



VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF
WELLINGTON
TE HERENGA WAKA

Disability Services guide for students

Welcome to Disability Services

Disability Services is a leading provider of disability advice, expertise, and support. We work in partnership with staff, students, and the disability community to strengthen Te Herenga Waka—Victoria University of Wellington's culture of inclusion, to celebrate disability, and to ensure students can fully participate and achieve their aspirations.

We value the expertise of people with disabilities and recognise the uniqueness of individual experience. We are committed to leading the University to being an inclusive education provider and eliminating barriers for people with disabilities wherever they exist.

We look forward to working with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "R Anderson-Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rachel Anderson-Smith
Manager, Disability Services





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DISABILITY SERVICES

Level 1, Robert Stout Building, Kelburn Parade

Phone 04 463 6070

Email disability@vuw.ac.nz

Web www.wgtn.ac.nz/disability

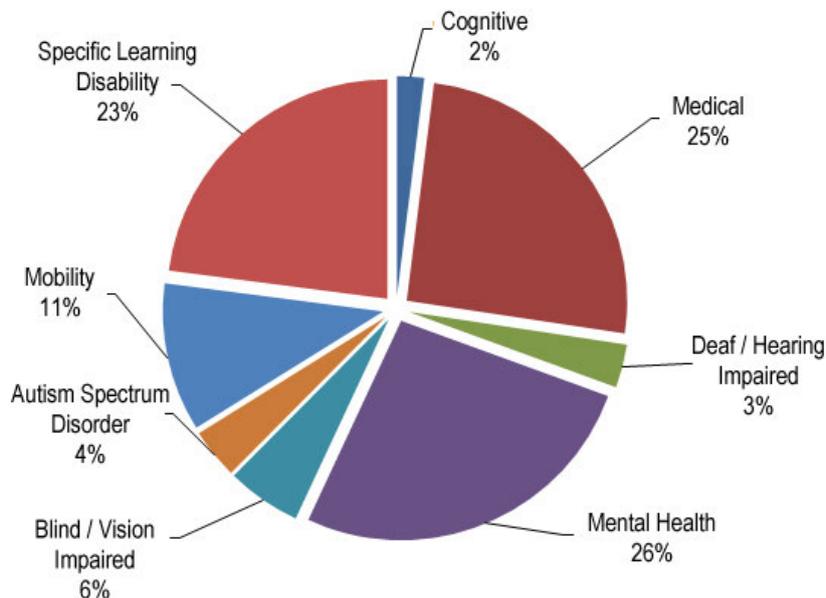
Disability at the University

The number of students with disabilities at the University is steadily growing, and we greatly welcome the increasing diversity of our community.

We are focused on attracting more students with disabilities to the University and creating an inclusive environment where disability is respected and celebrated, and where all members of our community are valued.

More than 1500 students with disabilities register with our service annually. Many of the students we see have multiple impairments and we are experienced in supporting students with complex requirements.

If you are Deaf, have a disability or impairment, mental illness, injury, medical condition, or specific learning disability that affects your learning at, participation in, or enjoyment of University then tailored assistance is available.



Our approach

We view disability as a diverse and complex phenomenon—reflecting an interaction between an individual with an impairment and their environment that may lead to barriers that hinder the individual’s full and equal participation.

We recognise that disability comes in many different forms—including physical, mental, learning, or sensory forms—and these can be experienced differently by each individual.

The work we do aims to minimise disabling experiences at the University. On an individual basis, we do this by working in partnership with you, respecting your disability expertise, and providing you with tailored advice, support, and services to enable your full participation with your learning.

We also work alongside University staff to create a fully inclusive learning and teaching environment. Our work includes raising disability awareness, providing advice and expertise on accessible built spaces, technological systems, inclusive lecture delivery, policies, and practices.

“Disability pride to me is valuing our communities’ experiences and taking that taonga with us when striving for change. Disability rights isn’t just about services, it’s about making the world inclusive. It’s about understanding that we haven’t achieved full inclusion if only a few of us make it through the glass ceiling.”

- Erikka Helliwell, Alumni



Our team

We share a common passion for celebrating disability and creating inclusive environments.

Our team includes experts in adaptive technology, and disability and inclusion who are complemented by our manager, coordination, and administration staff.

