

Disability Services

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY



Agenda

- Remit of Disability Services
- Support and Services available
- How to Register with Disability Services
- Transition to University
- Specific Support for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Case Studies
- Other Student Support Services

Our Remit

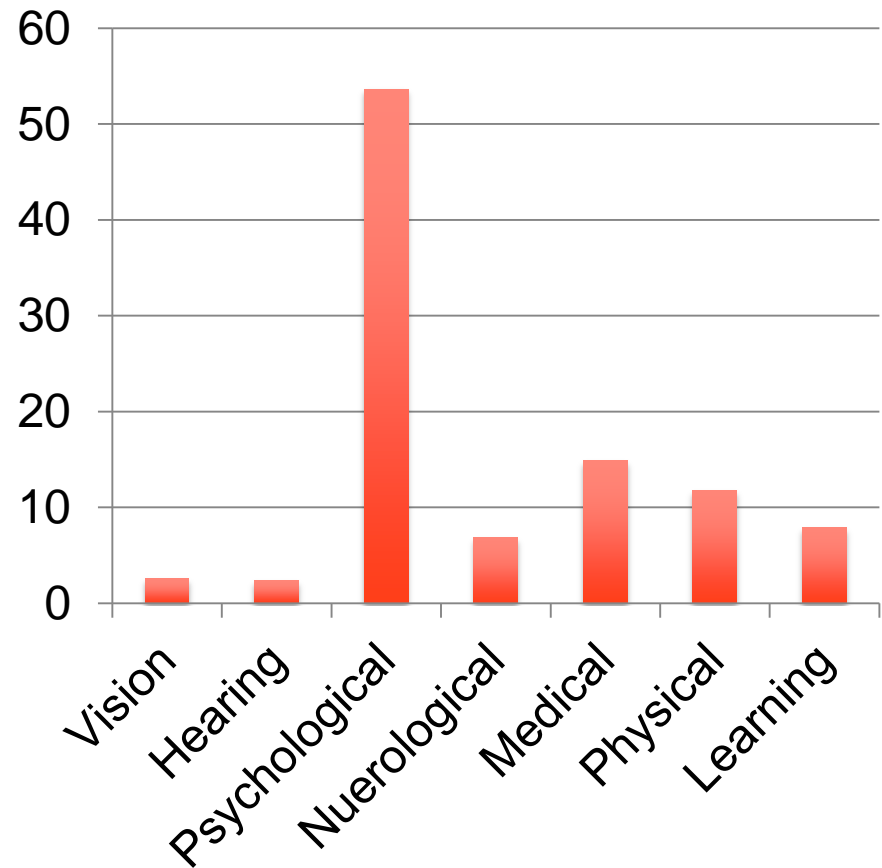
- One to one support and consultation with current students
- Assessment and implementation of Reasonable Adjustments
- Consultation and advice to Prospective students
- Liaison with academics, faculty admin and support staff, student medical practitioners, and other services within the University

Definition of Disability

The definition of 'disability' is based on the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#):

- hearing impairment
- vision impairment
- physical disability
- learning disability
- psychiatric/psychological disability
- acquired brain injury
- chronic medical conditions
- temporary disability

Disability Types % at USYD



Examples of the assistance we provide to students

Assessment Adjustments

- Extensions of time
- Reweighting of assessments
- Alternative assessments (e.g. Viva Voce, Take Home Examinations, Staged Exposure Method)

Exam Adjustments

- Additional time and/or rest breaks
- Separate supervision, smaller room with fewer students
- Alternative formatting
- Use of a computer and/or assistive technology, use of a scribe
- Timetable adjustment (e.g. AM/PM, breaks between examinations, one exam a day etc.)

Other Adjustments and support

- Accessibility
- Assistive Technology
- Equipment loans (digital voice recorders, infra-red hearing augmentation)
- Interpreting; Stenography services; Live remote captioning
- Lecture support
- Library support and liaison with faculty
- Timetable adjustments

Our Process

How Does our Service Operate?

Consultation and assessment of specialist supporting documentation with Disability Services Officer (DSO)

Determination of Reasonable Adjustments

Academic Plan

Implementation of Reasonable Adjustments by Faculty

Regular review and update of diagnoses, documentation and adjustments

Adjustments are communicated via Academic Plans.

An Academic Plan (AP) is a document that “plans out” a student's academic adjustments and one-to-one support requirements for an entire semester.

- Provides detailed information to academics regarding in-class support requirements, and an explanation of adjustments available to the student.
- Provides clear direction to teaching staff regarding their responsibilities.
- Provides clear direction to the student regarding their responsibilities.
- Provides advance notice of support required, and allows planning of Faculty resources.
- Provides student with an organisational tool.

Disability Services Officers

- Skilled at understanding how a student's disability may impact on their studies
- Work with students to determine the appropriate adjustments and support services
- Don't case manage – most communication is undertaken by email and through our online system
- We are not counsellors or learning support officers
- Office is located on Camperdown campus, with officers visiting the following campuses weekly
Conservatorium of Music, Sydney College of Arts, Camden, Cumberland

How to register with Disability Services

Students requesting assistance from DS are required to register using the following steps:

- Obtain a copy of the DS supporting documentation from and have this completed in detail by a medical or treating professional.
- To finalise the registration a one to one appointment with a DSO to discuss specific needs and determine eligibility for support services.
- As DS is a student driven service, once registered, students can independently manage their supports and services via the DS online system, and through requesting an Academic Plan which is used to communicate the students required adjustments to the faculty.

