Access and Inclusion Plan
2020 - 2023

Draft 12 December 2019
A message from the Vice-Chancellor

Every individual has the potential to succeed, progress, and have a positive impact in their field, study and in the broader community. It is Macquarie University’s aim to provide an inclusive learning environment that enables everyone to thrive.

We acknowledge that experiences of some staff and students with a disability do not reflect this aim. Our focus is on removing structural and cultural barriers faced by members of our community. This is a crucial step to ensure we provide a truly inclusive and accessible environment, and to ensure all staff and students are empowered to fully participate and contribute to Macquarie’s community.

After reviewing and reflecting on our progress to date, and consulting with our community, four key focus areas have been identified. Our Access and Inclusion Plan includes specific actions and aims that will help us achieve our vision for accessibility and inclusion. I encourage all staff and students to engage and support the action areas that have been outlined to help us collectively achieve this vision.

Introduction

Macquarie’s purpose is to provide transformative learning and career opportunities, and to impact the world through discovery, dissemination of knowledge and ideas, innovation and partnerships. A truly diverse and inclusive culture is directly linked to achieving this purpose.

Evidence from research and feedback from the University community indicates that some people experience barriers to study and employment, based on the environment, systems and/or culture. To remove these barriers at Macquarie, the University has adopted a range of diversity and inclusion strategies, including this Access and Inclusion Plan. For our community to flourish, everyone needs access to resources, information and technology, and to feel welcomed and included. With this in mind, we are working to embed equity and inclusivity into the fabric of our University, to create an environment where everyone is valued, respected and is able to participate and contribute.

This Access and Inclusion Plan sets out a targeted approach to remove unintended barriers, and to increase opportunities for students, staff and visitors with disability to succeed at Macquarie University. The Plan builds on our progress to date and identifies actions to strengthen a culture of accessibility and inclusion. This Plan was developed through engagement with stakeholders, the broad University community and key stakeholders, and in consultation with external disability inclusion advisors.

The plan will be lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission as a demonstration of Macquarie University’s commitment to meet the objectives of the:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Disability Standards for Education, plus guidance notes (2005)
- Disability Services Act (1993)
Overview

OUR APPROACH

At Macquarie, our approach to diversity and inclusion seeks to create real and sustainable change for equality across the University and is underpinned by the following strategic principles:

**Inclusive Leadership** Empowering all our leaders to implement inclusive practice and deliver measurable progress towards diversity and inclusion

**Systemic Change** Understanding and addressing the underlying drivers of inequality embedded within the University systems, policies, processes and communications, to ensure all staff and students are enabled to progress and achieve their potential

**Connected Community** Engaging and empowering the University community to participate in and contribute to a culture of fairness and respect

**Innovation and Impact** Developing innovative, evidence and research-based strategies that deliver real progress through collaboration with our University community and our partners

This Access and Inclusion Plan supports the University’s Framing of Futures strategic framework.

DEFINITIONS

The Australian Network on Disability defines a disability as:

“any condition that restricts a person’s mental, sensory or mobility functions. It may be caused by accident, trauma, genetics or disease. A disability may be temporary or permanent, total or partial, lifelong or acquired, visible or invisible.”

In addition, the Australian Network on Disability supports the social model of disability that aligns with our approach to access and inclusion at Macquarie University:

Disability’ is considered to be the result of interactions between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. [...] The social model seeks to change society in order to accommodate people living with impairment; it does not seek to change persons with impairment to accommodate society. It supports the view that people with disability have a right to be fully participating citizens on an equal basis with others (People with Disability Australia).
About this plan

DEVELOPING THIS PLAN

Macquarie University’s previous Disability Action Plan 2012-2017, led to the implementation of initiatives to progress accessibility and inclusion for students, staff and visitors. For example:

- Governance: Our Accessible Environments Advisory Group (AEAG) was established to ensure a more coordinated and effective response to issues related to the built environment.
- Digital environment: Web accessibility has been reviewed for the University website and the new Content Management System procurement process specifically includes a section on accessibility and compliance with relevant global standards.
- Learning and teaching: The University has developed a new L&T Strategic Framework (2015-2020) that places accessibility as a core element of its first objective (Connected Experiences) and the first key goal (Create a sense of belonging)
- Student Support: The Student Disability Support Policy and Procedure, approved in 2015, established Macquarie University’s approach to the provision of reasonable adjustments to ensure fair and inclusive treatment for students with disability.
- Employment: Ongoing partnership with Australian Network on Disability provides expertise and guidance to align Macquarie policies and practices with leading practice for disability inclusion in the workplace
- Students network: The Equity & Diversity subcommittee of the Student Representative Committee (SRC) was established in 2018 to promote the participation and inclusion of students from all diversity groups, including students with disability.

