

**Guidelines and Procedures to assist Universities to
Examine the Inherent Requirements of their Courses
(When Accommodating Students with Disabilities and /or Medical Conditions)**

VOLUME 1

Report

**Guidelines and Procedures to assist Universities to
Examine the Inherent Requirements of their Courses
(When Accommodating Students with Disabilities and /or Medical Conditions)**

VOLUME 1

Report

O. Watts, C. Stickels, C. Fraser, R. Carroll, N. Stewart, A. Radloff

ISBN 1 86342 912 3

This project was funded under the Co-operative Projects for Higher Education Students with Disabilities scheme, Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs and undertaken by Curtin University of Technology for the Post Secondary Education Disability Network (PSEDN), Western Australia

July, 2000

This report is available in alternative formats on request

Acknowledgments:

The authors gratefully acknowledge the generous donation of time and thoughtful feedback made by senior academic staff of Curtin University of Technology, The University of Western Australia, Murdoch University and Edith Cowan University.

The authors also sincerely thank Ms Sue Hebiton, Research Assistant, for her valued and considerable contribution to the project.

The authors also gratefully acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Bob Loss, who unfortunately was unable to continue as a project team member, due to other work commitments.

The project was funded under the Co-operative Projects for Higher Education Students with Disabilities (CPHESD) scheme, by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs (DETYA). The project was undertaken by Curtin University of Technology for the Post Secondary Education Disability Network (PSEDN), Western Australia. Associate Professor Owen Watts was approached by the Curtin University representative of PSEDN to lead the project team, which included counselling and academic staff members from Curtin University, a member of the community and a senior academic colleague from the University of Western Australia.

During the course of the project, Associate Professor Watts became the Director of the Centre for Educational Advancement (CEA) at Curtin University and the Centre then supported the project with project administration and budget accounting. The authors wish to thank the CEA staff members who provided this valuable support.

The support provided by the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs is gratefully acknowledged.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Associate Professor Owen Watts was Dean of the Education Faculty at Curtin University at the commencement of the project. During the course of the project, he became Director of the newly established Centre for Educational Advancement at Curtin University. He has had extensive experience in the field of Education.

Ms Cheryl Stickels is the Counsellor (Disability) at Curtin University. She is an Occupational Therapist by professional training and has many years of clinical experience. In the years she has been at Curtin University, she has sought to embed services, supports and procedures pertaining to students with disabilities and/or medical conditions in the mainstream activities of the university.

Ms Cozette Fraser is a Counsellor at the Curtin University Counselling Services. As a Social Worker, Cozette has many years of experience in the field of counselling, mediation and conflict resolution. Also a long-standing Curtin staff member, Cozette has experienced first-hand, many of the issues raised by the project respondents.

Ms Robyn Carroll is a senior academic staff member in the Law School at The University of Western Australia. In her position as the Sub-Dean she has had many opportunities to contribute to the equity agenda of the university. Robyn brought this valuable experience and her legal background to this project.

Dr. Neil Stewart is a retired senior educator. He has held many senior administrative and leadership positions in the Education Department of Western Australia. He has been the recipient of many scholarships and bursaries, both Australian and international, and he is the author of many research projects.

Associate Professor Alex Radloff is the Acting Director of the Centre for Educational Advancement at Curtin University. A psychologist by professional training, Alex has vast experience in Education and has a passion for excellence in inclusive teaching practices. She enthusiastically promotes this in her work with academic staff.

For further information about this project please contact Cheryl Stickels
Telephone: (08) 9266 7850
C.Stickels@info.curtin.edu.au

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
Key Findings	3
Recommendations	4
INTRODUCTION	5
Background	5
Rationale	7
PROPOSAL	8
PROJECT AIMS	9
Scope of the Project	9
METHODOLOGY	10
Phase One – Pilot Study	10
Results of Pilot Study	11
Conclusions from Pilot Study	17
Phase Two – Draft Guidelines	18
Responses to Draft Guidelines	21
Phase Three – Preparation of Final Guidelines and Distribution	24
CONCLUSION	24
BUDGET	27
REFERENCES	29
APPENDICES	
Appendix A: Members of Project Team	31
Appendix B: Policy for Students with Disabilities, Curtin University	33
Appendix C: Pilot Study Questionnaire	37
Appendix D: Final Guidelines	41
Appendix E: Letters of Invitation to Participants in Pilot Study - Phase One	51
Appendix F: Pilot Study Participants – Phase One	53
Appendix G: Code of Conduct, School of Applied Geology, Curtin University	55
Appendix H: Letter of Invitation to Participants – Phase Two	57
Appendix I: Participants - Phase Two	59

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Findings

All respondent schools/areas/departments across all four Western Australian universities welcomed the project and stated their need for guidelines and processes in their support for students with disabilities and/or medical conditions, especially those students with mental health problems.

Respondents agreed that accommodations in examinations, practical laboratory work fieldwork and practicum units/subjects were the most problematic for schools/areas/departments especially in the fieldwork units when the student presented with a mental health problem.

Some respondents expressed concern about the student's legal rights for accommodation and the *duty of care* to him/her versus the university's *duty of care* to the external fieldwork agencies and the clients and staff of the agency. They wanted advice on this.

Respondents reported that external agencies do not ask for personal student details prior to commencement in the agency, assuming that the university will only place *well prepared, stable* students in fieldwork situations.

Respondents wanted guidelines to encourage early disclosure of a disability and/or medical condition, in order to provide timely accommodations.

Initially the majority of pilot study respondents reported that essential course requirements were already spelled out in outreach activities eg. advertising brochures and videos, camps, fairs, school and student visits, career nights and open days.

All pilot study respondents believed that liaison with the University Counselling Services (UCS) to determine accommodations for a student with a disability, achieves good outcomes for the school/area/department and the student, while still clearly stating the need for guidelines and process to assist them.

No pilot study respondent raised the matter of specific pre-course counselling for individual prospective students with disabilities and/or medical conditions.

The University Handbook and Calendar is the main source of academic information (including essential requirements) about courses and it is the responsibility of the individual schools/areas/departments to provide this information.

Schools/areas/departments use a variety of sources to determine this information eg. Academic Boards, staff meetings, curriculum committees, historical considerations and employer satisfaction. One respondent reported that they refer to an external professional registering body when considering course and unit/subject content and that the body has occasionally insisted on changes.

A small number of respondents did not accept that the requirements regarding the rights of a student with a disability and/or medical condition took precedence over the demands of the professional or trade associations. Respondents were concerned that employment constraints imposed by these associations cannot be used to deny entry to a person with a disability and/or medical condition into a particular course, and felt this required further discussion within the university.

90% of respondents had school publications and manuals in addition to the university Handbook, but very few contained information specific to policy and procedures regarding students with disabilities and/or medical conditions. Most did not review this situation as a consequence of having enrolled a student with a disability and/or medical condition.

Respondents in Phase Two put the view that while it is unlawful to exclude entry on the grounds of a disability and/or medical condition, the universities have a duty of care to at least make prospective students aware that disability may preclude a student from working in fields particular to his/her qualification after graduation.

All respondents in Phase Two agreed that information should be available which gives a good appreciation of the overall structure and requirements of the units/subjects and therefore the course. This information should be in writing and should direct any students enquiries to a designated senior academic member of staff.

Phase Two Respondents reported that care should also be taken in pre-course counselling.

All respondents referred to the key role played by the Disability Liaison Officers (DLO) in this process, with some respondents expressing the view that neither the head of school/area/department or a designated senior academic staff member has the expertise to decide the appropriate accommodations.

Other respondents expressed an alternative view that schools/areas /departments should appoint a senior academic staff member who is trained in disability matters and works closely with the DLO in order to decide the appropriate accommodations.

Confidentiality of student medical documentation and other personal information was seen as a sensitive matter, with some respondents reporting that the DLO is the only and most appropriate person, to receive this information. Concerns were raised that knowledge of a student's medical information may leave the staff member open to 'accusations of discrimination'. Respondents agreed however, that the Release of Information Consent form would be useful.

Respondents asked about the legal status of the guidelines and procedures. What would be the role of the document in a grievance process?

Recommendations

Recommendation One

The universities endorse in principle **Volume 2 .Guidelines to Determine the Essential Requirements of University Units/Subjects (Part 1) and Procedures to Provide Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities and/or Medical Conditions (Part 2).**

Recommendation Two

The universities develop **Volume 2** to produce guidelines and procedures to suit their own needs and clarify the roles, procedures and legal status of such within the university operational environment.

Recommendation Three

The universities seek a legal opinion to clarify their position in regard to their liability with respect to students, external fieldwork agencies and the staff and clients of that agency, when students of the universities are placed in external agencies for the purpose of completing their fieldwork units.

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES TO ASSIST UNIVERSITIES TO EXAMINE THE INHERENT REQUIREMENTS OF THEIR COURSES When Accommodating Students with Disabilities and/or Medical Conditions

INTRODUCTION

This project was undertaken by Curtin University of Technology on behalf of the four public Western Australian universities. Funding for the project was provided by DETYA under the Co-operative Projects for Higher Education Students with Disabilities (CPHESD) programme.

