



MACQUARIE
University
SYDNEY • AUSTRALIA

Access and Inclusion Plan

2020–2023



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Macquarie University land, the Wattamattagal clan of the Darug nation, whose cultures and customs have nurtured, and continue to nurture, this land since the Dreamtime. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and future; to the Ancestors; and to the Land and Water, its knowledges, Dreaming and culture – embodied within and throughout this Country.

WATER IS LIFE

This stone arrangement on Macquarie University land was created and positioned by Darug women to recognise the important role of Darug women in their traditional society.

Foreword



It is Macquarie University's aim to provide an inclusive learning and work environment that enables everyone to thrive. We know that our teaching, research and community engagement will be most impactful when our students and staff are able to achieve their potential.

However, we acknowledge that the experiences of some students and staff with disability do not reflect this aim. Our focus for progressing diversity and inclusion at Macquarie is to remove structural and cultural barriers faced by members of our community. Our Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–2023 represents a crucial step in providing a truly inclusive and accessible environment that ensures all students and staff with disability are empowered to fully participate and succeed.

The plan sets out four key focus areas identified after reviewing our progress to date and consulting with our community.

It also outlines tangible and specific actions that will help us achieve our vision for accessibility and inclusion. I encourage students and staff to engage and support the actions outlined to help us continue to build a truly inclusive university.

Professor S Bruce Dowton

VICE-CHANCELLOR



About this plan

Macquarie University's purpose is to provide transformative learning and career opportunities, and to serve the world through discovery, innovation, partnerships and the dissemination of knowledge and ideas. A truly diverse and inclusive culture is directly linked to achieving this purpose. With this in mind, we are working to embed equity and inclusivity into the fabric of the University to create an environment where everyone is valued and respected, and able to participate and contribute.

Research, including feedback from the Macquarie community, shows areas where we can make our facilities and services more accessible, and create a more inclusive culture for people with disability. The Access and Inclusion Plan 2020–2023 sets out a targeted approach not only to remove unintended barriers for students, staff and visitors with disability but also to increase their opportunity to succeed at Macquarie.

The plan builds on our progress to date and was developed through engagement with the University's broad community and key stakeholders, and in consultation with external disability inclusion advisers. It will be lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission to demonstrate our commitment to meeting the objectives of the:

- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth).
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (plus Guidance Notes).
- Disability Services Act 1993 (NSW).

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 practices and deliver measurable progress towards diversity and inclusion.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE

Creating real and sustainable change by addressing the underlying drivers of inequality embedded within the University environment, systems, policies, processes, and communications.

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-based strategies in collaboration with the University community and external partners.

UNDERSTANDING DISABILITY

The **Australian Network on Disability** defines a disability as follows:

“A disability is 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.”

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability promotes and protects all persons with disabilities, who are defined in Article 1:

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”

Our story so far

Under the previous Macquarie University Disability Action Plan, a range of initiatives were implemented to progress accessibility and inclusion for students, staff and visitors. For example:

- **Governance:** The Accessible Environments Advisory Group was established to ensure a more coordinated and effective response to accessibility issues related to the built environment.
- **Built environment:** Accessibility objectives were embedded in the Macquarie University Campus Master Plan 2014 and the Macquarie University Design Excellence Strategy and Urban Design Guidelines 2018.
- **Digital environment:** Web accessibility was 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 *Learning and Teaching Strategic Framework 2015–2020* embeds accessibility in its key objectives and goals.
- **Student support:** The Student Disability Support Policy and Procedure, approved in 2015, established the University's approach to the provision of reasonable adjustments to ensure fair and inclusive treatment for students with disability.
- **Employment:** An ongoing partnership with the Australian Network on Disability provides expertise and guidance to align our policies and processes with leading practice for workplace disability inclusion.
- **Students network:** The Equity and Diversity Subcommittee of the Student Representative Committee was established in 2018 to foster the participation and inclusion of students from all diversity groups, including students with disability.



Four focus areas

The Access and Inclusion Plan outlines four key focus areas – each with specific goals, activities and success measures – that will guide the University’s collective efforts in implementing this plan over four years.

1. CULTURE

- Embed accessibility and inclusion objectives in our strategies, policies and practices.
- Improve communications on access and inclusion support available to staff, students and visitors.
- Involve students and staff with disability more directly in shaping access and inclusion strategies.

2. ACCESS

- Embed inclusive principles when designing and developing the University’s built environment, and ensure an effective response to accessibility requirements.
- Embed inclusive principles when designing and developing the University’s digital environment and ensure an effective response to accessibility requirements.

3. LEARNING AND TEACHING

- Increase collaboration to better understand and respond to the learning and teaching needs of students with disability.
- Implement inclusive learning and teaching practices consistently across the University.
- Improve access to support students with disability to successfully complete their studies at Macquarie.

4. EMPLOYMENT

- Embed accessibility and inclusion in our recruitment processes and practices.
- Build a more robust and well-communicated process for workplace adjustments.
- Improve the capability and confidence of managers and staff to implement inclusive workplace practices.



