

# ACCESS PLANS FOR VET EDUCATORS

**A Collaborative Resource for VET**

# Acknowledgement of Country

We pay our respects to the traditional custodians of our beautiful country and it's ever evolving culture. We recognise the first people's unique and rich traditions of learning and teaching. It is our hope that we embrace learning and teaching together in the spirit of true reconciliation.

# Introduction

Welcome to the two (2) hour workshop on Access Plans for Educators.

This workshop has been developed as a collaboration between TAFE SA, TAFE Queensland, Charles Darwin University, North and South Metropolitan TAFE WA, and TasTAFE. With special thanks to staff at TAFE NSW.



# A note on Language

**Students with disability** (also includes ongoing or temporary health and medical conditions)

**Access Plan** (also includes Individual Learning Plan, Disability Access Plan, Learning Access Plan, Learning Support Plan, Individual Education Access Plan)

**Educators** (also includes teachers, lecturers, tutors, trainers and assessors)

**Equity Services** (also include Student Services, Access Services, Disability Services, Counselling, Learning Support etc)

# Some starting points...

Each student experiences their disability uniquely.

We are expected to respond to individual learner needs of all our students (accommodations and special provisions) as well as specifically responding to identified needs of learners with disabilities (reasonable adjustments).

Being inclusive is everyone's responsibility.

# Workshop topics

- What is an Access Plan
- Legal Framework
- An Access Plan's Purpose
- Role of Equity Services, Educators and Students
- Confidentiality and Disclosure
- Inherent Requirements and Reasonable Adjustments
- Implementing, Documenting and Reviewing Access Plans
- Summary

# Activity

Think about a student with a disability whose learning outcomes surprised you.

- What contributed to a positive result?
- What hindered their outcomes?
- What surprised you about your own approach?

# What is an Access Plan?

The Access Plan is a collaborative tool to communicate the impacts of a student's disability on their learning and provides recommendations about what supports could be considered to assist a student to achieve a successful learning outcome.

It is meant to be a person-centred, meaningful and purposeful tool to guide better practice and reduce ambiguity about reasonable adjustment.

# Who is entitled to an Access Plan?

Students who have an identified disability can request an Access Plan.

Students who wish to have an Access Plan are asked to provide documentation/information about their disability and the impact it has on their learning and participation.

The documentation should outline the functional impacts of the student's disability on their learning and participation, and provide advice around the strategies/ supports/ reasonable adjustments that may assist the student.

# Access Plans...

Identify the impact a person's disability has on their learning and participation (functional impact)

Identify potential considerations in determining reasonable adjustments

Identify any specific learning and participation supports or equipment that will maximise participation in study

Communicate these identified impacts, needs and considerations to educators implementing reasonable adjustments

# What's not in an access plan?

An Access Plan does not provide:

- Detailed information about the nature of their disability.
- Specific contextual detail about reasonable adjustments
- Details about non-educational supports
- Information about LLN support requirements
- Other Social Impacts.

