go on campus if I feel anxious?
- Will accommodations be provided if I am unwell and falling behind in course work?

Mobility or physical disability

- Are toilets wheelchair-accessible?
- Are alarms installed in toilets to alert others if I need assistance?
- How user-friendly is the campus for a person with my disability?
- How long will it take me to reach the lecture theatres, classrooms, or workshops?

- Can classes be relocated if necessary to ensure better access for me?
- Are aisles, study corrals, and entrances wide enough for wheelchair access?
- How is personal/attendant care organised while I am at university?
- Is there accessible transport to the campus?

Vision impairment

- Will I be able to find my way around the campus easily?
- Is the campus equipped with tactile indicators?
- Is there a local service to provide orientation to the campus?
- Can campus maps and other printed materials be provided in alternative formats?
- How do I arrange to have textbooks, course notes, and other printed materials provided to me in a format that suits my needs and in a timely manner?
- Are Braille, print enlargements, and scanning facilities available on campus?
- What type of computer facilities, equipment, and software are available?
- Where can I toilet my guide dog?
- What arrangements do I need to make with administrative and lecturing staff for my guide dog?
- Who will help me negotiate for lectures to be provided on disk or tape rather than on paper so that I can use them at home, at a pace that suits me?

Intellectual disability

- Are there courses that will help me to prepare for higher-level studies?
- Are the course materials available in 'plain English'?
- Are printed learning materials available in accessible formats?
- What assessment considerations or alternative assessments are available?
- What computer software is available?
- Approximately how many people will there be in my class?
- What learning support will be available to me on campus?
- Will someone be available to provide me with an orientation to the campus?
- Can I record my classes or have notes provided to assist with my memory recall?

Step 4 Develop the disability access plan

It is important that you meet with the DLO to talk about the impact of your disability on all areas related to your studies and your life on campus. This discussion helps to make sure that appropriate and reasonable adjustments are put in place.

A disability access plan or learning access plan will be developed from that meeting. During this process, you and the DLO will determine who needs to be advised of the reasonable adjustments that need to be put in place. You will be asked to give permission for the DLO to share some information with the people who you decide 'need to know'.

This is an important part of the support process. The people who you decide need to know are an important part of ensuring that you have every opportunity to succeed in your studies. For example, when teachers are advised that a student has difficulty with reading, they will understand why it is important to provide all reading material for classes, including handouts, in electronic format. In this case, the student can access the learning material using text-reading software. If teachers did not know, they may not consider providing information electronically. The student may then be excluded from having access to the information or may be dependent on someone else to read for him/her.

In most situations, the DLO will also request a statement or report from a medical practitioner. These reports are used to guide the development of the disability access plan. Statements from the medical practitioner are not shared with others, although the DLO may mention in a report if the medical practitioner recommends a particular reasonable adjustment.

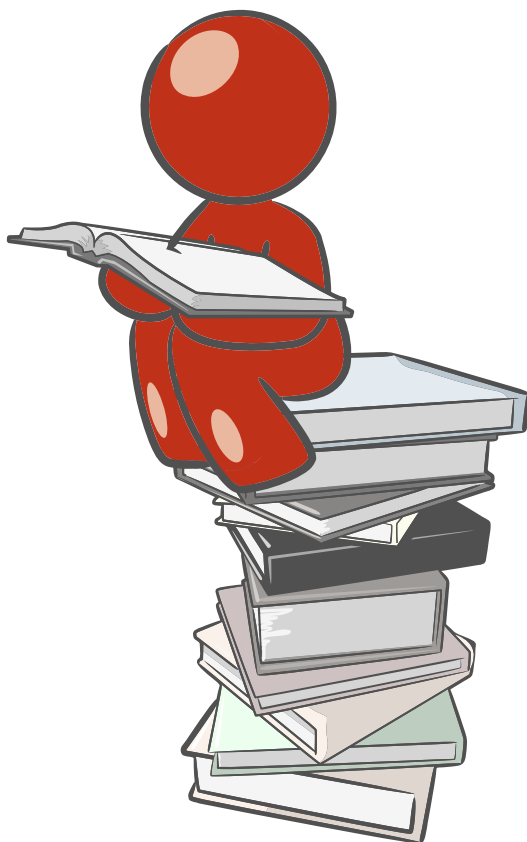
Step 5 Stay engaged and successful in your studies

The Australasian Network of Students with Disabilities (ANSWD) is a national student organisation for TAFE or university students with a disability. ANSWD helps to make sure that students with a disability have reasonable access to education by working with university staff across Australia and New Zealand. ANSWD aims to encourage a learning environment that is equal for all students. You can find more information about ANSWD at www.answd.org

ANSWD has developed a series of steps for new students to follow, to help them stay connected and succeed in their studies. These are outlined in brief below.

