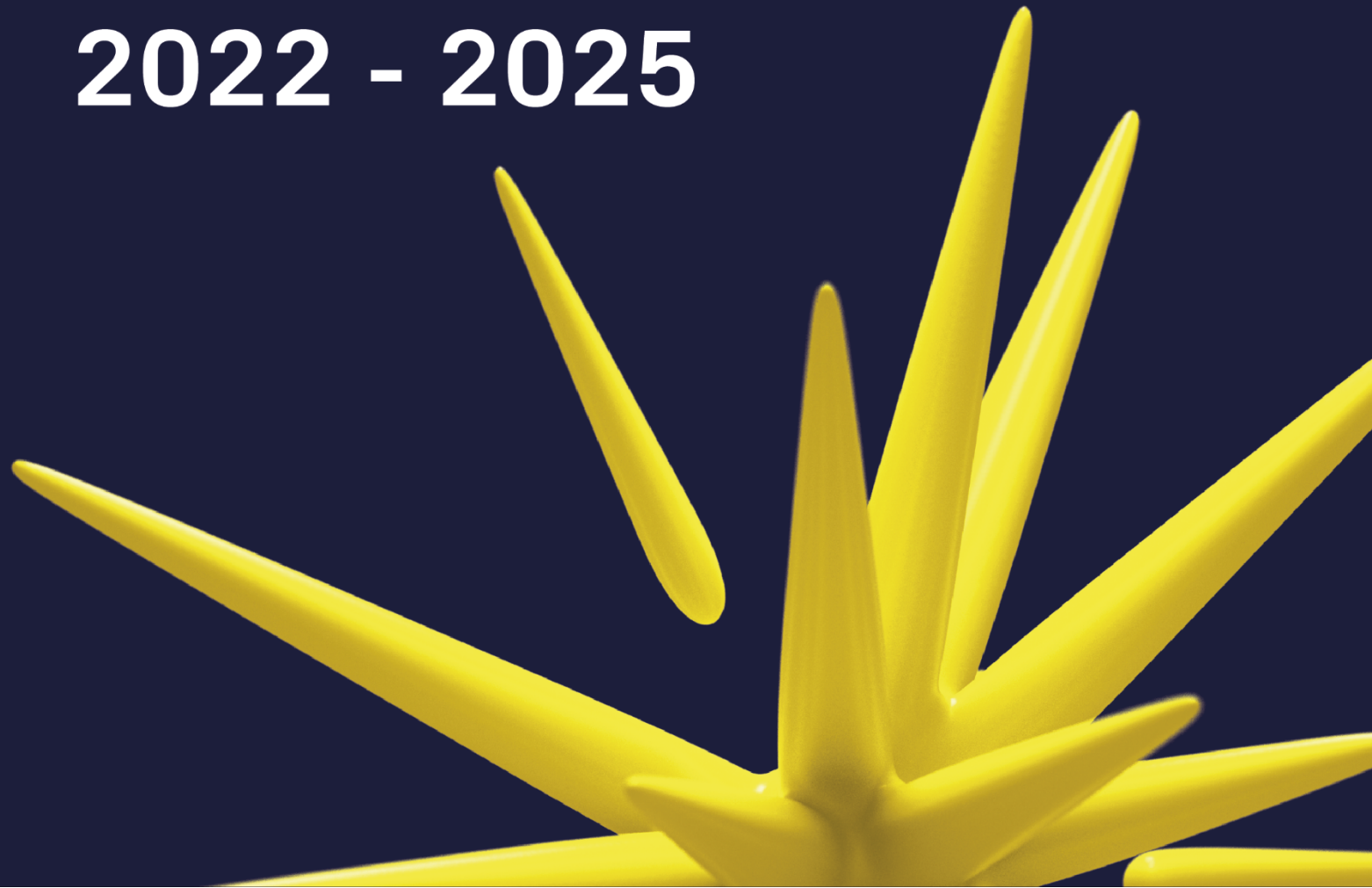




Disability Action Plan 2022 - 2025



Media Design School Disability Action Plan 2022 – 2025

Background

The 3-year Disability Action Plan is being developed to create an inclusive tertiary education environment for disabled learners at Media Design School (MDS). In doing so, it is acknowledged that real change is needed to better meet our commitment to equality of opportunity for the whole community, some 25% of which is disabled. It is our aim that this plan supports the change that is needed to eliminate intentional or unintentional disability discrimination, and we recognise that sustained effort and partnership with disabled learners is required to shift from an individualised service approach to an all-of-institution approach.

