

Guidelines for Inclusive Enrolment Practices in Vocational Education and Training



Acknowledgement of Country

ADCET is committed to the self-determination of First Nations peoples. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of all the lands across Australia and pay our deep respect to Elders past and present.

Note on language

This resource uses person-first language (e.g., 'student with disability'), but this approach does not suit everyone, and many people prefer identity-first language (e.g., 'disabled student'). It is up to the individual how they choose to identify. We encourage you to ask individuals what they prefer. We also acknowledge the deep history behind all these terms.

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.



Acknowledgements

The Australian Government provided funding for the development of this project in partnership with the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET). This project was overseen by an advisory committee and would not have been possible without the support and efforts of many tertiary practitioners and professionals who participated and contributed to project reference groups and consultations.

We extend our sincere thanks to all those who participated and contributed.

Program Manager

Darlene McLennan, ADCET, University of Tasmania

Program Advisory Group

Jennifer Cousins, TAFE SA, SA; Nancy Knowling, ADCET; Elicia Ford, Centre for Disability Studies; Jessica Buhne, University of Sydney; Kim Hawkins, Redgate Workforce Solutions; David Swain, STEPS Group Australia

Project Lead

Dr Elizabeth Knight, CIRES: Mitchell Institute, Victoria University

Project Staff

Dr Reshma Roy, Dr Yuan Gao, Dr Melissa Tham, Robyn Klepetko, CIRES: Mitchell Institute; Jen Anderson, Maria Vardakis; Kamal Singh and Madhusha Wijayarathne, Accessibility Services, Student Life and Wellbeing, Victoria University

The project staff who produced these guidelines were based at Victoria University City campus, and the project team acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the Traditional Owners of Victoria University land.

Production and Administrative Support Team

Editors Jo Vabolis and Gabrielle O'Brien, graphic designer Hazelman Creative, and administration support Kylie Geard and Charley Ulale

Project Reference Group

Susan Beard, Kirsty Runciman, Julie Irwin and Debbie Rooskov, National Disability Coordination Officers; Sarah Berwick, TasTAFE, Tas; Emily Bodey, Victoria University, Vic; Dr Lea Campbell, University of Melbourne, Vic; Kira Clarke, Senior Research Fellow, Brotherhood of St. Laurence, Vic; Brooke Conley, TasTAFE, Tas; Claire Field, Claire Field & Associates, NSW; Dr Jane Hickey, Victoria University, Vic; Taylor Leather, South Metro TAFE, WA; Julie Phillips, Disability Discrimination Legal Service, Vic; Kerry Rock, Response Training, NT; Dr Ben Whitburn, Deakin University, Victoria.

Critical friends

Professor Anne Jones, Victoria University and Asher Wolf, Disability Advocate, Victoria

About this Guide

The structure of the Inclusive Enrolment Practices Guidelines is in three parts:

- **Part 1: A Guide to Understanding Inclusive Enrolment Practices** defines enrolment practices, explains the regulatory and policy frameworks, details key issues regarding supporting students with disability during the enrolment process and proposes inclusive principles the RTO could implement.
- **Part 2: Practice Notes for Implementing Inclusive Enrolment Practices** for each element of enrolment practice, noting the scope of RTO responsibility, with advice for good practice and two worked examples for each element.
- **Part 3: Templates for Implementing Inclusive Enrolment Practices** to use and adapt for your own RTO.
- **References and Glossary.**



Contents

.....	i
Acknowledgement of Country	i
Note on language	i
Disclaimer	i
Acknowledgements	ii
About this Guide	iii
Inclusive Enrolment Practices	1
Part 1A: Understanding Inclusive Enrolment Practices	3
Part 1B: Key issues in developing inclusive enrolment practices that support access to VET	8
Part 1C: Inclusive principles for enrolment processes	15
Part 2: Implementing Inclusive Practices – Practice Guidance Notes	19
Practice Guidance Note 1 – Pre-enrolment Element: Course Information	22
Practice Guidance Note 2 – Pre-enrolment Element: First Contact	27
Practice Guidance Note 3 – Pre-enrolment Element: Application documents	33
Practice Guidance Note 4 – Enrolment Element: Process	38
Practice Guidance Note 5 – Enrolment Element: Onboarding to the RTO	43
Practice Guidance Note 6 – Enrolment Element: Orientation to teaching and learning	48
Part 3: Templates	54
Template 1: Course information	55
Template 2: Disability support information	57
Template 3: Disability support information	58
Template 4: Event sign-up form	59
Template 5: Record of Enquiry form	60
Template 6: Application form extract	62
Template 7: Reasonable adjustment information	64
Template 8: Record of Enquiry form	65
Template 8: Enrolment form extract	65
Template 9: Screening assessments – exploring support needs	67
References	68
Glossary	70

Inclusive Enrolment Practices

An estimated one in six people have a disability (AIHW, 2022). However, students with disability continue to be underrepresented in vocational education and training (VET) (ADCET, 2022). In the 2020 Review of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (Cth) there were several areas identified for enhancement. VET enrolment practices were highlighted as an area where there were limited resources to support registered training organisation (RTO) practice.

The target audience for these guidelines is RTOs. These guidelines are aimed at all VET providers but are written with a particular focus on the needs of small-to-medium organisations.

These guidelines aim to:

- help you enhance practice in your RTO. They should strengthen your RTO's confidence in supporting the success of students with disability
- provide RTO staff with access to an online reference resource to be used for planning and self-assurance
- encourage RTOs to review all relevant policies, procedures and practices against the outlined regulatory requirements. Undertaking this type of self-assurance aims to improve key practices across the organisation
- improve practice and help RTOs decide how to best allocate resources and responsibilities to address the needs of students with disability. We recognise and respect that RTOs are trying to do their best, and often work within constrained funding contexts
- encourage RTOs to be mindful of the ever-shifting landscape and new technologies as they emerge. These changes may be beyond the scope of these guidelines and we recommend you explore new offerings as they come to light.

These guidelines align with legislative requirements including:

- [National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) Instrument 2025](#). These Outcome Standards are one component of the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs).

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](#)

- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\) \(DDA\)](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\) \(DSE\)](#)

- Corresponding Guidance Notes: [Practice Guides Outcome Standards for RTOs \(Australian Skills Qualification Authority\)](#), [DDA](#) and [DSE](#)
- the [2020 Review of the DSE](#).

Part 1A: Understanding Inclusive Enrolment Practices

Access, inclusion and equity are about education being available free of any form of discrimination. This means RTO policies, procedures and practices should be developed, delivered and reviewed on the basis of fair treatment for all students.

There should be an orientation towards student success underpinned by an understanding that students have diverse and variable needs. This may mean that students with the same disability diagnosis may need quite different support. Students with disability are entitled to, and want to participate fully and succeed in, training and education. Training providers have an obligation to do whatever is reasonably possible to support students.

This first section of these guidelines details information about how RTOs can make their enrolment practices inclusive. Key topics include:

- an overview by defining enrolment practices
- the regulatory framework and principles for inclusive practice
- key issues in enrolment processes in VET for students with disability
- inclusive principles to underpin enrolment.

Enrolment overview

The aim of these guidelines is to support the development of inclusive enrolment practices in any RTO, irrespective of its size or training delivery scope. As part of your self-assurance process, you may need to review your policies, practices and documentation to improve the inclusivity and accessibility of key practices across the organisation.

Enrolment is a critical part of the learner experience, and standards relating to enrolment appear both in the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) and also the DSE.

In brief:

The National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025, which is one component of the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), requires that 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 2.2).

The DSE has a section on Enrolment Standards (4.2), which states information about enrolment should address the needs of students with disabilities and should be accessible and available in a range of formats. Additionally, Standard 4.3.b specifies the measure that design of the RTO's enrolment procedures should be able to be completed without undue difficulty.

Further information about these standards and other regulatory frameworks is detailed later in these guidelines in the section '[Regulatory and policy frameworks](#)'.

Due to the vast array of enrolment processes RTOs have in place, neither the DSE nor the 2025 Standards for RTOs define exactly what steps should apply to enrolment processes. Enrolment varies due to the type of training course, program or unit, the length of the course and the type of funding.

In the development of these guidelines, it was found there was lack of clarity among RTO staff about what constitutes an inclusive enrolment practice. However, having a model of a successful enrolment is useful and these guidelines identified six key elements to ensuring a successful enrolment.

Enrolment elements

Enrolment is encompassed by numerous varied steps or elements that may not necessarily occur in sequence. However, all elements must be completed to be assured of a successful inclusive and accessible enrolment. The elements incorporate specific activities. Due to the specific nature of VET enrolment, and the variety of RTO models, the elements do not necessarily flow in a linear manner but have overlaps and duplicative steps.

The model identifies six different elements of enrolment practices, all of which are distinct and interlocking.

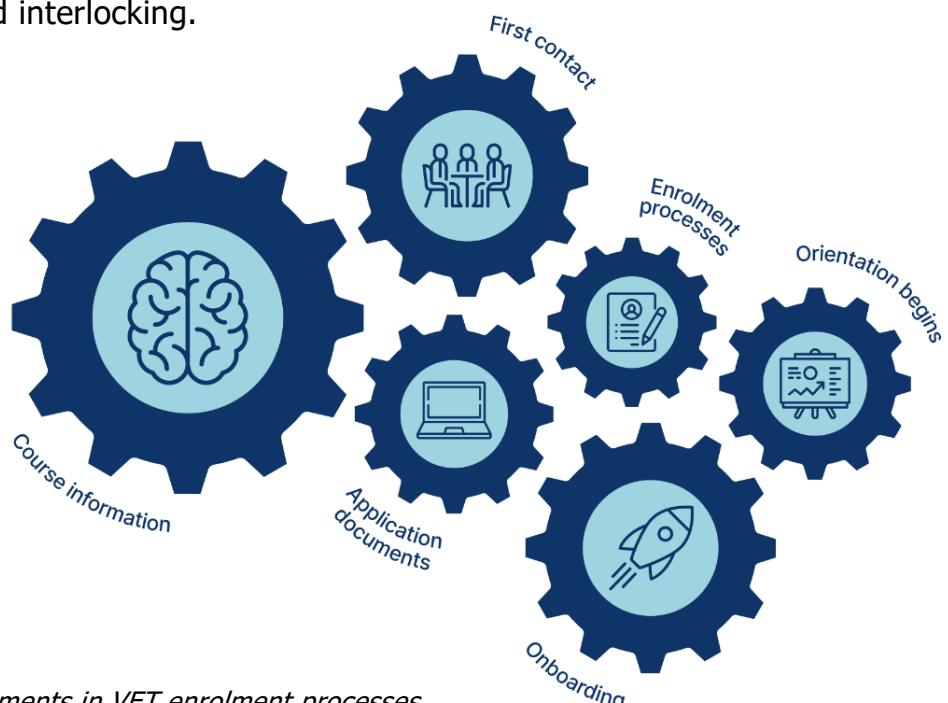


Figure 1: Elements in VET enrolment processes

Framing the model in this way recognises that enrolment is infrequently a linear process in VET. For example, students may commence their training and assessment at the same time as they complete all their formal paperwork.

This model also recognises the six enrolment elements may each be led by different teams within a large RTO or by different staff members in a medium RTO or, in a small RTO, may all be managed by one person.

It also allows the complicated and often very time-pressured enrolment process to be broken down into specific work areas that are divided between activities. All six elements can be mapped to areas and tasks that occur before and during the formal enrolment process (Table 1).

