ADCET REVIEW REPORT

February 2018

Summary

This ADCET review is prepared in response to an online survey conducted in 2017. ADCET was found to be highly regarded as a valuable 'one-stop-shop' that provides practical resources and networks, enabling people to keep up to date with the latest research, resources and best practices. Whilst acknowledging the strength of this resource the review makes six recommendations for consideration.

ADCET Advisory Committee
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Contents

Background

The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET) is a web-based resource hosted by the University of Tasmania for disability practitioners, and other key stakeholders, who support students in the post-secondary education and training sector with a disability or an ongoing medical condition.

ADCET is currently funded by the Federal Government Department of Education through its Higher Education Disability Support Program (DSP). ADCET currently receives just under $80,000 per year. Additionally, the government is yet to progress findings from an evaluation conducted in 2014 by KPMG, and in the interim ADCET funding is determined on a year by year basis.

ADCET's primary objective is to facilitate equitable, inclusive access to post-secondary education and training for people with disability and aims to achieve this by:

- Providing information about inclusive teaching practices, legislative obligations, learning and assessment strategies, adjustments and support services available for people with disability, and;
- Facilitating and promoting professional development, information sharing and research amongst disability practitioners, teachers and other professionals.

Since its official launch in December 2003 the traffic to the site continues to see views of webpages and resources around 760,000 per year.

ADCET is currently hosted by the University of Tasmania. It is supported by and seeks advice from an Advisory Committee from across Australia:

Darlene McLennan (Chair)	NDCO	University of Tasmania
Jane Hawkeswood	ADCET Project Coordinator	University of Tasmania
Ashlee Cremona	Student Rep	LaTrobe University
Cathy Easte	Coordinator, Disabilities Service Student Diversity and Inclusion, Student Services	Griffith University
Darren Britten	Senior Advisor, Inclusive Resources Development (IRD) and	LaTrobe University

	Projects.| Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Centre (CTLC)	
Dee Gibbon	Associate Director, Workplace Diversity and Inclusion, (EPHEA Rep - staff)	University of Queensland
Ali Parker	National Disability Coordination Officer Region 12 – Western Melbourne	Deakin University
Gabrielle O'Brien	Manager, Student Diversity and Inclusion, Student Services, (EPHEA Representative)	Griffith University
Geetha Krishnakumar	Manager, Inclusion and Engagement	Canberra University
Jodie Hoger	Disability Support Officer	TAFE Illawarra
Marion MacGregor Burgess	Team Leader, AccessAbility Services	James Cook University
Pam Anderson	National Disability Coordination Officer Western Victoria Region 16	Skills Plus
Shaun Corcoran	Disability Liaison Coordinator	Bendigo TAFE
Stephen Manson	Manager, Student Services	TAFESA
Stuart Dinmore	Lecturer, Academic Development	University of South Australia
Wendy Paulusz	Senior Officer, Inclusive Dev (Tech&Train)	LaTrobe University
Martina Boljkovac	Assistant Director	Department of Education and Training

We want to listen

The ADCET Advisory Committee is committed to continuous improvement of the site to ensure it stays relevant and continues to best meet the needs of users.

An online ADCET Review Survey was developed using SurveyMonkey. Aust-ed and EdEquity listserv subscribers were notified of its availability by email (n=693), which invited them to participate in the online survey and provided a link to the survey. A link to the survey was also provided in the monthly ADCET e-newsletter (n>530 subscribers) and directly on the ADCET website and ADCET Facebook page.

We acknowledge it was a comprehensive survey and we genuinely thank everyone who completed the 50 questions to provide us with valuable feedback.

This report reflects the findings from this survey.

Please contact ADCET's Project Coordinator, jane.hawkeswood@utas.edu.au if you would like a copy of the survey results.