We also have a dedicated team of academic support workers, New Zealand Sign Language interpreters, and volunteers as well as strong relationships with other Student Academic Services staff and disability liaison advocates in individual schools.

To meet our team members and get in touch, visit our website at:

www.wgtn.ac.nz/disability/about/staff

“Our lived experiences shape our thoughts and ideas. If we all have the same experiences then we’d all have the same solutions. To me, Disability Pride is knowing that my disability makes my contribution to the world unique. It’s knowing that my uniqueness is not a burden on others or society, it’s an opportunity to provide the diversity of thought that this world NEEDS.”

- Matt Truman, disability and inclusion adviser

Key services

We offer a broad range of quality services which are tailored to your individual needs.

You and your disability and inclusion adviser will discuss which of our services, if any, are right for you.

To access any of these services, make an appointment to see your disability and inclusion adviser as early as possible to ensure support is in place before you need it.

Access suites

Access suites are quiet places for students with disabilities to rest and study, available on both Kelburn and Pipitea campuses. The spaces are also where you can access ergonomic furniture, equipment, technology, or amenities that are not found in general University study spaces. All students who register with us are automatically granted entry to our access suites.

Timeframe: Access should be loaded onto your student ID card a few days after you register with us. If you are having difficulty accessing a suite, get in touch with us.

What you can expect from an access suite:

- ▶ a quiet space to study and/or rest
- ▶ various ergonomic equipment and adaptive technology, and spaces to rest
- ▶ respect from other users of the room
- ▶ not to be questioned about your reasons for using the access suite
- ▶ Disability Services and ITS staff to be prompt in dealing with issues.



Key services [continued]

What your responsibilities are when using an access suite:

- ▶ Be respectful of the other students using the room and their need for a quiet space to rest and/or study, remembering that often impairments are invisible.
- ▶ Treat the room with respect, leave the room tidy, keep all your personal belongings with you. Unattended personal belongings are at risk of being stolen, and may be taken to lost property.
- ▶ Some students need to utilise specific computers or equipment within the access suite and should be given priority if they request it.
- ▶ Leave the equipment in its original position if possible, as some students may find it difficult finding and/or moving that equipment.
- ▶ No hot food is to be eaten in the study or computer areas.

If there is an issue with a computer or printer

Report IT issues to ITS via phone on 04 463 5050 or to its-servicedesk@vuw.ac.nz by email.

Give us feedback

We always appreciate your feedback as it helps us to continually improve the access suites. Feedback can be given directly to a Disability Services staff member, or emailed to disability@vuw.ac.nz, otherwise given to a Library staff member, or placed in a suggestion box found in some access suites.

If someone is not following their responsibilities

If a student's behaviour is not appropriate when using an access suite, we first encourage you to resolve the situation amongst yourselves, otherwise alert Disability Services via the same mechanisms as described for providing feedback directly to us.

Reported inappropriate behaviour will be investigated and may result in access being removed or further disciplinary action.

Disability and inclusion advisers

A disability and inclusion adviser will work with you to identify and resolve learning or participation barriers. They can also assist with connecting you to other services on campus.

All disability and inclusion advisers are allied health professionals and will become your main contact at Disability Services.

Timeframe: Get in touch with us to make an appointment with a disability and inclusion adviser as soon as you can. The earlier you get in touch, the better.

Education access plans

Education access plans (EAPs) are designed to help you clarify your impairment related needs, articulate those needs, define the responsibilities of involved parties, and maintain your ownership of your university experience. EAPs can be completed with your disability and inclusion adviser and they outline how your impairment affects your ability to study, inclusive teaching strategies requested from lecturers or tutors, support provided by Disability Services, and your actions, strategies, strengths, and goals.

Adaptive technology and IT adviser

Our adaptive technology and IT adviser is available to provide you with advice on identifying adaptive technology to meet your needs, advocacy when applying for funding for personal technology, and training on using the adaptive technology available on campus.

Workshops and Showcases to introduce you to adaptive technology are held throughout the year.

Accessible test and exam arrangements

Accessible arrangements are available for tests and exams. You may require an accessible arrangement if the impact of your impairment means you need extra time, a reader/writer, a computer, a rest break, a smaller assessment room, or ergonomic furniture.