Table 1: Enrolment elements overview

Enrolment element	Stage of enrolment	Overview
Course information	Pre-enrolment	Involves the provision of information about VET courses by the RTO
First contact	Pre-enrolment	Related to supporting the first contact the student makes with the RTO which may be online, in person or by phone
Application documents	Pre-enrolment	Related to the first time the student provides their full details to the RTO or formally expresses interest in a particular course or program
Enrolment processes	Enrolment	Related to the formal procedures of enrolment
Onboarding to the RTO	Enrolment	Related to supporting the student to get ready to start their course. Includes identifying and arranging any support needed
Orientation to teaching and learning	Enrolment	Related to the commencement of teaching and learning activities, online or in person, synchronous or asynchronous

Regulatory and policy frameworks

Students with disability are entitled to, and want to participate in, training and education.

Training providers have an obligation to do whatever is reasonably necessary to ensure they are not creating barriers for students with disability. These obligations are covered by legislative and policy frameworks as well as any additional access and inclusion strategies RTOs have in place to support students with disability.

The key legislative and policy which governs support for people with disability includes:

- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\) \(DDA\)](#)
- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\) \(DSE\)](#)
- 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs): Comprised of three elements:

1. Outcome Standards (legislation):

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

Outcome focused requirements that support the delivery of nationally consistent and high-quality training that leads to quality outcomes for students, industry, employers and the Australian community.

2. Compliance requirements (legislation):

[National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements\) Instrument 2025.](#)

Administrative requirements, including the Fit and Proper Person Requirements and Nationally Recognised Training Logo Conditions of Use Policy, that support integrity in the VET sector.

3. [Credential Policy: Standards for Registered Training Organisations.](#)

An enforceable policy that outlines the credentials required for delivering training and assessments and undertaking validation of assessment.

Please note: Some RTOs in Victoria and Western Australia are regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority or the Training Accreditation Council Western Australia respectively.

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability 2009 \(UNCRPD\)](#)
- [State and territory equal opportunity legislation](#)

Each RTO should have explicit and responsive policies, procedures and practices that align with the relevant legislative frameworks to ensure staff are equipped to address the differing needs of students.

The RTO should also ensure training and assessment strategies meet the diverse needs of students with disability, and this includes enrolment practices. This means RTOs should anticipate the needs of students with disability and identify barriers to accessibility. RTOs should also ensure staff across the organisation feel confident to

support students with disability and should ensure students are well informed about their rights and responsibilities.

Training and resources

- [*ADCET | Legislation and Standards*](#)
- [*AHRC | Quick Guide to Australian Discrimination Laws*](#)
- [*United Nations | Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)*](#)
- [*UNCRPD | Australian Human Rights Commission*](#)
- [*UNCRPD | Australian Government Department of Social Services*](#)

Each legislation emphasises the need for education and training providers to take positive steps to eliminate unlawful discrimination on the basis of disability.

Summary

By considering these requirements when developing enrolment processes and making it obvious to prospective students that accessibility is embedded into enrolment processes, RTOs can meet their legal obligations and ensure more inclusive and welcoming approaches. This signals the RTO is endeavouring to improve engagement and participation for all learners, including students with disability.

Part 1B: Key issues in developing inclusive enrolment practices that support access to VET

There are several key issues or critical points in the enrolment process that be barriers to enrolment and support for students with disability in VET. By addressing these critical points RTOs can identify key considerations for reviewing, developing, and implementing inclusive enrolment policies, procedures and practices.

The following critical points are explored below:

- information provision about courses
- disclosure of support needs, moving away from medicalised disability declaration
- evidence required for disability support
- reasonable adjustments
- engagement with other support services
- data collection, collation and sharing
- need for evaluation and review.

Information provision about courses

As VET becomes more competitive, there is increasing pressure on the marketing of courses. Often this means a focus on what the course provides a student in terms of outcomes or future professional or personal development. With this focus, there seems to have been a gradual but distinct lessening of information about admissions requirements, course experience and learning requirements, and occupational outcomes in the provision of information about VET programs/courses.

The provision of training package or qualification or unit information does not mitigate this issue. For example, providing a link to the course outline on training.gov.au does not adequately inform a prospective student about the particular way an RTO will deliver training and assessment.

Pre-enrolment

Course information should clearly outline the admissions requirements. Even before the course, it is important that information and admissions requirements are clear and publicly available. Pre-entry information is also commonly known as enrolment requirements, course requirements or prerequisites. The provision of clear pre-entry information includes alternative ways to meet requirements if you require special consideration based on disability, or something deemed equivalent.

Admissions requirements may include auditions or portfolios, which have to be accepted before enrolling into the course. Enrolment requirements could cover screening tests for language, literacy, numeracy and digital (LLND) levels/skills/competencies that have to be done online before enrolment and funding are confirmed.

A major hurdle for students with disability is not being able to ensure they meet any admissions requirements or prerequisites or foresee their support needs. This is often due to minimal information about the course experience and learning requirements, including attendance expectations or physical and sensory requirements of the course. Course requirements might relate to lifting, handling or specific dexterity needed. All these issues should be explicated as early as possible in the process.

The information that is provided publicly should provide as much detail as possible about tasks and activities that are a core requirement of the course. These are sometimes known as 'inherent requirements'.

Sharing of support needs, moving away from medicalised disability disclosure

There is a practical and understandable focus on the disclosure of disability during enrolment processes as a solution to support students with disability. This increased focus is to prompt students to declare their disability earlier so support can be put in place. However, with continued reluctance to declare disability due to medicalisation of disability, the social model of disability takes a different approach. The social model takes a different approach which views the environment as the barrier not the person's disability.

Requests for 'evidence of disability' or 'verification' of disability through medical documentation and reporting perpetuates a medicalised model of disability and is at odds with [*Australia's Disability Strategy*](#), which explicitly recognises the social model of disability. Therefore, these guidelines are written in line with international interest to move away from the medical model of disability towards the social model of disability.

RTOs are advised to encourage students to share their support needs – rather than relying on medical declaration and evidence of disability. RTOs should know that students with disability are not obligated to disclose their specific disability unless they wish to request reasonable adjustments, or their disability is likely to pose a risk to themselves or others.

Supporting disclosure is best achieved using non-personal information-gathering instruments (e.g., designing specific forms or including a question on the enrolment form) rather than through course counselling. Follow-up questions about the type of reasonable adjustments could then be followed up separately.

Disclosure may also occur throughout the learning journey, but it is often better for both the RTO and the student when it occurs as early as possible. Declarations of support needs can be encouraged by making the process as positive as possible and ensuring the RTO proactively seeks information about support needs.

Regardless of the process used, it is important that RTOs clarify that personal information of students is private and confidential and the question is only asked for the purposes of being able to offer support and reasonable adjustments.

RTOs will need policies and procedures that outline these requirements.

For some students, acknowledging their disability and the impact it has on their learning can also be difficult. Some individuals may overestimate or underestimate their capabilities to complete a course or demonstrate competency. In some instances, a student may not be aware they have a disability and may not have the same cultural context or language to understand these concepts.

Evidence required for disability support

RTOs must also decide on the evidence needed before supports and adjustments are provided. This is becoming increasingly complex as cohorts of students who have been supported in school using concepts of imputed disability transition into VET.

Imputed disability

Imputed disability is a term that is used to describe a belief that someone has a disability. People who are imputed to have a disability are protected under the DDA and the DSE. Imputed disability is used widely for supporting students in the schooling sector and states:

i *For the purposes of the school-based Nationally Consistent Collection of Data, imputed disability means an undiagnosed disability the institutional team considers a student to have that is having a functional impact on their learning. In this scenario, the student may not have evidence, such as a diagnosis or assessment, to support their claim that they have a need for support and adjustments.*

Procurement of medical documentation to evidence disability can be difficult to gather in some circumstances, can be expensive and not necessarily productive in terms of RTOs being able to arrange support needs. For example, knowing that a person has an acquired brain injury, a learning disability or is a wheelchair user is not enough to assist an RTO to effectively determine what support needs the student will have.

It is also important to note that disability is understood differently across cultures, and a student may not identify as having disability much less be comfortable and confident to declare or discuss it.

In addition, while health professionals can make a clinical assessment or diagnosis, their skill set may not extend to identifying the impact of a person's disability on their learning or what appropriate reasonable adjustments and supports might be needed in a learning context. Students, in conjunction with teaching and learning staff, are often best placed to know what works for them based on their individual experiences and

learning needs. RTOs can get additional guidance on inclusive teaching approaches and reasonable adjustments through the practice guides and from ADCET.

When considering requests for documentation RTOs should consider:

- the aim or purpose of requesting the medical documentation or clinical verification (especially if it can be confirmed by the student, visually verified, or imputed) and only ask what is necessary
- the impact of this request on the student as it places the onus on students with disability to enforce their rights
- the cost to students being able to obtain or access documentation (including associated waiting times). For example, learning disability assessments or occupational therapy assessments can be very expensive
- maintaining confidentiality of student's documentation
- what emotional impact providing evidence about disability will have on a student commencing on a new or exciting study journey.

Reasonable adjustments



Reasonable adjustments under the DDA and DSE are measures or actions taken to help a student with disability to participate in a course on an equal basis as other students. This is a well-established way to support students with disability within the VET sector.

Reasonable adjustments may also apply during enrolment. This may include alternative options for completing forms or processes, if a student is required to do an audition for entry to a course or must participate in other selection or upfront assessment activities.

Given the highly individualised nature of disability, the vast range of competencies required in different courses, and the different delivery and assessment strategies, there is no single formula or set of rules to determine the reasonableness of adjustments. It is suggested that an adjustment is reasonable if it balances the interests of all parties affected, but this is a broad idea and should be linked with the student's need to access education.

Each person's experience and impact of their disability is unique. It varies throughout a person's life and in different contexts, therefore, reasonable adjustments should always:

- be negotiated together by the student and staff
- consider the individual student's needs and capabilities
- maintain the integrity of the course or unit of competency.

Adjustments are not reasonable if they could cause:

- the RTO unjustifiable hardship – the cost exceeds what the provider can afford
- harm to the learner or others.

Understanding the range of factors influencing the academic success of students with disability is crucial. This includes:

- the importance of RTO staff training and support for their development of disability awareness and confidence, stigma-reduction programs, and the development of a 'welcoming culture' on campus
- clearer documentation practices and effective and transparent policies to assist RTOs in designing the most appropriate reasonable adjustments for onsite, offsite and online training and assessment requirements
- a clear process and documentation for how staff will work with students to identify individual learning needs, reasonable adjustments or learning support
- a focus on the functional impact of the disability and any supports and adjustments that need to be provided in order to overcome the impact of the disability
- maintaining confidentiality and ensuring only relevant and necessary information is provided to RTO staff
- a mechanism within the RTO for trainers and assessors to acknowledge receipt of a Student Support/Learning Plan. To support success, staff must feel empowered to confidentially discuss these plans with students and ask for the student's perspectives as the expert of their disability.

RTOs may want to consider whether they could provide a more inclusive and success-orientated name for the plans while also making them recognisable – 'Student Success Plans' or 'Student Access Plan' are used in some RTOs and a range of names might be appropriate.

Engagement with other support services

In the VET context, cross-sector collaboration refers to services and sectors working together to ensure an individual progresses through VET and into employment.

Such a system has several benefits for students with disability in VET. These include consistency of structured support for individual students and not leaving the individual student to negotiate between providers. Dialogue between VET staff, employers, students and other stakeholders (e.g., parents, carers, partners and associates) regarding an individual's needs, prior to enrolment in VET, will support a smooth transition, enrolment and increased rate of VET study completion.

For people with disability, there are often several support services they may engage with. Some of these may relate to their engagement in a VET course. This includes Disability Employment Services that support participants to enrol in a VET course as part of their program and may be quite involved in the enrolment processes.

During the development of these guidelines, there has been much discussion about the interaction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and support within the RTO. While the NDIS may provide people with their own personal support workers and assistive technology, these provisions do not remove the need for the RTO to understand the support needs of the student in the context of learning. It should be noted that education providers are legally obligated to provide access and participation on an equitable basis and must consult with the student to provide support and make reasonable adjustments, irrespective of anything the NDIS or any other service might be providing.