The project team was lead by the Dean of the Education Faculty, Curtin University. During the course of the project, the Dean became the Director of the Centre for Educational Advancement, Curtin University. The project team members are tabled in **Appendix A**

Background

In Australia, the recognition that people with disabilities and/or medical conditions have the same rights of access to all levels of education as the rest of the community has become accepted and enshrined in state and federal legislation, *Disability Services Act 1992* (DSA) and *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). The DDA defines this as follows:

Education (s22)

- (1) *It is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's disability or a disability of any of the person's associates:*
 - (a) *by refusing or failing to accept the person's application for admission as a student: or*
 - (b) *in the terms or conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student*

- (2) *It is unlawful for an education authority to discriminate against a student on the ground of the student's disability or a disability of any of the student's associates:*
 - (a) *by denying the student access, or limiting the student's access to any benefit provided by the educational authority; or*
 - (b) *by expelling the student; or*
 - (c) *by subjecting the student to any other detriment.*

This development, as well as shifts in community attitudes and expectations, has lead to an increase in the number of people with disabilities and/or medical conditions applying for entry into university courses. Further, the federal government has also actively encouraged this trend in its' 1990 document *A Fair Chance for All: Higher Education that's Within Everyone's Reach*, detailing the six groups of persons within the community eg those with a disability, who were disadvantaged in their pursuit of higher education by factors not of their

making. The objective for Students with Disabilities articulated in *A Fair Chance for All*, and further developed in the document which replaced it, *Equality, Diversity and Excellence: Advancing the National Higher Education Equity Framework 1996*, is

To increase the participation in higher education of people with disabilities.

Educational authorities are charged by the legislation to offer the same access to their services and courses to people with disabilities and/or medical conditions as they offer to people without disabilities and/or medical conditions and further, the decision to offer entry must be based solely on the prospective student's academic capacity to meet the essential entry and course requirements. The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AV-CC) in its *Guidelines for students with disabilities (1996)* makes this explicit,

When considering applications for admission, universities must assess applicants with disabilities on the same grounds and using the same criteria as are used for other applicants (s4.4).

With this responsibility goes the requirement to make *reasonable adjustments* or *accommodations* to the course design, delivery and assessment to enable people with disabilities to perform essential study activities. *Guidelines for Disability Services in Higher Education (1994)*.

The concept of reasonable accommodation, or adjustment covers campus design, including the provision of equipment and access, and study course design. Applying the concept means that academic and administrative staff, wherever it is necessary, possible and reasonable to do so, take into account a student's disability and make appropriate adjustments to the learning environment to lessen the impact of the disability.

Accommodations should be made wherever they are reasonable and do not cause undue or unjustifiable hardship to the university.

Reasonable Accommodations: Strategies for Teaching University Students with Disabilities (1992).

Again, the AV-CC (1996) defines this,

Universities should have in place teaching and assessment strategies which are appropriate to students with disabilities. The assessment policies and practices of the university should make explicit provision for the use of procedural variations and/or alternative assessment strategies for students with disabilities (s5.3).

Should the educational authorities fail to fulfil these responsibilities, people with disabilities can, under the aegis of the legislation, bring a complaint of discrimination (either intentional or unintentional), against the authority. For the educational authority however, while the intention of the legislation is clear, difficulties can arise in the application of the provisions. One difficulty can arise when staff who are involved in decisions regarding entry to the university or course, or the subsequent accommodation of the person's disability and/or medical condition, are not aware of the requirements of the legislation. Discrimination, either wittingly or unwittingly, can occur when there are wrong assumptions, misguided intentions or thoughtlessness on the part of the staff member.

Further, difficulties can arise when the university courses prepare students for qualifications that enable entry or membership to particular trades or professions, and the relevant registration boards and associations impose conditions on the university courses and therefore the students, that are related to *practice* rather than *qualification*. One example of this is in schools/areas/departments which have field practice requirements in their courses and the student's disability and/or medical condition has the potential to conflict with professional or trade requirements.

An interpretation of the DDA makes it clear that

. . . it is unlawful for education authorities to refuse to admit a person with a disability to a professional or a skill-based training course on the basis that the person with a disability is unlikely to be able to work in the profession or trade because of his or her disability. Qualifying and vocational bodies may refuse to authorise or to qualify a person with a disability, if because of the person's disability, the person is unable to carry out the inherent requirements of the trade or profession (s 19). Educational authorities are not able to pre-empt the decisions of the qualifying body. Acting Against Disability Discrimination, manual (1994).

Universities are strongly committed to high standards in the design, presentation and assessment of their courses and this commitment has generally been with the needs of students who *do not* have disabilities and/or medical conditions in mind. The universities are now being called on to accommodate students with a disability and/or medical condition, while maintaining the academic integrity of the course.

Rationale

The intent of the disability legislation is to ensure that, as far as possible, reasonable accommodations are made in the way in which universities provide their services so as to ensure equal participation by students with disabilities and/or medical conditions. Reasonable accommodations might require that a university modifies the way it delivers and assesses its courses or services, even if this incurs a financial burden. Universities may however, refuse to adjust their practices or to accept a prospective student if to do so would require them to provide services and facilities which would cause a demonstrable 'financial hardship' (DDA (s11) 1992, Acting Against Discrimination, manual (1994) or alter the academic integrity of courses. The legislation places the onus on the universities to demonstrate that they cannot accommodate a prospective or an enrolled student with a disability and/or medical condition.

The Western Australian universities already have various measures in place to further their commitment to support their students with disabilities and/or medical conditions. These include policies (see **Appendix B**), a Disability Services Plan in one university (located at <http://www.curtin.edu.au/policy/>) with others in the development stage; a range of counselling support services and physical access plans to ensure the continual improvement of access at the various campuses. What is not clear, however, is whether the implications (legal and practical) of the provisions of the state and federal disability legislation are widely known or fully understood by the academic staff in the teaching areas with regard to the procedures and practices within the various schools/areas/departments. That is, whether academic practices and procedures in enrolling students, delivering course material, determining assessment methods and exercising flexibility in assignment deadlines are aligned with, or in contravention of, the provisions of the legislation.

Interpretation of the legislation outlines obligations which relate to university programmes, services and premises such as student admission, course delivery, assessment methods, institutional ceremonies and general access to premises, *A Guide to Preparing a Disability Services Plan for State Public Authorities in Western Australia (1994)*, *A Guide to Development of Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans for Tertiary Education Institutions (1995)*. The challenge to universities is, therefore, greater than simply making the necessary adjustments for people with disabilities to attend lectures, workshops, laboratories or field excursions. The legislative intent is to ensure that provision is made for equal access to learning with all of the implicit ramifications.

One strategy to this end is for *schools/areas/departments within the universities to clearly articulate the essential (inherent) requirements of their courses and individual units/subjects.*

Whether or not any prospective student with a disability and/or medical condition is permitted entry to a course depends only on whether he/she is able to meet those defined essential requirements.

While *inherent requirements* is not defined in the DDA, the term comes from the United Nations Convention Concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation (Acting Against Disability Discrimination, manual, 1994), and applies in respect of employment. “*Inherent requirements* of work is a narrower concept than (*all the requirements of*) *the work* or the *reasonable requirements of work*” (op cit). The term now has currency in the tertiary education sector, with its definition in the content of unit/subjects (in place of *work*) being an important factor in the discussions between schools/area/departments and their prospective and enrolled students with disabilities and/or medical conditions.

There are a number of differences which exist between the requirements of the various courses and the nature of the specialist skills with which students will graduate. Laboratory and workshop activities, fieldwork experiences and practical student clinics in courses such as Nursing, Occupational Therapy and Science for example, are different from the experiences in courses such as Social Sciences where course content is more routinely delivered in the lecture and tutorial environments.

The university schools/areas/departments must, therefore, become clearer about the inherent requirements and the core skills of the units/subjects and thus the courses they offer and be able to enunciate this to both prospective and currently enrolled students. This is a large task for which guidelines should be helpful.

PROPOSAL

The project aimed to investigate and determine guidelines which would assist schools/areas/departments to examine their course units/subjects, in order to understand and make clear the inherent requirements of the course and to eliminate unnecessary barriers for prospective and enrolled students with disabilities and/or medical conditions. As the project progressed however, it became clear that schools and faculties were not only looking for guidelines, but procedures that would assist them in accommodating their students with disabilities and/or medical conditions. An examination of process also became part of the project.

Definition of disability

For the purpose of the project the project team used the definition from the DDA:

“disability”, in relation to a person, means:

- (a) total or partial loss of a person’s bodily or mental functions: or
- (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body: or
- (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
- (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body; or
- (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement that results in disturbed behaviour:

and includes a disability that:

- (h) presently exists: or*
- (i) previously existed, but no longer exists; or*
- (j) may exist in the future; or*
- (k) is imputed to a person*

PROJECT AIMS

Specifically, the project aimed to:

Develop guidelines to assist Heads of Schools/Areas/Departments to meet the obligations of the universities which have been described above and to ensure that students with disabilities and/or medical conditions are provided with opportunities to participate fairly and equitably in the education benefits offered by universities.

Assist universities to align their practices with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), the Disability Services Act 1992 (DSA) and relevant Disability Service Plans.

Assist Heads of Schools/Areas/Departments to accommodate students with disabilities and/or medical conditions who encounter difficulties in fulfilling course requirements as a consequence of their disability and/or medical condition.

Scope of the project

The entry and participation of people with disabilities and/or medical conditions into tertiary education courses involves a wider community than that of the universities alone. The expectations and actions of the general community, the various professional and trade associations and state and federal legislatures can impact on decision-making regarding entry and course accommodation in a variety of ways which may be direct or indirect in their effects.