- Set up a safety net early (for example, introduce yourself to the DLO, teachers, and tutors).
- Do not wait to receive help. If you have problems, talk them over with the appropriate person before they are out of control.
- Start your work early (in case life or health impedes working later).
- Make use of the range of learning, academic, and personal support available at your university including personal counsellors, academic and learning advisors, and disability services.
- Nobody will do these things for you (search out your own support mechanisms).
- Strive to become an independent learner.
- Participate fully in class. Complete all required reading beforehand, and make sure that you ask for your reading material in a format that suits you.
- Good time management is a vital skill, so organise your time well.
- Be realistic about what you can expect of your body and your brain. Do not be discouraged if you need to study part-time, or even defer for a short time.
- Work out how you learn best, and work on developing the weaker areas.

- Be organised and plan ahead. It is better to ask for help early than after the wheels have fallen off.
- Make sure that you know about all the services available to meet individual needs.
- Do not ever give up! There are plenty of cases where doctors and specialists have told students that they cannot do something and then they go right ahead and do it anyway!
- Know your strengths and your abilities.



Financial support

Sometimes, even with the best planning, financial difficulties can interfere with your ability to complete your studies. It is important that you are aware of all of your financial entitlements. A range of financial support is available to students who meet specific criteria. Information is provided here about some of the financial supports that are available to students with a disability.

Often, universities also have a number of grants that they can access on behalf of students. Please check with the student services team at your university about any grants or financial incentives to which you may be entitled.



Austudy

Australian residents who are completing qualifying study may be eligible to receive Austudy. Austudy comprises fortnightly payments of between \$402.70 and \$527.50 depending on circumstances (as at January 2012). University Austudy recipients who do not already receive the Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship (CECS) may be eligible to receive a student start-up scholarship of \$2050 per year. Full-time university students living away from home may also qualify to receive a fares allowance, to reimburse the travel costs of two trips to university and home, and may receive rental assistance.

The best way to determine the payments for which you qualify is to contact Centrelink on 13 24 90 and discuss your eligibility with a consultant, or phone Centrelink on 13 10 21 and make an appointment to visit a customer service centre.

ABSTUDY

University students of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent may qualify for ABSTUDY. ABSTUDY comprises fortnightly payments which, for people aged over 16 years, range between \$220.40 and \$527.50 depending on circumstances (as at January 2012). Depending on your situation, you may also be eligible for extra payments to help with the costs of studying such as an incidentals allowance, away-from-base assistance, or the ABSTUDY pensioner education supplement.

University ABSTUDY recipients who do not already receive the CECS may be eligible to receive a student start-up scholarship of \$2050 per year. Full-time university students living away from home may also qualify to receive a fares allowance, to reimburse the travel costs of two trips to university and home, and may receive rental assistance.

Full-time university students who are under 21 years of age, have a disability, and receive ABSTUDY may be eligible for a youth disability supplement of up to \$114 per fortnight. It is paid with your main payment each fortnight. The amount you receive depends on the rate of your main payment.

The best way to determine the payments for which you qualify is to contact Centrelink on 13 23 17 and discuss your eligibility with a consultant, or phone Centrelink on 13 10 21 and make an appointment to visit a customer service centre.

Centrelink

Contact Centrelink by phone for information about allowances and concessions.

Youth allowance	13 24 90
ABSTUDY	13 23 17
Disability, sickness, and carers	13 27 17
Multilingual call	13 12 02
Pensioner education supplement	13 24 90
TTY service freecall	1800 810 586

The TTY service is for people who are hearing-impaired or speech-impaired. Access to this service is via a teletypewriter machine only.

For more information, please visit www.centrelink.gov.au.

Commonwealth support and HECS-HELP

Most undergraduate students are in Commonwealth-supported places. Other students undertake their higher education in fee-paying places.