Data collection, collation and sharing

There are two critically important components to the collection and sharing of information about students with disability:

1. Maintaining students' private information, which is particularly sensitive as it is often medical, is confidential.
2. Acting on information about a student's disability or support needs. The RTO must ensure the information is acted upon.

RTOs should have a robust system for collecting, collating, sharing and removing student records, particularly information about disability, supports and adjustment requirements.

Digital systems and information sharing and management must:

- ensure information about reasonable adjustments flows well within the organisation, especially to those people who require it the most
- ensure information is captured appropriately in multiple systems. Issues occur if information collected on an enquiry system is not transferred to an enrolment system, or to the training and assessment staff and documentation
- have appropriate trouble-shooting processes in place to manage issues as they arise
- keep all information private and confidential ensuring you have a clear record of who can and can't access the information
- have an appropriate data management and destruction strategy in place and ensure information no longer required is deleted appropriately and securely.

Need for evaluation and review

The importance of building in procedural and policy reviews was emphasised by the 2020 review of the DSE, which also noted there are systemic changes in policy and practice regularly. Therefore, it is recommended that RTOs regularly undertake organisational reviews of policies, procedures and practices using a continuous improvement matrix of requirements, covering each enrolment element.

Students with disability regularly face diverse and unique challenges along with stereotyping and indirect discrimination. These experiences impact their engagement and confidence with VET in numerous ways but, with pre-planning and understanding of key aspects of support needs, inclusion does not need to be onerous or expensive. Creating inclusive policies and practices ensures that students with disability obtain the maximum benefits from VET.

Review processes for RTOs should include:

- reviewing key intervention or decision points, relevant policies or procedures, and persons responsible and implications for professional development
- developing processes for implementing support needs including developing solutions to support needs of the students which may change and develop over time
- implementing regular reviews of individual learning plans to revisit adjustments for arrangements which have not worked effectively, when new needs arise and as students become more used to the VET environment
- adjusting for innovation from both an organisational point of view as well as adjustments to individuals needs as technology and innovation changes and improves
- clear and transparent feedback or complaints mechanisms which should also be fully accessible.

Part 1C: Inclusive principles for enrolment processes

These guidelines suggest some key underpinning inclusive principles. These principles are presented so that RTOs can discuss and integrate the ideas into their strategic plans, policies and procedures to support improved enrolment practices and student experiences. Here we suggest some possible ways forward in relation to enrolment practices. They aim to improve the attraction, engagement, retention and success of students with disability in VET.

These ten principles are discussed in detail below under the following headings:

- Success orientation
- Anticipation of possible needs
- Respond to the student's individual needs.

Success Orientation	Anticipation of possible needs	Respond to student's individual needs
1 Supporting a success-focused approach	4 Start planning using Universal Design for Learning principles	7 Seek students' support needs, not medical details
2 Providing an emphasis on completion	5 Think about students with multiple needs	8 Monitor information sharing
3 Being innovative and flexible	6 Allow discussion and requests at any point	9 Student at the heart of support discussions
		10 Whole staff disability awareness and confidence

Success orientation

For RTOs to increase and enhance support for students with disability, they should take a success-orientated, strengths-based approach. This recognises students' capabilities and understands that everyone needs support in some way. It acknowledges that individual choices should be respected.

Three key components of this approach are outlined here:

1. Supporting a success-focused approach

Talking to students about what helped them succeed in previous study or work involves listening to students' individual needs and discovering what helps them most.

2. Providing an emphasis on completion

Co-creating individual success pathways for students means discussing all barriers and elements involved in success. People involved in the discussion should be RTO support staff, trainers and assessors and external supporters including support workers.

3. Being innovative and flexible

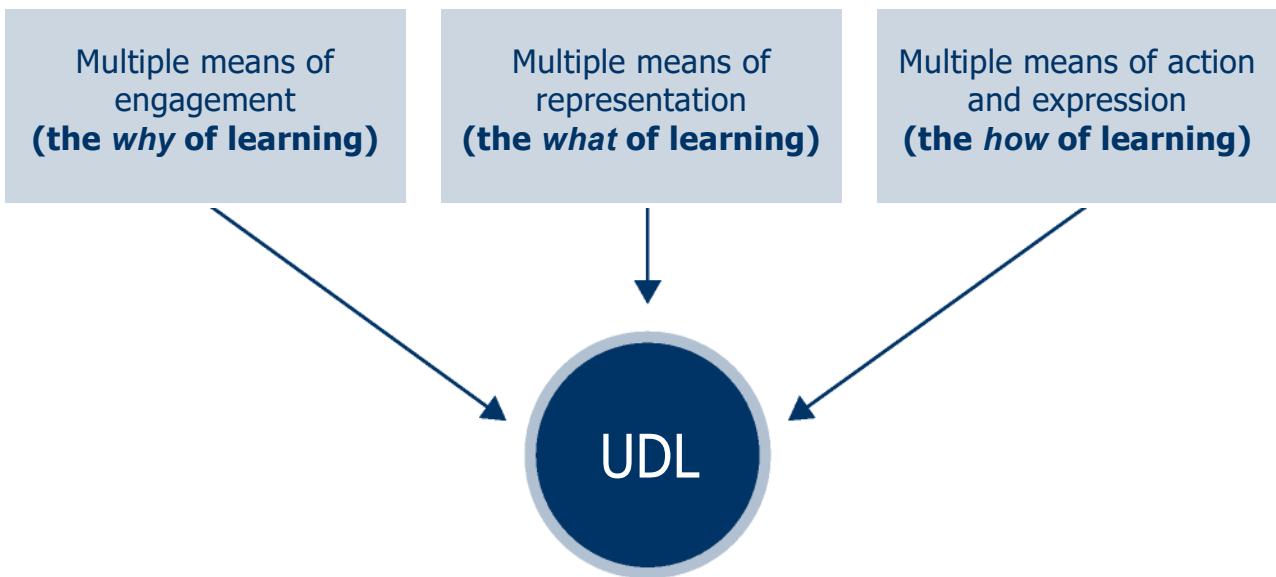
Harnessing possibilities of arrangements that were made in pandemic conditions (e.g., signing forms online, scheduled phone calls rather than in-person appointments) brings more flexibility.

Anticipation of possible needs

Delivering support for all students in the RTO can seem overwhelming, particularly with time and resource constraints. However, pre-planning can save much time on

individual supports and adjustments. Inclusive planning in advance can help RTOs make the best use of resources to assist as many students as possible. If a Universal Design approach is adopted by the RTO, then many barriers can be avoided (e.g., if information sheets about enrolment are designed in a range of formats from the start, this can help eliminate barriers).

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) offers an underpinning approach that can support good training and assessment throughout the RTO. The core of UDL is having multiple means of engagement, representation and action/expression (CAST, 2018).



Examples of UDL in this context could include providing a contact person for enquiries in addition to web-based forms or live chatbot, making course information available in a range of formats, and allowing for prospective students to demonstrate prerequisite knowledge or LLND competencies in a range of ways.

The next three principles that could be adopted by the RTO include the following:

4. Start planning using Universal Design for Learning principles

Recognise and embed Universal Design for Learning practices across the RTO alongside understandings of the need for individualised approaches (e.g., specialised supports and reasonable adjustments).

5. Think about students with multiple needs

Build understanding and recognise the cultural diversity and variability of all students. Anticipatory actions could be taken across facilities design and the selection of equipment, as well as learning and assessment design.

6. Allow discussion and requests at any point

Facilitate opportunities for students to make requests for support at all stages of the student life cycle.

Respond to the student's individual needs

Even when the RTO has a Universal Design approach and upholds inclusive principles, some individual learners will need specific support and adjustments. With good planning and strategies in place it is unlikely to mean redesigning learning to meet multiple but rather smaller and more meaningful adjustments for individual students.

Increasingly, it is understood that requiring specific medicalised disability declarations prevents the timely circulation of information and is emotionally very challenging for students. Often, medical evidence is not useful to the RTO ascertaining how that

student can be supported in their course. It is also important that respect is shown for student's autonomy and their ownership of their own medical or other information.

Due to the nature of VET, many students have succeeded in other schooling or workplace settings and have a strong idea about how they can be individually supported. Enabling students to express what would help them succeed will save the RTO a lot of time and guesswork through codesigning reasonable adjustments with the student.

These final four principles will help support RTOs to respond to students in a systematic and inclusive way:

7. Seek students' support needs, not medical details

Move away from requirements to disclose medicalised details of disability and the sole use of clinical definitions. RTOs should move towards disclosure pathways running through student support, which help staff understand the impact of a person's disability on their learning and how to respond to these needs and support the student's learning.

8. Monitor information sharing

Understanding information management and sharing of support needs is a key requirement of RTO systems and processes. This can help all students feel confident that their information is being effectively, consistently and sensitively shared. A key part of sharing information is staff fully understanding that the choice must remain with the student about how much and when to give information.

Information should be restricted to only those who need the information about the student's support needs and all information should be maintained confidentially through appropriate information management and privacy guidelines.

9. Whole staff disability awareness and confidence

Support the whole RTO workforce to be disability confident. Staff should understand and act on principles of communication, especially in relation to working with people with disability, and should be aware of the emotional labour of disclosure.

10. Student at the heart of support discussions

Centre the conversation about supports at the RTO around the personal perspectives and needs of individual students. This is likely to save the RTO much time as every person's experience of a disability is different and most students with disability have a good starting idea of what they might need.

Part 2: Implementing Inclusive Practices – Practice Guidance Notes

The aim of this section is to provide RTO staff with access to a quick-reference resource.

These Practice Guidance Notes focus on practical information about how to support students with disability in each element of the enrolment process. The notes outline key practice considerations and guidance that can be reflected in policies and procedures, and subsequently embedded into practice consistently across your RTO as appropriate.

Student examples, fictionalised from real RTO stories across Australia, give practical advice about how staff can make inclusive practices viable in their institutions. Key considerations for each element are summarised in Table 2.

There are six Practice Guidance Notes:

1. Pre-enrolment: Course information
2. Pre-enrolment: First contact
3. Pre-enrolment: Application documents
4. Enrolment Element: Processes
5. Enrolment Element: Onboarding to RTO
6. Enrolment Element: Orientation to teaching and learning.



Photo: iStock

Table 2: Key considerations for pre-enrolment

Course information from the RTO	First contact with the RTO	Enquiry/application documents
<p>Key practice considerations:</p> <p>Ensure course information is accessible as far in advance as possible prior to enrolment, with processes to accommodate specific individual needs if required.</p> <p>Provide as much information that students with disability could need about your RTO, the student experience at the RTO, course teaching and learning methods, and assessment and physical requirements to enable students to understand and articulate their support needs.</p>	<p>Key practice considerations:</p> <p>Ensure all enquiry methods are accessible to students with a range of communication needs.</p> <p>Make disability confidence training available for all staff so they can best support the enquiries of all people with disability.</p> <p>Make basic information about support for students with disability easily accessible so any staff can confidently access it and know how to refer on when needed.</p>	<p>Key practice considerations:</p> <p>Ensure forms are dynamic or downloadable (or printed), accessible and available in a range of accessible formats.</p> <p>Provide forms that are culturally appropriate for students with disability.</p> <p>Assess your need for evidence requests.</p>

Table 3: Key considerations for enrolment

Enrolment processes Key practice	Onboarding to the RTO Key practice	Orientation to teaching and learning
<p>Key practice considerations:</p> <p>Ensure all forms are accessible and written in an understandable way (they are legally binding documents).</p> <p>Provide support during enrolment to make it as inclusive and accessible as possible.</p> <p>Facilitate easy declaration of support needs so assistance can be arranged in a timely manner.</p> <p>Support students in screenings (e.g., LLND for subsidised funding).</p>	<p>Key practice considerations:</p> <p>Ensure RTO onboarding processes are clearly explained, especially processes relating to student support, teaching and assessment.</p> <p>Promote disclosure of support needs as a step towards student success.</p> <p>Make space for clear opportunities for discussion of support needs.</p>	<p>Key practice considerations:</p> <p>Arrange specific orientation to campus or online learning systems.</p> <p>Ensure accessibility of teaching rooms or learning management systems.</p> <p>Facilitate support arrangements, including support worker/interpreter bookings.</p> <p>Provide information to trainers and assessors, course managers and tutors.</p> <p>Introduce policies, practices and procedures (including staff and student roles and responsibilities, code of conduct/behaviour and complaints and appeals).</p>



Practice Guidance Note 1 – Pre-enrolment Element: Course Information

'Put yourself in the students' shoes'

Overview

The course information pre-enrolment element involves the provision of information about VET courses by the RTO. Supporting students with disability starts with the very first engagement of interest in the course. For students, you don't know what you don't know. This should be a core principle of the development of course information. RTOs should take the stance of a prospective student. This position helps RTOs know their courses well and explain the opportunities and potential challenges.

