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La Trobe College Australia

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# Disability Services Policy

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## **Disability Services Policy**

Key points contained in this document:

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Staff Development

### **Relevant legislation and policy**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following Legislation, Regulations and Policies:

- Disability Discrimination Act (1992), Commonwealth
- Disability Standards for Education (2005), Commonwealth
- The Australian Quality Training Framework (2005)
- Access, Equity and Equal Educational Opportunity Policy, La Trobe College Australia
- The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act)
- National Code of Practice 2018

### **Definitions**

In the context of this policy and as outlined in relevant legislation, a student with a disability is defined as a student, or potential student of the College with a temporary or permanent disability that is attributable to a:

- a) physical impairment including disfigurement, wheelchair use, chronic pain and back injury;
- b) cognitive or learning impairment such as dyslexia;
- c) psychiatric condition;
- d) sensory impairment e.g. hearing, vision;
- e) neurological condition such as, acquired brain injury;
- f) medical condition that may include asthma, epilepsy, diabetes, heart condition; or
- g) combination of such impairments;

and results in:

- a reduced ability to access educational services provided by the College; and
- a need for support services to overcome these barriers.

Within this policy reasonable accommodation refers to administrative, physical or procedural alterations required to ensure that students with disabilities are able to participate in the learning and teaching environment on the same basis as students without a disability.

### **Unjustified Hardship**

As outlined in the Disability Standards for Education (2005), in deciding that making accommodations for a student with a disability would result in unjustifiable hardship, the College will take into consideration:

- Additional staffing requirements;
- Provision of special resources;
- Modifications to curriculum;
- Impact on the learning environment, including the benefits and adverse impact on learning and social outcomes from the student's participation for the student, other students and staff;

- Financial incentives, including subsidies or grants available to the College as a result of the students' participation.

Where unjustified hardship is determined, the College will notify the student, or potential student, of the decision and the reasons for the decision as soon as practicable after the decision is made.

## **Principles**

La Trobe College Australia is committed to creating a teaching and learning environment which promotes dignity, acknowledges the right to privacy and confidentiality, and promotes an awareness of the needs and rights of students with disabilities.

In creating this environment, the College is guided by the following principles:

- Students with disabilities should be able to access and negotiate each campus in safety and with ease. Any accessibility issues experienced by a La Trobe College Australia student at La Trobe College Australia or La Trobe University should in the first instance be reported to the Student Counsellor or nominee, at La Trobe College Australia.
- The College may seek information about the nature and extent of a student's disability only insofar as it relates to assessing students' support needs and requests for reasonable accommodation and/or policy development or monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs.
- The support needs of students with disabilities will be assessed in consultation with them by the Student Counsellor, or nominee, on an individual basis.
- Reasonable accommodations will be provided by the Academic Director (FSDP) or the Director of Studies (ELICOS) for students with disabilities only insofar as the integrity of the course or program and assessment requirements and processes are maintained and where such accommodations do not impose "unjustifiable hardship" on the College;
- Accommodations for students with disabilities will neither advantage nor disadvantage them in comparison to other students not receiving disability support services, but will be designed to ensure that students with a disability have equal access to the teaching and learning environment.
- Accommodations made for students with disabilities should not disadvantage other students enrolled at the college
- Any information in relation to a student's disability remains confidential, is not part of the student's open record of academic progress, and will not be disclosed without prior written consent, except where necessary for monitoring and evaluation of the student's academic progress.
- Students who develop a disability while a student of La Trobe College Australia and wish to notify the College of that disability should make an appointment with the Student Counsellor or nominee.

## **Marketing, Admission and Enrolment**

It is essential that prospective students with disabilities provide information regarding the nature and extent of their disabilities and their support needs during the marketing, admission and enrolment process. This will help determine whether La Trobe College Australia is able to meet the specific needs of the student.

### **Marketing**

Marketing encompasses all of the College's promotional activities which are designed to make people aware of their opportunities to enter education, whether directly from high school or after leaving school.

Prospective students with disabilities are advised to notify the College either through their educational agent or directly with information about the nature and extent of their disability, and possible support needs, in order to participate in the teaching and learning environment. Such

information would normally include medical or other professional advice, reports from previous educational institutions or government and community agencies.

### **Admission**

The College does not dissuade individuals with disabilities to apply for admission to the College regardless of their disability.

The Admissions department will seek advice from the Academic Director (FSDP) or the Director of Studies (ELICOS) in the first instance, upon receiving an application from a student with a disability before deciding on their enrolment.