Each of the sectors has a role in ensuring that people with disabilities and/or medical conditions are made aware of, and given every opportunity to participate in, all aspects of tertiary education. While the universities have a major role in this, the tertiary education sector must also clarify the limits of its responsibilities and seek discussions as appropriate with the other sectors as above. The project did not seek to pursue the responsibilities of the other sectors, nor undertake to encourage the universities to do so. However, the project team members recognised that in encouraging the universities to articulate the inherent requirements of their courses, it will ultimately also be necessary to examine the inadvertent role the universities may have unwittingly assumed as the 'gate-keepers' for the professions. That role has occurred when the universities may have previously discouraged entry into a course on the basis that, due to a student's disability and/or medical condition, he/she may not find employment in his/her chosen profession.

The project sought to produce guidelines which would assist the schools areas/departments to examine their roles as *educators* and to define what skills and knowledge a student must demonstrate to pass the *academic inherent requirements of the units/subjects and thus the course*, not judge the student on how he/she will practice in the profession.

METHODOLOGY

The project was completed in three phases:

Phase One Pilot Study

The project team agreed that the pilot study phase of the project should be undertaken at Curtin University of Technology, with the other universities being invited to participate in Phase Two. This was an administrative decision.

Volunteer Heads of Schools/Areas/Departments (n=10), drawn from across the five academic Divisions at Curtin University, participated in a one hour interview with the project officer, using an interview schedule designed by the project team (see questions at **Appendix C**)

The interview questions were also posted, with an invitation to comment, on the national OZUNI-Disability internet network to disability service providers in both the university and TAFE sectors.

Phase Two Preparation of Draft Guidelines

The data gathered in the pilot study was used to design draft guidelines. The draft guidelines included (1) some procedure forms to be used in discussions with students and (2) a series of sample questions. These draft guidelines were circulated to schools and departments across the four public universities. Comments and feedback were used to produce the final guidelines (see **Appendix D**).

Phase Three Preparation and Distribution of Final Guidelines

Preparation and printing of the final guidelines and distribution to all Western Australian universities.

Phase One Pilot Study

This phase was designed to gather information about the current situation regarding the following practices within the schools/areas/departments at one university (Curtin University of Technology):

- the availability and nature of published information provided by the university (handbook) or by the individual schools/areas/departments in which the course and unit/subject details were outlined
- what the schools/areas/departments consider to be “essential, important and optional” units/subjects and the rationale for that decision
- whether there are laboratory and fieldwork components of the courses; and what the schools/areas/departments consider to be the purpose and essential skills required in these experiences.

The volunteer heads of schools/areas/departments responded to a written invitation by the project leader (see **Appendix E**) to all schools/areas take part in this project. The schools/areas which took part in the project are tabled in **Appendix F**. They undertook a one hour interview with the project officer and the questions explored all the above issues.

Results of pilot study

All of the respondent schools expressed appreciation for the work of the University Counselling Service (UCS) in assisting them to accommodate and support their students with disabilities. They also welcomed the project and expressed a need for some guidelines or procedures which would assist them when they were working with students with disabilities and/or medical conditions, especially those students who presented with mental health problems. Most said they were familiar with the university's Disability Services Plan, the disability legislation and how this impacted on their schools.

They also identified the specific situations that caused them most concern when accommodating students. These are the examinations, the practical laboratory work and the fieldwork placements. Respondents reported that dilemmas for course co-ordinators arose when a student's disability became obvious in the field. Schools asked, in this situation, whether *loyalty or responsibility to the employer or industry (fieldwork placement) should override the university's duty of care for the students?*

The following data was collated from the interview schedule (PARTS A, B and C)

PART A *Outreach*

Schools were asked how information about courses and the unit/subject content requirements is made available to prospective students. The respondents indicated that this information was generally disseminated through school visits and advertising material. Other approaches involved the use of the internet, camps, networks, career information nights and overseas education fairs. While the use of the internet was not large (7.7%) at this time, opinion was widely held that this source has strong future potential. Table 1. indicates the frequency of use of the various outreach activities.

Table 1. Procedures Used to Inform Prospective Students

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Advertising, brochures, videos	26.9
Other camps, networks, fairs	26.9
School and student visits	23.1
Career nights/Open Days	15.4
Internet	<u>7.7</u>
	100

Of the respondent schools, 88.8% indicated that essential course requirements were detailed in the outreach activities described above and 77.8% said they had received enquiries from prospective students with disabilities, in particular, from people who are hearing-impaired and wheelchair-users. All schools (100%) surveyed reported that any disclosure of a disability by a prospective student with a disability had resulted in that school liaising with the UCS and it was their perception that this in turn had prevented problems later in the course.

While only 33% of respondent schools use a course application form, 44% asked for a student's personal details (especially the case for post-graduate students) and 44% reported the use of interviews, especially for international, mature-age and bridging course students. When asked who had access to this personal information, the schools reported it was generally only a senior designated staff member (eg Dean of Undergraduates, course co-ordinator etc), though two schools (22%) reported that all staff had access to the information.

It was evident that a variety of approaches were used to seek information from prospective students and to provide them with information relative to the course requirements and to the demands that these would make upon them. Respondents reported that when prospective students had disabilities and/or medical conditions, the students generally sought specific information concerning the effect that these would have on their future ability to meet the demands of the course. Seventy eight percent (78%) of respondent schools indicated that, in their experience, prospective students expressed concern and sought assurances, usually from a course co-ordinator, that their disability and/or medical condition would not preclude them from successful participation in, and completion of, the course. While this concern was evident to the schools, the use of formal pre-enrolment interviews with the students was not widespread (44%).

Overall, when advised, the schools showed an appreciation of the problems prospective students with disabilities and/or medical conditions were likely to encounter and 78% of respondents reported that they encourage prospective students to seek information about the essential requirements of the units/subjects before making decisions about enrolment. When asked however, what specific information is given to students about the essential requirements of the units, the schools reported the following:

- *fieldwork and practicums are part of the course (undergraduate courses)*
- *double major degrees have no choices in units and all units are compulsory*
- *essential information is given at an "Ask the Professor" website*
- *students are encouraged to ask about essential course information at the prospective students forums*

During the pilot study interviews, no school/area/department raised the matter of specific pre-course counselling for individual prospective students.

Overall, respondents felt that students were generally well-informed about the essential requirements of their courses through the standard activities (Table 1.) of course advertising.

PART B University Handbook and Calendar Information

Schools were asked about the procedures they use to decide what information they would include in the university handbook in order to provide prospective students with information about the content of their courses and their essential requirements. Information was also sought about the procedures used by the schools to review their information, especially with regard to matters relating to students with disabilities and/or medical conditions.

Most respondents consider the university Handbook and Calendar to be the main source of information regarding the academic and administrative operation of the university. They further reported that information regarding the content and nature of the course information, including essential requisite skills, is the responsibility of the individual schools/areas/departments. The schools/areas/departments used widespread discussion and decision-making by committees such as Academic Boards (33%), whole of school meetings (22%), Boards of Study (11%), Curriculum Committees (11%), and Area Managers meetings (11%) to decide what is included in the Handbook. Some schools also reported historical considerations and employer satisfaction as influences on the decision-making.

The university handbook information is reviewed annually. Some respondents reported however, that the pressure of frequent review and the need to meet short printing deadlines occasionally meant that information may not be fully accurate or current, as late changes were often made after the deadlines.

One respondent also reported that in situations when courses prepare students for certification or acceptance by external professional bodies, for example the Australian Association of Social Workers, these groups are consulted with regard to content and other essential requirements of the course. This school further reported that occasionally the employers or the professional associations may insist on changes.

The relationship between the academic and administrative course requirements established by the university and the requirements of membership imposed by external trade and professional bodies appeared to be not fully understood by the all the respondents in this project. Over time, external professional requirements have been incorporated in some academic structures and have come to be seen as essential course requirements. A small number of respondents commented that they did not wholly accept the notion that legal requirements regarding the rights of the student with a disability took precedence over the demands of the professional or trade associations. Further, the implications that employment concerns imposed by professional or trade associations cannot deny entry to the university and enrolment in a particular course to a person with a disability and/or medical condition, were felt by respondents to need further discussion within the university community.

Finally, ninety percent (90%) of the respondent schools reported that in addition to the university handbook they had school manuals which supplemented the information in the handbook. Most of these manuals did not however, contain specific references to the school's policy or procedures regarding students with disabilities and/or medical conditions, though reference was made to the university's *Policy on Students with Disabilities, (1991)*. This is not a procedural document.

Two respondent schools did however, contain some references to disability in their manuals:

- *that disclosure of a disability was essential before working in a manual laboratory*
- *there was a physically accessible unit within the halls of residence*

When asked if handbook and manual information has ever been reviewed as a consequence of having had a student with a disability and/or medical condition enrolled in the course, 78% of schools said No, one school said they reviewed it annually and one school reported that they involved the UCS in their discussions with the student.

The reasons given for not reviewing the information included:

- *one school felt unable to make a judgement or ask for disclosure of a disability as the school considered this the responsibility of the university and further, 'there needed to be a clear policy about this'*
- *students already sit on the School's Board so there are no discriminatory practices against students and therefore no need to put in handbooks or pamphlets*
- *as the information was not in the manual in the first place, then there was no reason to review it*
- *any such review would be done at the next level of management in the university and there has been no reason to review handbook or manual information in the past two years*

While schools did not specifically review information about students with disabilities and/or medical conditions, 56% of the respondent schools had reviewed their university handbook information in the past twelve months. 33% reported that this was due to standard

programme/curriculum review, while 22% were reviewed as a whole of school process. Five schools (55%) used external agencies (Advisory Boards, legal opinion and another university) to assist them in this process. Only two schools reported the outcomes of these reviews, one being that most suggestions made during the review were incorporated into the degree course, while the other school received legal advice regarding the fieldwork component of the course. This was in regard to the university's responsibility to the student versus the university's responsibility to the fieldwork agency supervisor.

