

Procedure for requesting reasonable accommodations due to disability

Head Policy	Disability Policy
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Related documents	Learning Access Application Learning Statement of Access Form (staff access only)

1. Introduction

Media Design School (MDS) supports the right of people with disability and their carers to be involved in all facets of community life including full and equitable participation in vocational and higher education. To that end, MDS provides an accessible and inclusive environment for students with disability. MDS will act in accordance with the spirit and requirements of the legislation and guidelines detailed in the:

- Education and Training Act 2020
- Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021
- Human Rights Act 1993
- Kia Ōrite Toolkit for Achieving Equity
- New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026
- United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

MDS is committed to providing an accessible learning environment for students with disability, as detailed in the *Disability Policy*.

This document should be read in conjunction with the MDS 'Disability Policy' for full policy context and definitions.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all MDS students and prospective students requesting reasonable accommodations due to disability.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Prospective or current student

If a current or prospective student requires disability-related accommodation or other support services, they must inform MDS.

3.2 Staff

Staff members must:

- develop and maintain their awareness of the requirements of disabled students as stipulated in relevant legislation and the *Disability Policy*.
- encourage students to approach the Disability Advisor to discuss issues impacting their studies due to their disability.
- refer students whose studies are being impacted by their disability to the Disability Advisor.
- implement recommended reasonable accommodations as outlined in the student's approved Learning Statement of Access ('Statement').
- ensure privacy and confidentiality by referring students to the Disability Advisor to discuss reasonable accommodations required.

3.2.1 Course and Careers Advisor

The Course and Careers Advisor refers all prospective students who require accommodations or other support services due to disability to the Disability Advisor.

3.2.2 Disability Advisor

The Disability Advisor:

- collects and processes the completed *Learning Access Application* and relevant supporting documentation from all students, current or prospective, who require accommodations or other support services due to disability
- facilitates the review and approval of Applications in conjunction with the Campus Director and/or Programme Directors.
- assists students in discussing their accessibility needs with other staff where needed.

3.2.3 Campus Director and Programme Director

The Campus Director and Programme Director assess all applications referred by the Disability Advisor.

4. Purpose of disclosure

Providing supporting documentation enables:

- MDS to consider the appropriateness of the provision of disability services to the student if they are successful in their application to their chosen programme.
- MDS to fulfill statistical reporting responsibilities as required under relevant New Zealand legislation.

5. Procedure for disclosure

Disabled students do not need to disclose that they have a medical condition or disability. However, if they require assessment and/or study accommodation or other support services:

- they will be required to disclose that they have a disability and/or medical condition (without necessarily naming the disability/condition), and
- they will need to describe its impact on their studies.

All applications must be supported by documentation from a relevant treating medical practitioner or allied health professional. The supporting documentation must address the impact of the student's disability or medical condition on their studies. They maintain control over access to the information and determine what they choose to make available.

Once a disabled student has an approved Statement in place, they do not need to disclose the underlying cause of the accommodation and/or support. The accommodation made are agreed for the duration of their enrolment or as otherwise specified in the Statement.

A student is not legally required or obliged to disclose that they have a disability during their admission process or while enrolled; however, MDS is not responsible for making individual accommodation for that student if required information about their disability has not been disclosed along with an application for support (i.e. complete Learning Access Application).

Disclosure of a disability at admission does not lead to the automatic provision of disability services.

6. Requesting accessibility services

- MDS aims to provide all its services to students in an inclusive manner, minimising access difficulties and the requirement for individual accommodations.
- Some disclosures of disability will not require services or accommodations, so no further action will occur unless prompted by the student during their study. Some disclosures of disability will require individual services and accommodations. In this case, supporting documentation will need to be provided as detailed below.
- Students enrolled in MDS and undertake study and/or supported by partner institutions (i.e. another organisation or education institution with which MDS partners with to deliver part or an entire MDS programme and associated support services to students) are also eligible to access academic accommodation, such as assignment extensions and additional assessment time. However, modifications for physical accessibility must be negotiated with the partner institution and is at the partner's discretion.

7. Documentation

- Students who request disability-related services or accommodations will be required, in a timely manner, to provide appropriate documentation from a relevant medical or allied health professional to the Disability Advisor. This documentation must outline:
 - the nature and expected duration of the disability or medical conditions
 - its functional impact on studies
 - recommendations as to accommodations and services required.
- Complete information must be provided using the Health Practitioner Report. This will specify the expected duration of disability or medical condition and a recommended timeframe for a review of the impact of the condition on the students' studies.
- Disability information provided by students will be treated in accordance with the [Privacy Policy](#). Information will not be disseminated to staff for any other purpose or outside MDS without the student's explicit written agreement. However, information may be disclosed if there is a legal requirement to do so or if MDS has reasonable grounds for concern about the health or safety of the student or other persons.