Commonwealth-supported students are generally required to share the cost of their higher education through a student contribution. The Australian Government also subsidises part of the cost of a Commonwealth-supported student's education by paying a grant to the education provider. This subsidy is not a loan and you do not have to pay it back to the government. You only need to pay the 'student contribution' part of the fees.

To be eligible for a Commonwealth-supported place, you must meet the citizenship and residency requirements and still have enough student learning entitlement (SLE). The government has allocated you seven years of equivalent full-time university study and called this your SLE. So, if you have not already studied full-time at university for seven years, then you are likely to still have your full SLE to use.

The Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) allows eligible students to defer their student contribution through a HECS-HELP loan and repay it later through the taxation system. By deferring the payment, you will have to pay 10 per cent more than those students who pay upfront. HECS-HELP is an interest-free loan that students do not have to start paying back until their income reaches the minimum repayment threshold (\$47,195 in 2011/2012). Some Commonwealth-supported students are not eligible for HECS-HELP.

For further information, please contact your university or visit www.studyassist.gov.au

Disability support pension

If you cannot work full-time because of a long-term disability or illness, you may be eligible for a disability support pension (DSP). This benefit is for people who are over 16 years of age, meet an income and assets test, and have the necessary level of impairment to qualify.

If you came to Australia from another country and had your disability at that time, you must be a permanent Australian resident for ten years to qualify. At the time of printing, people who are vision-impaired may qualify for the DSP regardless of their income and assets. People who receive the DSP also receive a pensioner concession card which makes them eligible for a variety of discounts and free services.

Phone Centrelink on 13 10 21 and make an appointment to visit a customer service centre.

Phone Centrelink on 13 27 17 for more information about the DSP.

Fares allowance

A fares allowance can be paid to full-time university students who are living away from their permanent home in order to study. The allowance reimburses the travel costs of two trips to university and home.

Phone Centrelink on 13 10 21 to make an appointment to visit a customer service centre.

Phone Centrelink on 13 24 90 and discuss your eligibility with a consultant.

Fees

The fee you will be required to pay for your degree depends on the type of course you choose and on the type of 'place' you obtain, that is, whether you have a Commonwealth-supported place (CSP) or full-fee place. Some providers of higher education only offer one option.

Full-fee places are not subsidised by the government. Fees are set by the individual educational provider and vary from course to course.

Courses that are in high demand, for example, medicine or dentistry and those with high running costs, can be particularly expensive.

Most places at private universities and with private providers of higher education are full-fee-paying, although CSPs may be available in certain courses.

Commonwealth-supported places are subsidised by the government and are available at public universities and, for a small number of courses, at selected private universities.

The government subsidises part of the cost of your degree and you pay the rest. The amount you pay depends on where and what you choose to study. Areas of study in which the government wants to encourage study are placed in a national priority band and charged at the lowest rate. All other areas of study are then divided into three other bands, each with a different maximum cost per unit.

The maximum amount that students contribute changes every year (see table 1 for maximum fees in 2012).

Table 1 Maximum student contribution amount by student contribution band in 2012

Student contribution band	Maximum student contribution amount for a place in 2012
Band PM National priorities - mathematics and statistics	\$4520
Band PS National priority - science	\$4520
Band 1 Humanities, behavioural sciences, social studies, education, clinical psychology, foreign languages, visual and performing arts, nursing	\$5648
Band 2 Computing, built environment, other health, allied health, engineering surveying, agriculture	\$8050
Band 3 Law, accounting, administration, economics, commerce, dentistry, medicine, veterinary science	\$9425

Universities and other providers can choose to set the student contribution rate for each band between \$0 and the maximum rates listed in table 1. Some universities charge less than the maximum rate in some courses.

Please contact your university for full details about your fees.

Full-fee-paying places and FEE-HELP

If you are not enrolled in a Commonwealth-supported place, you must pay the tuition fees that your provider has set. If you are an international student, a full-fee-paying place is your only option.

You may be eligible for a FEE-HELP loan which enables you to borrow the money and repay it when you are earning money. FEE-HELP is an interest-free, income-contingent loan that you do not have to pay back until your income reaches a certain level.

A fee of 25 per cent applies to FEE-HELP loans for undergraduate courses. Not all private providers are eligible to offer FEE-HELP loans.

For more information about FEE-HELP and a list of approved providers, please visit www.studyassist.gov.au

For further information, please contact your university.