Who We Heard From

A total of 126 people from every state across Australia, and two people from overseas responded to the survey. The majority were from NSW, Victoria and Queensland, with a combined representation of 75% of respondents.
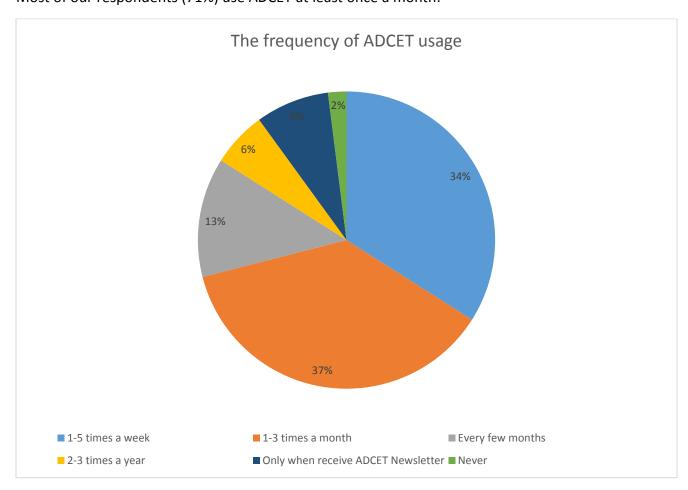
Most of the respondents to the survey were Disability Practitioners (60%), followed by 'Other' (20%), and Teachers or Academic staff (14%). We also had students with a disability (3%) and NDCOs respond (3%). Within the 'Other' category seven respondents identified as professional or consultants, six were equity or disability support staff, five were Managers, two were advocates, and one was a parent.

The greatest proportion of people were from a University setting, either a university only (52%), or dual university and VET (9.38%). There were 19% TAFE only respondents and 6% from secondary schools. Thirteen percent of respondents didn't fit into any of the given categories, and these included people who work across all sectors, advocacy, community based or government employees.

Our respondents reflected a broad range and depth of experience in the sector. More than half (55%) have worked in the sector for five years plus, with one indicating 31 years of service, and another 20 years. And 12% had worked for less than one year. While nearly a third are in-between, having worked between one to five years (30%). And 3% do not work in the field at all.

What People Told Us

How is ADCET used?

Most of our respondents (71%) use ADCET at least once a month.

The frequency of ADCET usage

Legend:
- 1-5 times a week
- 1-3 times a month
- Every few months
- 2-3 times a year
- Only when receive ADCET Newsletter
- Never

Pie chart values: 34%, 37%, 13%, 6%, 8%, 2%

"Whatever I am looking for ADCET usually provides the information I need. It is a fabulous resource."

ADCET is the first-place most people (71%) go to when looking for information to support students with disability. Of these ADCET users, 36% usually find what they are looking for on

the site and don't look any further, 23% say they sometimes keep searching other sites, and 12% like to compare ADCET information with information on other sites.

However, others (12%) come across the ADCET site when they search the internet with specific questions, and some people (6%) go to ADCET after they have searched for specific questions and not found the information they've been looking for. Only 1% of respondents said they don't usually find the information they need on ADCET.

What are people looking for?
ADCET is most often used to look for information and resources to set up appropriate adjustments for individual or groups of students with disability, to develop inclusive teaching practices, to pass on information to other staff about how to support students with disability, and to keep up to date with practices and trends in the sector.

It is also used for people undertaking research to support proposals and evidence-based work about best practices.

"I use ADCET because it has a wide variety of information, and I trust that this information is correct and current."
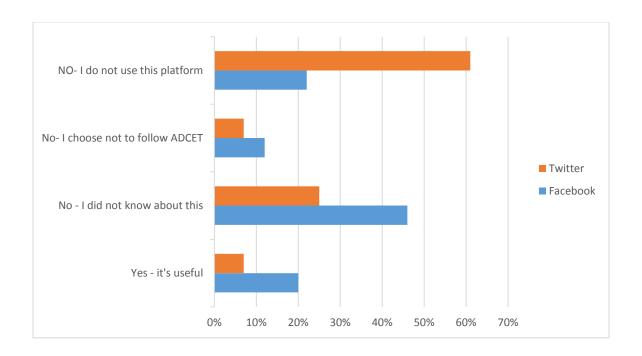
How easy is it to use?
Overwhelmingly, people find the ADCET website either very easy (50%) or easy to navigate (44%), while a few (5%) are unsure and one percent find it difficult.

Suggestions for improving the current layout include change the text color, less words on the home page, and better navigation markers. However most people (84%) are happy with the current layout.

Social Media
Social media sites are currently not a popular way for people to keep up to date with ADCET news and information. Many either do not use Facebook or Twitter platforms (22% and 61% respectively) at all or choose not to follow ADCET (12% and 7%). However, it appears that there is scope to improve the number of Facebook followers, as nearly half the respondents did not know about this option.

"I find ADCET a fantastic and intuitive user- friendly website."

What is most valued about ADCET?