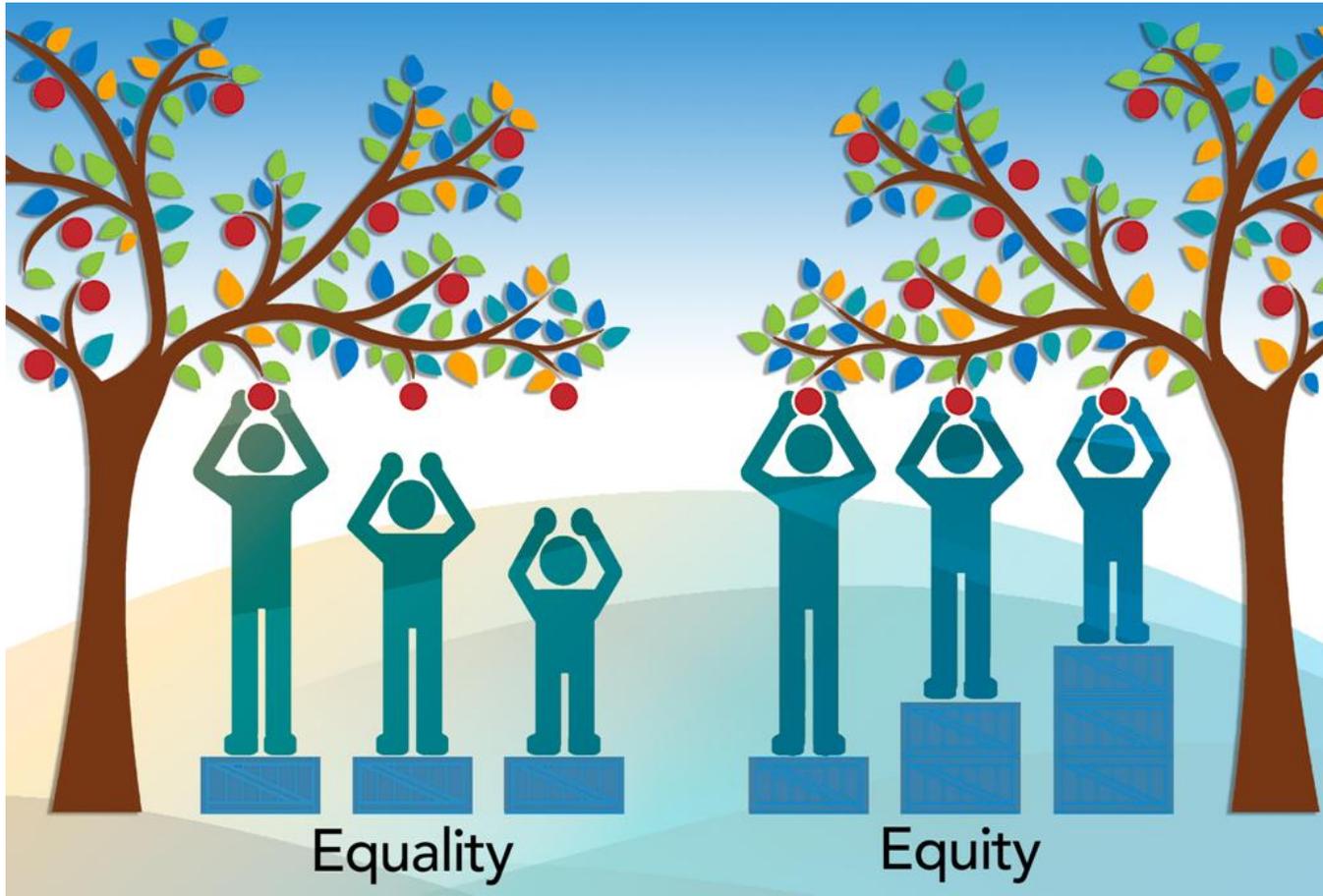
# Legal framework

As an education and training provider we are responsive to individual learner needs, provide reasonable adjustments and eliminate discrimination on the basis of disability. We are legally required to comply with :

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Disability Standards for Education 2005
- Standards for RTOs 2015
- Equal Opportunity Legislation

# Activity - Equality versus EQUITY

- Consider the definition of both terms
- What makes them different
- Consider examples



Equality

Equity

# Role of Equity Services

- Discussing individual needs with our students
- Advising about supporting evidence and supports available
- Collating information to confirm entitlement
- Contacting educators to determine requirements of the course
- Determining implications and potential reasonable adjustments
- Documenting the Access Plan
- Supporting the Student to communicate their needs and Access Plan with their educators
- Participating in conversations with student/educators as required
- Supporting the educators to determine the inherent requirements and reasonable adjustments

# Role of Educators

- Promoting Equity Services and Supports to students throughout their studies
- Being available to speak/work with Equity Services
- Reviewing the Access Plan
- Conversing with students
- Documenting the discussions and decisions about the agreed adjustments and how they will be implemented
- Implementing/accounting/reviewing reasonable adjustments

# Role of the Student

- Making informed choices
- Making contact with Equity Services
- Identifying impacts and useful strategies
- Presenting evidence
- Engaging in conversations and decisions about agreed approaches (including decisions about disclosure)
- Agreeing upon an approach for the ongoing management of their Access Plan

# Student choices

An Access Plan can be developed at any stage before or during a student's enrolment.

