

Disability Action Plan Update

Trading as New Zealand Skills and Education College



New Zealand School of Education - 7647

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Disability Action Plan Update

Recognising the need for a Disability Action Plan (DAP)

New Zealand Skills and Education College (NZSE College) is committed to improving access to learning for disabled learners. We recognise the need for additional information, support and services that may need to be provided by – and to – staff at all levels of the organisation.

Guided by the Kia Ōrite Toolkit, NZSE College is implementing the plan and demonstrates below the progress that has been made over the past twelve months since the DAP plan was written and implemented.

Student Experience Workstream

Led by the Academic Director Operations and Research, supported by the Learner Success Support Manager, Executive Management Team has the responsibility for this workstream. The focus of this workstream is to improve the learners' experience ensuring that across the company we are responsive to the learners' needs. This stream of the Disability Action plan focuses on improving staff awareness and areas that would improve the student experience.

Objective 3: Staff at all levels take responsibility for providing holistic support for ākonga with disabilities supported by the organisation-wide approach

The DAP plan was rolled out to all staff during the third and fourth quarter of 2023. Identification of learners with disabilities at the point of enrolment has ensured that current and prospective learners are offered the range of services we have available.

Tracking: On track

Status: **Green**, no issues identified

Achievements to date

- Individual conversations with learners prior to enrolment to identify their specific support requirements. Online application process has been established to support disabled learners.
- Professional Development of all staff to ensure companywide understand the Disability Action Plan and are engaged with the objectives and outcomes the company has identified.
- Easy access to campuses for disabled learners for the majority of our campuses
- Accurate reporting and recording of learners presenting with disability has been a focus.
- Staff consider inclusivity of access and of teaching materials across all platforms for learners with disabilities.
- External relationships have been established with Workbridge, SENZ, QES Youth Services (TUPU Careers Consultant), Raukura Hauora o Tainui, Solomon Group, Blue Light Youthline Drug/alcohol education, and Mahi Tahi Trust Mental Health and Addiction support,

Next steps

- Establish best practices in recruitment by engaging and encouraging more disabled learners.
- Establish best practices to provide support for Māori disabled learners
- Build into the System Integration Project measures to identify data to determine the number of learners supported by external services
- Establish processes to measure the year-on-year ākonga achievement and scaffolding to higher level qualifications and or employment



Objective 4: Build a partnership with ākonga with disabilities in planning and design through representative disabled student associations and groups.

NZSE College has three Learner Voice Committees serving the International, Domestic and Te Roopu Arotahi o nga Mana Māori which are very active in ensuring that their needs are heard and addressed. Representatives from each committee have a voice at the Learner Support Leadership Team bi-monthly meetings. The Student Voice Committees encourage new learners at the time of orientation to be part of the support mechanisms at the beginning of their study journey.

Tracking: Tracking slower than planned

Status: **Amber**, some internal resourcing (support roles) reliance on external providers

Achievements to date

- Through the Pre-cohort meetings, Learner Success Support Team and academic team identify the support need for disabled learners before their start date, a wraparound support is established for the disabled learners.
- The SMS records are updated as academic staff detect learners who present with a disability.
- Orientation is delivered in a flexible approach to cater for the need of disabled learners.
- Supported by surveys, learner voice committees, and complaint processes, disabled learners have a strong voice in helping us shape the practices that influence their study, learning environment and pastoral care. Their participation makes it possible for NZSE College to design our approach to pastoral care and academic support that fits their unique context.
- Programme delivery, materials and assessments are delivered with flexibility to disabled learners to support their outcomes.
- An initial meeting has been held with Nationwide Health and Disability Advocacy Service Mr Pranesh Davendran – further meetings are scheduled.

Next steps

- A DAP committee is in the process of being formed. Once formed this committee will report to the Academic Board and up to the Executive Management team, representation from learners, academics, Executive will ensure a good cross section of the company is represented.
- An audit of student facing web content and disability services to take place.
- Compliant and appeal policies to be updated to ensure they are accessible and communicated effectively to all disabled learners.
- A research proposal has been submitted to AARIA (Ako Aotearoa). Proposed Project Title: Machine learning based predictive system for equitable success of ākonga in tertiary education: Enhancing learner retention through AI innovation. This will focus on all learners including Māori, Pasifika and Disabled learners.

Objective 7: Review and analyse the outcomes and satisfaction levels of ākonga with disabilities in an ongoing cycle of review, reflection, response and planning

Tracking: On Track

Status: **Green**, no issues

Achievements to date

- Reviewed and updated its enrolment forms and approach to recording data for learners with disabilities. Learners identified with an undisclosed disability post enrolment have their records amended in the Student Management System.
- Course Advisors have a raised awareness of seeking the information at point of interview and enrolment.
- Student Management System recording accuracy enhanced by undisclosed disability reporting



Next steps

- Build an infographic as part of NZSE's data integration project to provide a visual representation of the data, view patterns and trends.
- Through a better understanding of data appropriate training can be applied to teaching and learning and support staff and services used by the learners.
- Lift up the disabled learner's achievement to ensure the equitable outcome through designated and targeted support

Staff Capability and experience

All staff will contribute to this objective. Tutors/lecturers and support staff will be responsible for ensuring all learner resources and access routes are accessible in a range of appropriate formats for all learners.