Health care card

If you do not qualify for a pensioner concession card, you may be eligible for a health care card which gives you access to pharmaceutical concessions and other discounts.

Please call Centrelink on 13 27 17 for more information.

If you are hearing-impaired or speech-impaired, please use TTY on 1800 810 586.

Loans

Some universities offer financial assistance to students who are experiencing financial difficulties that may jeopardise their studies. Information about loan funds for this purpose is usually provided by the student services department of each university.

Mobility allowance

A mobility allowance may be paid to people who are over 16 years of age and who, because of a disability, are:

- unable to use public transport without substantial assistance from others for at least the next 12 months
- working or undertaking training for at least eight hours per week or receiving the youth allowance or Austudy and need to travel to and from home to work or study.

This payment ranged from \$86 to \$120.40 a fortnight in January 2012.

Contact the disability officer at your nearest Centrelink customer service centre for further information and an application form, or call 13 10 21.

If you are hearing-impaired or speech-impaired, please use TTY on 1800 810 586.

Multi-purpose Taxi Program

The Multi-purpose Taxi Program, available through the Department of Transport, makes transport more accessible for people with a severe and permanent disability. You can use this program if you:

- live in Victoria
- have a severe and permanent disability that restricts your ability to use public transport independently
- have a pensioner or healthcare card from Centrelink.

The Multi-purpose Taxi Program offers half-price taxi fares to its members, up to \$60 per trip. Some members have a yearly limit.

Members are given a card which they have to show when they first enter a taxi. The cards cost \$16.50 and are valid for six years. Travel can be for any reason. Victorian members receive the same discount interstate for a limited number of taxi trips.

Please visit www.transport.vic.gov.au/taxis/mptp, call 1800 638 802 (toll-free), or TTY 133 677 for more information.

On-campus accommodation

Some university campuses offer on-campus accommodation for students. Accommodation types vary from living in a multi-bedroom, unit-type complex to dormitory style with catered meals. Prices of accommodation vary according to the services provided and the number of people sharing the facilities. You will need to consider whether the accommodation provides a private or shared room, a private or shared bathroom, meals, access to public transport, close proximity to campus, value for money, and wheelchair-accessible facilities.

All universities that provide accommodation have an accommodation officer who can assist you with the accommodation options that are available.



Pensioner Education Supplement and Education Entry Payment

The Pensioner Education Supplement (PES) is a fortnightly payment of between \$31 and \$63 (as at January 2012) that helps with the cost of full-time or part-time study. People who receive the disability support pension may be eligible for the PES if they are enrolled in and undertaking an approved course of study.

The Education Entry Payment is a one-off taxable payment of \$208 (as at January 2012) which is paid to assist people on the PES who have started or will start an approved educational course, and who have not received this payment in the last 12 months and have continuously received their payments from Centrelink for at least four weeks.

Eligibility criteria apply to these payments. It is generally payable to people who receive a carer payment, a DSP, a parenting payment (single), the Newstart allowance, or a youth or widow allowance.

Please visit your local Centrelink customer service centre, call Centrelink on 13 24 90, or TTY 1800 810 586 for more information.

Scholarships

There are many different kinds of scholarships available to provide financial support to you at university. Scholarships can be sourced from universities, community and corporate organisations, and the Australian Government.

Check with the university you are planning to attend about these scholarships and any equity scholarships that may be available. Equity scholarships are specifically designed to help students who are struggling to meet the costs of university study. To qualify, you must be able to demonstrate financial hardship due to low income, family difficulty, living in a rural or remote area, or the effect or extra costs associated with living with a disability or medical condition. Contact your university's DLO, scholarship advisor, or visit the university's website for more information.

You can apply for many university-funded scholarships through VTAC. Please visit www.vtac.edu.au/scholarships.html

Many community and corporate organisations also have established scholarships for students with a disability. For a list of scholarships from community and corporate organisations that are specifically for people with a disability, please visit www.adcet.edu.au

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) students may be eligible for the Australian Government's Commonwealth Scholarships Program. This program features two main types of scholarship. Commonwealth education costs scholarships assist ATSI students with the general costs of higher education. ATSI Commonwealth accommodation scholarships help those who are from regional and remote areas with the accommodation costs associated with attending university.

Please visit the following websites for more information about scholarships.