ADCET is mostly valued for having a broad range of credible and up-to-date information and resources that are relevant to the sector in one central place. ADCET is also valued for usability and the way that it connects the sector.

Comments include:

- "Whatever I am looking for ADCET usually provides the information I need. It is a fabulous resource."
- "Having a professional up-to-date resource centre at my fingertips."
- "Being able to remain up-to-date and have somewhere to turn to when I am unsure or needing assistance."
- "Confidence in the quality of information provided!"
- "Information is so directly relevant to working with students with a disability in higher education and easy to find."

"ADCET - You're there when I need you!"

What could be improved?

We also asked people to tell us their one wish for how ADCET could be improved. Nearly half (43%) have no wishes as they like ADCET the way it is. However, the suggestions for improvement include: more awareness of the site; more videos; more relevant information for the VET sector; more information on accessible technology; creating a mobile friendly App; and more interactive seminars or training. And some people mentioned that they would simply would like more time to make the most of all the resources on the site.

Comments include:

- "More information about the digital accessibility space."
- "More videos/podcasts so it becomes more 3-dimensional."
- "It's full of stuff that's really valuable, but unless I spend an hour exploring various sections I never really know what's in there."
- "Increase awareness of your service and the website. I have worked full-time as a Disability Advisor in a major university for 5 years and was not aware of the ADCET website."
- "More VET relevant content."
- "Videos stories of high-achieving students with disabilities. More resources on including indigenous students with disabilities."

How Helpful is ADCET?

Overall

The majority of people find most ADCET sections are helpful. The latest news (87%), disability practitioners (87%) and the latest links and articles (85%), sections were found to be the most helpful sections of ADCET. Positions vacant (32%), Opening all Options (23%), and NDCO resources (19%) were the least likely to be used, and were rated by the fewest people as being helpful.

This reflects the important role the website plays in keeping people up-to-date with new developments and trends in the sector, and the high level of usage by disability practitioners.

Sections of the Website by Helpfulness

Legend: ■ Very helpful ■ Somewhat helpful ■ Unsure ■ Somewhat unhelpful ■ Unheplful ■ Have not used

ADCET Newsletter

There is high support for the Newsletter, with 50% of respondents rating it as very helpful, and 26% somewhat helpful. No-one rated it as unhelpful. Readers commented that they appreciated the broad range of topics and issues, enjoyed the easy-to-read format, and find it a useful way to keep up-to-date with the latest sector news and information.
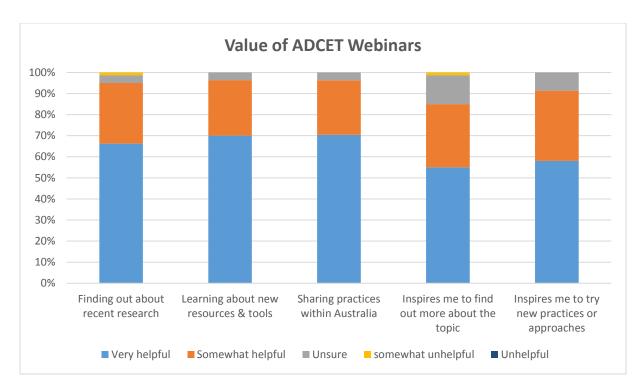
> *"The Newsletters are relevant, current, credible and informative. I rely on them, and often refer back to them."*

However, 16% of people say they don't receive the Newsletter, and 8% receive it but are honest enough to tell us they don't take the time to read the Newsletter.

While most people (72%) are happy for the Newsletter to continue in the current format and frequency, some people would like it more frequently (5%), and others (20%) suggested changes that include having more VET relevant content, more student case studies, and better upfront content summary.

Webinars

Seventy-five percent of people have engaged with ADCET webinars, and of these: 47% have participated in less than five webinars; 22% have participated in between five and 10 webinars; and 7% have participated in more than ten webinars. People find the webinars are helpful ways to find out about recent research in the field (95%), new resources and tools (96%), and share practices within Australia (96%). They are also helpful to inspire people to find out more about the topic (85%) and try new practices or approaches (92%).

Value of ADCET Webinars

The chart below shows the value of ADCET Webinars across five categories. Each bar represents 100% of responses divided into: Very helpful (blue), Somewhat helpful (orange), Unsure (grey), somewhat unhelpful (yellow), Unhelpful (dark blue).

