Tertiary Education Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Disability Action Plan – purpose and vision

This Disability Action Plan (DAP) reflects the Tertiary Education Commission's (TEC) commitment to improve access for disabled people, particularly our staff and people who access our information and services.

As a Crown entity and a national level funder of tertiary education, this document covers our:

› functions as an organisation, with its own staff and resources

› role in shaping a dynamic system that delivers lifelong learning and equips learners, communities and employers for success.

Our DAP reflects the requirements of the following legislation and guidelines: Human Rights Act 1993; New Zealand Government Disability Action Plan 2019-2023; the Education and Training Act 2020; the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2008; the Crown Entities Act 2004; Employment Relations Act 2000 and Government Accessibility Standards (1.1).

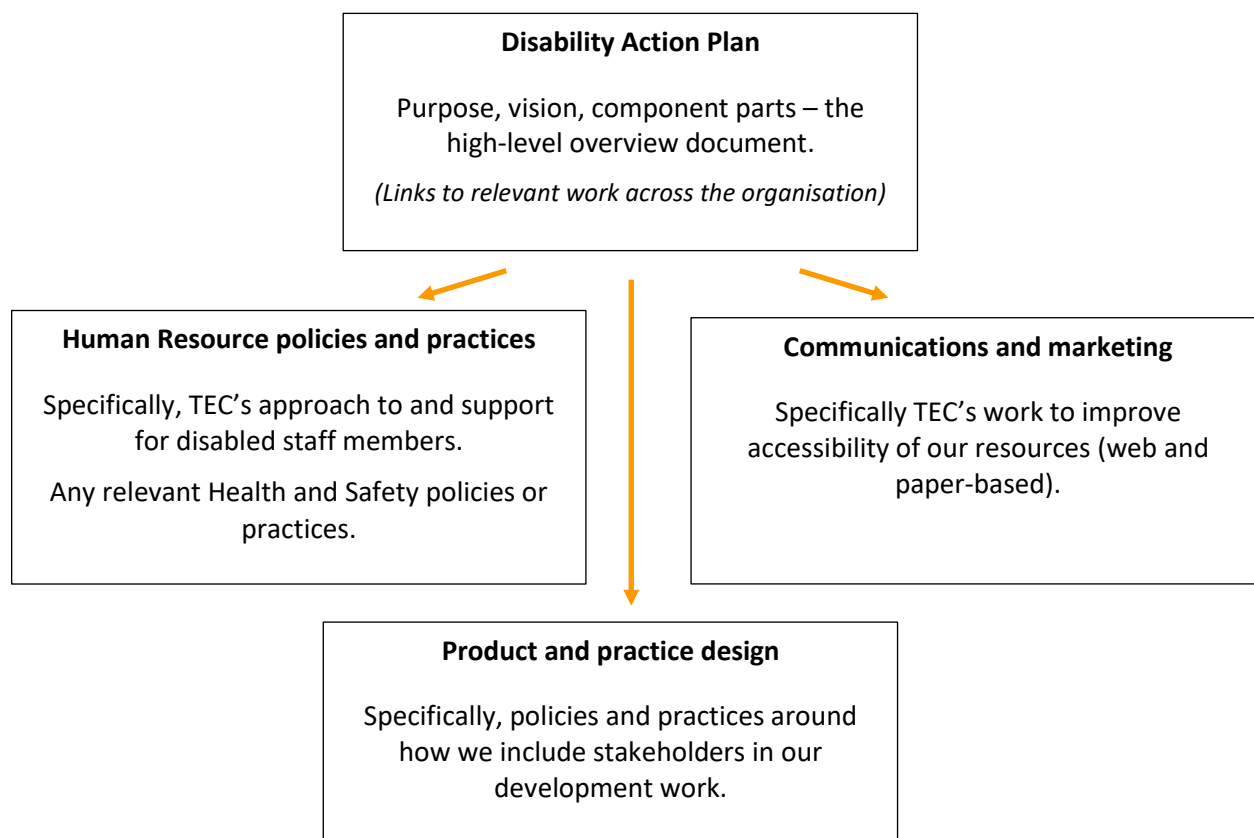## This DAP and related work supports the TEC to meet our commitments to:

› ensure our information is accessible to everyone

› be good employers of disabled persons

› involve disabled persons in the design of relevant systems, policies and processes to ensure decisions made by the TEC do not inadvertently harm them.

Key principles underpinning our action plan

› Disabled people will be treated with dignity and respect as individuals, and be able to realise their individual capabilities.

› Disabled people will have access to the full range of educational and employment opportunities to maximise their learning and career development.

› Disabled people are consulted to determine the effect of policy and practices on their ability to access, enter and achieve in tertiary education.

› Disabled people will participate in environments free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, consistent with the relevant legislation and strategies.

DAP activities are part of our everyday work and practices at the TEC

This ensures we embed in our work, rather than it becoming a side-line process. The DAP Purpose and Vision is a driver for work to occur and be aligned, creating a point of focus and mechanism to track progress. It is informed by relevant legislation and cross-government initiatives.

Disability Action Plan

Purpose, vision, component parts – the high-level overview document.

(Links to relevant work across the organisation)

Human Resource policies and practices

Specifically, TEC's approach to and support for disabled staff members.

Any relevant Health and Safety policies or practices.

Communications and marketing

Specifically TEC's work to improve accessibility of our resources (web and paper-based).