Objective 6: Using the principles of Universal Design in Learning (UDL) in all course design, curriculum, delivery, assessment, learning support strategies, building design, access routes, information and communication processes

Tracking: Tracking slightly behind

Status: **Amber** – some resourcing required in the next steps

Achievements to date

- We have reviewed existing programme development with respect to disability awareness and our approach to meeting the UDL in all programmes.
- Staff awareness of privacy protection in using disabled learners' information in providing support
- Worked to improve school-wide engagement and understanding of disabilities ensuring removal of barriers for learners who have a disability. This can be seen in the LMS Canvas (adding transcripts to conferences), delivery including availability of part-time or evening classes.
- Common student areas are accessible for learners with a disability

Next steps

- Development of PD material for staff using Universal Design will commence in the latter part of the second quarter of 2024. Resources produced by <https://achieve.podia.com/> will support this work.
- An audit of NZSE's eco-system to determine the changes required to the campus to further enhance suitability of facilities across a broader range of learners with disabilities.
- A research proposal has been submitted to AARIA (Ako Aotearoa). Proposed Project Title: Machine learning based predictive system for equitable success of ākonga in tertiary education: Enhancing learner retention through AI innovation. This will focus on all learners including Māori, Pasifika and Disable learner.

Objective 5: Provide guidance and/or training to stakeholders on the use of non-discriminatory practices throughout ākonga educational pathways, from first engagement to employment.

Supporting learners with disabilities into meaningful employment commences during their study and as part of work-placement. By empowering learners to be open and self-advocate will lead to meaningful opportunities and a successful transition to employment.

Tracking: Slower than expected



Status: **Amber**, some resourcing constraints

Achievements to date

- Pathways established from high schools to the programmes at NZSE College, and pathways from lower levels to higher levels within NZSE, and pathway into universities.
- A good relationship has been developed with Workbridge which supports learners with barriers to employment offering tailored employment and skill development to assist their transition to employment. Workbridge discusses with the employer and job seeker any reasonable accommodation and support necessary and for the following 12 months supports the employee and employer.
- A good relationship with QES TUPU Career Consultants who provide support and TUPU Aotearoa funding for Pasifika learners
- Emerging relationship with MPTT Community Lead (work broker support for MPTT learners)
- Establishment of an industry engagement hub to provide targeted career services for learners including disabled learners.

Next steps

- More resources into employment support for disabled learners

Systems & Policies & Leadership Workstream

Objective 1 of the Disability Action Plan focuses on maintaining an organisation-wide approach to support ākonga with disabilities. This includes inclusive policies, procedures and practices, created and driven by senior leadership with the aim of removing barriers in the environment.

NZSE College is committed to the best practice standards guided by the Kia Ōrite toolkit in working on its management responsibilities. NZSE College is working on putting best practices right from recruitment, selection and admission, enrolment processed to teaching, learning, technologies to monitoring and planning.

All students are made aware of the range of support services that are available and specifically for students with disabilities. Student uptake and feedback will inform the continual improvement of these services. NZSE's staff recruitment process has changed its focus to make the role requirements clear specific and behaviour based.

Tracking: On track

Status: **Green**, no issues identified

Achievements to date

- Organization-wide awareness of equity achievement for disabled learners
- NZSEG's QMS and Policies are inclusive to enable all learners access to study and achieve qualifications to improve themselves, their whanau and communities.
- The majority of the programmes have a work-placement, internship or project which
- Training attended (People and Capability Director and a range of Learner Success and Support manager/advisors Neurodiversity – the new brain gain? May 2022 Diversity Works NZ.
- Autism Supporting Learner Success March 2023
- Dyslexia Workshop supporting Learner Success
- Companywide attendance of and engaging in the DAP Plan. We have added the following statement to the automatic response in Employment Hero *"We recognise that a diverse and inclusive workplace makes for a healthy, productive, and innovative organisation. When it*



comes to cognitive diversity, a typical recruitment process does not always allow the 20% of us who are neurodivergent to shine. We want the recruitment process to be safe and effective for all so please let us know how we can best work with you when we speak next. Prefer Teams to in-person? Scheduled conversations work best? Want more detail on logistics or dress code? Suit an environment with less sensory stimulus? Prefer to have someone accompany you to interviews?"

- We do not discount CVs with minor spelling or grammar mistakes (dyslexia)
- Sending candidates the interview questions in advance to help them prepare to shine at the interview

Next steps

- Establishment of the DAP Committee.
- Ongoing training for new recruits to engage with the Disability Action Plan. It is now part of the staff onboarding process

Objective 3: Create the infrastructure and provide resources that continuously develop organisational confidence and competence in supporting ākongā with disabilities.

Tracking: On track

Status: **Green**, no issues identified

Achievements to date

- Organization-wide awareness of support for disabled learners promoted systemically
- All campuses have been through an audit to ensure they are accessible for disabled learners wherever applied
- All course advisors and learner success support advisors equipped to be responsive to disabled learners' needs.
- Teaching and Learning flexible for disabled learners

Next steps

- To provide and maintain assistive technologies such as screen readers, captioning services or other adaptive equipment to facilitate learning and accessibility
- Use collected data to continuously improve support systems and infrastructure based on ākongā needs and feedback.



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NZSE – New Zealand Skills and Education College is part of the New Zealand Skills and Education Group.