Category	Very helpful	Somewhat helpful	Unsure	somewhat unhelpful	Unhelpful
Finding out about recent research	~66%	~29%	~3%		~2%
Learning about new resources & tools	~70%	~26%	~4%		
Sharing practices within Australia	~70%	~26%	~4%		
Inspires me to find out more about the topic	~55%	~30%	~13%	~2%	
Inspires me to try new practices or approaches	~58%	~33%	~9%		

Legend: ■ Very helpful ■ Somewhat helpful ■ Unsure ■ somewhat unhelpful ■ Unhelpful

Respondent's comments also indicate that the webinars are valued for: their ease and convenience; ability to refer back to them at any time; and for being a great way to connect and network with others in the sector. Many people share them with colleagues and stakeholders.
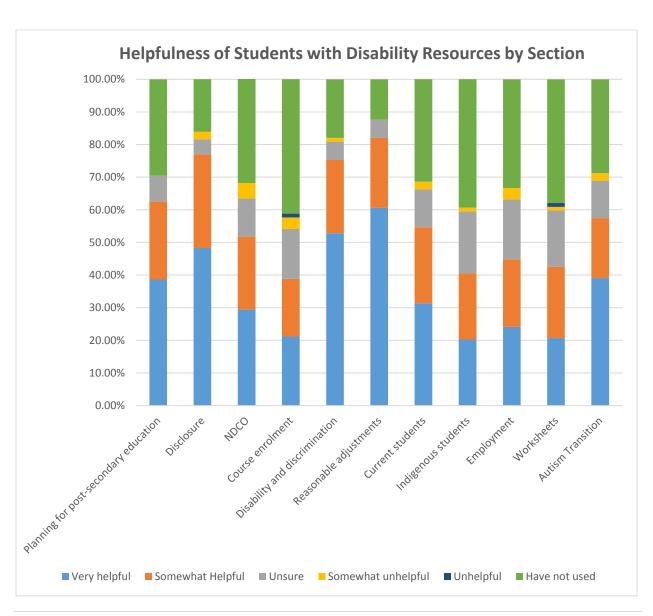
People commented that they would like the timing to be more flexible so they could participate in real-time – perhaps in the morning or early evening. It was also suggested that they could be more reflective of inclusive teaching practices, and more questions and interactions could be generated if information is provided before webinars. And the content could be improved by including more VET-related material, and information on implementing current legislation. However, most people are happy with the variety and breadth of the content.

"The webinars are a great opportunity to hear about new research or others' experiences relevant to my role, which doesn't involve having to take half- to a full day out of the office."

Students with Disability Resources section

An average of eighty-eight people, which is 70% of our survey respondents, answered this part of the survey, despite the fact that only 3% identified as students with disability. Given that over half of the respondents find it to be either a very helpful (31%) or somewhat helpful (22%) section, suggests that these resources are also valued by those other than students with disability.

After the *Students with Disability* section, the *Reasonable Adjustments* section is the most helpful (81%), followed by Disclosure (77%), and *Disability and Discrimination* (73%). Information on *Course Enrolment, Indigenous students, and Worksheets* are the three least likely information resources to be used.

Helpfulness of Students with Disability Resources by Section

Legend: Very helpful, Somewhat Helpful, Unsure, Somewhat unhelpful, Unhelpful, Have not used

People enjoyed the videos of the people talking, feel that the language of the student resources are much more user-friendly, and that they are great resources to share with students.

Suggestions of how to improve the Students with Disability resources include a number of calls for more student-based case studies in areas such as reasonable adjustments, work placements and transition to work. There is a strong preference for these to be video based. Other suggestions include: more information on work placements; simpler layout; less dense text on pages; more worksheets; and information on specific cohorts of students, including refugees and LGBTIQ community.
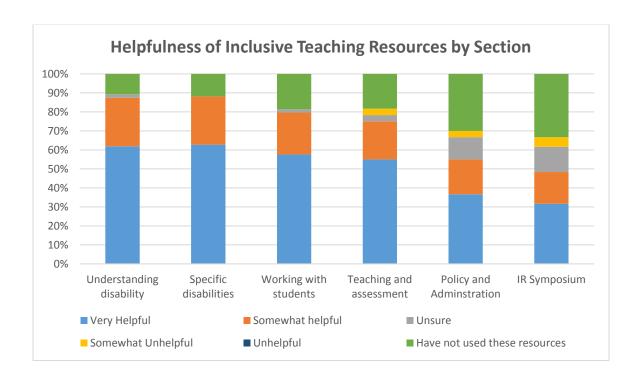
"What is most useful to me is the comprehensive information for students; and the videos are so easy to get the information to students rather than just reading lots of text."