CONTENTS

Through extensive consultation with the University community, four focus areas for action have been identified. Within each focus area specific goals and activities will guide the University’s collective efforts over the next four years. Further details of the goals, related activities and success measures are provided within this Plan.

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## Access & Inclusion Plan

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### IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

An Access & Inclusion Steering Committee will be established to oversee the implementation and evaluation of this Plan. The Committee will be co-chaired by two members of the Macquarie University Executive Group.

The Steering Committee will comprise representatives of:

- Vice President People and Services (focusing on inclusive culture, employment and digital environments)
- Vice President Finance and resources (focusing on inclusive physical environments and procurement)
- Deputy Vice Chancellor, Corporate Engagement & Advancement (focusing on inclusive communications and accessibility of the digital environment)
- Deputy-Vice Chancellor, Academic (focusing on culture, inclusive learning and teaching, adjustments and support for students)
- Students and staff who experience disability

The Steering Committee will meet biennially to coordinate action and discuss progress. The Plan will be comprehensively reviewed every four years, or as required in response to emerging issues or developments.

The Access & Inclusion Steering Committee will be supported by two working groups:

#### The Accessible Environments Advisory Group (AEAG):

- Provides advice and assistance to Property to identify, prioritise and resolve existing access issues within Macquarie University’s built environment
- Provides feedback regarding proposed changes to the existing built environment and planning decisions at Macquarie University
- Provides a mechanism for regular communication and consultation between Property and internal stakeholders on accessibility issues
- Works in collaboration with research teams at Macquarie to test and implement innovative ideas to improve access and inclusion on campus
- Has representation from: Property, Security, Organisational Health Advisor, Student Wellbeing, Student and Workplace Diversity & Inclusion teams and student and staff representatives.

#### The Accessible Learning & Teaching Environments Advisory Group (LTAG) (to be created within this Plan’s implementation period):

- Identifies and addresses access issues within Macquarie University’s learning and teaching environment.
• Provides advice and drive initiatives to improve communication and collaborations between specialists in learning and teaching and the support services available to students
• Creates a framework for attracting, retaining and supporting students with disability to succeed at Macquarie University
• Has representation from: Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning & Teaching, Accessibility Services, Information Technology, Student Diversity & Inclusion team, Higher Degree Research (HDR) and Disability Representative from the Students Representative Committee (SRC)
Culture

OVERVIEW
Macquarie will ensure that accessibility and inclusion are meaningfully integrated within our culture, strategies, policies, processes and communications. Information about the support available for students and staff with disability, and the avenues for accessing this support needs to be clearer and better communicated. We are committed to ensuring the views and experiences of staff and students with Disability are heard and included within decision making.

GOAL 1:
Embed our accessibility and inclusion objectives within University strategies, policies and practices

Our policies, practices and organisational culture reflect the principles of access and inclusion. The University has a strong governance structure in place that supports effective implementation and evaluation of the Access and Inclusion Plan.

ACTIVITIES
• Establish a Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of the Access and Inclusion Plan
• Clearly communicate values and behaviours expected from the university community that prevent discrimination, bullying and harassment and promote equality and inclusion
• Identify and review University policies and make any necessary changes to ensure they align with leading practice for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion
• Access and Inclusion Steering Committee to report annually to the University Executive Group and provide updates to the University community on achieving success measures in this Plan
• Benchmark our progress on access and inclusion and implement best practice
• Embed recognition of inclusive practice into University award programs in learning and teaching, research and professional services

SUCCESS MEASURES
• Improved survey results and feedback from Staff and Students with Disability, particularly in relation to access and inclusion
• Annual participation and progress on the Australian Network on Disability Access and Inclusion Index

GOAL 2:
Improve communications around access and inclusion support available to staff and students

Students, staff and visitors with disability can easily find information about the support services available at Macquarie University and request assistance or adjustments for their individual requirements.