Students are encouraged to develop an Access Plan as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to implement any negotiated reasonable adjustments.

# To have a plan or not?

Students may choose to develop an Access Plan later in their study for a variety of reasons, including:

- Feeling like they can manage the study without supports
- Becoming aware later that they need support
- Fearing potential discrimination
- Being unaware of needs
- Experiencing previous negativity when learning

# Where a student has limited evidence of a disability

Equity Services can :

- Listen to the student
- Consider a range of evidence from a variety of practitioners
- Consider previous circumstances e.g. education plan at school
- Maximise use of other learner supports
- Consult with other professionals
- Make a professional and holistic decision.

# Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Standards for Education are actions taken to help a student with disability to participate in an education program on the same basis as other students.

Reasonable adjustments refer to the support provided to students with a disability to ensure equal access within the delivery and assessment strategies.

# Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments must take into account:

- Impacts of disability on learning and participation
- Inherent requirements of the course/unit
- Impacts on others when applying the reasonable adjustments
- Cost

# Inherent requirements

Inherent requirements are the fundamental parts of a course or unit that must be met by all students to achieve competency.

They are the essential abilities, knowledge and skills a student will need to demonstrate to achieve competency.

***All students must meet competencies, regardless of disability.***

Reasonable adjustments may be implemented and a student still may not meet competency. When this occurs, it is important that conversations with the student about alternative reasonable adjustments or pathways are explored.

# What is unreasonable?

- When adjustments compromise the integrity of the course (e.g. not the same competency requirements)
- Has an adverse impact on other students (e.g. provided too much assistance)
- Giving an advantage to a student with a disability over other students (e.g. too much time to complete)
- When staff start to manage a student's disability including medication etc.
- WHS requirements are compromised
- Does not demonstrate the inherent requirements (e.g. not completing all assessment tasks)

# Inherent requirements/ reasonable adjustments

Applying reasonable adjustments should be a matter of practicality and common sense.

When determining or recommending reasonable adjustments, the following factors are usually considered:

- the nature and onset of the disability
- the type of assessment and course requirements
- the student's usual work methods and their ability to achieve learning outcomes
- information from consultation with the student involved and/or specialist advisors
- a focus on enhanced independence
- the effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including staff and other students
- the cost and benefits of making the adjustment.
- whether the adjustments are suitable to the job role, learning and assessment tasks
- are they equitable

# Activity – Exploring what's possible

Explore examples of Units of Competency to identify inherent requirements and what reasonable adjustments might be possible?

# Confidentiality and disclosure

A student can choose to disclose their disability within the Access Plan, it is not a requirement, unless it impacts on the safety and well-being of the student or others.

Students may decide to disclose their diagnosis in the Access Plan as;

- they are aware of the impacts on their learning
- actively look for ways to overcome any barriers or hurdles they may face
- feel that by sharing information staff can better understand their individual needs and provide learning strategies and support to assist them during their study program.

# Non-disclosure

A student may decide to **NOT** disclose their diagnosis in the Access Plan due to;

- fear of discrimination
- prejudicial attitudes/stigma
- concerns of being treated differently
- the possibility of encountering lowered expectations
- previous negative experiences

It is the student's right to make this decision.

# Access Plans in practice

While Equity Services staff are likely to develop the draft of the Access Plan they are not subject matter experts - you are!

Equity Services is relying on you to be actively involved in the conversations and decisions about what will be the agreed reasonable adjustments.

Equity Services can work with you to achieve this.