When assessing and making decisions about admission to its programs, the College will treat a prospective student with a disability on the same basis as a prospective student without a disability. La Trobe College Australia does not discriminate on grounds other than academic performance based criteria. In assessing applications, due consideration may also be given to the fact that a prospective student may have suffered educational disadvantage as a result of their disability.

If not already provided during the College's promotional activities, prospective students or their educational agents, are responsible for providing information about the nature and extent of their disability, and their possible support needs, prior to the admissions process. This will facilitate an assessment of the student's support needs and/or accommodations required to undertake the academic program to which they seek entry. Such information would normally include medical or other professional advice, reports from previous educational institutions or government and community agencies.

The College will make reasonable accommodations to provide support services for students with disabilities which neither advantage nor disadvantage them in comparison to other students not receiving disability support services. Any accommodations will be designed to ensure that students with a disability have equal access to the learning and teaching environment and do not impose "unjustifiable hardship" on the College.

Where information regarding the nature and extent of the prospective students with disabilities, was not provided in its admission processes, the College may be unable to provide students with disabilities with the support services necessary to complete courses or programs of study to which they have been admitted.

### **Disability Support**

The support needs of students with disabilities will be assessed in consultation with them by the Student Counsellor, or nominee, on an individual basis. As per the Victorian Child Safe Standards, students under 18 years of age who have disabilities are to be paid particular attention to for learning as well as accommodation purposes. Any plans for their welfare requires the involvement of their parents and carers.

The student with a disability is required to register with the La Trobe College Australia Student Counsellor or nominee within one week after commencing their course. The College will make reasonable accommodations to provide support services for students with disabilities which neither advantage nor disadvantage them in comparison to other students not receiving disability support services and assist them to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

On deciding on reasonable accommodations, the Student Counsellor, or nominee, may seek professional expertise from La Trobe University's Disability Services. Any accommodation will be designed to ensure that students with a disability have equal access to the teaching and learning environment and do not impose "unjustifiable hardship" on the College.

In consultation with the student, the Student Counsellor, or nominee, will advise the Academic Director (FSDP) or the Director of Studies (ELICOS) to implement the agreed support services to ensure the student is able to achieve the intended learning outcomes. It is the responsibility of the student to utilise the support services as negotiated.

### **Teaching, Learning and Assessment Practices**

The College supports the use of alternative strategies for teaching, learning and assessment within academic courses undertaken by students with disabilities, when such students are prevented by their disability from participating in the same manner as other students without a disability.

In consultation with the student, the Student Counsellor, or nominee, at the commencement of each trimester or term of study will provide academic staff members responsible for teaching courses that students with disabilities are undertaking with information about any accommodations necessary for the student to participate in their courses.

Reasonable accommodations will be provided for students with disabilities which maintain the integrity of the courses or program and assessment requirements and processes and take into account the students' learning needs. Alternative strategies for assessment may include the mode of questioning, mode of response, the use of specific equipment, use of separate examination rooms and extended periods of time for undertaking assessment.

To this extent, the Student Counsellor, or nominee, in consultation with academic staff members, within the College shall be responsible for:

- Assessing, negotiating and implementing support services for students with disabilities;
- Academic counselling services for students with disabilities;
- Supervision and review of the progress of students with disabilities, if required, in consultation with teachers;
- Recommending teaching and assessment methods appropriate to students with disabilities.

### **Staff Development**

To facilitate the full participation of students with disabilities in the College, academic and general staff within the College will be provided with the opportunity to gain the knowledge, skills and understanding necessary to meet the education, support and social needs of students with disabilities. This will be achieved through the implementation of timely, relevant and ongoing professional development activities.

<b>Policy Title</b>	Disability Services Policy	
<b>Policy Owners</b>	Director, Student Services, Student Counsellor	
<b>Key Stakeholders</b>	Staff Students Visitors to the College	
<b>Approval Body</b>	<b>LTM Executive Committee</b>	<b>Date Approved:</b>
	LTM Executive Committee	September 18 014
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<b>Relevant Legislation</b>	Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth) Workplace Relations Act 1996 (Commonwealth) Disability Standards for Education (2005), Commonwealth The Australian Quality Training Framework (2005) Child Safe Standards, Victoria 2017 Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act National Code of Practice 2018	
<b>Related Policies</b>	Student Grievance Policy Enrolment Policy Access, Equity and Equal Educational Opportunity Policy	
<b>Related Guidelines</b>		
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