Product and practice design

Specifically, policies and practices around how we include stakeholders in our development work.

HR policies and practices (employment)

We ensure we have employment practices that meet the responsibilities in the good employer requirements in the Crown Entities Act 2004. We strive to provide an environment with equal employment opportunities for all current and potential employees. At TEC, we want all our people to feel empowered, valued and supported. Helping our people better understand the diverse needs of New Zealanders, including those of disabled people, means we can all contribute to our goal of achieving the same patterns of participation and achievement for all learners.

At TEC, we are curious about different perspectives; we want to work well with people with different backgrounds and experiences. It is important to us that we reflect those perspectives so people feel they belong, without barriers.

Work we have undertaken to date in this area includes:

- Ensuring our buildings and meeting places are fully accessible

- Specifically working with disabled staff to understand and support their needs when moving to working from home environments as a result of COVID-19

Communication, marketing, and working with the TEC

Accessibility is about inclusion — making sure everyone, including disabled people and those using assistive technologies, can access building environments, workplace arrangements, information and services. Providing assistive technologies and different types of communications are key in giving people access to engage with agencies. Accessible websites and communication channels are an important part of agencies ensuring everyone can access information and services, and participate in society.

The TEC is aware of existing access issues in its communication and digital environments. We are working to understand and resolve these to improve access and participation of disabled people with all TEC communication channels. This work involves both external and internal-facing communication products, alongside working to educate and support TEC staff and processes.

Work we have undertaken to date in this area includes:

- Ensuring all our new web material is produced in web-reader format

- Ensuring our internal communication channels and products are accessible

- Providing captioning for online webinars we have run for the sector

Product and practice design

We will affect change in all aspects of access and participation in tertiary education through embracing a proactive capacity-building approach, seeking opportunity to strengthen and guide the tertiary sector to better support disabled learners. This will include building our internal capability to ensure we can lead by example in our design work.

When we offer advice, design products or make changes to the way we fund or support the delivery of tertiary education, we will consider how our work may affect disabled people, and seek their timely input on changes and developments.

Work we have undertaken to date in this area includes:

- Funding the re-development and expansion of Kia Ōrite, the NZ Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments

- Working with TEO's to assess their use of equity funding for disabled learners, in order to better understand system constraints and learner needs.

Review and evaluation

This DAP is an evolving plan of action requiring ongoing review, evaluation and monitoring. The TEC will:

› Review and report on actions and progress as part of regular internal reporting cycles (to Executive Leadership Team and TEC Board).

› Report to the Minister on progress and development of the DAP, and TEC's related work with the sector.

› Annually review the DAP.

To support our work, we welcome feedback from staff, visitors and interested agencies about any matter regarding access and inclusion.

› Staff please contact TEC HR.

› Other interested parties please email customerservice@tec.govt.nz.

Appendix One: Definition and demographics

Definition

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that:

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

The Convention "recognises that disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."[1]

That is, disability is something that happens when people with impairments face barriers in society; it is society that disables, not an individual's impairments, this is the thing all disabled people have in common.

Within this commonality, every human being is a unique individual. Even if we have the same impairment as someone else, we will experience different opportunities and barriers because of where we live and how we are treated by those around us. The time and context in our lives when we may acquire our impairment(s) also affects what barriers or opportunities we may experience.

The understanding of disability has changed significantly over the past several decades. Importantly, it is now understood the lives of disabled people are usually far more limited by existing social, cultural, and economic constraints than by specific physical, sensory, psychological or intellectual impairments.[2] This is the social model of disability described in the current New Zealand Disability Strategy.

When considering disabled people in tertiary education, we need to understand:

› the number and proportion of people with different types of impairment

› the extent to which they experience limits in their day to day activities and barriers to full participation in learning.

This places the focus not just on the students but also on the environment in which education is offered and takes place.

Demographics

Disabled people make up a significant proportion of our community. Disability is a part of the human experience. According to the World Report on Disability "almost everyone will be temporarily or permanently impaired at some point in life..."[3]

According to the New Zealand Disability Survey 2013, in New Zealand 24 percent or more than one million people reported as having a disability.[4]

In New Zealand:

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[1] United Nations (2008). *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*. Available from https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-

[2] Oliver, M. (1996). *Understanding disability: From theory to practice.* Basingstoke: Macmillan.

[3] World Health Organization (2011). *World report on disability*. Page 3. Geneva, Switzerland. Available from www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/en/index.html

[4] NZ Disability Survey, 2013. Available from http://archive.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/health/disabilities/DisabilitySurvey_HOTP2013.aspx

- › For adults, physical limitations were the most common type of impairment. Eighteen percent of people aged 15 or over (64 percent of disabled adults), were physically impaired.

- › For children, learning difficulty was the most common impairment type. Six percent of children had difficulty learning.

- › Māori and Pacific people had higher-than-average disability rates, after adjusting for differences in ethnic population age profiles.

- › An estimated 11 percent of the total population (484,000 people) were limited in their everyday activities by sensory impairments (hearing and vision loss) that assistive devices such as hearing aids or glasses did not eliminate.

- › An estimated 5 percent of the total population (242,000 people) were living with long-term limitations in their daily activities as a result of the effects of psychological and/or psychiatric impairments.

In 2019 12.7 percent of staff at the TEC self-identified as having a disability in the employee experience survey He Waka Eke Noa.