**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 Victoria University of Wellington’s culture of inclusion, celebrate disability and 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.

Jo Hodge  
Acting Manager, Disability Services
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DISABILITY SERVICES CONTACT DETAILS
Email: disability@vuw.ac.nz
Phone: 04-463 6070
Website: www.victoria.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.

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

Many of the students we see have multiple impairments and we are experienced in supporting students who have complex requirements.

More than 1500 students with disabilities register with our service annually.
Our Approach

We view disability as a diverse and complex phenomenon, reflecting an interaction between an individual and their environment.

We recognise that disability comes in many different forms – including physical, mental, learning or sensory forms of impairment – and is experienced differently by each individual. We also recognise that these barriers may hinder an individual's full participation in society on an equal basis with others.

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

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. Outside our core team, we have a dedicated of academic support workers, New Zealand Sign Language interpreters and volunteers, and we have 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.victoria.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 for students

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 a 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, located at both Kelburn and Pipitea campus. 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 registered 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 have registered. If you are having difficulty accessing the suite, get in touch with us.

What can you 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
Key Services for students [continued]

Disability Services and ITS staff to be prompt in dealing with any issues

What are your responsibilities when using an Access Suite?

- Be respectful of 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, taking all 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 furniture.

What if there is an issue with a computer or printer?

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

How can you give feedback?

We always appreciate feedback; it helps us to continually improve the Access Suites. Feedback can be either: given directly to a Disability Services staff member, emailed to disability@vuw.ac.nz, given to library staff, or placed in the suggestions boxes found in some Access Suites.

What 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.

Reported inappropriate behaviour will be investigated and may result in access being removed or further disciplinary action. Hot food is not to be eaten in the study/computer areas.
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

An education access plan can be completed with a disability and inclusion adviser. It outlines 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. They are designed to support you to articulate your needs to academic staff and to have ownership of your university

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 to introduce you to adaptive technology are held throughout the year.

Accessible test and/or exam facilities

Accessible assessment facilities are available for tests or exams. You may require an accessible facility if the impact of your impairment means you need extra time, a reader/writer, a computer, a smaller assessment room, or ergonomic furniture.
Key Services for students [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
- high tables for standing study.

All access suites have a full range of ergonomic furniture and these items can be moved to lecture and tutorial rooms when required.

Mobility parking

Mobility parking is available if you hold a CCS Disability Action mobility card, or have been granted access by a disability and inclusion adviser. Parking is timetabled to fit in with your study hours. There is a small cost for mobility parking.

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 between-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 lecture information. Your disability and inclusion adviser will identify which note-taking service best meets your needs.

**Note-taking**

There are two different ways that we can provide you with notes from your lectures.

The first option is to receive notes taken by a volunteer student note taker. These notes should be used to supplement other information you will 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, such as a hand injury, or those with a specific learning disability, such as dyslexia.

**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 week 3 of a trimester.
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 a laptop. This service is for students who cannot access oral or written information.

**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 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 an ongoing sign language interpreter and 1 week to arrange 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, or suspect that you might, we can help you determine what it might be and what support you’ll require. Screening tests can be used to identify specific learning disabilities, or behaviour associated with those disabilities.

We work closely with Student Learning, who can assist you with learning strategies, such as reading, study skills, 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, as they’ll become your 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 year to year.

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 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.

Students who require minimal support may still find it useful at this point to know what kind of support is available should they need it.

### 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 towards 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, as we’re always keen to hear stories from our alumni.
Connecting with us

Getting Registered

Getting registered with us is different to applying for enrolment at the University. If you haven’t applied for enrolment yet, that’s not a problem—you can register with Disability Services as a prospective student, or as an enrolled student.

To register with us:

- Call us on 04-463 6070
- Email us at disability@vuw.ac.nz
- Drop in to see us in RS155 on Kelburn Campus
- Or register online at: https://www.victoria.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.

We respect the expertise you have about your lived impairment experience so will also ask you about this. To assist you to provide this documentation, here is a form you can give to your registered health professional to complete. If you have a recurring or temporary impairment we will need to be kept up-to-date with any changes.
Privacy

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 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 will discuss the possibility of sharing your personal information with other University staff. The purpose of this is to enable your equitable access at the University. Your information will assist staff with your Education Access Plan and mean that they can provide you with the best possible support.

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

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

How can Disability Services, Workbridge and Careers and Employment help you transition to employment?

We work in partnership with you to ensure you can fully participate in your studies and achieve your aspirations. In preparation for work we can support you to identify your strengths and positively disclose your disability needs to others.

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

Careers and Employment assists students and graduates with career plans, job applications and job search strategies. They 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.victoria.ac.nz/disability/publications

For queries and more information, call 04 463 6070, email disability@vuw.ac.nz or drop in to see us on Level 1 of Robert Stout on Kelburn Campus.