Incorporating:

- marketing by the RTO (including radio, bus shelters and billboards)
- marketing materials on the RTO website
- career counselling
- course information.

Information about study requirements and supports available:

- brochures and other course information
- community engagement activities.

Description

Providing course information to support students' decision-making is a key role of RTOs in the enrolment process. A well-described course will support informed decision-making of all students, including students with disability. The Standards for RTOs require the provision of clear and accurate pre-enrolment information to students. A lack of accurate and relevant information at this time can significantly disadvantage a student.

Marketing and advertising responsibilities of RTOs extend beyond the description of courses. A key principle to developing marketing materials is understanding:

- who will use the materials, including online materials
- whether materials would benefit from being written using the Universal Design principles, designed in alternative formats and include Easy Read, Plain English or in other languages (especially for overseas markets)
- how will the materials be used by third-party providers or agents.

All marketing materials should highlight:

- essential admissions requirements e.g., audition, portfolio, LLND
- course information and statements of inherent requirements
- online information sessions
- videos and other media on RTO websites
- pre-enrolment information brochures
- enrolment interview checklists
- assessment requirements
- practical elements of the course
- potential challenges to consider
- how students can access reasonable adjustments.

Practice considerations

There are some key considerations for RTOs to ensure course information is accessible and enables RTOs to actively support the inclusion of students with disability.

Actions can be grouped into two main considerations to work towards:

1. Ensuring course information is accessible as far in advance as possible prior to enrolment, with processes to accommodate specific individual needs if required.
2. Providing as much information as students with disability could need about the RTO, the student experience at the RTO, course training and assessment methods, and core (inherent) requirements (e.g., physical, literacy etc) to enable students to understand and articulate their support needs.

Accessible course information

Additional strategies to address these are detailed below to support self-assurance. They include:

- ensuring there are accessible forms for all information provided, including multiple accessible formats and multiple means to engage (e.g., online, downloadable, video with captions)
- providing a statement on RTO websites which give guidance about accessibility available onsite and in courses. This may link to your Disability Action Plan, which you can lodge with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)
- ensuring RTO websites are accessible to screen readers and text-to-speech software and comply with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 standard as a minimum
- ensuring easy-to-find mechanism to request more information about course accessibility

- providing alternative means of delivering information about each course, with Easy Read written versions, videos (with captions or Auslan) and audio files
- ensuring all marketing/promotional/course information materials use inclusive language and imagery (e.g., images include a diverse range of learners with as little reference to non-inherent requirements as possible)
- ensuring non-decorative images have alt-text so screen readers can convey the information. Decorative images should have alt-text to indicate the image is just for decoration and does not contain information
- providing videos with captions, and important videos that contain essential information should have professional captioning
- providing additional information about the range of supports available for all students e.g., counselling, learning support, child support, accessible parking etc
- ensuring all registration or sign-up forms for events and requests for further information should be able to be accessed using voice-activated software
- ensuring RTO staff should ensure they have capacity and knowledge about how to respond to requests for audio description, transcripts and other alternative formats.

Course and program expectations

Provide useable and relevant information about course/program expectations and the student experience at the RTO. This includes providing:

- clear information about the support given for students with disability, including who to talk to about types of support available. This information should be located within the first two levels of the RTO website
- examples on the website to show indicative or previous reasonable adjustments and accommodations that are possible at the RTO
- details on the course website and in other marketing materials about the course delivery and assessment strategy. These could include answers that would help students with disability plan their study and understand what support they might need, such as training and assessment requirements, how the course is taught and in what setting
- clear information about any core (inherent) requirements for the course
- clear information about specific licensing or professional registration requirements associated with a course (e.g., safety certificates, immunisations, licenses or registration requirements)
- clear information about modes of study available e.g., part-time, full-time, online, hybrid options and any specific attendance requirements
- be explicit about any particular work health and safety issues related to the course. For example, any special course requirements (e.g., lifting, handling) must be made clear as early as possible and on marketing materials.

Practice snapshots

Case study 1: Anticipating information needs of students

Cal hopes to retrain as a graphic designer and knows that working graphic designers are often contractors and can manage their own timetables. Cal manages a condition that means they need to have regular rest breaks and find it difficult to work every day of the week. When they were looking at the Diploma of Graphic Design they were interested in, there was no information about how the classes ran and whether rest breaks were possible.

What the RTO could have done:

- include indicative class patterns on course listings (e.g., daytime classes, usually three full days a week)
- publish information about availability of rest rooms and ensure this is searchable
- include information about course flexibility. Can the course be undertaken part-time or is it only available in full-time mode?

Case study 2: Inviting engagement about support needs

Caden was considering undertaking a Certificate III in Community Services and tried to find out as much as possible so he could be prepared and find an RTO that suited him. He looked into the support services available and took a lot of notes as he was worried about what help he could get, particularly during the course placement. He was worried as the issues he had support for at school related to dexterity and these were not listed on the RTO's website as a disability that was supported. Caden decided he would not declare his disability to the RTO as it appeared (according to the RTO website) that there was no help available.

What the RTO could have done:

- ensure that any website listing of disability notes that it is not exhaustive
- move towards 'support needs' language and away from medical diagnoses
- provide a means of confidential enquiry.

Linkages (standards)

[National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) Instrument 2025](#), which is one component of the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs):

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.

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](#)

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

Standards for Enrolment – Part 4: The education provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the prospective student is able to seek admission to, or apply for enrolment in, the institution on the same basis as a prospective student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination. Enrolment includes marketing, course information, communication and counselling, assessment of learner needs, disclosure, and fees information. It also includes the provision of supports and reasonable adjustments.

Training and resources

- [Practice Guides Outcome Standards for RTOs \(Australian Skills Qualification Authority\)](#)
- [Sharing your disability information while studying](#)
- [Guiding Principles for Career Development Services and Career Information Products](https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/CICA-Guiding-Principles-for-Career-Development-Services-and-Career-Information-Products-2nd-Ed.pdf)
<https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/CICA-Guiding-Principles-for-Career-Development-Services-and-Career-Information-Products-2nd-Ed.pdf>
- [e-Learning: VET Staff Supporting Students with Disability](#)



Practice Guidance Note 2 – Pre-enrolment Element: First Contact

'First impressions count'

Overview

The first stages of contact that a student has with an organisation can be a call, information session, online chat or email.

For prospective students, the first person they speak to at the RTO makes a huge difference. This first impression forms the student's perception of the professionalism and inclusiveness of the organisation. Students can be easily discouraged if contact does not seem inclusive or if the RTO staff are not ready to listen to them or understand their needs.

Incorporating:

- first online contact, including live chat
- enquiry emails and phone calls
- open/information evenings
- in-person enquiry
- course manager engagement.

Description

RTO materials are brought to life by first contact that is responsive and welcoming.

A student's first engagement with an RTO is often with course and enrolment information in digital form.

For inclusive practice to be organisation-wide, it is important for RTOs to take a whole-workforce approach. This requires ensuring reception, enquiry and professional staff are all trained in disability discrimination awareness. Also, it means ensuring that key issues about inclusive practice throughout the RTO are clearly understood. The whole-workforce approach is important, as students may legitimately ask any staff member for support regarding needs related to their disability.

A sharing of information or disclosure may only be for one specific support requirement, but it should be taken seriously and recorded at all points. To request support, students should not necessarily need to give a specific disability declaration or details of their medical diagnosis. It is the responsibility of the RTO to maintain good records of students' needs. If a student has declared their support needs, they can reasonably be expected to be known by the RTO.

Recording support needs may require robust enquiry management systems. These do not have to be expensive IT systems, however, student records should commence from the enquiry point onwards to support students and protect RTOs. Sales and marketing channels should be linked with student support systems.

A key priority for RTOs should be to make it as easy as possible to explain and explore support needs. Further, it is important these needs are recorded confidentially but correctly. RTOs should be aware that queries about support needs do not always come in as disability related issues. For example:

- a query about the need to stand and lift during placement on nursing courses could mean the person needs support to pace themselves
- asking about morning start times could indicate the need for careful planning of medication
- attendance requirements could relate to a medical condition that might have an impact on continuity in a business administration course.

Staff members should feel empowered to engage with issues of support needs and refer where needed to specialised staff (e.g., support services or trainers and assessors).

The goal of robust disability inclusion training for all staff is to support everyone to be disability aware and confident. Staff should not feel awkward or worried about discussing support needs with, or for, students.

Practice considerations

There are some key considerations to ensure the first contact students have with your RTO is provided in an accessible way and demonstrates the RTO's active support for the inclusion of students with disability.

Actions can be grouped into three critical considerations to work towards:

1. Ensuring all enquiry methods are accessible to students with a range of communication needs.
2. Making disability awareness and confidence training available for all staff so they can best support the enquiries of all people with disability.
3. Making basic information about support for students with disability easily accessible so any staff can confidently access it and know how to refer on when needed.

These are critical considerations to ensure your RTO provides an inclusive first contact experience for students. Additional strategies to address these are detailed below to support self-assurance.

Accessible enquiry methods online and in-person require:

- enquiry and public open areas should be physically accessible with flat access and seating
- published policies, practices and procedures about accessibility and inclusion that staff have access to
- clear policies, practices and procedures about who can be supported by their 'nominated associate.' This could be a professional support worker, parent or friend
- accessible registration/sign-up forms for events and further information requests including access via voice-activated software and usability by screen readers.

Staff who feel confident will have the requisite disability awareness and competence to support any student enquiry. This can be achieved by:

- ensuring all staff and volunteers representing your RTO have received some training in awareness about disability discrimination and principles of inclusion
- ensuring there is always someone on duty in public-facing areas who is disability confident (e.g., knows how to communicate with students who are Deaf or hard of hearing and is aware of how to meet the needs of an enquirer who has visual impairment). Staff should understand their duty of care and have respect for the self-autonomy of students with disability (e.g., no physical guiding unless requested)
- ensuring all staff and volunteers who provide course information understand how to use inclusive language and ask questions about relevant support needs
- staff should be supported to understand the importance of allowing people to ask as many questions as necessary, even if the questions might not seem immediately relevant.

RTO staff members involved in first contact activities (including third-party agents) need to be confident to discuss issues related to supporting students during enrolment processes. This includes:

- knowing how to respond to requests for reasonable adjustments during the enrolment process (e.g., audio description transcripts and other alternative formats or how to escalate requests)
- ensuring that third parties agents who represent them are aware of accessibility and understand how to support people with disability
- ensuring staff have knowledge of other targeted services in order to support for students with disability to account for people who have more than one area of support to access (e.g., a student with disability who is enquiring about accessing support for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples)
- ensuring staff awareness of core (inherent) course requirements (e.g., physical requirements to the course that could be explained to a potential student, such as lifting and handling)

- ensuring staff awareness of modes of study (i.e., part-time or full-time) or if they have specific attendance requirements. Staff should be aware of options for online learning that have been previously utilised during the COVID-19 pandemic period.