"In the Autism section would be good to have students with Autism talking about their experiences make it more prominent. Great content but a lot to read! Difficult if the student on the spectrum has a learning disability as well."

Inclusive Teaching Resources section

Sixty people or 48% of our survey respondents answered questions in this section. Again, a greater proportion than the 14% of people who identified as teaching or academic staff, and indicating the value of these resources is wider than the specific target group. Disability practitioners say they find these resources useful when working with academic staff, and many commented that the 'specific disability' section is the most useful.

Overall, the *Specific Disabilities* (88%) and *Understanding Disability* (82%) content areas are the most helpful. The Inherent Requirements (IR) symposium is the least likely to be used (33.33%).

Helpfulness of Inclusive Teaching Resources by Section

Legend:
- Very Helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Unsure
- Somewhat Unhelpful
- Unhelpful
- Have not used these resources

Suggestions for improvement include: having tips for practitioners engaging with academic staff; more engaging resources; video case studies of academics who have implemented some of the strategies; and an easier search function. There is also some concern that it is focused more on the university than the TAFE context.

"When preparing training presentations for academic and student support staff, I always invite participants to visit ADCET - the best one stop shop resource in the land!"
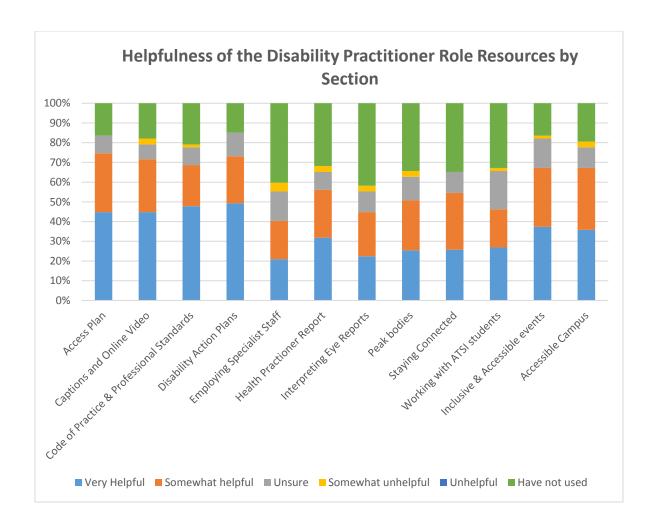
Disability Practitioner Resources section

On average sixty-three people responded to the survey questions about this resource. This was 50% of our respondents, however 60% identified as Disability Practitioners. This suggests that not all Disability Practitioners participated in this section of the survey. This may have been due to the length and comprehensive questions in this part of the survey. As ADCET is mainly targeted at Disability Practitioners, we wanted feedback about the specific content under each of the Disability Practitioner sections, rather than the resource as a whole, as per the Students with Disability and inclusive Teaching sections.

Disability Practitioner Role

Respondents felt that the resources are very comprehensive and relevant for their role. It provides practitioners with the confidence that they have access to the latest information and best practices. *Access Plans* (75%), *Disability Action Plans* (73%) and *Captions and Online Videos* (72%), are the most helpful resources in this section. No resource is regarded as being unhelpful. The least likely to be used are *Interpreting Eye Reports* (42%) and *Employing Specialist Staff* (40%).

Suggestions for improvement include more content regarding: LGBTIQ+ students; specific information on specialist staff; impairments and relevant interventions to try; and information from other institutions such as access plans and policies. There was also a suggestion for webinars and workshops to review some of the existing information.

"Excellent and relevant resources for those new to the Higher Ed sector. Everything in one place and the search engine works well for me."