PART C *The Nature of Units/Subjects*

Respondents were asked about the nature of the units/subjects in their courses. For the purpose of this study, units/subjects were described as *essential*, *important* or *optional*. Respondents were asked to define the characteristics of these units/subjects and to say what criteria they used to determine the status of the unit/subject. Part C included class-room, practical laboratory and fieldwork units/subjects.

Essential Units/Subjects

All respondents described these units/subjects as compulsory, or core building, and generally sequential in nature. They are units/subjects which are essential to the integrity of the course and while the content may be modified to some degree, they are the units/subjects which may not be deleted without detriment to the course. All respondent schools (100%) reported some compulsory units/subjects in the first year of the course and many were described by the schools as essential units/subjects because of the needs of employers or the demands of the professional bodies (50%) which set essential requirements for registration and because of the decisions of the external Advisory Board. Community expectations and historical reasons were also cited in deciding when a unit/subject was essential.

The responses to this section of the questionnaire varied as they were very course-specific however, many of the respondents agreed that while a particular unit/subject might be essential to the integrity of the course, alternative delivery methods, or substitution of some parts of the unit/subject which did not violate the essential purpose of the unit/subject, could be considered when accommodating a student with a disability and/or medical condition.

Important units

Forty five percent (45%) of respondents defined important units/subjects as *electives* and said these are generally offered after the first year of the course. Three schools (33%) said they did not offer elective units/subjects. One of these schools further reported that the *criteria of duty of care to patients* is what defined the unit/subject as important and, therefore, essential (*sic*).

When asked how they decided these were important units/subjects, 44% of respondents reported that this was decided by staff (often through the Academic Board), while 33% reported this was determined by the workplace, industry or external professional registration boards. One school reported that staff are required to work in industry as well as the school, so it was their first-hand knowledge which helped them know exactly what was required by the industry and therefore what constituted an 'important' unit/subject.

Respondents also considered that while such units/subjects were seen as highly desirable it would be possible to offer a substitution unit/subject to accommodate a student with a disability.

Optional units/subjects

The use of optional units/subjects was mostly confined to the third or fourth years when the students' needs or interests are more specialised. In response to being asked how this was decided, the individual responses included:

- *decided by the field of employment*
- *'one that is not a core unit'*
- *designed by the school*
- *Advisory Committee recommendation*
- *Programme Review*
- *whole of school meeting*

Related Unit/Subject Matters

Fifty five percent (55%) of the respondents reported that self-paced learning units/subjects were available in selected areas such as open learning, distance education and some computing units/subjects. Similarly, fifty five percent (55%) of respondents reported that external units/subjects were available in their courses. More external units/subjects are available in postgraduate courses than in undergraduate courses. All respondents (100%) agreed that units/subjects containing laboratory or fieldwork were unsuitable to the external mode of delivery.

Practical/Laboratory/Fieldwork Units/Subjects

In all cases (100%), respondents reported that practical, laboratory and fieldwork were considered to be essential units/subjects in a course and, therefore, compulsory for all students. They further reported that prospective students are made aware of this prior to enrolment. The students are required to demonstrate the ability to integrate theory and practice, as part of the assessment in these units. Sixty six percent (60%) of schools reported that the fieldwork placements required students to operate equipment and/or demonstrate skills *not* used in the theoretical course. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents also reported that travel outside the university was necessary in fieldwork units/subjects.

The schools reported that a variety of external agencies are involved in hosting students in their fieldwork and that the relationship between the university and these agencies had developed over many years. The agencies included hospitals, churches, galleries, factories, mining camps, police organisations, farms, banks, union organisations, private and government (state and federal) agencies. In some instances, students also completed their fieldwork in countries outside Australia.

When asked if external agencies request personal student details prior to accepting the student on placement, respondents reported that the agencies assume that the university will only place *well prepared, stable students* in fieldwork situations. The schools reported that they are aware that a student's personal details are confidential and that except in one situation when an agency required immunisation records, no external agency has requested personal information about a student. All respondents (100%) considered that it is the student's prerogative to provide personal details to the external agency, if they deem it to be appropriate. In one school students were given the option of signing a school Code of Conduct form (see **Appendix G**) before working in the agency in order to alert the students to behavioural expectations in the field.

With regard to laboratory and fieldwork, respondents agreed that any accommodation of a student with a disability and/or medical condition needed to be considered on a case by case basis and that there could be situations when suitably structured alternatives to fieldwork and laboratory work could be used. Sixty six percent of the schools said they also considered

student requests when organising fieldwork placements and these requests included proximity to home, potential employment needs, interests or special needs.

Schools reported however, that it is in the area of fieldwork placements or practica, that the most difficulties for students with disabilities and/or medical conditions and dilemmas for staff seem to arise. Respondents said that there were occasions when duty of care to the student could be in direct conflict with loyalty to, or consideration for, the industry or professional fieldwork agencies and their clients or patients. The academic staff interviewed were anxious to comply with the DDA and Equal Opportunity policies, but felt they also had a duty of care to the patients, primary and secondary school students and other industry clients as well as a loyalty to the industries and agencies which support the schools by accepting their students for fieldwork placements.

Types of Disabilities Reported in the Pilot Study

While the interview schedule did not specifically enquire about the schools' personal experiences of enrolling and accommodating students with disabilities and/or medical conditions, the respondents offered information about their experiences. Table 2. details the frequency of disclosure of disability to the schools by type.

Table 2. Types of Disabilities Reported to Schools in the period 1996 - 1998

Type of Disability	Frequency
Hearing-impaired	6
Vision-impaired	4
Wheelchair-bound	2
Specific Learning Disability	2
Psychiatric disability	2
Colour-blindness	1
Epilepsy	1
Arthritis	1
Dermatitis	1
Hand injury	1
Inability to write	1
TOTAL	22

Respondents reported that in each case, these students were accommodated within the schools with the assistance of the UCS and extra assistance from the academic staff involved with the student. In most cases discussions between the student and the staff resulted in accommodations being made without problem. Accommodations included extra time in exams, extra tutoring time from staff, enlarged lecture notes, provision of gloves and specialised equipment such as an FM transmitter/receiver system, and a voice-recognition computer. None of these accommodations required an adjustment in course content or structure.

Conclusions from pilot study data

The pilot study, although specific to Curtin University, provided valuable information about the issues regarding entry and accommodation of students with disabilities and/or medical conditions in university courses. The schools/areas/departments were asked what they would like to have included in the guidelines. While acknowledging the valuable role of the UCS in assisting the respondent schools/areas/departments in their discussions with, and accommodations of, their students with disabilities and/or medical conditions, the schools/areas/departments expressed the need for more definitive written guidelines and

procedures to support staff in their work with prospective and enrolled students with disabilities and/or medical conditions.

In particular, some schools/areas/departments expressed concern about the university's legal position when students with disabilities and/or medical conditions, especially those with mental health problems, went out on fieldwork placements. For some schools, the fieldwork placements were the most problematic units/subjects to accommodate, especially when a student disclosed a disability and/or medical condition just prior to, or during the fieldwork placement. One school asked how the staff should respond when they were aware of a student's disability (again, especially a mental health problem) and felt the student was not ready for the placement or could pose a *potential problem* in the community? The respondents wanted advice about this. They asked about the rights of the student versus the rights of both the fieldwork agency and their clients. One school expressed the view that *protecting* the agencies and the agencies' clients above the needs of the student was not seen as discriminatory by that school.

The respondents also wanted guidelines to encourage students to disclose their disabilities and/or medical conditions early or prior to their enrolment so there is opportunity for timely accommodations. One school cited the experience of trying to assist a student who suffered an epileptic seizure whilst on a fieldwork trip in a remote location. The university had no prior knowledge of his medical condition, and the school had no procedure or support to deal with the situation

Respondents wanted written guidelines and also asked if there was any additional information they should be including in their current school information. One school suggested that their Code of Conduct form (see **Appendix G**) could be amended to provide clearer guidelines for the school and its students.

The need for a statement outlining the legal rights of a person with a disability was frequently raised, especially in those cases where students' rights were perceived to conflict with those of fieldwork clients in the community agencies. Schools felt again, that this was particularly important when the student presented with a mental health problem.

Phase Two - Draft guidelines

From the pilot study responses and with some input from the UCS' experiences, draft *Guidelines to Determine the Essential Requirements of University Courses (Accommodation of Students with Disabilities and/or Medical Conditions)* were developed. These guidelines were distributed to the four West Australian public universities with an invitation (see **Appendix H**) through the project leader for the universities to distribute them to schools/faculties/areas for their comment and feedback. The universities and schools which responded are tabled in **Appendix I**.

The guidelines were initially intended to assist university schools/areas/departments to determine the essential requirements of their courses, however, the feedback to the project team from the pilot study, indicated strongly that heads of school/area/department felt they had no procedures to fall back on when dealing with a student with a disability and/or medical condition who requested accommodations in the course. For this reason, the project team felt it appropriate that the draft guidelines should also contain some procedural information which was intended to provide a context in which a school/area/department may consider the essential requirements of the unit/subject and ultimately, the course.