RTO staff who frequently respond to enquiries from students must feel confident to talk about the general availability of support for students with disability and be able to refer on. They should feel confident noting there are some inherent requirements and be supported by good course information.

Practice snapshots

Case study 1: Dealing with infrequent enquiries that require policy exceptions

Faizah attended an open day and asked a staff member if her service dog could attend her Certificate IV in Business Administration classes. The staff member was representing the Business school and knew there was a 'no dogs on site' policy and advised Faizah about that. When Faizah explained that her dog was a service dog who was trained to alert to seizures and asked whether that might be an exemption to the policy, the staff member was still firm and said while the RTO took an inclusive approach, this was not possible. Further, the staff member did not refer Faizah to anyone else to clarify, and she was left thinking she might not be able to take the course safely.

What the RTO could have done:

- prepare staff by acknowledging that, while a Universal Design for Learning inclusive approach is an appropriate foundation, there will still be needs and requests that cannot be anticipated
- advise staff (during training) that they should be wary about being firm about any issue of reasonable adjustment. Ensure staff understand they can refer on, or escalate any queries they are not prepared for, or do not have an answer to
- ensure issues of work health and safety (WHS) and requests related to safety of students are recorded confidentially on any enquiry system.

Case study 2: Promoting disability confidence and Deaf awareness in all staff

The TAFE campus had a shopfront enquiries centre and while Forster was in the area, he went in to investigate whether there were any post-school hospitality courses he could enrol in. He was not sure exactly what course he wanted but had a friend who was enjoying hospitality and hoped to find out more. Forster uses Auslan.

After queuing, he went to the first available staff member but had difficulty communicating with them. Forster was able to write down his query, so the staff member rang the Accessibility Liaison Office, but no one was available. The staff member tried to show the website for events management, but it was hard for Forster to obtain the information he needed, and he left disappointed and demotivated.

What the RTO could have done:

- all public facing staff should have access to communication training, including Deaf awareness training. Designated enquiries officers should, at minimum, have a communication board such as those available from Access Ability Australia.

Linkages (standards)

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025, which is one component of the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs):

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.

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*](#)

Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth) (DSE)

Standards for Enrolment – Part 4: The education provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the prospective student is able to seek admission to, or apply for enrolment in, the institution on the same basis as a prospective student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination. Enrolment includes marketing, course information, communication and counselling, assessment of learner needs, disclosure, and fees information. It also includes the provision of supports and reasonable adjustments.

Training and resources

- [*Practice Guides Outcome Standards for RTOs \(Australian Skills Qualification Authority\)*](#)
- [*Sharing your disability information while studying*](#)
- [*e-Learning: VET Staff Supporting Students with Disability*](#)
- [*Your Consumer Rights: A Guide for Consumers with Disability \(Australian Competition and Consumer Commission\)*](#)



Practice Guidance Note 3 – Pre-enrolment Element: Application documents

'Information flows are critical'

Overview

This Practice Guidance Note covers the first time a prospective student enters their details into the administration system of the RTO. This could be on initial enquiry, as an application or even as a precursor step to enrolment. There comes a point in every student's enrolment journey when information about personal details must be recorded. Information flows are critical for the support of students with disability.

Incorporating:

- electronic forms (individual or series)
- forms submitted through a third party
- paper-based forms
- applications for recognition of prior learning (RPL).

Description

Support for students with disability is dependent on robust information collection, storage and sharing systems within the RTO. These do not need to be expensive customer and student recording systems – a simple filing and record-keeping system on a secure spreadsheet can be as effective. It is essential the system captures, records and shares data from the start. In almost all cases, there is a need for prospective students to provide the RTO with their personal details. This may involve uploading multiple documents.

Information collection can occur in a number of ways. RTOs are responsible for the collection, maintenance and security of this personal information. In some cases, the application to the RTO may be made by a third party. This third party records the details of the student and is likely required to provide this form to the RTO. At some point

in the enrolment process, students formally fill in forms of some kind. These may be application forms, enrolment forms, AVETMISS (Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard) forms (named for the national record-keeping system) or application interviews where details are recorded.

Practice considerations

There are some key considerations for RTOs to ensure that when students provide information to your RTO it is an inclusive experience, and the RTO actively supports the access of students with disability.

Actions to take can be grouped into three main considerations to work towards:

1. Ensure forms are dynamic or downloadable (or printed), accessible and available in a range of formats.
2. Provide forms that are culturally appropriate for students with disability.
3. Assess your need for evidence requests.

These critical considerations can help ensure your RTO provides accessible application forms. Additional strategies to address these are detailed below to support self-assurance.

Use appropriate formats for all forms and incorporate accessible language and processes including:

- ensuring all forms are available in a range of formats or be able to have alternative means for completion
- providing forms that are easy to complete in a range of ways (e.g., online, using assistive technology and by supporters)
- providing forms that are professionally produced and use proper styling in Microsoft Word documents and/or Adobe PDF creation tools. This is to ensure documents are readable and accessible. Online forms should be checked to ensure they can be read by a screen reader
- ensuring all forms include the option for people to indicate if any adjustments are required. Forms should include clear directions on how to ask for more information in order to complete them
- providing users with options to indicate their preferred methods of communication (e.g., when collecting a phone number, there could be a tick box for 'SMS only' to accommodate people who do not take phone calls, including the Deaf or people who are hard of hearing)
- ensuring forms should be easy to understand and could be Easy Read. Combine text with layout and imagery to simplify and explain information.

Language and content of forms should be clear and inclusive by:

- using positive language and be success orientated (e.g., What could we do to support your learning?)
- avoiding the use of medical models of disability and medicalised terminology where possible. For example, some national reporting requires reference to diagnosis or disability type
- avoiding assumptions about students' capabilities, disability or living situations

- giving ample opportunity for students to share details of any support needs
- clearly stating how the information is going to be used, securely stored and circulated.

Evidence requirements must be clear and reasonable including:

- clearly stating what evidence requirements, the RTO has regarding requests for supports and reasonable adjustments
- ensuring evidence requirements are reasonable and necessary and should relate to the impact of the disability on the student's participation in enrolment, training and assessment
- clearly defining what definition RTOs are considering in relation to disability and whether an absolute definition of disability with a medical diagnosis is required. It might be possible to focus on evidence of support needs as sufficient to request support or reasonable adjustment. The RTO should have a position on this and make this clear on application forms. It should be clear what the implication of declaring support needs but not a disability would be. For example, is there a difference between providing learner supports and reasonable adjustments?
- ensuring that any requested evidence is understood by staff processing it. Staff should have qualifications and experience to read and assess specialist evidence. Specialist or diagnostic reports should not be requested if staff are not equipped to interpret them. For example, who has or should ask for reports from educational psychologists or psychiatrists?
- developing policies and processes to accept statutory declarations from individuals with low documentation of their disability, support needs declarations from previous education institutions or workplaces, or the student's NDIS plan
- developing policies and processes for students who have had 'imputed disability' throughout their schooling. The process may be the RTO accepts the schooling documentation, or it may require further evidence.

Practice snapshots

Case study 1: Making forms workable for all kinds of student needs

Alex had been told he had to do White Card training as he was planning to be an owner builder. Navigating the website was no problem with his voice-activated software, however, when he got to the application form he found a big problem. He could not fill in the forms even if he used keyboard tabbing, which was difficult for him. He had to contact the RTO. They had a lot of trouble finding a way he could apply without using the online form, and in the end, he had to read out his personal information over the phone.

What the RTO could have done:

- make applications useable by voice-activated software or have a Microsoft Word downloadable version
- have a backup process for students who cannot use the application forms provided (e.g., ensure student record systems have a management input system and all records do not need to be originated through the website)
- ensure there are confidential ways to collect information from students and set procedures about safe deletion when it is no longer needed.

Case study 2: Collecting enough information to be useful

Anjali entered her details on the enquiry form for the Certificate II in Applied Fashion Design. She entered her phone number and her email and specified that she preferred to be contacted by email. There was nowhere on the form for Anjali to indicate that she could only use SMS on the phone as she is hard of hearing. As it was quite close to the start of the program, staff called Anjali on her phone, but it was not answered as Anjali did not use a phone in that way. Staff called a couple more times and then removed her from the list, so she was not informed in time to come to the in-person enrolment session.

What the RTO could have done:

- put a notice on the enquiry form indicating enrolment closures, commencement dates and how to address all communication modes used
- provide a box to add extra information about communication. This should also trigger a notification if the student declares that they are Deaf or hard of hearing
- ensure emails are used if that is the chosen method of student communication
- provide a way to catch up (e.g., recording of sessions) if the students misses any information.

Linkages (standards)

[National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) Instrument 2025](#), which is one component of the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs):

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.

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](#)

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

Standards for Enrolment – Part 4: The education provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the prospective student is able to seek admission to, or apply for enrolment in, the institution on the same basis as a prospective student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination. Enrolment includes marketing, course information, communication and counselling, assessment of learner needs, disclosure, and fees information. It also includes the provision of supports and reasonable adjustments.

Training and resources

- [Practice Guides Outcome Standards for RTOs \(Australian Skills Qualification Authority\)](#)
- [Sharing your disability information while studying](#)
- [e-Learning: VET Educators Supporting Students with Disability](#)
- [Creating Accessible and Inclusive Communications](#)



Practice Guidance Note 4 – Enrolment Element: Process

‘There’s more than one way to process enrolments’

Overview

This Practice Guidance Note focuses on the formal enrolment of a student in the VET course or program. Formal enrolment processes are necessary for most students to confirm the details of their course. Financial agreements like payment of course or other fees are formal and serious parts of the enrolment process. Any documents to review and agreements to be made should be as clear as possible.

Enrolment processes often include screenings for LLND. Best practice for these screenings is to use them as diagnostic tools for support within the RTO and not as hurdles for entry. Students may need support from the RTO and possibly from their nominated associate to complete these necessary processes.

Incorporating:

- online enrolment
- independent enrolment
- staff-supported enrolment
- enrolment sessions
- screenings (e.g., LLND).

Description

While it is likely that students have been in touch with the RTO for some time at this point of the enrolment processes, this does not mean assumptions can be made. There may have been no extended contact between RTO and student. The formal enrolment stage is a frequent point of disclosure of support needs and discussion of a student’s disability.

Enrolment procedures should be:

- designed so the student can complete them without undue difficulty
- not be onerous in terms of time required
- have clear and easy-to-follow processes
- indicate options for assistance throughout any of the enrolment steps
- provide opportunities and support for any of the student’s support people as needed.

With increasing digitisation of the student experience, access to individual support through the process has become challenging. Processes that are fully online and require independent enrolment present barriers, are particularly difficult if there is no way of asking for support.

There are many innovative practices being undertaken to reimagine and implement enrolment practices. Small changes can make the enrolment processes more inclusive and accessible. These include individually supported enrolments and group supported enrolments. Some of the innovations for inclusivity include rethinking the timing and support available in certain steps.

Practice considerations

There are some key considerations for RTOs to ensure the formal enrolment process is as accessible as possible, and that RTOs actively support the inclusion of students with disability.

Actions to take can be grouped into four main considerations to work towards:

1. Ensure all forms are accessible and written in an understandable way (they are legally binding documents).
2. Provide support during enrolment to make it as inclusive and accessible as possible.
3. Facilitate easy declaration of support needs so assistance can be arranged in a timely manner.
4. Support students in screenings (e.g., LLND for subsidised funding).

These critical considerations can help ensure your RTO provides inclusive access to enrolment. Additional strategies to address these are detailed below to support self-assurance.