- www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/Scholarships
- www.myfuture.edu.au/The%20Facts.aspx
- www.studyassist.gov.au

Travel concessions

If you have a Victorian health care card, you can buy concession fares on public transport services in Victoria and on the interstate legs of V/Line coach services. Tertiary student concession cards are also available, for a half-year or a full year. Students who are enrolled in courses of between 10 and 20 weeks' duration can obtain a half-yearly card. Most student services departments at universities have information about travel concessions and the appropriate application forms.

Youth allowance

Students who are not eligible for the DSP may be eligible for the youth allowance. Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students may be eligible for ABSTUDY.

You may still qualify for the youth allowance or the Newstart allowance if you have a reduced study load because of your disability. However, you must meet Centrelink's eligibility criteria and provide documentation accordingly.

Youth allowance recipients who are under 21 years of age and who have been assessed as having a partial capacity to work may also qualify for a youth disability supplement which increases the youth allowance by up to \$114 a fortnight.

Up-to-date information and application forms are available from Centrelink's customer service offices.

Please visit www.centrelink.gov.au or call Centrelink on 13 24 90 and make an appointment to discuss your application and how to best substantiate your claim.

Contact details of DLOs at universities across Victoria

University	Campus	Disability office phone	Disability office email
Australian Catholic University Disability advisor Equity and Disability Unit	Ballarat (Aquinas)	03 5336 5343	disabilityadviser.aqu@acu.edu.au
	Melbourne (St Patrick's)	03 9953 3413	disabilityadviser.pat@acu.edu.au
Deakin University Disability Resource Centre	Waterfront Geelong	03 5227 1427	drcentre@deakin.edu.au
	Waurm Ponds Geelong	03 5227 1427	
	Burwood Melbourne	03 9244 6255	
		03 9244 6255	
Warrnambool	03 5563 3256		

University	Campus	Disability office phone	Disability office email
La Trobe University Disability Liaison Officer Disability Support Services	Albury Wodonga	02 6024 9628	dlo.aw@latrobe.edu.au
	Bendigo and Shepparton	03 5444 7941	equalitybendigo@latrobe.edu.au
	Bundoora and Melbourne City	03 9479 2900	equality@latrobe.edu.au
	Mildura	03 5022 3629	j.nunn@latrobe.edu.au
Monash University Equity and Diversity Centre Disability Liaison Officer Disability Liaison Unit	All campuses	03 9905 5704	dlu@adm.monash.edu.au
RMIT University Disability Liaison Officer Disability Liaison Unit	All campuses	03 9925 1089	dlu@rmit.edu.au

University	Campus	Disability office phone	Disability office email
Swinburne University of Technology Disability Liaison Officer Disability Support Services	Hawthorn and Prahran	03 9214 8500	johalloran@swin.edu.au
	Lilydale and off-campus	03 9215 7123	oflorenini@swin.edu.au
University of Ballarat Disability Liaison Officer Disability Liaison Unit	All campuses	03 5327 9757	disability@ballarat.edu.au
University of Melbourne Disability Liaison Officer Disability Liaison Unit	All campuses	03 8344 7068	dlu-enquiries@unimelb.edu.au
Victoria University Disability Liaison Officer Student Equity and Disability Support	All campuses	03 9919 8801 03 9919 4418 03 9919 2399	disability@vu.edu.au

National disability coordination officers

There is a national disability coordination officer (NDCO) in each region of Victoria. The NDCO works with individuals, schools, Institutes of TAFE, universities, employers, employment services, and disability-specific community organisations to:

- improve transitions for people with a disability from school to further study and employment
- increase participation by people with a disability in education and employment at tertiary level
- establish better links between schools, Institutes of TAFE, universities, employers, and disability service providers.

For a current list of NDCO contact details visit www.innovation.gov.au/ndco

NDCO program - Victorian network

The NDCO in your region can help provide information and referrals for people with a disability. The Victorian NDCO website provides a range of useful resources and information for students with a disability who are transitioning through school and to employment.

Please visit www.ndcovictoria.net.au

Other useful information and contacts

Adaptive technologies

There is a range of adaptive technologies that can improve participation and success in education for people with a disability. EduApps is an initiative developed by the JISC Regional Support Centre in Scotland. It expands on the already very successful AccessApps. EduApps extends the AccessApps philosophy of free, portable software in your pocket to include bundles of applications that are specifically designed for teachers (TeachApps) and learners (LearnApps). The current program hosts over 90 open-source and freeware software applications which can be entirely used from a USB stick on a computer that has Windows® installed.