ACTIVITIES
• Create a central source of information for staff and students outlining support available, accessing adjustments, reporting a problem and requesting assistance
• Identify channels to effectively inform students and staff about available provisions, any new initiatives or changes to accessibility arrangements
• Encourage students and staff to keep their personal records and information up to date creating a culture of trust where they feel comfortable to disclose disability. Accurate data enables tailored support and informs improvements to university policy and practice.
• Develop guidelines to ensure that the University's internal and external communications and events are accessible and inclusive of students and staff with disability

SUCCESS MEASUREMENT
• Minimum of 60% of staff have completed the “My Diversity Profile” in HR online
• Positive results and feedback on diversity and inclusion questions in staff and student surveys, in relation to access to information and support
• Representation of people with disability in internal and external communications

GOAL 3:
Involve students and staff with disability more directly in shaping access and inclusion strategies

Our approach to accessibility and inclusion is reflective of and responsive to the needs of our community, and people with disability contribute to and influence decision making.
Access & Inclusion Plan

ACTIVITIES

- Seek feedback from staff and students with disability to inform decision making through a variety of avenues including surveys, focus groups and networks.
- Include quantitative data and feedback from students and staff in annual reporting to the University's Executive Group and the University community.
- Ensure that staff and students with disability are represented on the AIP Steering Committee and the Advisory Groups (AEAG and LTAG).

SUCCESS MEASURES

- Improved survey results and feedback from Staff and Students with Disability, particularly in relation to access and inclusion and consultation.
- Fewer reports or concerns raised by staff and students relating to accessibility and disability.
Access & Inclusion Plan

Access

OVERVIEW
To embed inclusion and become a University of choice for staff, students and visitors, our physical and digital environments must be accessible, safe and dignified. As a community, we need to collaborate in planning, designing and developing inclusive and innovative physical and digital spaces, based on Universal Access principles*

GOAL 1:
Embed Universal Design principles in developing the University’s built environment and ensure an effective response to accessibility requirements

An accessible built environment that enables dignified access and provides exceptional learning and teaching. Universal design principles are embedded within the processes and procedures for the planning, design, construction and management of the built environment

ACTIVITIES
• Include representation from Workplace and Student Diversity and Inclusion teams as key stakeholders for consultation on major projects
• Aim to implement best practice when considering differences between the applicable statutory design and construction codes or standards, and the Macquarie University Campus Masterplan and Macquarie University Design Excellence Strategy & Urban Design Guidelines
• Continue to incorporate accessibility requirements explicitly into Standard Consultancy Agreements to ensure contractors comply with the university’s accessibility objectives.
• Incorporate Universal Access principles into detailed precinct planning studies, to ensure accessibility is a key consideration
• Evaluate user experience and satisfaction post-delivery of major projects and respond to feedback and any accessibility issues raised

SUCCESS MEASURES
• Continued compliance with relevant construction codes and standards
• Positive feedback from key stakeholders on accessibility following completion of major projects

GOAL 2:
Embed universal design principles when developing the University’s digital environment and ensure an effective response to accessibility requirements

An equitable and accessible online environment that enables exceptional learning and teaching. Universal Access principles are embedded and all university websites, web content and applications meet best practice and standards.

ACTIVITIES
• Review all digital environments to ensure compliance with latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 recommendations
• Develop and implement best practice guidelines reflecting the needs of staff and students with disability, for all electronic and other resources
• Update information and training materials for staff responsible for creating web and e-learning content, following the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1
• Require external providers of training for users of the University’s online platforms to specifically address accessibility
• Promote mechanism for students and staff to raise accessibility issues in relation to the University’s digital environment, monitor, and make improvements as required
• Improve provisions in relation to assistive technology

SUCCESS MEASURES
• Progress towards compliance of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1
• A minimum of 80% of staff responsible for web content have been trained on accessibility

*Universal Access Principles
Learning and teaching

OVERVIEW
To become a University of choice where students, teachers and researchers thrive and reach their greatest potential, we need to have a stronger, more consistent and connected approach to supporting students with disability

GOAL 1:
Increase collaboration to better understand and respond to the learning and teaching needs of students who experience disability

Specialists in learning and teaching, accessibility support and student diversity and inclusion collaborate to attract, retain and support students with disability to succeed at Macquarie University.

ACTIVITIES
- Establish a Learning and Teaching Advisory Group (LTAG), to better understand and address accessibility issues in the learning and teaching environment

SUCCESS MEASURES
- Increase in representation of students with disability at Macquarie University

GOAL 2:
Implement inclusive learning and teaching practices consistently across the University

An innovative, flexible and responsive learning and teaching experience for staff and students where academic and support staff proactively enable an inclusive learning and teaching environment for students with disability

ACTIVITIES
- Embed Universal Access principles consistently in curriculum development
- Develop and deliver staff training focused on Universal Access in the learning and teaching environment, active referrals and progression support of students with disability

SUCCESS MEASURES
- Minimum of 80% of student-facing staff complete training
- Positive feedback from staff on how to implement Universal Access principles