The guidelines were not intended for use:

- where there is visual evidence of a disability and/or medical condition but no formal request for accommodation has been made by the student
- where the student has disclosed to a member of staff within the school that he/she has a disability and/or medical condition but is not seeking accommodation
- where an independent third party, either internal or external to the university, discloses information about a student to the school without the written consent or knowledge of the student. [In these instances, the matter should be referred to the Head of School/Area/Department, who may seek advice from the Counsellor (Disability)]

The guidelines proposed that **dealing with requests for accommodations by an individual student with a disability and/or a medical condition involves a four-stage process**. Respondents were asked to consider whether this process would be helpful to them when they were dealing with a prospective or an enrolled student with a disability and/or medical condition, as well as considering the helpfulness of the draft guideline questions.

The Four Stage Process

Stage 1 *Requests to any staff member in a school/area/department for course information by a student who discloses that he/she has a disability.*

In this case, the staff member approached may give general written information and the details of school/area/department procedures relating to accommodation of a student on the grounds of his/her disability and/or medical condition.

Stage 2 *Discussions with Head of School/Area/Department or a designated staff member who has responsibility for considering requests for an accommodation by a student with a disability and/or medical condition.*

At this stage, if the student approaches the school with a request for an accommodation due to his/her disability and/or medical condition, discussions should focus on accommodation requirements within units/subject rather than making general statements about the student's capacity to handle the course, his/her employment prospects or registration requirements from professional or other bodies. Students are informed that appropriate documentation regarding the disability and/or medical condition is required. The Counsellor (Disability) is an appropriate source of referral if the student is unable or unwilling to provide the necessary details. Discussion about accommodations without receipt of written verification of the disability and/or medical condition should provide information *only*. Accommodations cannot proceed without written documentation (presented to either the school/area/department or to the UCS).

Stage 3 *Discussions following the receipt of appropriate documentation.*

At this stage, the discussion should focus on the specifics of the student's request. (It may be useful to work through the attached Student Request Form for Accommodation of a Disability on an individual unit/subject basis). It is also an appropriate time to raise the issue of confidentiality of disclosure of the disability and/or medical condition with the student and to fill out the Release of Information Consent Form should discussion with others be necessary within either the school/area/department or the university.

Stage 4 *Matters requiring referral to the Head of School*

Should the designated staff member consider that the school is not able to accommodate the student's request on the grounds of either 'unjustifiable hardship' or the compromise of the unit's/subject's academic integrity, the matter should be referred to the Head of School/Area/Department. (The Head of School/Area/Department might find it useful to then work through the attached guideline questions). If areas of ambiguity remain, the Head of School/Area/Department should seek appropriate advice from within the university (eg UCS, Legal Services).

(Curtin University only). If the nature of the student's disability presents the school/area/department with significant concerns and requires more than routine consideration, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) will direct the Head of Counselling to co-ordinate input from all relevant areas of the university in order for the Senior DVC's office to determine the course of action.

Process described in the Guidelines

The draft guidelines proposed that a "Student Request Form for Accommodation of a Disability" be used. This form consisted of four parts. Part A sought the student's personal details. Part B identified the unit/subject in which the accommodation was being sought, the nature of the accommodation and whether the student had provided appropriate documentation about the nature of the disability which would support his/her request for an accommodation. Part C referred to confidentiality and disclosure and the use of a Release of Information form (included) in the event that the student's request may have to be discussed with other persons in the school/area/department or the university.

Part D referred to the capacity of the school/area/department to meet the academic, physical or financial considerations associated with the request for accommodation. In this section, the designated staff member was instructed to refer the student and the request to the Head of School/Area/Department if any of the considerations proved problematic, or the requested accommodation affected the academic integrity of the course. At this stage a head of school/area/department may be required to consider the larger question of describing the inherent requirements of the unit/subject (and ultimately the course) as part of his/her discussions with the student.

Questions included in the Guidelines

The guideline questions were intended assist the school to determine the essential requirements of the units/subjects, in order for the school to be able to accommodate (or not) a student with a disability and/or medical condition.

The questions were:

Question 1. What aspect(s) of the student's disability leads to the view that they might have difficulty acquiring the required skills and passing the assessment for this unit?

In this discussion, it is essential to explore the student's view on how they will manage unit/subject content and assessment requirements. In determining these matters, school/areas/departments have a responsibility to clarify essential elements of the unit/subject and to explore alternative means to achieve the same learning and assessment outcomes required of all other students.

Question 2. What skills/abilities/knowledge must a student demonstrate to complete the unit/subject, ie outcomes? (eg. cognitive, technical, interpersonal communication etc)

In order to accommodate a student, *essential* and *desirable* unit/subject outcomes need to be identified, and this determination must be justified on grounds other than history or employment requirements. A clear distinction must be made between the requirements of external bodies (professional registration bodies etc) and those of the university. The probability of future employment, for example, is not legally acceptable as a criterion for course entry or enrolment in a unit/subject. It is the academic content and nature of the unit/subject that must take precedence over the demands of external agencies, unless it is agreed that the demands are essential to the integrity of the course.

Question 3. How are the required skills/abilities/knowledge taught and assessed?

Here the school needs to also consider the role of practica, fieldwork placements and laboratory work, as well as the style of course material delivery, tutorials and assessment methods.

Question 4. Is the present method of instruction the only way that the required skills/abilities/knowledge can be acquired or imparted?

Here, the school/area/department needs to consider whether the current *way* in which the course material is conveyed to students and their knowledge is assessed, is an essential part of the learning outcomes or not. If YES, then the school/area/department will need to justify this. If NO, then the school/area/department needs to discuss alternative delivery and assessment of course material.

Question 5. In what way(s) could the teaching and assessment requirements reasonably accommodate the student's disability.

Here the school/department is reminded that it needs to determine the activities/tasks within the unit/subject which are essential and those which are ancillary. The example of a geology fieldwork trip was used to illustrate this.

Responses to draft guidelines

The project team received responses from nine respondents (including a Disability Liaison Officer from an interstate university who responded via the national OZUNI internet network).

Most respondents said they felt the guidelines would be helpful, with one of the universities reporting that they mirrored the current informal process already underway in that institution. The respondents commented on the guidelines themselves, identifying confusing statements and suggesting improvements. They also commented further on issues that had been triggered for them in their consideration of the draft guidelines. These issues will be detailed further in the report. The specific feedback about the guidelines was as follows:

- there needs to be a definition of the key words ie *accommodations*, *inherent requirements* and *unjustifiable hardship*
- key people in the request process need to be made explicit (ie head of school, undergraduate co-ordinator, disability liaison officer etc) and that the process needs to be handled by these designated senior staff only, not all school staff

- there is a need to clarify whether the guidelines were referring to individual units or the course as a whole
- the *Student Request Form for Accommodation of a Disability (PART B)* should delete *modification of course content and substitution of an alternative academic unit* as these ‘may raise false hope in the student’
- the *Student Request Form for Accommodation of a Disability* does not have a similar form for the student’s use, thus enabling the agreement to the accommodation to be recorded and not left to memory
- there is no indication in the guidelines as to who will have access to the *Student Request Form for Accommodation of a Disability* and where it will be stored
- the *Release of Information Consent Form* could be more user-friendly and should include a ‘how to use’ clause
- the respondents felt the guideline questions themselves needed re-working to include more scenario examples

The more general issues that were raised by the schools’ consideration of the draft guidelines were as follows.

Enrolment in a course

In the matter of entry to the university and courses, the respondent heads of schools/areas/departments were generally aware of the provisions of the state and federal disability legislation and recognised that it is unlawful for schools/areas/departments to refuse enrolment on the grounds of disability. Most offered the view however, that the universities have a duty of care to at least make prospective students aware that disability may preclude a student from working in fields particular to their qualifications after graduation. The view was also put that care had to be taken in pre-course counselling as it was possible that acceptance into a vocational course could infer that disability and/or a medical condition would not preclude ultimate employment in the field.

A matter on which all respondents agreed was that a student with or without a disability and/or medical condition, should have information available which gives a full appreciation of the overall structure including an understanding of the modes of course delivery, a clear explanation of the structure and content of essential, important and optional units/subjects and an appreciation of the requirements of any specialised activities associated with fieldwork or laboratory units/subjects. This information should be written and also available in alternative formats. The information should also direct the prospective student to the designated senior staff member who can respond to any questions. One school suggested the use of an 1800 telephone number, advertised in the University Handbook and Calender, to which prospective students with disabilities and/or medical conditions could be directed prior to enrolment.

One university stressed the primary role of the Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs) in matters relating to the entry of students with disabilities. (Note: The term Disability Liaison Officer is a generic term that describes a university staff member whose primary responsibility is to identify, and respond to, issues concerning students with disabilities and/or medical conditions).

Enrolment was seen as a three-way process involving the prospective student, the school and the Counselling Service (ie DLO). The view was expressed that heads of school/area/department did not generally understand the difficulties involved in structuring a

unit/subject to accommodate a student with a disability. A response from an interstate colleague expressed the view that heads of schools/areas/departments did not have the expertise in the range of accommodations that might be available to a student. The respondents felt that a matter worthy of closer consideration was the designation of an appropriate senior school staff member to be the key school/area/department person to interact with a student with a disability/medical condition. This person would need some knowledge of disability, be able to discuss confidential matters with the student and would work closely with the DLO to determine accommodations which were the most appropriate. This staff member would refer matters to the head of school/area/department when the requested accommodations needed to be funded or had the potential to affect the academic integrity of the course.