Helpfulness of the Disability Practitioner Role Resources by Section

Legend: Very Helpful, Somewhat helpful, Unsure, Somewhat unhelpful, Unhelpful, Have not used

Categories: Access Plan, Captions and Online Video, Code of Practice & Professional Standards, Disability Action Plans, Employing Specialist Staff, Health Practitioner Report, Interpreting Eye Reports, Peak bodies, Staying Connected, Working with ATSI students, Inclusive & Accessible events, Accessible Campus

Disability Practitioner: Course Design and Implementation

Most ADCET users of the *Disability Practitioner Course Design and Implementation* resources found the Universal Design section the most helpful, with 49% saying they are very helpful, and 31% finding them somewhat helpful, while few are unsure (5%) or have not used them (15%). Similarly, in regard to Inherent Requirements most found these resources very helpful (49%) or somewhat helpful (28%), some are unsure (8%) or have not used them (15%).
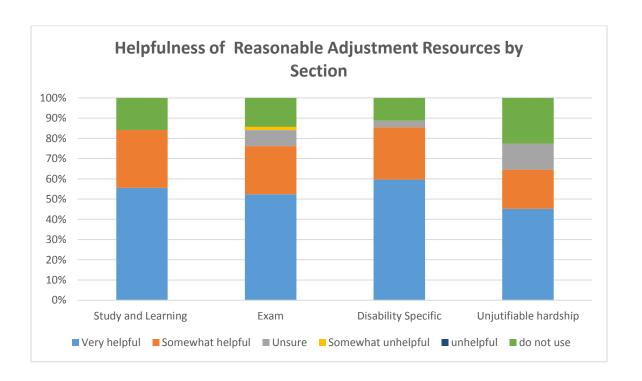
The least likely sections to be used are the Interpreting Eye Reports (42%), and Employing Specialist Staff (40%).

Comments indicate that it is a valuable, practical and easy resource to use and/or pass on to academic staff. Suggestions for improving this section include: providing more practical examples of how it has been used; more detailed information such as checklists and guides; and more information that is directly relevant to the VET sector.

Disability Practitioner: Reasonable Adjustments

The *Disability Practitioner: Reasonable Adjustment* resources are highly regarded as accurate and up-to-date, especially valuable for those new to the Higher Education sector, and is also used for advocacy and as a reference point for academics. Most people of the Reasonable Adjustment resources find the *Disability Specific* section the most helpful (85%), followed by the *Study and Learning Adjustments* (84%) section. The *Unjustifiable Hardship* section is the least likely to be used (23%).
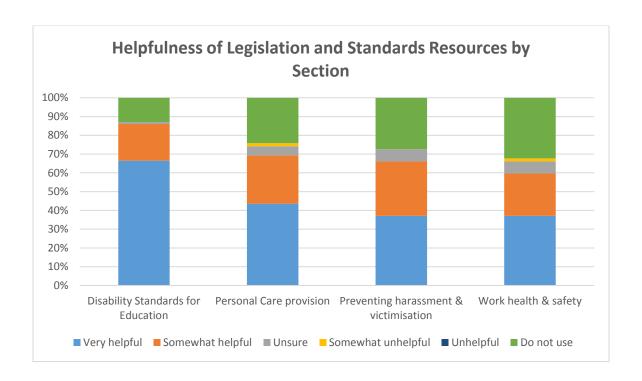
The feedback indicates that most users are happy with the current content and format. Suggestions for improvement include: having more case studies; training videos for professional development; advice on how to promote the benefits of reasonable adjustments to encourage more students to disclose; alternative formats for downloads; and a more VET focus.

Helpfulness of Reasonable Adjustment Resources by Section

Legend: Very helpful, Somewhat helpful, Unsure, Somewhat unhelpful, unhelpful, do not use

Categories: Study and Learning, Exam, Disability Specific, Unjutifiable hardship

"My wish is for more recommendations and videos on the latest assistive software."

Disability Practitioner: Legislation and Standards

The *Disability Practitioner: Legislation and Standards* resources is valued for its clear up-to-date information, ease of navigation and good links to guides. The *Disability Standards for Education* was the most useful resource in this section. The *Work Health and Safety* content is used the least.

Helpfulness of Legislation and Standards Resources by Section

Legend: Very helpful, Somewhat helpful, Unsure, Somewhat unhelpful, Unhelpful, Do not use

Most are happy with the current format, however there were some suggestions for the inclusion of examples and case studies.
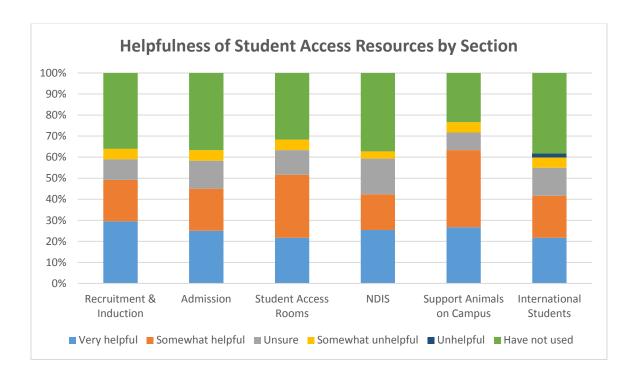
"I would like more specific information for TAFE - around inherent requirements and informed choices. Quite a different situation to Unis with training packages being explicit."