Ensure the accessibility of forms by ensuring:

- all enrolment and associated forms and paperwork are available in a wide range of accessible formats and may benefit from an accompanying short video explaining enrolment
- all language used must be inclusive, easy to understand and framed using success orientation
- all formal legal documents should have an Easy Read version, combining text with layout and imagery to simplify and explain information
- being clear how personal information is used by the RTO. It should be made clear that medical information is kept private and confidential. For example, inform students that evidence of disability is only requested for the purposes of being able to offer support and reasonable adjustments.

Provide support during enrolment:

- it must be possible to seek information or advice during the completion of enrolment processes at your RTO
- it should be possible to seek support from the RTO to complete enrolment.

Provision of support for enrolment sometimes has implications. Make these clear. For example, receipt of timetables may be delayed.

Elicit support needs during enrolment by ensuring:

- all forms ask if any adjustments to enrolment processes are needed due to disability
- all forms should focus on needs-based language, not medical diagnoses, unless required for national reporting
- that in addition to a standard question on an enrolment form or at course counselling, there should be other opportunities to disclose and/or seek support
- all forms could make clear this is not the last chance for support needs to be identified, but timely identification is beneficial to the student
- students have the option to share support practices from previous school or work settings. This should be with the consent of the student
- there is clear information about whether courses can be done part-time or have specific requirements. These should be listed whenever possible so learners can make plans for necessary supports. For example, are there particular requirements for attendance, travel or relocation? Are there set dates for intensives or student placements?
- robust referral procedures are available if a student is having second thoughts about a course at the point of enrolment.

Support students in screenings (e.g., LLND for subsidised funding and upfront assessment of need) by ensuring:

- there is information about whether it is possible to request extra time for screenings
- there is information about whether it is possible to use assistive technology as part of screenings
- consideration and information about whether screenings assume use of English
- alternative option such as Auslan users be accommodated or people who prefer to read braille?
- there is clear guidance about what happens with the information. For example, what happens if the screening information indicates the student may not be suitable for the course or does not have the requisite LLND capabilities?
- there could be support materials to help students prepare for screening.

Practice snapshots

Case study 1: Focusing the forms on the most important information

Ellie was filling in her enrolment form for the Certificate II in Fitness online course and was able to declare that she had a previously acquired brain injury. She didn't like that naming, and it wasn't clear from the selection what support she needed, however, she tried and was unable to declare another disability, so she assumed someone would be in touch to find out more. She did not write down that she also experienced visual impairment that was related to the brain injury. She viewed it as her primary disability. No one contacted her, and she was able to enrol automatically. The class teacher was surprised when she had trouble with some of the in-class activities.

What the RTO could have done:

- ask about how the conditions affect the student and their learning needs, rather than placing focus on medical terminology and names of conditions
- offer an in-person or supported enrolment if requested
- ensure that more than one disability can be declared.

Case study 1: Focusing the forms on the most important information

Erik was enrolling in a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care course that had funding subsidised by the state government. In order to qualify for that funding, an LLND screening had to be completed. Throughout school, Erik had had 25 per cent extra time due to his dyslexia and this meant that he could achieve the relevant requirements.

He asked if there was extra time allowed for students with diagnosed specific learning difficulties and was told 'no.' He raised an internal complaint using the RTO's complaints procedure. The accessibility officer intervened to try to resolve the complaint as allowed in the internal procedure. The accessibility officer tried to get extra time allowed, but was advised it was not possible in the rules of the screening test. The complaint progressed through the RTO's procedures.

What the RTO could have done:

- explain the reasoning behind the decisions and options available to the learner before the issue progresses to a formal complaint. Ensure staff are aware of when and how to refer a query on in a timely way
- negotiate with the screening test provider to be clear on reasonable adjustments that are possible (e.g., initial reading time for students with specific learning difficulties and the same time to respond to the questions)
- provide a service to support students to consider other courses
- demonstrate empathy and consideration whenever possible in engaging with students, being aware of the considerable stress the issue may invoke.

Linkages (standards)

[National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) Instrument 2025](#), which are one component of the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs):

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.

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](#)

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

Standards for Enrolment – Part 4: The education provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the prospective student is able to seek admission to, or apply for enrolment in, the institution on the same basis as a prospective student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination. Enrolment includes marketing, course information, communication and counselling, assessment of learner needs, disclosure, and fees information. It also includes the provision of supports and reasonable adjustments.

Training and resources

- [Practice Guides Outcome Standards for RTOs \(Australian Skills Qualification Authority\)](#)
- [Sharing your disability information while studying](#)
- [e-Learning: VET Educators Supporting Students with Disability \(90 mins\)](#)
- [Legal and Ethical Considerations of Service Delivery](#)



Practice Guidance Note 5 – Enrolment Element: Onboarding to the RTO

‘Think about how to ensure the student’s success’

Overview

This Practice Guidance Note is about onboarding. Onboarding is the step between planned study to active engagement – a critical step in students’ enrolment. Information about disclosure rights and responsibilities can be crucial at this point. Information about disclosure and support helps students work out whether a course is right for them and what will support their success. This is an ideal time to support disclosure of learning needs and disability. There may be particular onboarding needs that students with disability will often share.

Incorporating:

- conversations between student and support staff to specify individual learning needs and negotiate support that goes beyond Universal Design provision
- scheduling course timetables and modes (e.g., part-time and flexible)
- support arrangements including work health and safety (WHS) plan and safety in lab and practical settings
- discussion and supports provided for vocational placement/field trips etc.
- assessment arrangements explained and options for support explored
- linking with other support services and transport
- individual learning plan.

Description

During onboarding, specific arrangements may need to be made. Supports could include adaptive and assistive technology, support workers and transport arrangements. Some students need enhanced support in familiarising themselves with the new environment. Students with disability require explicit understanding of the supports available during this process. The supports need to be available in multiple modes to ensure the best access for diverse needs. It may take extra time to engage with new environments – particular support may be required and may differ from previous school or work settings.

This stage of enrolment includes:

- assessment of learner needs
- disclosure, course information
- registration, course counselling
- fees and administration.

In some instances, after exploration and discussion of the information, it may be appropriate and necessary for referral either to a different course choice or to another well-equipped and appropriate provider. This is a sensitive and challenging decision and how to handle it appropriately will be best served by good policies and processes, and documented protocols.

Before enrolment, course information and counselling sessions are ideal times to discuss with students the vocational outcomes and requirements, however, this is not always possible. It is important to discuss referral at the onboarding stage too. Information about the core (inherent) requirements and activities of the course and the progression through the units, courses or programs is critical and should enable the student, or associates, to make informed choices. A lack of accurate and relevant information at this time can significantly disadvantage a student.

Practice considerations

There are some key considerations for RTOs to ensure the onboarding experience is successful, accessible and inclusive.

Actions to take can be grouped into three key considerations to work towards:

1. Ensure onboarding processes are clearly explained, especially processes relating to student support, training and assessment.
2. Promote disclosure of support needs as a step towards student success.
3. Create opportunities for discussion and exploration of support needs.

These three critical considerations can help ensure your RTO provides inclusive onboarding experience to students. Additional strategies to address these are detailed below to support self-assurance.

Clearly explain onboarding processes:

- the post-enrolment stages and requirements should be made clear for all students to avoid confusion about what is next and to anticipate support needs
- there should be clear and concise information about arrangements regarding circulation of student personal and disability related information. The information must make clear that personal information is private and confidential

- there should be clear ‘offboarding’ procedures if a joint decision is made by the student and RTO that another course is more appropriate within the RTO, or at another well-supported appropriate RTO
- discussions about inherent requirements, reasonable adjustments and disclosure should form part of a standard introduction to the RTO for all students. This information should be repeated at course or unit counselling, during the orientation sessions and in the first class
- there should be information available to help students differentiate between what happens at schools around disability support and what happens in VET.

Encourage disclosure and the seeking of support:

- there must be multiple means, modes and opportunities at the RTO for students to share their support needs, disclose any disability and/or seek support
- to promote disclosure, the RTO might promote well-known positive examples to highlight how students have benefited from disclosure
- there should be clear guidance on how information about disclosure rights and responsibilities is shared with students. Students should be told on multiple occasions where and how to access supports and services
- RTOs should ensure staff know that students with disability are not obligated to disclose their disability unless they wish to request reasonable adjustments or their disability is likely to pose a risk to themselves or others. This message about disclosure should be able to be passed on to students
- in all invitations to disclose disability or support needs, it should be made very clear that declarations are only for the purposes of providing support and reasonable adjustments, and there will be no vilification or discrimination.

Provide clear opportunities for discussion of support needs:

- staff involved in the onboarding process must be well briefed and disability confident to receive declarations of disability or support needs, and know how to use that information
- there should be significant signposting or prompts for how to talk about support needs in the course, particularly in relation to needs arising from LLND screening
- timetables should be issued to students with support workers’ arrangements as soon as possible. There should be clear information for support workers, including those the student may bring themselves, while on the RTO site
- if possible, Student Support/Learning Plans should be arranged before enrolment, and there should be a clear process about how they are prioritised if they are needed after enrolment
- student Support/Learning Plans should be communicated to relevant staff with the student’s consent
- there should be a specific staff time quarantined for discussion with students about the requirements of program courses, units, assessments and vocational outcomes, including placement/field trips

- there should be clear information about how reasonable adjustments are negotiated, communicated, implemented and documented. Staff must know how to refer students to these services and resources.

Practice snapshots

Case study 1: Making space and time for support workers

Britt was enrolling in a Certificate II in Animal Studies. When booking to attend a supported enrolment and induction session, she could not book her support person to come with her. Britt would require a support person on the course, but for the enrolment, her older sister had agreed to accompany her for the day. However, when they arrived there was nowhere for Britt's sister to wait as there were only chairs for people booked in. It was all very difficult and made Britt feel really unwelcome.

What the RTO could have done:

- when student declares a disability, there could be an automated email to provide details of how to request support at enrolment and in onboarding sessions
- support people should be welcomed at RTO enrolment sessions. There should be information about how students can ask for support workers to be provided or to register their own support workers
- staff should be informed that students should not need to declare their disability in a public forum to be allowed to have a support person. Staff should be careful not to breach a student's privacy.

Case study 2: Checking all systems are accessible

In the online induction to the learning management system (LMS) for the Certificate IV in Library and Information Services, Baez realised that his screen reader software was not working well, and it was becoming hard for him to follow. His software had worked with no problems on the website and on the front page of the LMS, but when it came to content pages, it was disordered and difficult to know how to manage the information. When Baez asked his tutors, they agreed they could send materials to him, but it meant that he could not look ahead in the LMS and review assessments as he had done in previous courses.

What the RTO could have done:

- check that the LMS is able to be read by built in screen readers (e.g., Windows accessibility) and more sophisticated software. If screen readers cannot be used successfully, make it clear early in enrolment processes
- ensure all reading materials and assessments that are stored on the LMS are available offline before access to the LMS for all students commences. As much as possible, alternative information formats should be clearly labelled and ordered in the same way as information other students are receiving.

Linkages (standards)

[National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) Instrument 2025](#), which are one component of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs):

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.

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](#)

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

Standards for Enrolment – Part 4: The education provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the prospective student is able to seek admission to, or apply for enrolment in, the institution on the same basis as a prospective student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination. Enrolment includes marketing, course information, communication and counselling, assessment of learner needs, disclosure, and fees information. It also includes the provision of supports and reasonable adjustments.

Training and resources

- [Practice Guides Outcome Standards for RTOs \(Australian Skills Qualification Authority\)](#)
- [Sharing your disability information while studying](#)
- [e-Learning: VET Staff Supporting Students with Disability](#)



Practice Guidance Note 6 – Enrolment Element: Orientation to teaching and learning

‘Orientation is a two-way communication, not a set-and-forget process.’

Overview

Each time a student has a new trainer and assessor, they go through an orientation to the new training and assessment environment and approaches. Changes to class settings may occur once on a course or program or several times. If a course or program is delivered by the same trainers and assessors throughout, there may only need to be one engagement about support arrangements. There may need to be several discussions if there are different elements to the course, or program, or there are a number of trainers and assessors. For different units, there could be different needs depending on the activities involved. Practical workrooms, labs and studios may have heightened support needs for some students. For other students, classroom sessions may need further support or adjustments. It is quite common for students to require support workers in some settings and not others.