Confidentiality of information about the student was a prominent issue in the responses to the draft guidelines. The respondents stressed the right of confidentiality of medical information and also raised the question of who had access to this information and under what circumstances. This was described as a sensitive matter. The view was expressed by some respondents that access to medical information could leave a school staff member open to accusations of discrimination. The use of the Release of Information form was generally supported, with the proviso that a brief guide on its' use would be helpful.

Responses highlighted the matter of the university's 'need to know' about the existence and nature of a student's disability and/or medical condition and the student's right to have his/her situation discussed and considered in a confidential manner. Matters of access to medical records and the need to have the student's permission for the dissemination of information were also raised. Some respondents expressed the view that the university's DLO was essential to all stages of the student's progress through the university and felt that neither the head of school/area/department nor the school academic staff should become involved in the handling of confidential information for 'fear of accusations of discrimination'. In other words, there was an expressed preference for the DLO or UCS to be the recipient of the student's confidential medical information. Respondents further asked about the status of this process and the handling of personal information should an issue arise and the student bring a complaint against the university. Does this process have any legal status?

Accommodations

The respondents referred to two aspects of accommodation.

The first refers to accommodations required within the units/subjects themselves eg. modification or substitution of assignment requirements, alterations to assignment deadlines, the use of computers, use of support services such as personal readers, note-takers, scribes, the use of alternative formats and modification to assessment requirements (eg. additional assignments in lieu of exams). These also include the modifications to units/subjects that do not affect the academic integrity of the unit.

The second aspect refers to the nature of the units/subjects themselves and whether the school/area/department judges the skills and learning outcomes inherent in them to be 'essential', 'desirable' or 'optional'. This judgement is important to the discussion about accommodations as the student may not, because of a disability and/or medical condition, be able to achieve the unit/subject learning outcomes in the way it has always been done and the student may ask 'is there another way I can do this, or do I have to do this at all?'

This project proposed that in order for students to receive accommodations, they must be diagnosed with a disability and/or medical condition as per the DDA definition. The diagnosis must be made by a practitioner who is appropriately trained in the specific disability. The respondents in the project took a somewhat similar view, but were concerned

that students 'are required to provide documentation about their disability to a school or department'. They expressed the view that it was more appropriate for students requesting accommodations, based on their disability/medical condition, to provide the documentation to the DLO rather than the school academic staff as they believe this would remove prospects of prejudice or bias towards a student in seeking to accommodate them.

It was further considered that the inherent requirements of the units/subjects and therefore the courses, should be clearly stated in relevant written course outlines and that these need to be clearly separated from considerations about accommodations.

In referring to course and unit/subject content, some respondents took the view that if there are issues related to meeting the inherent requirements of a course, these should be clearly stated in material developed by the school/department when advertising their programmes, or at least in the written unit/subject outline information. If this were done students would be able to determine for themselves whether or not they would be able to meet the inherent requirements of a programme prior to enrolling. Respondents saw a need for clarity when publishing statements regarding accommodations.

These responses confirmed the need to determine the essential requirements of unit/subject or course content in order to grant an accommodation on the basis of a student's disability and/or medical condition.

Phase Three Preparation of final guidelines and distribution to the West Australian public universities.

The next stage of the project involved the modification of the draft guidelines, incorporating the feedback from participants in Phase Two.

The guidelines (see **Appendix E**) were modified to contain two parts:

Part 1 contains six guideline questions for use *only* by a *designated* senior member of school staff or the Head of School/Area/Department (or equivalent). These questions are intended to assist the school/area/department staff to *explore the inherent (or essential) requirements of the units/subjects*. The questions may be used in discussions with an individual student or in general school discussions. They are intended only to facilitate discussion and are not to be viewed as definitive.

Part 2 relates to process and provides sample procedure forms which schools/areas/departments might find helpful in their efforts to *accommodate students with disabilities and/or medical conditions*. Again, the forms are samples only and may be modified to suit the individual university environments. Within Part 2, the process used to consider a student's request for accommodation has been modified to a five-stage process:

Stage 1: A senior academic staff member is designated by his/her school/area/department and trained to deal with requests from students with disabilities and/or medical conditions.

Stage 2: Students seeks accommodation.

Stage 3: Discussions on possible accommodations. Documentation requested.

Stage 4: Request and consent forms.

Stage 5: Matters which require referral to the Head of School/Area/Department (or equivalent). This also includes directions for Heads when the decision requires further discussion at more senior levels in the university.

The final report comprises Volume 1 and 2. It is the intention of the project committee that Volume 2 be seen as a possible model for assessing the inherent requirements of university courses and for accommodating a student with a disability and/or medical condition.

The project team recommends that each university examine the model and adapt it to the local context.

CONCLUSION

This project was based on a perception that determining inherent requirements of courses is particularly problematic for universities.

For the purposes of this project, the inherent requirements of a course are viewed as existing within a broader context of social imperatives and legislative requirements and are also integral to the issue of a student request for accommodation within the course, as a consequence of having a disability and/or a medical condition.

This perception was validated by the schools/areas/departments involved in the project who raised a range of questions, issues and concerns regarding such matters as fieldwork placements, psychiatric disability, duty of care and legal responsibility. Schools/areas/departments often found themselves in a position of having to maintain the academic credibility of their programs while needing to be thoughtful and reasonable when processing requests for accommodations without well considered procedures and processes to guide them.

The project sought to provide a snapshot of the experiences of a sample of schools in order to articulate the current situation, raise key issues and concerns and to develop sample guidelines and procedures.

The findings of this project endorse that there are areas that require further clarification and discussion. This includes the role of the Head of School in the process of determining inherent requirements and accommodating requests and the question of what can and should be done at a school/area/department and university level to ensure that students have access to information on course structures as well as access to open processes and procedures which conform to the legislative requirements on the university and adhere to principles of natural justice.

The sample guidelines and procedures, which arose as a consequence of this project, are intended as a catalyst for ongoing discussion, rather than as a definitive statement on what must or should occur. The project team hopes that these findings will stimulate further inquiry on all the issues raised, in particular those issues associated with fieldwork and clinical placements units.

BUDGET

ACCOUNTING AND PROGRAM REPORT Guidelines and Procedures to assist Universities to Examine the Inherent Requirements of their Courses

Co-operative Project for Higher Education Students with Disabilities (CPHESD) DETYA

PROJECT BUDGET **\$25,000**

Itemised as:

Salary Project Officer	\$20,000
Other	\$5,000

EXPENDITURE TO DATE

Salary Project Officer	\$17,883
Preparation of final report	\$2,054
Other [administration support, consumables etc]	\$2,542
Printing	<u>\$2,521</u>

TOTAL **\$25,000**

REFERENCES

1. Government of Western Australia. *Disability Services Act 1992 (DSA)*. No. 77 of 1992. Perth, AGPS.
2. Commonwealth of Australia. *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*. No. 135 of 1992. Canberra, AGPS.
3. DDA (1992) op cit, Part 2, Division 2, section 22 (1) and (2), p17.
4. Commonwealth of Australia (1990). *A Fair Chance for All: Higher Education That's Within Everyone's Reach*. Canberra, AGPS.
5. National Board of Employment, Education and Training, Higher Education Council (April 1996). *Equality, Diversity and Excellence: Advancing the National Higher Education Equity Framework*. Canberra, AGPS, p37.
6. Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AV-CC) (1996) *Guidelines relating to students with disabilities*. Canberra, Paragon Printers, s4.4, p3.
7. National Board of Employment, Education and Training (August 1994). *Guidelines for Disability Services in Higher Education*. Commissioned Report No. 29. Canberra, AGPS, pp10-11.
8. The University of Sydney, The University of New South Wales, The University of Technology, Sydney, Macquarie University (1992). *Reasonable Accommodations: Strategies for Teaching University Students with Disabilities*. Resource booklet produced as a Co-operative Project for Higher Education Students with Disabilities (CPHESD), Department of Education, Training, Youth Affairs (DETYA).
9. AV-CC (1996), op cit, s5.3, p4.
10. Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department (1994). *Acting Against Disability Discrimination: A practical manual for using the Disability Discrimination Act*. Canberra, Villamata Publishing Service (Geelong) p 114.
11. Disability Services Commission WA (1994). *A Guide to Preparing a Disability Services Plan for State Public Authorities in Western Australia*. Perth, Disability Services Commission.
12. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1995). *A Guide to the Development of Disability Action Plans for Tertiary Education Institutions*, draft document. Sydney. Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.
13. *Acting Against Disability Discrimination: A practical manual for using the Disability Discrimination Act*, op cit p 108
14. DDA (1992) op cit, Part 1, section 4, p2

MEMBERS OF PROJECT TEAM

Associate Professor Owen Watts, Project Leader
Director, Centre for Educational Advancement, Curtin University of Technology

Ms Cheryl Stickels
Counsellor (Disability), Curtin University of Technology

Ms Cozette Fraser
Counsellor, Curtin University of Technology

Ms Robyn Carroll
Associate Dean, Law Faculty, University of Western Australia

Dr. Neil Stewart
Community Member

Associate Professor Alex Radloff
Associate Director Professional Development, Centre for Educational Advancement, Curtin
University of Technology

Dr Bob Loss
School of Applied Physics, Curtin University of Technology

Project Officer:

Ms Sue Hebiton
Education Faculty, Curtin University of Technology

CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

POLICY

**STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES
1991**

<http://www.curtin.edu.au/policy/>

CURTIN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
CO-OPERATIVE PROJECT FOR STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES/MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Guidelines to determine the Essential Requirements of University Courses

QUESTIONNAIRE

Preamble

An increasing number of people with disabilities and medical conditions are applying for and obtaining places in university courses. Universities must provide the same educational opportunities to people with disabilities as to anyone else. Both State and commonwealth legislation exposes the universities to legal action by people with disabilities who believe they have been discriminated against. Discrimination can be intentional or non-intentional. Both are unjust and unlawful.