Disclosure

- Disability Services will not at any stage disclose a student's diagnosis to University staff; rather what may be communicated is the student's Impact Statement.
- Information is only disclosed to faculties for the basis of organising reasonable adjustments for students.

Transitioning To University



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Then & Now – Study

High School / TAFE	University
Structured	Unstructured
Directed Study	Independent Study
Compulsory	Non-Compulsory
Class Work	Group Work
Explicit	Not Explicit
Face-to-Face Communication	Online Communication
Teacher reaches out	Students reach out

Impacts During Transition

- Dealing with change and adjusting to new routines
- Learning to navigate an unfamiliar environment
- Processing information, including University policies, procedures and expectations
- Asking for help
- Forming a social network
- Adapting to independent learning
- Managing time and getting organised
- Coping with multiple academic demands
- Coping with sensory sensitivities

Then & Now - Lifestyle

Students need to think about the differences they might now experience to their lifestyle:

- Travel to and from, and how long did it take?
- What time did you have to get up?
- What days did you have to attend?
- Were you also working?
- Extracurricular activities and social commitments

When students 'transition' they are going to experience differences to how they manage their life. This is not a negative thing, but it can cause anxiety, and being aware and prepared for those differences will make it an easier process.

What is expected of students?

- No longer a teenager, now a young adult
- Be responsible
- Regular communication
- Attend and participate in classes
- Meet the academic requirements of your course
 - Know the processes
- Access support from student services
- Take opportunities for further development
- Plan ahead and be organised
- Manage stress
- Ask for help

Transition and Engagement Support for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Previous Research

- It has been suggested that “*students with ASD will present individual needs that may require specialised support in order for them to be successful academically and socially, in the context of post-16 education.*” (Howley, 2006)
- The Orientation Week “may potentially be overwhelming” for students with ASD, “adding to the student’s feelings of failure early on in his/her experience of University life.” As a result, students with ASD “may benefit from longer induction periods, with specific support in relation to induction.” (Blamires and Gee, 2002).

Orientation Day

– Aims:

- To provide students with relevant academic and practical information to help make a confident and smooth transition to university.
- Social facilitation and development of support network.

– Outline of day:

- An Overview of Disability Services
- Presentation from DS on transitioning to University
- Information Sessions from a variety of Student Support Services
- Personalised Campus and Library Tour, including Quiet Study Space
- “Student Experience” talk from a current student with ASD

Workshop 1 – Communication and Social Skills

Aims of the workshop:

- Identify and develop an understanding of different forms of communication used at University
- Increase confidence of how to socially interact with fellow students at university
- Increase awareness of appropriate ways to interact in class and with academics

Workshop 2 – Organising your studies

Aims of the workshop:

- Identify and develop an understanding of time management tools to keep organised
- Increase awareness of ways to plan ahead to meet deadlines
- Identify strategies to develop as an independent student

Benefits

- Reduced anxiety about new and unfamiliar environment
- Establishment of allies and safe spaces
- Increased understanding of academic and social expectations at University
- Social facilitation and developing a sense of community (for both students and parents)

These benefits have resulted in improved student experience and engagement at University

Student Case Study

Emma is a school-leaver with a vision impairment that is deteriorating. She can see figures of people but she cannot read print on whiteboards and screens. Emma uses screen readers to manage her written materials and computer use.

Emma met with Disability Services to get the support she needed to successfully manage at university. Emma brought along relevant documentation from her specialist which described the current impacts of her condition and the things that she may need assistance with.

- **Study Materials:** Emma needed electronic materials (text books etc.) to use with her screen reader.
- **Assistive Technology:** Emma was given access to the Assistive Technology Lab at the university. The AT lab gave Emma access to lots of different software and hardware such as CCTV to help her manage library materials which could not be converted.
- **Lecture Support:** As Emma would not be able to see the lecture power-point slides, she was given access to lecture recordings.
- **Assignments:** Using screen readers and having materials converted may take time and Emma may have difficulty meeting deadlines. Disability Services provided Emma with extensions.
- **Examinations:** Emma will require access to electronic exam papers and technology to undertake exams, and was provided with extra time.
- **Communication with Teachers:** Disability Services assist Emma communicate with her teachers about her needs in class.
- **Orientation and Mobility:** Disability Services encouraged Emma to contact Guide Dogs to organise orientation to the university campus to ensure that Emma can get around safely.

Other Student Support Services

- **Counselling and Psychological Services** - provide a free and confidential service for all students to assist in the development of skills and techniques to manage social, academic and personal difficulties.
- **Financial Assistance Service** - offers a number of loan and bursary funds to assist students with disabilities who are experiencing financial difficulty.
- **The Careers Centre** - assists students looking for casual work, volunteer opportunities, graduate placements and internships. The Careers Centre works closely with Disability Services to assist students with disabilities access employment opportunities and to transition from University to employment.

Disability Action Plan

- The DAP provides the University with a plan of action for delivering an accessible best practice teaching, learning and working environment to students, staff and visitors.
- The DAP ensures the University meets its legislative and strategic requirements and is an important step in risk management for the University.
- All Faculties are required to develop and implement their own local DAPs. Local DAPs allow ownership and involvement by the key stakeholders in the University to meet the objectives of the University DAP.

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