Implementation and evaluation

Implementation of the Access and Inclusion Plan will be overseen by the University's Workplace Diversity and Inclusion team, the Student Diversity and Inclusion team, MQ Inclusion (staff network), and the MQ Student Equity Inclusion and Diversity Network (student network). Progress against the implementation of the plan will be reported annually to the University's Executive Group. The plan will be comprehensively reviewed every four years or in response to emerging issues or developments.

The plan will be supported by two working groups focusing on the priority areas of the built and digital environments:

The Accessible Environments Advisory Group (AEAG):

- provides advice and assistance to Property with identifying, prioritising and resolving existing access issues within the University's built environment.
- provides feedback regarding proposed changes to the existing built environment and planning decisions at the University.
- provides a mechanism for regular communication and consultation on accessibility issues between Property and internal stakeholders.
- 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, Student Wellbeing, the Student and Workplace Diversity and Inclusion teams, an organisational health adviser, students and staff.

The Accessible Learning and Teaching Environments Advisory Group (LTAG) (to be created in this plan's implementation period):

- identifies and addresses access issues within the University's learning and teaching environment.
- provides advice on creating inclusive learning and teaching environments, by improving the communication and collaboration 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 the University.
- has representation from the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching), Accessibility Services, Information Technology, the Student Diversity and Inclusion team, Higher Degree Research, the disability representative of the Student Representative Committee, and the networks of students and staff with disability.





1. Culture

Macquarie will ensure that accessibility and inclusion are meaningfully integrated into our culture, strategies, policies, processes and communications. Information about the support available to students, staff and visitors 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 students, staff and visitors with disability are heard and included in decision-making processes.

GOAL 1: Embed accessibility and inclusion objectives in our strategies, policies and practices.

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

Activities

- Clearly communicate our values and foster behaviours that prevent discrimination, bullying and harassment, and promote equality and inclusion.
- Identify and review our policies and make any necessary changes to ensure they align with leading practice for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Report annually to the Executive Group, and provide updates to the University community on achieving the plan's success measures.
- Benchmark our progress on access and inclusion, and implement leading practice.
- Embed recognition of inclusive practice in our award programs in learning and teaching, research, and professional services.

Success measures

- Improved survey results and feedback from students, staff and visitors with disability, particularly for access and inclusion.
- Annual participation in and progress against the Australian Network on Disability's Access and Inclusion Index.

GOAL 2: Improve communications on access and inclusion support available to students, staff and visitors.

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

Activities

- Create a central source of information on the support available to students, including how to access adjustments, report a problem and request assistance.
- Effectively communicate new initiatives on or changes to accessibility arrangements.
- Encourage students and staff to keep their personal records and information up to date by creating a culture of trust where they feel comfortable to disclose disability.
- Develop guidelines to ensure that the University's internal and external communications and events are accessible and inclusive of students, staff and visitors with disability.

Success measures

- Positive survey results and feedback from students, staff and visitors with disability on their experience of access and inclusion at the University.
- 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 reflects and responds to the needs of our community, and people with disability contribute to and influence decision making.

Activities

- Seek feedback – through a variety of avenues including surveys, focus groups and networks – from students and staff with disability to inform decision making.
- Include quantitative data and feedback from students and staff in annual reporting to the Executive Group and the University community on the implementation of the Access and Inclusion Plan.
- Ensure that students and staff with disability are represented on the Access and Inclusion advisory groups (AEAG and LTAG).

Success measures

- Improved survey results and feedback from students and staff with disability, particularly in relation to consultation.
- Fewer reports or concerns raised by students and staff with disability relating to accessibility and inclusion.





2. Access

To embed inclusion and become a university of choice for staff, students and visitors, our physical and digital environments must be safe and dignified. As a community, we need to collaborate in planning, designing and developing inclusive and innovative physical and digital spaces.

GOAL 1:

Embed inclusion principles when designing and developing the University's built environment, and ensure an effective response to accessibility requirements.

We provide an accessible built environment that enables dignified access and exceptional learning and teaching. Inclusion principles are embedded in the processes and procedures for the planning, design, construction and management of the built environment.

Activities

- Aim to reflect leading practice in the Macquarie University Campus Master Plan and the Macquarie University Design Excellence Strategy and Urban Design Guidelines.
- Continue to make accessibility requirements explicit in standard consultancy agreements to ensure contractors comply with our accessibility objectives.
- Incorporate inclusion principles into detailed precinct planning studies to ensure accessibility is a key consideration.
- Include representation from the Student and Workplace Diversity and Inclusion teams as key stakeholders for consultation on major projects.
- Evaluate user experience and satisfaction following the 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 the completion of major projects.

GOAL 2:

Embed inclusion principles when designing and developing the University's digital environment, and ensure an effective response to accessibility requirements.