Census data indicates that “Disabled people are over-represented in negative education related statistics. In June 2020 48.2% of young disabled people (15–24 years) were not in employment, education or training, compared with 10.6% for non-disabled youth” (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021, p.1).

Media Design School’s mission statement is to "To create students who are prized by industry" and the school celebrates our graduates’ high employment rates. Welcoming, supporting and empowering all learners to achieve is fundamental to the ongoing sustainability of the organisation, and to fulfilling MDS’ goal of producing work-ready graduates that reflect the communities we serve. Becoming a more disability-friendly organisation will ensure increased numbers of disabled graduates will have the skills required to succeed in today’s jobs.

Being a fully inclusive provider that values diversity, including disabled learners, aligns with the obligations under The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

Additionally, by meeting our objective of providing a high-quality learning experience for all, MDS upholds Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the New Zealand Human Rights Act, and gives life to our obligations and responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi.

Defining disability

This plan adopts the definition used by the TEC: "For the purposes of this guidance we have used the New Zealand Disability Strategy definition of disability, which utilises the social model of disability. The New Zealand Disability Strategy states that, "disability is not something individuals have. What individuals have are impairments. They may be physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, learning or other impairments."

Therefore, "disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people may have" (Tertiary Education Commission, 2021, p.6). Impairments may be apparent, or hidden; short-term or permanent. Disabled learners may have impairments lasting six months or more, including those resulting from injury or illness.

It is understood that language around disability is evolving, and that not everyone who may be described by a disability-focused definition would choose to identify with it. Moreover, where disability is acknowledged as intersectional, cultural factors and access issues faced by Māori and Pacific disabled people - as well as disabled learners of non-English speaking backgrounds - may necessitate further consideration.

MDS Disability Action Plan

MDS is at the early stages of co-creating a Disability Action Plan that reflects the overarching policies and procedures regarding disability supports and services, as well as external regulatory guidelines. The DAP in its current form has been formally endorsed by the senior management team, and engagement with key stakeholders across the organisation is building.

Staff from all parts of the organisation are involved. In coordinating the development of the DAP, those responsible for specific activities will review the relevant management and learning support implementation toolkits in partnership with disabled learners, and report back to MDS' disability reference group (yet to be formed). This Disability Access and Inclusion Steering Group will be comprised of disabled learners with different impairments, staff and relevant community networks where practicable. The DAP will be monitored and annually reviewed, and published on our website in a suitable format. Progress towards DAP goals is expected to be reported through annual and evaluation reports

and audits. Its success may be demonstrated through feedback from disabled learners; increased numbers of enrolled disabled learners; higher levels of academic success and employment outcomes for disabled taura; changes in staff awareness and understanding of disability discrimination issues; increased availability of accessible software and alternative format resources. Over time the DAP will be incorporated in the general approach to forward planning.

At the time of writing we are preparing to seek expressions of interest from our disabled learner community in being involved as student experts in this important strategic mahi. In the spirit of Matariki Manako Nui we are taking this time to reach out to our communities with the aim of identifying where the greatest barriers for our disabled learners are, and starting there. The intention is to find out from currently enrolled disabled learners what, in terms of their lived needs and experiences, are barriers to success and possible actions for solutions.