Key services [continued]

Timeframe: It takes two days to establish a test or exam arrangement once you have finalised your request with your disability and inclusion adviser. However, we encourage you to make these arrangements as early as possible to ensure your support is in place.

Ergonomic furniture

We offer a range of ergonomic equipment, such as:

- ▶ ergonomic chairs
- ▶ kneelers and foot rests
- ▶ lecterns
- ▶ tables for standing study.

A range of ergonomic furniture is available in the access suites and some of these items can be moved to lecture and tutorial rooms when required.

Mobility parking

Timetabled mobility parking is available across the campuses to students who have been issued a Disability Services Mobility Parking Permit. These spaces are timetabled to fit in with your study hours and there is a small cost involved.

Mobility van service

If your impairment affects your ability to move across campus or between campuses then our mobility van service, driven by our volunteer van drivers, may be able to help.

The service is generally limited to across-campus runs, rather than taking you from home to campus.

Timeframe: It takes one week to arrange a volunteer mobility van run once you have finalised your request with your disability and inclusion adviser.

Note-taking and electronic live transcription

Note-taking and electronic live transcription is available if your impairment significantly impacts on your access to in-lecture information. Your disability and inclusion adviser will identify which service best meets your needs.

Note-taking

There are two different lecture note-taking options that we can provide.

The first option is to receive notes taken by a volunteer student note taker. These notes should be used to supplement other information you gather from attending class and taking what notes you are able to. Students who may benefit from this service include those unable to write full notes due to a physical impairment, or those with a specific learning disability.

Timeframe: It can take up to three weeks from the beginning of trimester to receive volunteer notes once you have finalised your request with your disability and inclusion adviser. Requests for this service can't be made after the third week of trimester.





Key services [continued]

The second option is to receive tailored, typed lecture notes from an employed student. These are summaries of the lecture content rather than full notes, and will be provided to you after each lecture.

Timeframe: It takes two weeks to arrange a tailored note taker once you have finalised your request with your disability and inclusion adviser.

Electronic live transcription

Electronic live transcription is when a note-taker types what a lecturer is saying into a laptop, which you can read on another laptop. This service is for students who cannot access verbal or written information in the lecture.

Timeframe: It takes three weeks to arrange an electronic live transcriber once you have finalised your request with your disability and inclusion adviser.

Sign language interpreters

Sign language interpreters provide access to verbal information for Deaf students who use New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) as their preferred language. Interpreters are qualified professionals who interpret the full content of lectures, tutorials or other events into NZSL.

Timeframe: It takes four weeks to arrange for an ongoing sign language interpreter and one week to arrange for a one off sign language interpreter once you have finalised your request with your disability and inclusion adviser.

Specific learning disability assessments

If you have a specific learning disability (SLD), or suspect that you may have, we can help you determine what it might be and what support you may require. Screening tests can be used to identify the likelihood of an SLD being present.

We work closely with Student Learning, who can assist you with learning strategies, such as study skills, reading, note-taking, essay writing, and exam techniques.

Additionally, we refer a small number of students each year to an educational psychologist for assessment. After this assessment we work with the student to implement the recommendations, which often involves adaptive technology or other kinds of tailored support.

“One of the things that helped me see disability as an identity was changing my concept of what independence looked like. So often we are told that independence looks like standing on your own two feet. For me, independence was being able to have choice and self-determination even if you needed support to make your goals real. The volunteer services I used were the van service and volunteer note takers. These services enabled me to get on with the job of being a student without being able to expend energy on the basics like getting around. These things were part of my independence as they were reliable. They were part of my success. I came to see independence as having a chosen community around me.”

- Henrietta Bollinger, Alumni

Working with your adviser

The best way to access the support we offer is to make an appointment with a disability and inclusion adviser. They will become a key point of contact within our service.

Here are the common steps that you and your disability and inclusion adviser will work through together.

1. Identify your support requirements

At the start of each year, we'll work out how we can best support you. This is a chance for you to discuss which courses you'll be taking and outline your support requirements with your adviser.

Most students find that their support requirements will change from year to year.

If you believe you require minimal support you may still find it useful to know what kind of support is available should you need it.

2. Make a plan

Once we've identified your needs, we can help you to create a plan for the trimester. Your plan may include:

- ▶ your impairment related needs
- ▶ your strengths and goals
- ▶ inclusive strategies from teaching staff
- ▶ what support Disability Services will provide
- ▶ what actions you'll take.

