



## DISABILITY POLICY

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Sydney Met is committed to providing an inclusive environment for students and staff that is aligned with the principles of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Disability Standards for Education 2005, the Disability Inclusion Act 2014, and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW). This includes making reasonable adjustments so that students and staff with disabilities can study and work on an equal basis with students and staff without disabilities and ensuring that students and staff with disabilities are not subjected to harassment and/or victimisation at Sydney Met.

### 2. PURPOSE

This purpose of this policy is to outline the rights and responsibilities of Sydney Met students and staff in relation to people with disabilities studying or working at Sydney Met. The policy is designed to ensure that students and staff with disabilities have equal opportunities to achieve at Sydney Met and that, as far as circumstances reasonably allow, they do not experience discrimination, harassment, or victimisation based on their disability, and that there are mechanisms for reporting, investigating and acting on complaints of discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. Specifically, the policy aims to:

- (i) support equality of opportunity for all students and staff;
- (ii) develop a culture that appreciates and values diversity;
- (iii) address inclusion positively; and
- (iv) recognise the right of people with disabilities to access and participate in higher education and employment.

### 3. SCOPE

- All students and staff of Sydney Met, including those with disabilities
- Carers, families, and professional health practitioners of Sydney Met staff and students with disabilities.

### 4. DEFINITIONS

**Disability** has the same meaning as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (updates 2015). Disability– in relation to a person means:

- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions, or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour; and
- includes a disability that:
  - presently exists; or
  - previously existed but no longer exists;
  - may exist in the future (including because of a genetic predisposition to that disability); or
  - is imputed to a person.
- To avoid doubt, a disability that is otherwise covered by this definition includes behaviour that is a symptom or manifestation of the disability.

**Disability Discrimination** occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation, because of their disability.

**Reasonable Adjustments** mean measures or actions taken to minimise barriers for people with disabilities to perform their roles. Adjustments are considered reasonable where they:

- do not impose unjustifiable hardships on the organisation; or
- require actions not possible due to regulations or restrictions, such as building codes; or
- change the inherent nature of the role or create disadvantages for other students or staff.

## 5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Information related to disability will be treated as confidential and revealed only with the student or staff member's permission.

## 6. PHYSICAL ACCESS

The Sydney Met campus building has disability access standards. In the design of new physical spaces the College will ensure that there is conformity with appropriate Australian standards and that the level of access and the facilities required for students with disabilities is considered based on expert advice.

## 7. DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND BULLYING

Any form of discrimination, harassment or bullying based on disability is prohibited at Sydney Met. Allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimisation are dealt with using the *Grievance and Appeals Resolution Policy*.

Sydney Met promotes an inclusive culture and provides a secure and safe environment for all staff and students, including those with disabilities, through the provision of relevant induction

and professional development programs. In relation to students and staff with disabilities this includes:

- ensuring that all students and staff are aware of the principles of equality of academic opportunity for people with disabilities;
- use of appropriate language that reflects inclusive attitudes in relation to people with disabilities;
- ensuring that all students and staff are aware of the support services provided by Sydney Met for people with disabilities;
- adjusting teaching and assessment strategies where appropriate to meet the needs of students with disabilities;
- implementing reasonable adjustments for students and staff with disabilities.

## **8. LANGUAGE**

Sydney Met promotes the use of inclusive language when referring to disabilities.

## **9. GRIEVANCES**

Grievances in relation to disability, whether in relation to access, reasonable adjustments, discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimisation, are dealt with through the *Grievance and Appeals Resolution Policy*.

## **10. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **a. Admissions**

Applicants with disabilities are subject to meeting course entry requirements (see *Admissions Policy and Procedure*).

### **b. Academic Support**

Sydney Met is committed to making reasonable adjustments to accommodate students with disabilities or chronic health conditions. However, in so doing it cannot compromise academic standards or essential components of a course required to assure the Course Learning Outcomes.

## **11. STAFF WITH DISABILITIES**

The Human Resources (HR) Officer has the responsibility of supporting staff with a disability in their work activities. Staff with a disability are encouraged to notify the HR Manager of their disability as they require support.

### **a. Recruitment and Employment**

Prospective and current staff with disabilities will be assessed in line with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) that concerns temporary and permanent disabilities that may be

physical, intellectual, sensory, neurological, learning, or psychosocial, and that may result from diseases, illnesses, medical conditions, and/or injuries.

Sydney Met is committed to removing barriers that a staff member with a disability may encounter in performing their role and will make reasonable adjustments to assist prospective or current employees with disabilities (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2015).

## **15. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY**

- 15.1. Disclosure of disability by student: Students who have a disability, who request that the College provide reasonable adjustments, must register with Student Support and Learning Hub Officer, and must provide appropriate documentation to verify the nature and extent of the disability. This process is treated as confidential.

Recognising that the impact of disabilities may vary across time, students seeking reasonable adjustments for a disability are requested to contact the Student Services and Learning Hub Officer by email to <studentsupport@sydney.edu.au > to arrange a confidential consultation to discuss the recommendations of their health professional(s) concerning their support needs prior to the commencement of the effected teaching period.

Following this confidential consultation the Student Services and Learning Hub Officer will:

- i. advise the student of the reasonable adjustments to be made and provide a certificate listing the adjustments; and
- ii. liaise with other College academic and support staff as required to implement required adjustments.

Where circumstances change for a student in respect to his/her disability or chronic health condition, the student (or family member designated by the student) is required to inform the Student Services and Learning Hub Officer of the change, in writing, as soon as possible to enable a review of the adjustments provided for the student.

- 15.2. Documentation: Documentation provided by students to support their request for reasonable adjustments must be legible, presented on a letterhead that clearly identifies the health professional and their credentials, must be dated and signed by the health professional, and must be assessed as current:

- no more than two weeks old for temporary conditions.
- no more than six months old for fluctuating conditions, if appropriate.
- no more than three years old for chronic/permanent conditions unless the condition is self-evident.

The documentation provided should be specific and must:

- state the nature of the disability.
- indicate whether the disability is permanent, temporary, or fluctuating.
- document the impact on the student.
- recommend reasonable accommodations.

- 15.3. Reasonable Adjustments: An adjustment is reasonable if:

- it minimizes barriers for people with disabilities to perform their roles;

- it does not impose unjustifiable hardships on the organization or require actions by the organization prohibited by regulations (such as building codes);
- it does not change the inherent nature of the role so that, for example, for students the Course Learning Outcomes cannot be verified; or
- it does not create disadvantages for other students.

Reasonable adjustments for students enable students with disabilities to have equitable and inclusive access to all educational services on the same basis as students without a disability including:

- at admission and enrolment
- during participation in a course or program
- when using facilities and services
- during examinations and assessment
- when attending events.

The adjustment may take the form of an aid, a facility or a service that the student requires because of his or her disability.

Reasonable adjustments will be made in consultation with the student, within a reasonable time. Reasonable Adjustments provided for students with disabilities must not detract from the integrity of the course or program and its assessment requirements or processes in order that the graduates of the course can present themselves as having the appropriate knowledge, experience, or expertise.