Acknowledging that where disabled learners are also a member of another underserved group their outcomes are further affected, input into the DAP will be sought from the Māori and Pasifika Steering Committee, which drives the organisation-wide implementation of the Tangata Māori + Pasifika Peoples Matawhānui / Vision 2020-2024. This strategy was introduced in 2020 and manifests MDS's focus in this area, outlining ways to grow and empower staff, students, and the wider community in supporting the promotion of Māori and Pasifika outcomes. It also gives expression to the Tertiary Education Strategy's objective of supporting Māori and Pasifika students to succeed.

Developing the DAP aligns with our organisation's vision to Connect The World For Good, and the 2022 Strategic Plan to deliver on our promises: Enable Student Happiness; Empower Our People; Secure The Future; Create A Better Future – while remaining true to our values:



MDS' Long Range Plan is growth. Our growth strategy centres around expanding our curriculum to include new and emerging technologies and to provide equality of access to an inclusive, quality education for all – including disabled taura, Māori and Pasifika communities and working adult students.

Key Principles

- MDS is guided by the principles relating to access and equity for students and prospective students who are disabled and carers of a disabled student.
- MDS is committed to fostering a positive environment with informed behaviours and attitudes among staff and students.
- Inclusive practice is the primary strategy for accommodating the needs of disabled students and their carers. Wherever reasonably practicable, barriers will be removed or reduced systematically thereby reducing the need for disabled students to seek tailored services or accommodations.
- Students and prospective students with disability who are requesting reasonable accommodations have a responsibility to provide information that will assist MDS in the timely planning and implementation of appropriate services and accommodations.
- Provision of appropriate services for disabled students is the shared responsibility of relevant organisational areas within MDS.
- MDS recognises that disabled students are themselves best placed to understand their disability and capacities. Consequently, disabled students seeking reasonable adjustments share the responsibility for identifying appropriate solutions.
- Reasonable services and adjustments will be designed to reduce or remove disability related barriers and support student independent learning but will not be implemented in such a way that diminishes the academic standards and integrity of MDS programmes, or imposes unjustifiable hardship on MDS.

It is envisioned that the DAP will be developed to address the following four key themes:

1. **Student Voice**

The purpose of this theme is to recognise that disabled taura are at the centre of the Disability Action Plan and are the subject matter experts of their lived experiences and needs. Throughout the development of the DAP and its implementation stages, managers and teams will partner with disabled learners with different impairments so they can give their feedback about the learning environment, services and systems. To guide and support this, work will begin soon on establishing a Disability Access and Inclusion Steering Group, which will be comprised of disabled learners with different impairments, staff and relevant community networks where practicable. We will also look for opportunities to

activate our physical and online environments in regards to accessibility, in order to help us create more inclusive and welcoming spaces, aligned with our organisational and social ethics and values of support, collaboration and diversity, and to engage our communities in strong and meaningful relationships.

2. Service Provision

The purpose of this theme is to expand upon the supports we provide to both current and future students. In order to maintain our reputation as an accessible institution, it is vital that we continue to maintain and expand upon the accessible adjustments and modifications available to students, as well as to improve the experience in customer services for individuals seeking support and engaging with the university at all levels and points.

3. Training and Development

The purpose of this theme is to invest in the development of staff to provide improved accessibility supports and services. Upskilling our people and educating staff will promote awareness of disabilities and positive messaging of disabled staff and learner success. Training staff and learners on the range of disabilities and best practices for supporting disabled people, as well as maintaining regular communications regarding the specific needs of our student population, will help staff to perform in their individual roles to their best ability, and to respond appropriately when needs arise.

4. Process Transparency

The purpose of this theme is to ensure transparency across all of our recruitment, admissions, enrolments and marketing activities and support processes. The complex processes of tertiary institutions can be difficult and raise challenges for all students, regardless of an identified accessibility need, and maintaining transparency and clear communications throughout all procedures and systems helps to develop strong rapport with students, as well as to maintain oversight and accountability of organisational obligations and requirements. Accessibility as it relates to our processes is defined by an equitable, open and fair review and evaluation of a student's circumstances, situation or application in order to support all individuals in being provided a positive and rewarding educational experience.