Incorporating:

- specific orientation to onsite and online learning systems
- accessibility of teaching rooms or learning management systems
- support arrangements, including support worker/interpreter bookings
- information provided to trainers and assessors, course managers and tutors
- introduction to policies and procedures (including staff and student roles and responsibilities, code of conduct/behaviour and complaints and appeals).

Description

The passing of information from students through the RTO is a real challenge. Support information may need to be shared between a number of staff members and work areas. This could include:

- enquiry staff
- enrolment staff
- support staff including library and accessibility experts
- trainers, assessors and learning support staff in the classroom.

Respect for the student should be the focus of all these discussions and information exchanges. It is critical that any support needs are not presented as problems for training and assessment teams. Staff should feel assisted by the RTO to provide support for the needs of all students. The aim should be success for the student and for the

RTO to uphold inclusive teaching and learning practices. Trainer and assessor teams are critical for the success of students and know their programs and courses the best.

Trainers and assessors should not feel they cannot discuss the details of their program or course and competencies. There should be a comfortable space to raise queries and to discuss support needs in a disability confident way with students. These discussions may include a student's chosen supporters, support staff and specialists as appropriate. Discussions are particularly important in relation to inherent requirements of a program. Trainers and assessors will have deep knowledge of what is required to successfully demonstrate competencies. Specific units need to be well understood and fully discussed to provide any adjustment to assessment arrangements.

Practice considerations

There are some key considerations for RTOs to ensure the orientation to the training and assessment environment is as accessible, successful and inclusive as possible.

Actions to take can be grouped into five main considerations to work towards:

1. facilitating staff awareness and confidence through training
2. ensuring accessible teaching and learning provisions
3. encouraging staff to reflect on inclusivity
4. sharing information
5. reviewing support plans.

These critical considerations can help ensure your RTO provides successful orientation to the RTO's training and assessment approaches. Additional strategies to address these are detailed below to support self-assurance.

Facilitating staff confidence through training:

- everyone representing the RTO must have had training to build understanding of disability discrimination (and how to prevent it), DSE and inclusion
- the RTO should take steps to ensure all RTO staff, trainers and assessors are disability aware and confident
- there should be access to specific training in Universal Design for Learning so staff can anticipate needs in their area, course or program. This should also be considered regarding design of the RTO's enrolment processes

- the RTO's disability training must explain the difference between anticipatory Universal Design for Learning actions and individual needs for specific students. For example, training should cover reasonable adjustments and specialist services. There should be explicit provisions for preparing support workers for any class, workplace or assessment. If there are any requirements the support worker needs to meet while onsite, these should be made clear.

Ensuring accessible teaching and learning provisions:

- selection of training locations and modes must take into account the needs of students and consider assistive technology, adjustments and support needs
- the RTO's provisions for accessibility must be clearly laid out. For example, providing information about which rooms have physical access, T-loops, infrared, FM and Bluetooth systems to connect to people's hearing aids
- have strategies to address a range of requirements such as ergonomic and adjustable furniture, classroom layout and class scheduling
- there may be flexibility in qualification structures to enable students to choose particular units with different inherent requirements. If all courses at the RTO have mandatory units, this should be made clear
- the LMS, tools and technologies (e.g., video conferencing platforms and environments) used in the RTO should be accessible to screen readers and meet WCAG 2.0 standards as a minimum
- there should be a procedure relating to course transfers. It should detail how students will continue to receive support if they move from one course to another.

Encouraging staff to reflect on inclusivity:

- staff should have the opportunity to talk about inclusive training and assessment in their programs, courses, units, assessments, placements and field trips. For example, create activities and checklists to facilitate reflection to identify and address barriers in the training and assessment
- staff should also have the opportunity to explore and develop understanding about the specific and core (inherent) requirements
- there should be examples of reasonable adjustments and accommodations available for staff to review, including adjustments to assessments, so they are prepared for discussions during enrolment.

Sharing information:

- there should be clear and transparent procedures about how student record systems support confidential sharing of information with relevant staff
- there must be provisions in your student record systems to document student support needs or just the disability
- there should be procedures to inform relevant staff (including casual staff) about any support needs of students they will work with

- there should be a secure and respectful procedure for accessibility/access/support plans to be circulated
- there should be consideration about how trainers and assessors, students and support workers will work together. Schedule regular check-ins to see how it is working to support individual students and the whole cohort.

Reviewing Student Support/Learning plans:

- Student Support/Learning plans should be regularly updated on multi-year courses or if a student is returning to study
- students should be able to trigger a review of their support if new classroom, practical or assessment requirements emerge or their condition changes
- students who are experiencing issues should have transparent means to request and organise part-time study or defer course completion and for the support to be resumed after their return.

Practice snapshots

Case study 1: Ensuring accommodations persist

As part of onboarding, Orlo requested a mobility orientation and walk through before the training and assessing period started as he uses a 2-point aid. He needs a high desk in his Diploma of Risk Management classes. When he did the walkthrough with the accessibility officer, he was really glad to see the room that had been scheduled had one that would be suitable. It was the kind of high desk that could be moved into different rooms.

Unfortunately, when Orlo started he was very surprised that although he had the right room, the high desk was not available. He had a very uncomfortable 3-hour session, which caused him pain and fatigue afterwards.

What the RTO could have done:

- notify Facilities when it is essential that equipment (e.g., desks) must not be moved
- hand over to the trainer and assessor so they can understand the importance and check that appropriate equipment is available
- provide a way for students to check prior to their sessions so they can be sure all arrangements that have been agreed to have been continued.

Case study 2: Understanding inherent requirements and supporting students through the implications

Obelia is using a walking frame due to a temporary exacerbation in her condition. However, her doctors are not sure when she will be able to walk and stand unaided. Although she has successfully completed several of her Diploma of Nursing units without disclosing, particularly as a lot of the early units have been online, she is soon due to go on placement. In planning for the new placement, she disclosed that she is not able to stand. Obelia discusses her needs with her supporters at the RTO and the course manager. However, the RTO and placement provider decide the walking frame will cause too much of a work health and safety (WHS) hazard on placement.

Additionally, they are concerned that Obelia does not have the balance to stand unaided and, if using her frame, she will have limited use of her hands. Some competencies will require the use of both hands. She is supported to interrupt her studies for a year to see what improvement occurs.

Obelia improves a great deal in the year but still requires the aid of the walking frame. There is a student meeting called with course managers, placement providers and the union representative, but they cannot see a way forward. The RTO suggests that as Obelia's career aim was to work in mental health nursing she could have some units assessed for recognition of prior learning (RPL) and move into a Diploma of Mental Health.

What the RTO could have done:

- make sure the inherent physical requirements of the competencies are made clear at the earliest possible point (e.g., course information phase)
- allocate a contact person for confidential discussions (e.g., if the student wishes to talk privately about accessibility)
- provide career counselling to discontinuing students.

Linkages (standards)

[National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) Instrument 2025](#), which are one component of the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs):

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.

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*](#)

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

Standards for Enrolment – Part 4: The education provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the prospective student is able to seek admission to, or apply for enrolment in, the institution on the same basis as a prospective student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination. Enrolment includes marketing, course information, communication and counselling, assessment of learner needs, disclosure, and fees information. It also includes the provision of supports and reasonable adjustments.

Training and resources

- [*Practice Guides Outcome Standards for RTOs \(Australian Skills Qualification Authority\)*](#)
- [*Sharing your disability information while studying*](#)
- [*e-Learning: VET Staff Supporting Students with Disability*](#)



Part 3: Templates

These templates can be adapted and used in your RTO and can be integrated with any existing processes you already have in place.





Template 1: Course information

This template provides some extra text you may adapt for use on a page detailing course information. Rewrite the template text to insert content relevant to the course/s you offer at your RTO. Provide a link to disability support, and include information about how to make contact with people who can discuss support needs.

Course Description

The EXP55500 Diploma of EXAMPLE is a course for people who want to develop their skills in a broad range of contexts and business functions.

There are promising career prospects for those who successfully complete the Diploma of EXAMPLE, and it may help you advance your career in business operations. You might find work in project management firms, large enterprises or professional services.

As part of the course, you will need to give your Unique Student Identifier (you can apply for one if you don't have one), provide a form of photo identification that has your signature on it and complete a numeracy and literacy screening. You will also have to undertake a Personal Learning Plan Evaluation.

What does the Diploma of EXAMPLE involve?

It may be helpful for you to understand what it is like to complete the Diploma of EXAMPLE. Further information about the course is available in the Program Guide and we recommend you familiarise yourself with this.

The Diploma runs over 18 months in terms with holiday breaks. There is a weekly timetable of classes that may change on a term-by-term basis. The course is primarily taught in workshop classes, usually with one computer lab/online class per week.

There are two short placements on the course, which require you to complete particular work-based projects.

You will be required to develop a portfolio of your EXAMPLE work. This may involve document preparation, spreadsheet work and presentation.

What do I need to succeed in the Diploma of EXAMPLE?

There are several inherent requirements in the Diploma of EXAMPLE.

1. *Competent literacy skills are essential to EXAMPLE studies.*

The ability to acquire information and to accurately convey spoken messages is fundamental requirement of assessment.

2. *Competent numeracy skills are essential to EXAMPLE studies.*

The ability to present data using numbers in writing is fundamental.

3. *Competent digital skills are essential to EXAMPLE assessment.*

The ability to use text, spreadsheet and presentation tools to produce professional documents is fundamental.

Please note: *adjustments must demonstrate a capacity to effectively acquire, comprehend, apply and communicate accurate data and information.*



Template 2: Disability support information

This template provides some text you may adapt to put on a page about disability support at your RTO. You could link to it from course information pages and from other support pages on your website. It is a good idea to provide a contact name or number.

EXAMPLE RTO is committed to supporting the success of students with disability, impairment or medical conditions. We have a track record of providing support for students and helping them to succeed in their chosen course.

At EXAMPLE RTO, we use the term 'disability' as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth).

EXAMPLE RTO believes that there is no definitive classification system for disability and there is no list of disabilities. Please contact us directly to talk about your needs. Disability is a normal part of human diversity, and we welcome discussion with you to see how we can help you achieve success in your studies.

Disability is not always visible, and people may have multiple disabilities that may need different kinds of support. At EXAMPLE RTO, we know that people may be affected temporarily, permanently or have symptoms that occur from time to time and can be different in varied settings. We understand that this means you may require long or short-term assistance.

You may be unsure whether you have a disability or whether we can help you. Please contact us and we will be happy to arrange a confidential chat.



Template 3: Disability support information

This template provides some text you may adapt to put on a page about disability support at your RTO. You could link to it from course information pages and from other support pages on your website. It is a good idea to provide a contact name or number.

EXAMPLE RTO is committed to supporting the success of students with disability, impairment or medical conditions. We have a track record of providing reasonable adjustments to support students succeed in their course/program.

If you have a disability, impairment or medical condition that has an impact on your studies, please let us know so we can discuss your needs.

EXAMPLE RTO provides reasonable adjustments so students can be supported to successfully finish their studies. Examples of reasonable adjustments include:

- *providing equipment*
- *modifying course materials (e.g., different format)*
- *different training and assessment strategies.*

Please note that all reasonable adjustments must meet the inherent requirements of a course.

Inherent requirements are the core requirements of a course. All students must be able to meet their course/program core (inherent) requirements to successfully complete the course/program.