One step to ensure that universities are providing discrimination-free educational opportunities, is for *schools and faculties within the universities to clearly articulate the essential requirements of their courses and individual units*. Whether or not any prospective student is permitted entry to a course or unit depends on whether they are able to meet those essential requirements.

It is also most important to be aware that the universities are not permitted to refuse a person's entry to a course because, in view of that person's disability, they are unlikely to gain employment in the field for which the course prepares them.

Project

This questionnaire is part of a pilot project, which is a national first, and which is being conducted on behalf of the four public universities in Western Australia. The information provided in the questionnaire, will provide the basis for a set of guidelines which hopefully will be helpful to Heads of Schools/Faculties in discharging their responsibilities vis a vis student with disabilities/medical conditions.

The pilot stage will be conducted at Curtin, but the guidelines will be distributed to faculties and schools at the four universities.

Project Aims

To develop written guidelines which will assist Heads of Schools/Faculties to meet the obligations of the universities which have been described in the preamble and which will ensure that students with disabilities/medical conditions are provided with opportunities to participate fairly and equitably in the education benefits offered by the university.

To assist universities to align their practices with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, Commonwealth), the Disability Services Act (DSA, State) and relevant Disability Services Plans.

To assist Heads of Schools/Faculties in their communication with students with disabilities/medical conditions who encounter difficulties in meeting course requirements, as a direct consequence of their disability/medical condition.

QUESTIONS

PART A: Outreach

1. How does your School inform prospective students about the course?
 - a) General recruitment
 - b) Advertising
 - c) International students
 - d) Secondary students

2. Does this information specify the essential requirements of the course? Yes
No

3. Has your School encountered queries regarding the needs of prospective students with disabilities? Yes No

4. Does your School have a course application form as well as the university enrolment form? Yes No
If Yes, does the application form:
 - Ask for personal details? Yes No
 - Include an interview? Yes No
Who has access to this information?

5. Are the prospective students encouraged to seek information about the essential requirements of the course?

PART B: Curtin Handbook and Calender

1. How does your School
 - a) decide upon Handbook information?
 - b) review Handbook information?
 - c) decide which prerequisites skills, conditions are essential?

2. a) Does your school have any additional handbooks, manuals, references or publications outlining the School's policies and procedures? Yes
No
b) Do any of these contain information that relates directly to students with disabilities? Yes No

3. Has your School reviewed any of this information recently, as a result of a student with a disability inquiring about, or enrolling in your course? Yes No

1. If YES,
 - a) what **aspect** of the handbook information did you need to review?
 - b) what **process** did you use to review this information?
 - c) did you involve anyone **external** to your school to review the information?
 - d) what was the **outcome** of the review for your School?

PART C: Section 1

Classroom-based units within the course

1. Describe an **essential** unit, and how you would describe its' characteristics. How have you decided it is an essential unit?
2. Describe and **important, but not essential** unit and how you would describe its' characteristics. How have you decided it is an important but not essential unit?
3. Describe an **optional** unit and how you would describe its' characteristics. How have you decided it is an optional unit?
4. Are self paced units part of this course? Yes
No
5. Can units be completed externally? Yes No

Section 2

Practical/Laboratory/Fieldwork units

1. Do any of your courses have prac/lab/fieldwork units? Yes
No
If Yes, are they compulsory? Yes No
are students aware of this before enrolling? Yes
No
2. Do these units require students to
a) demonstrate competencies Yes No
b) integrate theory/practice Yes No
c) be assessed Yes No
d) travel Yes No
3. Do students need to operate equipment or demonstrate skills which are not used in the theoretical course? Yes
No
4. Do these units involved external agencies? Yes No
 - a) does the agency ask for personal details of the student?
 - b) what is your school's policy on supplying such information?
 - c) who supplies the information?
 - d) how is the information supplied?
 - e) does the school seek the student's written consent to release this information?
 - f) does the school consider student requests when organising the practical/laboratory/fieldwork?

PART D: Conclusion

As a result of past experiences, what would you like to see included in the guidelines, to assist you in accommodating students with special needs?

Appendix D

**GUIDELINES TO DETERMINE THE
ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS OF UNIVERSITY UNITS/SUBJECTS
(Part 1)**

With

**PROCEDURES TO PROVIDE REASONABLE
ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH
DISABILITIES AND/OR MEDICAL CONDITIONS
(Part 2)**

VOLUME 2

INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to assist universities in their obligations under state and federal legislation, to describe the essential requirements of their units/subjects and courses and to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or medical conditions. *It is also intended for use when a student with a disability and/or medical condition approaches his/her school/area/department direct with his/her request for accommodations without initially involving Counselling or Disability Liaison Officers (DLO)* (Note: The term Disability Liaison Officer is a generic term that describes a university staff member whose primary responsibility is to identify, and respond to, issues concerning students with disabilities and/or medical conditions).

The universities must provide the same educational opportunities to people with disabilities and/or medical conditions as for anyone else. In order to do this, the individual schools/areas/departments will need to define the *essential requirements of the individual units/subjects* (and therefore, the course), in order to discuss accommodations that are reasonable and will not compromise the academic integrity of the unit/subject.

Universities are not permitted to refuse a person's entry to a course on the grounds that the person may not gain entry in the field of employment for which the course prepares them. This behoves the universities to examine the content of their units/subjects to ensure that the essential requirement is imposed for *academic reasons* and not in response to the demands of industry or the professional bodies. Agencies external to the university are required to develop their own protocols in line with the legislation.

The document contains two parts:

Part 1 contains guideline questions intended for use *only* by a *designated* member of school staff or the Head of School (or equivalent). These questions are intended to assist the school staff to explore the *inherent (or essential) requirements of the units/subjects*. The questions may be used in discussions with an individual student or in general school discussions. They are intended only to facilitate discussion and are not to be viewed as definitive

Part 2 relates to process and provides sample procedure forms which schools/areas/departments might find helpful in their efforts to accommodate students with disabilities and/or medical conditions. Again, the forms are only samples, and may be modified to suit the individual university environments.

PART 1

GUIDELINE QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE THE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS OF UNIVERSITY UNITS/SUBJECTS

Q1 Has the school/area/department already determined if this unit is an ‘essential, important or optional’ unit/subject and described it as such in publications? If so, how was this decided?

Here, the school/area/department needs to consider each of its units/subjects and ask what is it about the content of this unit/subject which makes it ‘essential, important or optional’ to the students’ learning and on what grounds the decision was made.

In addition, has the school/area/department informed all its prospective students about the ‘essential, important or optional’ status of the units/subjects in the course?

Q2 What skills/abilities/knowledge must a student demonstrate to complete the unit/subject ie the outcomes (eg cognitive, technical, interpersonal communication etc)?

The school/area/department needs to distinguish, if possible, between essential and desirable outcomes.

*Usually a course will comprise some compulsory/core units/subjects. The current status of a unit/subject, especially where it is based on professional requirements, may not necessarily render it essential to the course. The decisions about what constitutes the essential elements of a unit/subject and consequently the course, are a matter of academic judgement, and must be **justifiable** on other than **historical** or **employment-based** grounds. Requirements imposed by external agencies (eg professional bodies, registration boards, external fieldwork agencies etc) are only important if they are essential to the academic course (as determined by university academic staff).*

The school/area/department needs to determine which activities or tasks within a unit/subject are essential and which are ancillary. For example, a geology student may be required to go on a field trip which involves travelling to a remote location in a 4WD vehicle, collect rock samples from an area of rocky terrain, analyse the rock sample at a base camp laboratory and spend the night at the base camp. Is the essential task the selection and collection of the rock sample, or is it the analysis of the rock sample? (It may be both). If it is only the analysis of the sample which is essential to the unit/subject it may be feasible to dispense with some aspects of the field trip for a student who has a disability which would preclude him/her from collecting the rock samples.

Q3 How are the required skills/abilities/knowledge taught and assessed?

In addition to the standard lecture presentations, the school/area/department also needs to consider the purpose of, and participation in, both fieldwork and practical laboratory units/subjects. Does the teaching and assessment of this unit/subject involve an agency which is external to the university? Does the external agency have input into determining the skills/abilities/knowledge taught in this unit/subject?

Does the unit/subject involve self-paced learning, practicum or fieldwork, or ‘wet or dry’ laboratory work? Is the student required to prepare assignments, complete examinations,

prepare oral and tutorial presentations, participate in group projects or complete continuous test assessments?

Who has decided the content and assessment style of the unit/subject?

Q4 Is the present method of instruction the only way that the required skills/abilities/knowledge can be acquired or imparted?

The school/area/department is reminded that a concern about the possible backlash or censure from industry, trade or the professions cannot influence a university decision to provide an accommodation in a unit/subject. Many schools/areas/departments already have experience in accommodating students with disabilities and/or medical conditions, using special equipment, allowing extra time for the completion of work, allowing alternative exam arrangements or providing lecture notes.