GOAL 3:
Improve access to support for students who experience disability to successfully complete their studies at Macquarie University

The support and adjustments provided support students with disability to successfully complete their studies at Macquarie University

ACTIVITIES
- Authorise and enable the Accessibility Services unit to allow for the timely implementation of adjustments
- Introduce University-wide Customer Relationship Management (CRM) practice for the implementation of Individual Educational Access Plans
- Update Student Disability Support Policy and Procedure to reflect best practice in program delivery and support
- Implement support programs for students with disability transitioning from University to employment
- Develop activities and programs to promote a healthy community at Macquarie
- Review the assessment and approval process of adjustment requests for PACE placements, internships and exchange programs for students with disability; identify and mitigate any bias.

SUCCESS MEASURES
- Minimum of 5% of enrolled students registered for disability support at Macquarie University
- Increased number of iLearn units that adhere to principles of Universal Access principles, including induction modules
- Positive feedback from students with disability on their experience of PACE placements, internships and exchange programs
Employment

OVERVIEW
To become an employer of choice for people with disability, we need to seek and attract more diverse applicants who want to work at Macquarie University and provide an environment that is flexible and adaptive to support individual requirements. We need to better understand and address the systemic barriers that people with disability experience and foster an inclusive culture where all staff can progress and achieve.

GOAL 1: Increase the accessibility and inclusivity of our recruitment processes and practices
Our recruitment process is fair and accessible, and attracts candidates with diverse abilities, perspectives and life experiences so that our workforce better reflects the community we serve.

ACTIVITIES
- Develop an employee value proposition that is inclusive of people with disability
- Provide information about our inclusive recruitment processes and adjustment provisions to hiring managers and candidates
- Develop and promote the training and resources available to mitigate bias throughout the recruitment process for members of selection panels
- Develop formal programs and initiatives to increase the employment of people with disability

SUCCESS MEASURES
- Progress towards at least 5% of job applicants and staff identifying as having a disability
- People with disabilities are represented throughout all stages of the recruitment process
- Each recruitment panel to have at least one member who has completed inclusive recruitment training

GOAL 2: Build a more robust and well communicated process around workplace adjustments
Access to workplace adjustments for those who need support is easy and effective and enables an equitable professional development process.

ACTIVITIES
- Track the number and nature of workplace adjustments requested and implemented, and survey staff and their managers on the effectiveness and timeliness of the process
- Ensure staff development options are inclusive and accessible

SUCCESS MEASURES
- Positive feedback from staff and managers in surveys on the workplace adjustment process
- Positive feedback from staff with disability in response to development and progression in the ‘Your Say’ all staff survey.
- Increased number of staff with disability in leadership and management roles

GOAL 3: Improve the capability and confidence of managers and staff to implement inclusive workplace practices
Our managers and staff are well informed and understand the barriers faced by people with disability and are equipped to proactively support an inclusive working environment for all

ACTIVITIES
- Provide information on diversity and inclusion at Macquarie University, including access and inclusion principles and support available for people with disability, as part of the induction program for new staff and via the staff website
- Embed inclusive leadership as an expectation for all managers and provide training and resources to build capability in this area
- Provide training for managers and staff in partnership with the Australian Network on Disability to build a disability inclusive culture
- Continue to promote a healthy workforce through wellbeing initiatives, training and resources, and promotion of the Employee Assistance Program

SUCCESS MEASURES
- Progress towards 100% of HR and staff managers having completed Disability Confident Workforce training
- Increase in positive responses from people with disability in relation to leadership support, inclusion and wellbeing questions in the all staff survey
Macquarie University is a vibrant hub of intellectual thinkers, all working towards a brighter future for our communities and our planet.

A PLACE OF INSPIRATION
Macquarie is uniquely located in the heart of Australia’s largest high-tech precinct, a thriving locale which is predicted to double in size in the next 20 years to become the fourth largest CBD in Australia.

Our campus spans 126 hectares, with open green space that gives our community the freedom to think and grow. We are home to fantastic facilities with excellent transport links to the city and suburbs, supported by an on-campus train station.

RENEWED FOR EXCELLENCE
We are ranked among the top two per cent of universities in the world, and with a 5-star QS rating, we are renowned for producing graduates that are among the most sought after professionals in the world.

A PROUD TRADITION OF DISCOVERY
Our enviable research efforts are brought to life by renowned researchers whose audacious solutions to issues of global significance are benefiting the world we live in.

BUILDING SUCCESSFUL GRADUATES
Our pioneering approach to teaching and learning is built around a connected learning community: our students are considered partners and co-creators in their learning experience.