These will be different for each course. Inherent requirements are concerned with:

- *abilities related to ethics*
- *behaviour*
- *legal compliance*
- *communication*
- *cognition*
- *literacy*
- *language*
- *numeracy*
- *sensory ability*
- *reflective skills*
- *relational skills*
- *sustainable performance.*



Template 4: Event sign-up form

This template includes questions that can be incorporated into your event booking forms and sign-ups. The information should also be collected by any third-party event managers, agents or other recruitment sources that you use. Carefully consider data security practices (e.g., safety when collecting and sharing information; appropriate destruction after use).

Student name	
Enquiry/student ID	
Email address	
Do you require plain text emails? Y/N	
Phone number(s)	
SMS only? Y/N	
Interest in training product (e.g., qualification/course)	
Support needs due to a disability, impairment or medical condition	<i>EXAMPLE RTO can help you access information you need. This information will only be used for operational purposes and will not form part of the assessment of your suitability for the course/program.</i>
Do you have a disability, impairment or medical condition? Y/N	
Do you need support to access the event? Y/N/Unsure	
Do you require materials in a specific format? Y/N	
Please give details of any supports that help you	
Will you be bringing a support person with you? If so, please provide their details	



Template 5: Record of Enquiry form

This record can be completed by the staff member at the RTO who discussed support needs related to a student's disability, impairment or medical condition. It is a record of the student's enquiry. If a disability is declared, it ensures the meeting is recorded. This consultation meeting record must be kept confidential but can be attached to a prospective student's file and destroyed appropriately if the student does not proceed to enrolment.

Student name	
Enquiry/student ID	
Training product (e.g., course/program)	
Date of meeting	
Attendees (names and titles)	
Record of discussion	
Learning supports and adjustments discussed	
Support needs due to a disability, impairment or medical condition	<i>EXAMPLE RTO can help you access information you need. This information will only be used for operational purposes and will not form part of the assessment of your suitability for the course.</i>
Do you have a disability, impairment or medical condition? Y/N	
Do you need support to access the course/program? Y/N/Unsure	
Do you require pre-enrolment materials in a specific format? Y/N	
Please give details of any supports that help you	
Will you be bringing a support person with you? If so, please provide their details	

What types of support do you think would assist you to successfully complete your course/program?	
What types of support and strategies have been helpful when you have studied or worked before?	
Is there anything else you would like us to know about you as a student?	



Template 6: Application form extract

This template includes questions that can be added to information that you already collect before enrolment. The information should also be collected by any third party acting on behalf of the RTO or other online sources that you use. Carefully consider data security practices (e.g., safety when collecting and sharing information, appropriate destruction after use).

Student name	
Enquiry/student ID	
Training product (e.g., course/program)	
Date of meeting	
Attendees (named and titles)	
Record of discussion	
Learning supports and adjustments discussed	
Support needs due to a disability, impairment or medical condition	<i>EXAMPLE RTO can help you access information you need. This information will only be used for operational purposes and will not form part of the assessment of your suitability for the course.</i>
Do you have a disability, impairment or medical condition? Y/N	
Do you need support to access the course/program? Y/N/Unsure	
Do you require pre-enrolment materials in a specific format? Y/N	
Please give details of any supports that help you	
Will you be bringing a support person with you? If so, please provide their details	
What types of support do you think would assist you to	

successfully complete your course/program?	
What types of support and strategies have been helpful when you have studied or worked before?	
Is there anything else you would like us to know about you as a student?	



Template 7: Reasonable adjustment information

This template provides some text you may adapt to put on a page about undertaking a course. You could link to it from course information pages and from other support pages on your website. It is a good idea to provide a contact name or number.

Student name	
Enquiry / Student ID	
Email address	
Do you require plain text emails? Y/N	
Phone number(s)	
SMS only? Y/N	
Interest in training product (e.g., course/ program)	
Support needs due to a disability or medical condition	<i>EXAMPLE RTO can help you access information you need. This information will only be used for operational purposes and will not form part of the assessment of your suitability for the course.</i>
Do you have a disability, impairment or medical condition and you need support to access information about the course/program? Y/N/Unsure	
Do you require materials in a specific format? Y/N	
Please give details of any supports that help you:	
Will you be bringing a support person with you? If so, please provide their details	



Template 8: Enrolment form extract

This template includes information that you must collect for regulatory purposes and can be added to questions you use from the [*AVETMISS form*](#). Carefully consider data security practices (e.g., security when collecting and sharing information, appropriate destruction after use).

Support needs due to a disability, impairment or medical condition	<i>EXAMPLE RTO can help you access information you need. This information will only be used for operational purposes and will not be shared with your trainers and assessors.</i>
Do you need support to succeed in the course/ program? Y/N/Unsure	
Do you have a disability or medical condition? Y/N	
How would you describe your disability in your own words?	
Do you require course materials in a specific format? Y/N	
What types of support do you think would assist you to successfully complete your course/ program?	
What types of support and strategies have been helpful when you have studied or worked before?	
Is there anything else you would like us to know about you as a learner?	
Do you have formal evidence of your disability or medical condition? Y/N	

<p>What kind of evidence do you have? (Medical evidence from a treating practitioner / Previous support documentation from school or study / NDIS plan)</p>	
<p>Is there anything else you would like us to know about supporting your disability?</p>	



Template 9: Screening assessments – exploring support needs

This template documents potential barriers and possible reasonable adjustments for screening assessments. It should be made clear to the student the RTO does not determine the reasonable adjustments for these external assessments. These needs may be captured along with the Student Support/Learning Plan to be implemented

Screening test title:
Screening test provider e.g., ACER (Australian Council for Educational Research):
Elements of screening assessment conditions where reasonable adjustments may be required:
Screening tasks/ methods that may affect a student's ability to complete the requirements:
Suggested reasonable adjustments:
Does it affect the inherent requirements of the screening task/ methods? Y/N
Other comments and considerations:
RTO staff declaration I confirm the student has been informed of the process of how to apply for the requested adjustment. Name: Signature: Date:
Student declaration I have been informed about the process of requesting a reasonable adjustment to the screening test. Name: Signature: Date:

References

- 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs), comprised of:
 1. [*National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) Instrument 2025*](#)
 2. [*National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements\) Instrument 2025*](#)
 3. [*Credential Policy - Standards for Registered Training Organisations*](#)
- ACPET (Australian Council for Private Education and Training) and NDCO (National Disability Coordination Office). (2015). [*Building confidence in enrolling learners with disability: for providers of education and training*](#). Accessed 2024.
- ADCET (Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training) (n.d). [*VET Statistics*](#). Accessed 2024.
- ADCET (n.d). [*Legislation and Standards*](#). Accessed 2024.
- ADCET (n.d). [*e-Learning: VET Staff Supporting Students with Disability eLearning package*](#). Accessed 2024.
- ACCC (Australian Competition and Consumer Commission). (n.d). [*Your Consumer Rights: A Guide for Consumers with Disability \(Australian Competition and Consumer Commission\)*](#)
- AHRC (Australian Human Rights Commission) (n.d) [*Quick Guide to Australian Discrimination Laws*](#). Accessed 2024.
- AHRC (n.d.). [*Includability: creating accessible and inclusive communities*](#). Accessed 2024.
- AHRC (n.d.). [*Legal and ethical considerations of service delivery*](#). Accessed 2024.
- AIHW (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare) (2022). [*People with disability in Australia*](#). Accessed 2024.
- Centre for Applied Technology (CAST) (2018). [*Universal Design for Learning Guidelines*](#). Accessed 2024.
- CICA (Career Industry Council of Australia). (n.d.). [*Guiding Principles for Career Development Services and Career Information Products*](#). Accessed 2024.
- Department of Education (2020). [*2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005*](#). Accessed 2024.
- [*Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\) \(DDA\)*](#)

- [Disability Standards for Education 2005 \(Cth\) \(DSE\)](#)
- [Guidance Notes for Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Guidance Notes for Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
- [National Vocational Education and Training Regulator \(Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations\) Instrument 2025](#), one of the components of the 2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) (see above).
- Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD) (n.d.). [Imputing disability for the NCCD](#). Accessed 2024.
- [Practice Guides Outcome Standards for RTOs \(Australian Skills Qualification Authority\)](#)
- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability 2009](#)

Glossary

2025 Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs): Comprised of three elements:

1. Outcome Standards (legislation):

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcomes Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025.

Outcome focused requirements that support the delivery of nationally consistent and high-quality training that leads to quality outcomes for students, industry, employers and the Australian community.

2. Compliance requirements (legislation):

National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025.

Administrative requirements, including the Fit and Proper Person Requirements and Nationally Recognised Training Logo Conditions of Use Policy, that support integrity in the VET sector.

3. Credential Policy: Standards for Registered Training Organisations.

An enforceable policy that outlines the credentials required for delivering training and assessments and undertaking validation of assessment.

Please note: Some RTOs in Victoria and Western Australia are regulated by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority or the Training Accreditation Council Western Australia respectively.

Alternative/accessible formats: Material that has been reformatted to be accessible to people who are blind or vision impaired. Formats can include audio, braille, large print, Word format or tactile images.

ASQA: Australian Skills Quality Authority. ASQA is the national regulator for Australia's vocational education and training sector.

AVETMISS: Australian Vocational Education and Training Management Information Statistical Standard

Disability Access Plan: A document used to record reasonable adjustments to enable equitable participation in learning for students with disability.

DDA: The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)*.

Disability: Disability covers a range of impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Section 4 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*

defines disability. It includes a disability that a person presently has, previously had, may exist in the future, or is imputed to a person.

DSE: The *Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth) (DSE)* came into effect in August 2005 and clarify the obligations of education and training providers under the DDA. They were reviewed in 2010, 2015 and 2020.

Easy Read: Easy Read refers to the presentation of text in an accessible, easy-to-understand format. It is often useful for people with learning disability and may also be beneficial for people with other conditions affecting how they process information.

Imputed disability: A term used in the DDA. It means an undiagnosed disability the team considers a student to have that is having a functional impact on their learning.

Multimodal/multimodality: Conveying something through multiple channels using different media or means of communication.

Onboarding: Includes the processes in which new students learn about the RTO and are integrated into the learning environment. In this document, the term is used primarily as a student-support-led process.

Offboarding: If a student finds a course is not suitable, or there are other reasons they cannot continue, an offboarding process will occur. The process involves the student completing paperwork and connecting with RTO staff to finish their engagement. It may include starting another more appropriate course.

Online learning platforms: Used by RTO institutions for student services, delivery of learning content and resources for both students and staff.

Reasonable adjustments: Under the DDA and DSE, reasonable adjustments are measures or actions taken to help a student with disability to participate in a course on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it balances the interests of all parties affected.

Social Model of Disability: This model recognises attitudes, practices and structures can be disabling and act as barriers preventing people from fulfilling their potential and exercising their rights as equal members of the community.

Strengths-based approach: A strengths-based approach can mean focusing on what the student is able to do and contribute, not what they are not able to do due to their disability.

Student Support/Learning Plan: A document the RTO uses to identify and detail any support needs the student might have.

Success orientation: A way of being and doing where the plan is for success of the individual and a positive mindset is focused on, identifying potential barriers but with a clear success goal.

Training Accreditation Council (TAC): TAC is Western Australia's Vocational Education and Training (VET) Regulator and is established under the *Vocational Education and Training Act 1996*. It can register training organisations in and accredit courses.

UNCRPD: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted in 2006 and ratified by Australia in 2008.

Universal Design: The intentional design to maximise access for all people including people with disability.

Universal Design for Learning: An approach to minimise or remove access barriers at the design phase to maximise participation for all learners.

VET Regulators: Australia has three VET regulators: ASQA, the national regulator, TAC, the VET Regulator for Western Australia and VRQA the training regulator for Victoria.

Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA): The VRQA is Victoria's education and training regulator. It is an independent statutory authority that works to assure the quality of education and training in Victoria through the application of standards to education and training providers and accreditation of courses and qualifications.

Web Content Accessibilities Guidelines (WCAG): Guidelines developed by the W3C that outline how to make web content more accessible for people with disability.

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>