



Enrolment

Getting That Photo

After students have received their offers of a place in TAFE or University and have nominated their acceptance, they need to enrol at the institution. The process of enrolling can be exhausting with forms to complete, payments to be arranged, venues to be located and finally lining up for that photo that adorns the student card.

Disclosure Of Disability

Students with a disability are also faced with the choice of whether or not to disclose their disability at the time of enrolment. At the time of enrolment students have an opportunity to disclose their disability on the enrolment form and/or to the Disability Support service at the Institution.

Enrolment Forms

Enrolment forms require all students to provide a range of information, some of which is used simply to build a statistical picture of the numbers and types of students enrolling in any one year.

Most enrolment forms also include questions relating to disability. The enrolment form often requests information about whether a student has a disability and the type of disability. This information assists the institution in building a statistical picture of the student population. **Some** institutions may also ask if students would like to receive information about the services and supports available to them because of their disability. Disclosing your disability on an enrolment form does NOT ensure that you are identified and registered with the disability support service at that institution.

State and Federal Privacy Acts provide information on the responsibilities of educational institutions with regard to the collection of personal information. It requires educational institutions to take reasonable steps, at the time, or as soon as practicable afterwards, to make students aware of certain information. A statement or supporting letter from the institution tends to be placed on forms that require confidential information that outlines:

- why the institution is collecting the information;
- who and where the information will go to and how to contact them;
- any consequences if the student does not provide the information
- what other organisation student information may be given to and
- that the student can access personal information held about them by the institution. It is important to obtain this information **before** deciding to disclose disability information on any forms.

The statement should provide sufficient information for the student to determine whether to disclose or not and to know to whom they are disclosing. For more information about state and federal Privacy Acts refer to the Privacy and Confidentiality section in this Resource (<http://pubsites.uws.edu.au/ndco/disclosure/pdfs/leg/privacy.pdf>) or go to the Office of the Federal Privacy Commissioner website at <http://www.privacy.gov.au>.

Disability Support Services

A student may also notify disability support staff at the TAFE or University of their choice at the time of enrolment to advise them that they are enrolling. The disability support service is specifically set up to provide information, support and practical assistance to students with a disability.

Disability support staff also provide support to academic and other staff working with students with a disability. From time to time they may provide professional development support.

If a student chooses to disclose their disability at enrolment time to access disability support services, it is highly recommended that this occurs with the disability support staff as soon as possible. This provides an opportunity for the student to discuss and implement education related adjustments required and any other support structures such as mentoring and learning skills support.

When a student contacts disability support staff, all personal information such as information about their disability will remain confidential. Information about students will not be given to others without the student's written consent.

Why Students Choose to Disclose at the Point of Enrolling

Carmen received notification that she has been accepted into the course and institution of her choice. While completing the enrolment form she decides to disclose both that she has a disability and the type of disability. Carmen also chooses to indicate that she would like to receive information about support services that may be available to her.

Students may choose to disclose at the time of enrolment to:

- find out how to access disability support services when they begin their course
- obtain information about the range of available support services available at the education institution
- ensure the institution is aware that they will be attending and may require education related adjustments to be implemented in their study environment.

Why Students Choose Not to Disclose at the Point of Enrolling

Jessica decided not to disclose her disability on the enrolment form, because she wasn't sure what assistance she would require and because she was fearful of discrimination and not being accepted into her course.

Students may choose NOT to disclose to an education institution at the time of enrolling because:

- they feel they may experience discrimination and not be admitted into their chosen course (*Note: refer to the*
- *Disability Discrimination Act document at <http://pubsites.uws.edu.au/ndco/disclosure/pdfs/leg/dda.pdf>. Education institutions must ensure that students with a disability receive non-discriminatory treatment, including during the enrolment process*)
- they may not require any additional support or services
- they may be uncertain whether to contact disability support services at this time (*Note: accessing disability support services at enrolment is considered good practice for students with disabilities*)
- they may not know who will have access to their personal information (*Note: refer to the Privacy Act (<http://pubsites.uws.edu.au/ndco/disclosure/pdfs/leg/privacy.pdf>) about the right to obtain information about what happens to personal information and disability specific information that the institution collects about them.*)
- they may be unsure if they will need support.