8. Reasonable accommodations to teaching and assessments

- Reasonable services and accommodations will be made to accommodate students with disability without compromising the academic standard or inherent requirements of the programme.
- It is the responsibility of MDS, in consultation with the student, to identify those elements of a programme that affect the student's ability to participate on the same basis as a student without a disability. This may require reasonable accommodations to teaching and learning materials, teaching methodology and assessment.
- The following circumstances will be taken into account when determining if a requested accommodation for a disabled student is reasonable:
 - the impact/s of student's disability, as described by the student, on their studies
 - the advice provided by the professional specialists (e.g. Doctor's report)
 - the views of the student
 - the effect of the accommodation on the student's independence and ability to achieve learning outcomes and participate in their components and programmes
 - the inherent requirements of their components or programme
 - the costs and benefits of making the accommodation, and
 - the effect of the proposed accommodation on staff and other students.
- Where it is possible to make reasonable accommodations or provide reasonable services, the student will be asked to complete a *Learning Access Application*.
 - Where a student requires modification to the physical accessibility of their programme, this will be negotiated between the student and the Disability Advisor. The Disability

Advisor will liaise with the Campus Director (or delegate). The approved modifications will be documented in a Statement, and will remain in place for the duration stipulated. It will remain the responsibility of the student to share relevant details of the Statement with staff.

- Where a student requires modification to examinations and assessments, this will be negotiated between the student and the Disability Advisor. The Disability Advisor will collaborate with the Programme Director (or delegate). The approved modifications will be documented in a Statement, and will remain in place for the duration of the Statement. It will remain the responsibility of the student to share relevant details of the Statement with staff.
- Where a student requires modification to practice-based learning activities, this will be negotiated between the student and the Disability Advisor. The Disability Advisor will liaise with the Programme Director (or delegate). Where negotiation regarding accommodations involves external placements, the relevant student's consent will be obtained before any disability-related information is provided externally.
- Where a student requires modification to other services (e.g., learning material accessibility), this will be negotiated between the student and the Disability Advisor. The Disability Advisor will collaborate with the Programme Director (or delegate). The approved modifications will be documented in the Statement and will remain in place for the duration of the programme.

Students studying at partner institutions will be eligible to request academic accommodations, however the student will be required to negotiate any modifications for physical accessibility needs with their partner institution directly. The Disability Advisor will assist by facilitating and providing recommendations for partner institutions; however, implementation will reside with support services within these institutions.

- MDS is not required to make an accommodation if, after careful assessment, it is deemed that it will:
 - cause unjustifiable hardship on MDS
 - compromise the inherent or essential requirements and standards of the programme or any of its components
 - create a health and safety risk for the student, staff, other students or other members of the MDS community.

Where this is the case, the Campus Director (or delegate) or Disability Advisor will discuss with the student modified accommodations in line with reasonable expectations. Where no modified arrangements could be put in place, the Campus Director (or delegate) will discuss admission without reasonable accommodations or alternative study options.

9. Learning Access Application

- The Learning Access Application along with the Health Practitioner Form will be the primary method for students to document the impact of their disability on their studies, the services which they requested, and the details of proposed accommodations to examination or assessment conditions. It is not expected that students with short term medical conditions will submit an Application. Procedures for variation to assessment methods, tasks and timelines on medical grounds are outlined in the [Assessment Policy](#).
- Students are encouraged to inform MDS of their accessibility needs, and the need for support and accommodations where required.

- Students are required to retain a copy of their application and make any request for accessibility services and accommodations in a timely manner so academic participation can be planned over the duration of a study period.
- The Learning Access Application must be approved by the Campus Director (or delegate) in conjunction with the relevant Programme Director (or delegate) before it can be implemented. Each subsequent material accommodation to the Learning Access Application must also be approved by the Campus Director (or delegate).
- If approved, students will be issued with a Statement that will serve as documentation of their accommodations.
- Academic staff will use the Statement as a basis for discussion with students who require reasonable accommodations to accommodate their disability. The Disability Advisor will assist students in discussing their accessibility needs with other staff where required.
- Additional documentation outlining a students' Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan, where appropriate, will supplement the Learning Access Application and the Learning Statement of Access.

10. Further information

For further information, students may refer to the [Student Hub](#) or contact the Disability Advisor by email (disability@mediadesignschool.com).