Over the next 3 years, management and teams will apply the two components within the Kia Ōrite Toolkit and review the best practice standards described within, to identify related objectives and actions in order to achieve targeted outcomes in the timeframes identified below. Note that these indicative and may vary. Likewise, certain roles are being recruited and functions may be subject to change.

Management

- Leaders driving the development, implementation and funding of the disability action plan.
- Policy makers who write all the policy and procedures related to it.
- Managers responsible for recruitment, selection, admission, enrolment, withdrawal and appeals, monitoring and evaluation of disabled learners.
- Staff involved with IT and assistive technology for disabled learners.
- Managers of property and facilities.

Learning Support

- Teaching staff and all staff involved with assessment and the provision of exams.
- Technical staff, including those providing laboratories, tutorials, etc.
- Specialist staff, including disability support staff, sign language interpreters, note takers, readers, writers, specialist tutors and those providing exam support.
- General support services including all health services, student learning services, student associations and those services providing academic, administrative and general support.

management responsibility	who	when mid-2022 - mid-2025
2.1 Recruitment, selection, admission and enrolment	Admissions & Applicant Services Student Recruitment Registrar Marketing	Sept – Nov 2022 + annually reviewed
2.2 Funding and withdrawal	Registrar Finance Manager	Nov 2023 + annually reviewed

	Bursar Student Admin team	
2.3 Complaint and appeal policies and procedures	Director, Policy and Academic Governance	Dec 2022 – Feb 2023
2.4 Access to buildings, facilities and infrastructure	Campus Director IT Facilities Disability Liaison Advisor Head of Language and Learning Services Campus Librarian H&S Rep	Dec 2022 – mid 2023
2.5 Policy and planning	Director, Policy and Academic Governance (policy) with the Document Owner and Responsible Officer	July - Dec 2023 + annually reviewed after monitoring and evaluation
2.6 Monitoring and evaluation	Disability Access and Inclusion Steering Group Assistant Academic Services Manager Director, Policy and Academic Governance	July - Dec 2023 + annually reviewed

learning support responsibility	who	when mid-2022 - mid-2025
2.1 Appropriate use of disabled learners' personal information	Admissions & Applicant Services Student Recruitment Registrar Student Admin team Campus Director Student Services team Programme Leaders	Dec 2022 – Dec 2023 + reviewed annually
2.2 Learning support and teaching	Programme Leaders Teaching staff Library Services Language and Learning Services	Dec 2022 – mid 2023

2.3 Learning support for Māori disabled learners	Māori and Pasifika Steering Committee Library Services Language and Learning Services	2023
2.4 Examinations and assessment	Programme Leaders Teaching staff Director, Policy and Academic Governance (policy) with the Document Owners and Responsible Officers Learning & Development team	2023
2.5 Other diverse groups of disabled learners	Programme Leaders Teaching staff Registrar Learning & Development team	2023
2.6 Learning supports for learners with different impairments	Programme Leaders Teaching staff Library Services Language and Learning Services Direct Managers Finance	2024
2.7 Access to general and specialist support services	Support Services managers and teams	2024
2.8 Transition into employment	Disability Liaison Advisor Success Coach Student Counsellor	2023
2.9 Staff development	Learning & Development team Programme Leaders Teaching staff Direct Managers HR Student Services	Annually in August / November (non-academic); Week 4-6 of trimesters (academic) + Ongoing on core competencies

Related documents and resources

[The Accessibility Charter: A Commitment to Accessible Information](#)

[Accessibility | New Zealand Digital government](#)

[Human Rights Act 1993](#)

[UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

[NZ Disability Survey 2013](#)

[NZ Disability Strategy 2016 –2026](#)

[Faiva Ora 2016-2021 National Pasifika Disability Plan](#)

[Whāia Te Ao Mārama 2018-2022: The Māori Disability Action Plan](#)

[Disability Action Plans: A guide for the tertiary education sector \(TEC\)](#)

[Kia Ōrite Toolkit - Achieve](#)

[The Tertiary Education Strategy 2020](#)

[Education \(Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners\) Code of Practice 2021](#)

[Privacy Act](#)