

Practice Illustration

Participation – Perceptions



Practice scenario

A student commences the Children's Services course and identifies that they are Deaf. The student can lip-read and generally uses a speech-to-text app on her phone to support conversations. For important information sharing, they use an Auslan interpreter.

Registered training organisation (RTO) staff members express concerns about the student. They are unsure of the student's capability to work safely in a Children's Services setting.

The student indicates that there is likely to be an early childhood education and care service for children who are Deaf. This service may be willing to assist in supporting placement. The student understands there are challenges and potential barriers. They also know it may be difficult to secure a placement. They would still like to see what opportunity may be possible. Given their passion for children's education, they want to be able to pursue this career.

Better practice response

RTO staff members assume the student will not be able to meet the requirements of the course and job roles. The student expresses their passion. They also say they have a commitment to trialling a range of strategies as this is their dream. This challenges staff perceptions. It convinced them to explore the possibilities of supporting the student's aspirations.

In consultation with the student, staff members explore the course requirements, including the vocational placement. They pay particular attention to the performance evidence. The student identifies several strategies they can use to help manage and meet these requirements. Together they identify a few services for children who are Deaf or have a hearing impairment.

Both student and RTO staff members meet with the various agencies. They explore agency willingness to support the student throughout their training and assessment. While most agencies felt it was a big ask, one expressed a strong desire to support the student, with the view that it would be positive role modelling for the children in their care and their parents and would also be an opportunity for the organisation to 'walk their talk' about inclusion.

The agency representative highlights the range of assistive technology they have in place. They identify support strategies and confirm that they always have a staff member on duty who can use Auslan. They also have light-based emergency features in their facility. The agency feels these will support the student's participation. They will conduct a work health and safety assessment to ensure the student can operate safely in the environment. They do not perceive there will be any barriers.

On recommendation from the student, the RTO staff also contacted *deafConnectEd*. They discussed strategies to strengthen their delivery and assessment practice. This included:

- enabling auto-captions and transcription in TEAMS for class webinars and personal meetings
- checking captioning and transcription quality
- slowing down presentations to allow a better pace of captions, transcription or interpretation
- trainers and assessors positioning themselves in classes so their faces are visible
- providing content ahead of classes so students and interpreters can prepare themselves (e.g., pre-reading, agendas, handouts, copies of presentations, details of terminology/jargon)
- recording and transcribing classes (on-site and online) where possible
- considering the noise levels in the learning environment (e.g., classrooms that are near exits or student lounges can be especially noisy, and unnecessary sounds or notifications on the computer can be distracting)
- being mindful of how verbal/audio learning and assessment elements are being used
- ensuring availability of text alternatives for verbal/audio learning and assessment elements
- setting aside student consultation time outside of class for questions, clarification or feedback.

The RTO does not have a budget for providing Auslan interpreting, and there is no policy or procedure for conducting a cost–benefit analysis. This type of expenditure needs further consideration. The student and the teaching team map out the parts of the course that may need Auslan interpreting. They identify how to optimise existing strategies and technologies. Based on this information, the RTO manager conducts a cost–benefit analysis. They consider the:

- student's preferences

- use of the student's existing strategies and assistive technology
- RTO's assistive technology capabilities
- support from the vocational placement agency to support the student
- the benefit for the student
- impact on the RTO and other students
- anticipated cost of the interpreting
- RTO's capacity to pay for the interpreting.

The analysis indicates that, while it is an extra cost for the RTO, the benefits are greater. It is therefore viable to provide an Auslan interpreter for the course duration.

The RTO manager also believes these types of costs should be ongoing considerations. They recommend a budget line for reasonable adjustments for the future. A policy and procedure will be created for conducting a cost–benefit analysis.

Action and Evidence

The RTO took all reasonable steps to support participation and respond to individual learner needs. It will be important for the RTO to document all conversations and agreements about adjustments and supports.

This scenario emphasises the importance of supporting student's aspirations and being willing to explore all possible options. What may have seemed like a challenge to begin with was, in the end, a great success story. This was due to everyone's commitment to exploring the possibilities for participation. The student has every opportunity to pursue the course of their choice.

Please note: Every student's particular circumstance will be unique, and the illustration of practice is indicative and offered as guidance only.

Links to the relevant legislation and standards to meet RTO obligations

[Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\) \(DSE\)](#)

Making reasonable adjustments – Part 3: The Standards require education providers to make reasonable adjustments where necessary. A reasonable adjustment is a measure or action taken by an education provider in relation to applying for enrolment, participating in the course or program, or accessing services and facilities; to ensure the student with disability can access, use and participate on the same basis as a student without disability. There is no requirement to make unreasonable adjustments.

Standards for Participation – Part 5: The education provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the student is able to participate in the course or program provided by the educational institution, and use the facilities and services provided by it, on the same basis as a student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination.

2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

[*National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) Instrument 2025*](#)

Outcome1: Quality training and assessment engages VET students and enables them to attain nationally recognised, industry relevant competencies.

Outcome Standard 1.8: Facilities, resources and equipment for each training product are fit-for-purpose, safe, accessible and sufficient.

Outcome 2: VET students are treated fairly and properly informed, supported and protected.

Outcome Standard 2.1: VET students have access to clear and accurate information concerning the organisation, the relevant training product, and students are made aware of any changes that may affect them.

Outcome Standard 2.2: VET students are advised, prior to enrolment, about the suitability of the training product for them, taking into account the student's skills and competencies.

Outcome Standard 2.3: VET students have access to support services, trainers and assessors and other staff to support their progress throughout the training product.

Outcome Standard 2.4: Reasonable adjustments are made to support VET students with disability to access and participate in training and assessment on an equal basis.

Outcome Standard 2.5: The learning environment promotes and supports the diversity of VET students.

Outcome Standard 2.6: The wellbeing needs of the VET student cohort are identified and strategies are put in place to support those needs.

Please note: RTOs registered by the *Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority* or the *Training Accreditation Council Western Australia* may refer to the following websites for requirements specific to you.

[*Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority*](#)

[*Training Accreditation Council Western Australia*](#)

Disclaimer

The 'supporting students with disability resources' provide guidance on legislation and policy for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) regarding vocational education and training for students with disability, but they should not be considered legal advice or impose additional legal obligations. RTOs should seek tailored legal advice to understand their specific obligations.

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