It is also important to consider how and when an Access Plan will be monitored and reviewed, and how ongoing communication will occur.

# Implementing Access Plans

Collaboration and communication will optimise student opportunity to develop knowledge and skills and to demonstrate competency.

Discuss the Access Plan with the student and agree on an approach.

Remember to ensure that you are respecting the student's privacy and confidentiality.

# Activity - Case Studies

- Explore Case Studies
- Group Discussion/Feedback

# Conversation good practice

- Strategies and adjustments that have worked best for the learner in the past?
- Explain all the types of learning and assessment tasks involved in the unit or course and explore what will work and what might need adjustments
- Is the student comfortable with the proposed adjustments/approach
- Is there anyone else who could provide further guidance or advice?
- Are there any logistics we need to consider i.e vocational placement
- What educational or assistive technology or equipment might help?
- Discuss the need to maintain work health and safety requirements/ obligations?

# When else should I have conversations

- When making decisions about the student
- At the start of the course
- When you identify student challenges (e.g. not engaging, non attendance, poor outcomes from assessment, feedback from employers or placement host)
- Prior to assessment events
- When the student approaches you for assistance
- In preparation for placement

# Documenting discussions/decisions

Discussions and decisions about reasonable adjustments should be recorded in the student's training file.

This helps ensure transparency about the decisions.

You should also record on the Assessment instruments whether a reasonable adjustment was applied and how it was applied.

# Reviewing Access Plans

Access Plans can be updated and amended at any stage during the learning journey.

Access Plans may be updated due to:

- Increased skill, capability and confidence
- Changes in their disability
- New/Reviewed diagnosis
- Difficulties with implementing/ negotiating reasonable adjustments with their educators
- Increased complexity of course requirements
- Emerging concerns

# Mental health and well-being

For many students mental health/well being issues arise during their studies that impact on their ability to cope and manage demands.

Sometimes it is important to ensure you revisit the supports and services available and encourage the student to make contact with Equity Services.

# Access Plans & Vocational/ Work Placement

Vocational Placement may be a key consideration in an Access Plan.

Access Plans may need to document reasonable adjustments and approaches that specifically relate to work placement.

Discussion about placement might need to include decisions about disclosure and how needs will be communicated.

Managing these discussions and building the student's confidence to self disclose is important.

# The power of positivity

Where possible it is always important to focus on the student's strengths and capabilities.

Positively framing the students capabilities helps minimise assumptions or negative views of the student.

A positive attitude by an educator can make the real difference.

# Things to remember

Access Plans don't equate to an automatic pass

Students with disability must meet the inherent requirements of the course/unit they just may do this a little differently

Students with disability are capable

As an Educator you make the difference because you implement the Access Plan and work with the student to have an equitable learning experience.

Access Plans are a living document that enhances communication, participation, learning and teaching.

# Useful websites & training 1

**ADCET (Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training)**

<https://www.adcet.edu.au/>

**ASQA fact sheet: Providing quality training and assessment services to students with disabilities**

[https://www.asqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/FACT\\_SHEET\\_Providing\\_quality\\_training\\_and\\_assessment\\_services\\_to\\_students\\_with\\_disabilities.pdf?v=1508135481](https://www.asqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/FACT_SHEET_Providing_quality_training_and_assessment_services_to_students_with_disabilities.pdf?v=1508135481)

**Supporting Students with Disability in VET eLearning**

<https://disabilityawareness.com.au/elearning/vet-sector/>

# Useful websites & training 2

## **Inclusive Learning Framework**

[https://desbt.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0018/8091/inclusion-statement.pdf](https://desbt.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/8091/inclusion-statement.pdf)

## **Reasonable adjustment in teaching and assessment for learners with disability: a guide for VET practitioners (July 2018)**

[https://desbt.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0028/8299/reasonable-adjustment-for-web.pdf](https://desbt.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0028/8299/reasonable-adjustment-for-web.pdf)

## **Universal Design for Learning**

<http://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>

Questions ?????