As part of your plan, we'll also talk about ways that we can tailor our support to best suit you. For example, you may require specific types of support such as coaching, places to rest, or certain kinds of technology.

3. Get you connected

We can help you get connected—across the University—with other students, academic staff, or another service like Student Counselling.

4. Check in with you

At the end of the trimester we encourage you to reflect on what worked and what didn't. We'll discuss your progress toward your goals and your satisfaction with the support that you're receiving. This will help us plan for the next trimester.

5. Prepare for graduation

At any time during your study—particularly as you get close to graduating—we can connect you with our partners in Careers and Employment, and Workbridge who can help prepare you for meaningful employment during and after your study.

We encourage you to stay in touch with us following graduation. We are always keen to hear stories from our alumni.

Connecting with us

Getting Registered

Registering with us is different to applying for admission to the University. Even if you haven't applied for admission to the University yet—you can still register with Disability Services as a prospective student.

To register with us:

- ▶ call us on 04 463 6070
- ▶ email us at disability@vuw.ac.nz
- ▶ drop in to see us on level 1 of the Robert Stout building on Kelburn campus
- ▶ or register online at www.wgtn.ac.nz/disability/for-students/register

Supporting documentation

When you register with Disability Services, you'll also need to provide us with some supporting documentation about your impairment.

For example, an assessment or report from a registered health professional such a doctor, specialist, psychologist, counsellor, or educational psychologist that describes the impact your impairment is likely to have on you and your study. This enables us to tailor support and services to meet your needs.

To assist you to provide this documentation, if you do not have it, we can supply a form you can give to your registered health professional to complete and return.

If you have a recurring or temporary impairment we will need to be kept up-to-date with any changes. We respect the expertise you have about your lived impairment experience so we will also ask you about this.

Privacy and confidentiality

Our staff are aware that personal information we hold about you may be of a private and confidential nature.

As a general rule, the personal information you disclose to us is treated as confidential and not available to anyone outside of Disability Services, except with your consent. We will only override this when there is a serious concern for your health or safety, or the health or safety of someone else, or when there is a legal duty to provide health information.

When you register with us, your enrolment details will be updated to indicate that you have an impairment. This is also confidential and is used for statistical purposes only.

We are bound by the rules of the Health Information Privacy Code and the Health Act regarding the collection, storage, and access to your personal information.

Sharing your information with other staff

You and your disability and inclusion adviser may discuss the benefits of sharing some information about your impairment related needs—such as outlined in your education access plan (EAP)—with other University staff. Sharing this information can inform other staff as to how they can best support your equitable access to education.

If you have any concerns about privacy and confidentiality, discuss these with your disability and inclusion adviser.



Our Workbridge partnership

We have partnered with Workbridge, and Careers and Employment to assist current students and graduates with obtaining meaningful and inclusive employment opportunities.

We work in partnership with you to ensure you can fully participate in your studies and achieve your aspirations. We can support you to prepare for work by identifying your strengths and help you positively disclose your impairment related needs to others.

Careers and Employment work with you to help find your career direction. They can assist you with career guidance, planning, CV skills, job applications, and job search strategies.

Workbridge works closely with employers to support them to be more inclusive. They can work with you to find the right job and link you with these employers. They can also help you with CVs, cover letters, and support you through the application process.

Together we can help you get connected with employers and the community, develop your skills and prepare for your future employment.

To get involved

Just contact us at disability@vuw.ac.nz or call 04 463 6070 to be connected with the University's Workbridge consultant.

“I recently started a job at Customs. Everyone is very kind and I’ve been doing great work. I feel my skills and Master’s Degree are a real asset to the team as they give us more ways to explore and interpret Custom’s data. Workbridge has been a great help with getting the job - I don’t think I would’ve got it without them.”

- Cadin Glennie, Alumni

Useful Resources

Visit our website for the latest events and news, a range of publications including our self-help guides, and our policies and procedures

www.wgtn.ac.nz/disability/publications

For any queries and more information:

- ▶ phone 04 463 6070
- ▶ email disability@vuw.ac.nz
- ▶ or drop in to see us on Level 1 of the Robert Stout building on Kelburn Campus.





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MAI I TE IHO KI TE PAE

DISABILITY SERVICES

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