Disability Practitioners: Student Access

The *Disability Practitioners: Student Access* resources tends to be used less than the other Disability Practitioner resources. However, a number of people commented that all the information is useful in this section, as the specific advice on complex issues helps them in their role. The Support Animals on Campus is the most helpful section, with 27% finding it very helpful and 37% finding it somewhat helpful.

The least likely sections to be used are International Students (38%), National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) (37%) and Admission (37%).

While most people are happy for this section to stay the same, improvements could include information on how to update access in older buildings, and more information on NDIS.
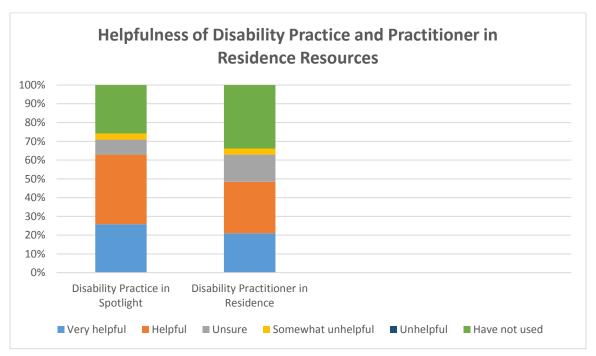
Helpfulness of Student Access Resources by Section

"It's helpful to have access to this type of information to ensure good practice."

Disability Practitioner: Articles on other Disability Practitioners

The *Disability Practice in the Spotlight* and *Disability Practitioner in Residence* sections highlight other practitioner or institutions' practices or gives an opportunity for a practitioner to directly share their insights. While the *Disability Practice in the Spotlight* is regarded as very helpful for 26% or somewhat helpful by 37% or users, it is not used by a quarter of people. Similarly, while the *Disability Practitioner in Residence* section is very helpful for 21% or somewhat helpful for 27% of users, a third of people do not use this section.

However, those who do use it regard it as a good way to get know others in the sector, create networks, learn about new and innovative practices, and provide peer support. For some it enables a sense of 'meeting' fellow practitioners, and enables users to get in touch with others to find out more about their practices and approaches.
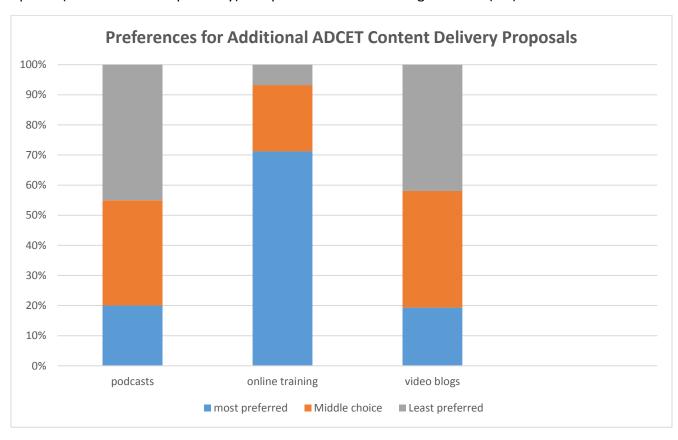
Most feedback indicates that they want this section to continue with no changes, however one suggestion called for less about their life story and more about their projects.

Helpfulness of Disability Practice and Practitioner in Residence Resources

Legend: Very helpful, Helpful, Unsure, Somewhat unhelpful, Unhelpful, Have not used

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"These sections give our colleagues in the field a human face."

Additional ADCET Resources

ADCET are committed to looking for new and innovative ways to provide information and connect with our users. We wanted feedback about preferences for three proposals for additional content delivery: podcasts; online training modules; and video blogs. Online training modules was the most preferred option (71%), compared to podcasts and video blogs (both at 20%). And congruently more people rated podcasts and video blogs as their least preferred option. (45% and 42% respectively) compared to online training modules (7%).