These applications can be downloaded from www.eduapps.org/

Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training

The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) provides information and resources to support the work of disability practitioners in the post-secondary education and training sector. The website also incorporates resources for students.

Please visit www.adcet.edu.au/

Australian Network on Disability

The Australian Network on Disability operates the 'Stepping into ...' programs. Of four weeks' duration, this paid internship program runs during the semester break in June/July. To be eligible to participate in this program, you must have a disability, be in the final or penultimate year of a relevant degree at a recognised tertiary institution, and have the right to work in Australia.

Please visit www.and.org.au for more information.

Disability Employment Advisory Service

The Disability Employment Advisory Service (DEAS) is a workforce program for the Victorian Public Service. It is an initiative of the Office of Disability and delivered by Randstad in partnership with Diversity@Work. DEAS aims to increase the number of people with a disability who work in state government departments by providing support to job seekers with a disability and to public sector managers who have advertised vacancies. They regularly have positions suitable for graduates with a disability.

To view the vacant positions in Victorian Government departments, please visit www.careers.vic.gov.au/, call DEAS on 03 8318 8592, or email to deas@randstad.com.au

Disability Employment Service

The Disability Employment Service (DES) provides specialist assistance to job seekers with a disability who require ongoing support to find and maintain employment. DES is delivered by a network of large and small organisations around Australia.

As a job seeker, you can be referred to the DES if you:

- have a permanent (or likely to be permanent) disability
- have a reduced capacity for communication, learning, or mobility
- require support for more than six months after placement in employment.

For more information about how DES members can help you, or to locate your local service, please call JobAccess on 1800 464 800 or visit www.jobaccess.gov.au

Disability Standards for Education 2005

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 were formulated under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and came into effect in August 2005. The Standards clarify the obligations of education and training providers to ensure that students with a disability are able to 'access and participate in education without experiencing discrimination'.

Please visit www.deewr.gov.au/schooling/programs/pages/disabilitystandardsforeducation.aspx for more information.

Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) and Transition to Employment (TTE)

The FFYA program is available to Victorians who are 18 years old, in the last year of school, and have been assessed as eligible and receiving support through the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's program for students with disabilities or its equivalent in the Catholic or independent sectors.

The program provides support to students with a disability who need additional assistance to make the transition to post-school options. The program is available to eligible students from when they are 18 years old and complete school until they turn 21 years old (three years).

Another component of the FFYA program is the TTE initiative. This initiative focuses on providing 12 months of support to young people with a disability who want to pursue further education, training, and employment but are not yet ready to move directly into employment, or receive assistance through a Commonwealth employment service.

Please visit www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/disability/community-life-and-jobs/transitioning-to-employment for more information.

Transition information

Many people with a disability, whether they have just left school or are at a later stage in their lives, plan to continue their education. As students with a disability, they will need to be well informed about their rights and responsibilities as well as the responsibilities that post-secondary educational facilities have to them.

Being well informed helps you to make sure that you have every opportunity to enjoy the benefits of the post-secondary education experience.

For further information about successful transition, please visit www.adcet.edu.au/Student_Resources.chpx

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

The role of the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is to help resolve individual and representative complaints about discrimination, sexual harassment, and racial and religious vilification by offering a conciliation process that is confidential, impartial, free, and simple.

It also provides education about equality of opportunity, racial and religious tolerance, and human rights and undertakes projects and activities that aim to eliminate discrimination, and racial and religious intolerance.

Phone the commission on 03 9281 7111 or email complaints@veohrc.vic.gov.au

Willing and Able Mentoring (WAM) program

The WAM program matches job seekers or tertiary students who have a disability with mentors in leading organisations in the job seeker's/ student's field of interest for a series of approximately eight one- to two-hour discussion meetings. These meetings focus on information about that career environment, developing skills around presenting a professional profile and related workplace issues (for example, workplace modifications). WAM is available across Australia for any job seeker or tertiary student who has a disability on a fee-service basis.

For further information, please visit www.graduatecareers.com.au/CareerPlanningandResources/GraduateswithDisability/WillingandAbleMentoringProgram/index.htm

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