



# 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005

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CRICOS Provider Name: Christian Heritage College  
CRICOS Provider No: 01016F

**CHC**  
CHRISTIAN HERITAGE COLLEGE

## Questions for educators and providers of education and training

Tell us about your experiences with students with disability.

### **Enrolment and access: What has been your experience with students with disability accessing education?**

As the Disability Support Officer (DSO) at CHC, my primary role has been to assist students with disabilities by being the conduit between academic staff and students. I assist students to access content relating to their degree through a detailed academic plan specifically tailored for their needs.

### **Participation: Do you understand your obligations for making reasonable adjustments to ensure all students with disability can participate in education?**

Yes, I understand this would include participating in courses and programs, curriculum, and using facilities.

### **Would you know how to consult with a student or parent / carer? If you have had experiences in making reasonable adjustments, tell us about this.**

Yes, I understand my obligations for making reasonable adjustments to the various areas of higher education. These adjustments are organised in consultation with the student along with advice from the student's medical professional (eg. GP, psychologist, social worker etc.). At times, although rarely, this can also include advice from a parent or carer. If adjustments affect how an assessment is completed, I will consult with the relevant course coordinator to seek necessary advice on what alternatives are provided to the student to complete the assessment. Most adjustments relate to provision of extra time for assessments and exams as well as additional classroom resources.

### **Supporting students: How have you appropriately supported students with disability during their education? This includes the student being able to access supports, including specialist resources.**

The DSO provides ongoing support for students with disabilities through an individually tailored Academic Support Plan (ASP). Once the ASP completed, it is shared only with lecturers and course coordinators with instructions on adjustments and interactions for the student. The ASP reassessed at the end of every semester and changes adjusted accordingly.

The secondary role of the DSO is to provide pastoral care support such as being attentive to the emotional as well as physical well-being of students by modelling the Christian ethos of CHC. They also provide ongoing communication between academic



staff regarding progress and challenges of students and connect students to further support with specialist organisations for support outside of CHC.

Finally, the DSO acts as an advocate for the student between academic staff and other students through grievances or complaints.

**Harassment or victimisation: Have you had a situation where one of your students with disability experienced harassment or victimisation? What steps did you take to address this?**

No incident has been recorded.

**Compliance: Have any of your students or parents / carers said that you were not meeting your obligations? How did you address this?**

The students surveyed have been grateful for the support offered.

**Transition: Tell us about your experience assisting a student with disability to transition from one education sector to another; for example, from school to further education.**

N/A.

**Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disability: Tell us about your experiences supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disability. How did you help them to access and participate in education? How did you consult with them and their families and carers?**

The DSO followed normal procedures of consulting and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (see supporting students' description above).

**Specific experiences: Access and participation in education for students with disability may be affected by other circumstances such as age, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, intersex status, ethnic origin or race, and culturally and linguistically diverse background. If you have had students with disability who were affected by other circumstances, tell us about how you helped them to access and participate in education.**

The DSO followed normal procedures of consulting and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (see supporting students' description above).

Cultural adjustments were made to cater for students from different cultural backgrounds and who are (EAL/D) learners such as adhering to cultural norms regarding personal and physical boundaries and body language.

Interaction with LGBTQI students followed normal procedures with partner of students often invited into conversations and meetings upon the request of the student.



**COVID-19: Has COVID-19 impacted the experience of your students with disability in participating in education? Have their experiences ever been impacted by other major events, such as natural disasters?**

Overall, half of the students with mental health concerns found the isolation experience of COVID-19 particularly difficult due to the stress of the pandemic on top of their studies. Also, some who relied on-site classes for structure as part of their routine found the change to online classes difficult and disruptive. This affected their ability to participate in lectures and complete assessment. Whilst other students with mental health concerns, found the change easier to cope with and even helpful.

**We want to know what you think about the Standards.**

**Are you familiar with the Standards and what they are designed to do? If so, where did you find out about the Standards?**

Yes, I researched the Standards when I started the role as DSO at CHC.

**Have you received training of any kind about the Standards? What did this involve?**

No.

**Do you understand your obligations when it comes to students with disability being able to access and participate in education? How have the Standards helped you to understand your obligations?**

Yes, I understand my obligation to provide support for a learning environment of equal opportunity to students with disability and to treat them with dignity and assist them in accessing the benefits of tertiary education.

**The Standards have given good guidelines of what is a reasonable adjustment and how to assess a student's adjustment request.**

**Do you feel confident negotiating and implementing a reasonable adjustment? Do you know how to determine if this would result in unjustifiable hardship?**

Yes, I am confident in negotiating and implementing a reasonable adjustment. If I felt an adjustment may affect learning outcomes or specific criteria which needs to be for a unit or course, I would consult with the relevant academic staff, usually the course coordinator or if needed consult the Dean of the school involved.

**Do you think the Standards help students with disability to access and participate in education and training on the same basis as students without disability? Why, or why not?**

Yes, the Standards give outlines and guidelines for both education facilities and students with disabilities on how to access education with equal opportunity for all. It



allows accountability and implementation guidelines for educators in their conduct and policies and procedures produced.

**Do you think the Standards help Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disability to access and participate in education and training on the same basis as students without disability? Tell us why you think this.**

My engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students has been very limited at CHC, however, the few students I have supported, I have been able to implement the same procedures and treat them with the same dignity and respect as I do all other students.

**This Review will help us to consider if we need to improve the Standards and how they are used and implemented. We want to know how you think the Standards could be improved.**

**How do you think the Standards could be improved to help overcome barriers for students with disability in accessing or participating in education?**

Standards could be improved by:

- Giving students more individual rights to freedom of expression, self-determination, and decision-making
- For students to feel included and for services to work together with individuals to enable their genuine participation and inclusion
- For joint effort between students and services provider
- For students to know where and who to give feedback and complaints
- For students to know where to access necessary services and resources

**Do the Standards need changing? If so, please let us know how you would change them.**

Being new to this role, I have limited understanding of what Standards would require changing.

**What should be done to improve awareness of the Standards?**

More "town hall" consultation with students with disabilities and their service providers.

**Do you need more or different support to help you to understand and apply the Standards? What kind of support would be useful?**

Something that would be useful might include a creation of a website to discover and access disability consultations from the governing body as well as to share ideas and have your say about what matters.



**Do you find the Guidance Notes for the Standards useful? If not, why not?**

Yes, they help unpack and show the application of the Standards to education institutions.

**What would you change to make the Standards work better for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disability and their families and carers?**

I have limited understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture regarding disabilities and therefore cannot make an informed comment on this matter.

For further information, please email [studentservices@chc.edu.au](mailto:studentservices@chc.edu.au)