In deciding what accommodation should be made, it must be noted that the university will unlawfully discriminate against a student with a disability and/or medical condition if it does not provide reasonable accommodation for the student's disability unless it can be shown that the accommodation would impose financial hardship on the university. In order to claim financial hardship, the university would have to demonstrate that all due process had been followed and that the accommodation would cause detriment to others and incur expenses which the university deems to be unreasonable or excessive.

Q5 What aspect(s) of the student's disability and /or medical condition leads to the view that he/she may have difficulty acquiring the required skills/abilities/knowledge and successfully completing the assessment for this unit/subject?

The school/area/department cannot exclude the student from enrolment in the unit/subject on the basis of the schools'/areas'/departments' judgement or perception of the student's capacity.

Here, the student's view on how they will manage the content and assessment requirements of the unit/subject must be explored. The school/area/department must have clarified the essential requirements of the unit/subject and be prepared to discuss alternative means to achieve the same learning and assessment outcomes.

Q6 In what way(s) could the teaching and assessment requirements reasonably accommodate the student's needs?

This question can only be considered once the previous questions (especially Q5) have been addressed. The school/area/department must be open to the possibility that the same learning outcomes may be achieved by different styles of participation in the unit/subject. This does not mean, however, that the academic integrity of the unit/subject can be compromised.

If the school/area/department has clarified and justified that a skill is essential and can only be achieved in the prescribed manner (ie it is an essential requirement), then this must be made clear to the student and the student makes the choice whether or not to proceed with enrolment, having been fully briefed on the demands of the unit/subject.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES OF A REQUEST FOR ACCOMMODATION

Student

- The student's request is accommodated
- A planned management process is put in place for the remainder of the student's study period where the disability and/or medical condition will have an effect.
- The student withdraws from the unit or course.
- The student receives advice or counselling about other courses.

University

- Schools/areas/departments review, and revise if necessary, their handbook and promotional material, to ensure that the essential requirements of units and courses are made explicit.
- Pre-course counselling by school/areas/departments for prospective students is made available and prospective students are encouraged to undergo this.
- University provides reasonable adaptations to meet the needs of the student (eg self-opening doors, large screen computers)

PART 2

PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS BY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND/OR MEDICAL CONDITIONS

The following process applies when a student has directly approached the school/area/department and has requested an accommodation within a unit/subject as a consequence of having a disability and/or medical condition.

In the case where the student has already disclosed his/her medical circumstances to the Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) and has involved the DLO in his/her discussions with the school/area/department, the process will necessarily be different.

A five-stage process is proposed:

Stage 1: *A senior academic staff member is designated by his/her school/area/department and trained to deal with requests from students with medical conditions and/or medical conditions.*

Within the school/area/department it is this person only (or the Head of School/Area/Department) who deals with requests for accommodations.

Stage 2: *Student seeks accommodation.*

Student is directed to either the DLO or the designated staff member. Student may also be directed to university or school procedures regarding these matters.

Stage 3. *Discussions on possible accommodations. Documentation requested.*

Discussions should focus on the accommodations being sought and the possibility of providing such. Discussions should not include judgements about the student's capacity to complete the course or whether he/she will achieve employment in the field. The student is informed that written verification of the disability and/or medical condition, by an appropriate professional health service provider, is required and that no accommodation can be made without the receipt of same. If for reasons of confidentiality, the student is reluctant to provide such information to the school/area/department and the school/area/department does not want to have receipt of the documentation, then the student should be directed to the DLO.

Stage 4. *Request and consent forms.*

Discussions should focus on the specifics of the student's request. The *Student Request Form for Accommodation of a Disability* may be used. Should further discussion be necessary within either the school/area/department or the university, it will be appropriate to raise the matter of confidentiality and disclosure and the *Release of Information* form is used.

Stage 5. *Matters which require referral to the Head of School/Area/Department (or equivalent).*

If the designated senior staff member considers that the school is not able to accommodate the student's request on the grounds of either unjustifiable hardship or the compromise of the unit's/subject's academic integrity, the matter should be referred to the Head of School/Area/Department. The Head may then find it useful to use the guideline questions (PART 1) as part of his/her deliberations. The Head may also seek advice in his/her deliberations from others in the university eg. The University Counselling Services, Legal Services or the Grievance Officer. If the Head is of the view that the student is unable to meet the inherent requirements of the course, or to accommodate the student would impose an

unjustifiable hardship on the university, the matter should be subject to a high level review before a determination is made.

Note: The Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AV-CC) in its *Guidelines relating to students with disabilities (1996)*¹ has determined that:

Where it is claimed on the basis of expert advice that a particular academic course is not available to a student because his/her disability has a particular functional implication, the matter must be examined by the most senior academic committee within the university, which should seek independent advice from other appropriate bodies.

¹ Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AV-CC) 1996. *Guidelines relating to students with disabilities*. Canberra, Paragon Printers ACT, s 5.2, p3.

STUDENT REQUEST FORM FOR ACCOMMODATION OF A DISABILITY

(This form will be kept secured as a confidential record in the office of the Head of School only. Release of this information only on receipt of the student's written consent. Student to be given a copy of this request form).

Part A Personal details

Name _____
Family name _____ Given name _____

Is the student: prospective currently enrolled
Student ID number (if appropriate): _____

Contact details: Tel: _____
Fax: _____
Email: _____

Part B Details of Request

Name of unit in which the accommodation is being sought:

Unit code: _____ Unit title: _____

Nature of the accommodations being sought:

Provision of special equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Physical modification of environment	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Alternative examination conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Other modification of assessment procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Extension of submission dates for assignments	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Flexible delivery of course material	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Course material in alternative format	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Substitution of an alternative unit of study	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Modification of unit-related learning activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Use of support services eg note-takers etc	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Other:	

Has the student provided medical documentation? Yes No

If No, or documentation is inappropriate, refer student to DLO.

Part C Confidentiality and Disclosure

Have you discussed issues of confidentiality with the student? Yes No

Does the request need to be discussed with others in the school/university?

If Yes, has the student signed the Release of Information form? Yes No
 Yes No

(If No, the request cannot proceed at this time)

Part D Outcome

If, in your opinion, the school/area/department is able to accommodate the request, then the request procedure is complete. If further discussion is necessary (eg funding is required and/or in your opinion, the accommodation affects the academic integrity of the unit) refer the matter to the Head of School/Area/Department.

Request is accommodated:

Requires further discussion:

Student's signature

Staff member's signature

Printed name

Printed name

Date

Date

Appendix E

SAMPLE MEMO TO CURTIN UNIVERSITY HEADS OF SCHOOL INVITING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST IN THE PROJECT

Dear

The University Counselling Service and the Office of Teaching and Learning were successful in developing a funded project under the Access and Equity Plan. The project aims to determine the degrees of access to Curtin courses for students who claim to have some form of disability. As you might imagine, the issues are quite complex, involving the students' own disclosure of the disability and the extent to which that disability affects the learning program in the course.

Universities are being required to bring their practices in line with the Disabilities and Discrimination Acts and Curtin has a Disabilities Services Plan (1997) which is being reviewed. This project is a first for universities nationally and others who are interested in the outcomes we achieve are watching our efforts. All universities will eventually have to undertake this process.

The aim of the project is to provide a set of procedures that will assist Heads in meeting student needs and ensuring compliance with the law. We aim to make the guidelines very practical and clear in their applicability.

This project is being managed by the University Counselling Service by Cheryl Stickels (Counsellor-Disabilities) and Cozette Fraser (Counsellor). The Project Officer is Sue Hebiton. The Reference Group includes Dr. Rob Loss, Dr. Neil Stewart and Associate Professor Alex Radloff and is chaired by Associate Professor Owen Watts.

Heads are asked either to contact the Chair or Cheryl Stickels offering to take part in the Project or to make themselves available for interview and to assist with reviewing drafts of the guidelines when they are developed. The Project Officer will also contact Heads across the Divisions and Branches.

If you think that your School has special problems in meeting the needs of some students or that your participation in the project would assist you in administering your courses, please contact me on ext 4282 or Cheryl Stickels at the University Counselling Service.

Your assistance is appreciated.

Associate Professor Owen Watts
Director
Centre for Educational Advancement

Appendix F

LIST OF CURTIN UNIVERSITY HEADS OF SCHOOL WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PILOT STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE (Phase One)

Professor Murray McGregor	Director	Muresk Institute of Agriculture
Associate Professor Ted Snell	Head	School of Art
Professor Richard Hugman	Head	School of Social Work
Mr. John Wyber	Head	Accounting, Curtin Business School
Dr. Ron Wilde	Snr Lecturer	School of Speech and Hearing
Professor Lawson Savery	Head	Management, Curtin Business School
Associate Professor Kevin Singer	Snr Lecturer	School of Physiotherapy
Ms Nancy Rees	A/Head	School of Nursing
Associate Professor Krishna Sappal	Head	School of Applied Geology
Professor Bob Kagi	Head	School of Chemistry

Appendix G

Appendix H

Appendix I

LIST OF UNIVERSITIES AND THEIR DEPARTMENTS WHICH PROVIDED FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT GUIDELINES (Phase Two)

The University of Western Australia
Department of English
Human Movement and Exercise Science

Murdoch University
Equity Office

Edith Cowan University
Equity and Diversity Office

Curtin University of Technology
School of Physiotherapy
School of Physical Sciences, Department of Applied Physics
Centre for Educational Advancement