We provide an equitable and accessible online environment that enables exceptional learning and teaching. Inclusion principles are embedded in all aspects of our digital environment, and our websites, web content and applications meet leading practice and standards.

Activities

- Review all digital environments to ensure continued compliance with the latest Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 recommendations.
- Develop and implement leading practice accessibility guidelines for all electronic and printed resources that reflect the needs of students and staff with disability.
- Update information and training materials for staff responsible for creating web and e-learning content, following the WCAG.
- Require external training providers for users of the University's online platforms to specifically address accessibility.
- Promote mechanisms for students, staff and visitors to raise accessibility issues related to the University's digital environment, monitor feedback and make improvements as required.
- Improve the provision of assistive technology.

Success measures

- Progress towards 100% compliance with the WCAG.
- Minimum of 80% of staff responsible for our website content have received accessibility training.



3. Learning and teaching

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

GOAL 1:

Increase collaboration to better understand and respond to the needs of students with disability.

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

Activities

- Establish the Learning and Teaching Advisory Group (LTAG) to better understand and address accessibility issues in the learning and teaching environment.
- Identify key issues where collaboration is needed, and develop an action plan to address these issues.

Success measures

- Increased representation and academic success of students with disability at Macquarie.

GOAL 2:

Implement inclusive learning and teaching practices consistently across the University.

We provide an innovative, flexible and responsive learning and teaching environment that proactively fosters inclusion for students and staff.

Activities

- Embed inclusion principles consistently in curriculum development.
- Develop and deliver staff training on how to embed and normalise inclusion principles in the learning and teaching environment, in active referrals and in support services for students with disability.
- Provide user-friendly resources to assist staff to incorporate inclusion principles in teaching units.

Success measures

- Minimum of 80% of student-facing staff complete training on how to embed inclusion principles in the learning and teaching environment.
- Increase in the number of iLearn units, including induction modules, that embed inclusion principles.

GOAL 3:

Improve access to support for students with disability to successfully complete their studies at Macquarie.

The support and adjustments provided are effective and assist students with disability to have a positive experience while completing their studies at Macquarie.

Activities

- Ensure the timely coordination and implementation of adjustments for students with disability, through Accessibility Services.
- Introduce university-wide customer relationship management (CRM) practice for the implementation of Individual Educational Access Plans.
- Update the Student Disability Support Policy and Procedure to reflect leading practice in program delivery and support.
- Implement support programs for students with disability transitioning from university to employment.
- Consider the specific needs of students with disability in wellbeing initiatives.
- Review the assessment and approval process of adjustment requests for PACE (Professional and Community Engagement) placements, internships and exchange programs for students with disability, and identify and mitigate any identified bias.

Success measures

- Minimum of 5% of enrolled students at Macquarie are registered for disability support.
- Positive feedback from students with disability on their experience of PACE placements, internships and exchange programs.



4. Employment

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 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:

Embed accessibility and inclusion in our recruitment processes and practices.

The 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 recruitment panels and candidates with information on the inclusive recruitment processes and adjustment provisions.
- Develop and promote training and resources for selection panel members that are designed to mitigate bias throughout the recruitment process.
- Review the recruitment process to identify any unintended barriers that may prevent people with disability from being recruited.
- Complete the Australian Network on Disability's Disability Confident Recruiter program to attract applications from talented candidates with disability.

Success measures

- Increase in job applicants and the number of staff identifying as having a disability.
- People with disability 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 for workplace adjustments.

Access to workplace adjustments for those who need support is easy and effective, and enables career development.

Activities

- Develop and implement a policy guideline and procedure for workplace adjustments.
- Implement a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan for all staff with disability.
- Provide tools to assist managers and staff to discuss accessibility support options.
- 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 response to the workplace adjustment process in the all-staff survey.
- Positive feedback from staff with disability in response to the question(s) about development and progression in the all-staff survey.

GOAL 3:

Improve the capability and confidence of managers and staff to implement inclusive workplace practices.

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, including access and inclusion principles and support available for people with disability, as part of the induction program for new staff and via the University website.
- Embed inclusive leadership practices as an expectation for all managers, and provide training and resources to build capability in this area for recruitment, retention and progression of staff with disability.
- Provide training for managers and staff, in partnership with the Australian Network on Disability, to build a disability inclusive culture.
- Consider the specific needs of staff with disability in our wellbeing initiatives.

Success measures

- Increase in positive responses from people with disability to the leadership support, inclusion and wellbeing questions in the all-staff survey.
- Increase in the number of managers and staff who have completed disability inclusion training.
- Positive feedback from staff with disability in response to the question(s) about development and progression in the all-staff survey.

FIND OUT MORE

Macquarie University
North Ryde NSW 2109

T: (02) 9850 7111
mq.edu.au



MACQUARIE
University
SYDNEY • AUSTRALIA

PHOTOGRAPHY BY: Cristiana Fiorini, Nick James Fraser, Christopher Ireland, Morris McLennan, Chris Stacey, Joanne Stephan, Jesse Taylor.

HRE5305