Preferences for Additional ADCET Content Delivery Proposals

Legend: ■ most preferred ■ Middle choice ■ Least preferred

Recommendations

ADCET remains an extremely relevant resource for Disability Practitioners, as well as academic staff and students. With the increasing number of students with disability entering post-secondary education, we need to have, now more than ever, a reliable resource such as ADCET that provides comprehensive, relevant information to support the inclusion of people with disability into further education.

The findings from this survey suggest that ADCET is a valuable one-stop shop that provides easy access to relevant and up-to-date information for the sector. Not only is there a broad range and depth of resources that can be accessed when needed, ADCET is proactive in providing information through the Newsletter, Webinars and social media channels. ADCET also seems to play a key part in linking and connecting those who work, study or teach in the sector. In particular, Disability Practitioners and NDCOs can sometimes work on their own or with a small number of colleagues who share the same role, so ADCET's connecting role is very worthwhile in providing a way to share practices, learn from others, and feel part of a network.

While some of the specific resources may be less likely to be used than others, this survey has found that every resource is helpful for enough users. Given the breadth of the resource this is commendable indeed.

Whilst acknowledging ADCET's strengths and value, this review from within the sector makes six recommendations for improving the service that need consideration. These recommendations are provided with the caveat that with just under $ 80,000 per year funding ADCET is currently providing an excellent value for money with a highly-regarded comprehensive and useful resource. It is also difficult to plan for further services and initiatives in the context of uncertainties in regard to ongoing funding.

1. **Better promotion of ADCET –** despite ADCET being regarded as a very useful resource, especially for those new in the role, it seems that a number of people may be missing out, as they are not aware of ADCET or do not receive the Newsletter. There is also scope to increase the social media Facebook followers. While there are icons on the homepage linking visitors to the Newsletter sign up and social media site, there perhaps could be more done to highlight these. There also needs consideration of further promotion through email campaigns, other newsletters and websites, and attendance at conferences.

2. **Better promotion of resources to existing users –** albeit that it seems some users feel they are not able to maximise the use of ADCET resources due to lack of time, there are many resources on ADCET that are being underutilised. Resources, which when used are found to be very helpful or helpful by users. Additionally, given that the information people need to support students in tertiary education is most often found on ADCET, it

could save time and energy if more people used ADCET as their first point of reference. Perhaps rotate highlighting existing information and resources through the front page or newsletter to remind people of the broad content.

3. **Create case studies –** a number of people commented on providing more information through case studies. This included, but not limited to, implementing reasonable adjustments, inclusive teaching practices, and successful transitions of students in and out of tertiary education. People want to know how these work in real life, and hear directly from others, especially students and academics. There is a strong preference for these case studies to be presented in a visual-audio format.

4. **More relevant to the VET sector –** there were concerns raised that increasingly ADCET is becoming less focused on the VET sector and more on the university sector. As one person commented "I really value ADCET, ATEND and Pathways, however I am finding that they are becoming more focused on the university sector and less on the VET sector". Some people asked for more direct information on VET. And one suggestion for separate sections for VET and universities. ADCET may consider seeking additional funding from the Department of Education and Training - Skills and Training

5. **Gain feedback from students and academics –** there was a small proportion of teaching staff or academics, and even fewer students with disability who participated in the survey. Their direct feedback about the resources targeted for their respective use would provide valuable insight into the relevance and helpfulness of these. While it is understandable that these users are less likely to sign up for the ADCET Newsletter and not be on the Aust-ed listserv or be EPHEA, there needs to be consideration of gaining their feedback. With regards to students, perhaps links to a survey might be circulated to students, or focus groups arranged through student unions or advocacy groups, or mini surveys that are frequently available on the website.

6. **Ensure ongoing funding** – a number of comments throughout the survey indicated that there are concerns with regards to the uncertainty of ADCET funding into the future. This survey indicates the critical role that ADCET plays in providing information, resources and connections to support the participation of students with disability in the tertiary sector. This is in line with the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 that commits governments to strengthening the capability of all education providers to deliver inclusive high-quality education programs, as well as improve pathways for student with disability from school to further education, employment and lifelong learning. It is therefore recommended that the sector advocate strongly to the Federal Government for ADCET to be provided with more certainty than that provided by a year-by-year commitment. The sector as a whole could benefit from funding allocated on at least a three-year funding cycle.