What to Disclose

Enrolment form:

Students with a disability are not legally required to disclose their disability on enrolment forms. If a student chooses to disclose their disability, they are only required to answer the specific questions on the form. These questions tend to be specific to identifying that they have a disability and the category of disability which best applies to them. It is not necessary to disclose specific medical or personal information about a disability.

Disability support services:

If students choose not to disclose their disability on the enrolment form, they still have the option of contacting the disability support service staff at any time to advise that they are enrolled and to seek information or practical support to assist with their studies.

Disclosure of disability specific information to disability support staff is required for support services to be successfully implemented in the education institution. Disability information is required for the disability officer to work with the student to:

- assess the needs of the student based on the impact of their disability on study
- identify, implement and evaluate the education related adjustments required
- provide disability education, training and awareness for academic and general staff
- design, implement and monitor support plans.

Formal documentation about the students disability is often required. Additional information required or discussed may include:

- information about education related adjustments provided in secondary or other education environments
- specific disability information and possible effects on education
- study history
- technology skills
- support structures within the home and community.

It is not always essential to disclose specific personal information about a disability. What is most important and helpful is to provide information about how the students disability impacts on their capacity to study and what supports are needed to assist in providing the optimum environment for study to occur.

To Whom Should Students Disclose?

If a student with a disability chooses to disclose their disability at enrolment time, the most appropriate pathways to disclose is on an enrolment form (by answering the disability specific questions) or to the disability support staff at the education institution.

The Purpose Of Disclosing

The main purposes of disclosure at the point of enrolling is to:

- inform the educational institution of their disability via the enrolment form. This assists institutions to collect data on disability required by the Institutions relevant funding body. Disability information may also enable the institution to contact those students who have indicated that they want further information about disability services
- *(this service may not occur at every institution so it is important to investigate the purposes for the collection of disability information.*
- to advise disability support services at the education institution that they are enrolled and to seek information, support and/or the implementation of education related adjustments

Student Rights And Responsibilities When Disclosing At The Time Of Enrolling

Students have a right to:

- information about what happens to personal information and disability specific information that the institution collects about them
- information about existing disability support services and education related adjustments that they may access during their course.
- privacy and confidentiality
- work collaboratively with staff to identify disability specific support needs required in the education environment.

Students are Responsible for:

- ensuring that they fully understand the academic and practical requirements of the course in which they are enrolling. There may be appropriate education related adjustments that can be made to enable the student to fulfill the requirements of the course.
- investigate registration board core requirements with professional or authorising bodies if a student is planning to undertake a course to obtain a particular career.
- completing the section of the enrolment form, which asks about disability, if they wish to have their

- disability status recorded by the institution
- to find out about all options for accessing the institution of their choice.

Educational Institution Roles And Responsibilities At The Time Of Enrolling

Role:

- education providers are obliged to ensure that prospective students with disabilities are not discriminated against in seeking admission and enrolment. Providers have an obligation to make reasonable adjustments, where necessary, to ensure that prospective students with disabilities are able to be considered for enrolment and complete enrolment processes without discrimination.(1)
- educational institutions have a role in promoting disability support services to all students or prospective students.
- educational providers are obliged to ensure that all staff involved in enrolment processes are trained in understanding and implementing nondiscriminatory practices.

Responsibilities:

- institutions are responsible for providing appropriate services if students disclose a disability at the time of enrolling.
- educational institutions are responsible for ensuring that the academic and practical requirements of each course are clearly articulated to enable students with a disability to consider their needs for any reasonable adjustments in relation to their disability and their chosen course.
- course coordinators or heads of school need to ensure that the core requirements for registration with appropriate professional or authorising bodies is made available. This information needs to be made freely available for all prospective students.
- it is important to know that Universities, TAFE's and other tertiary institutions must ensure that students with a disability receive nondiscriminatory treatment. This includes the provision of appropriate educational adjustments. This is a requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).

Footnotes

(1) Disability Education Standards

http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/school_education/programmes_funding/forms_guidelines/disability_standards_for_education.htm