Tips for Creating an Inclusive Learning Environment

Things to remember

- Some disabilities are variable and can be affected by the time of day, medication or temperature; this may occasionally result in absences
- Some students may need to leave early or have a break during sessions so don’t draw attention to them
- Some students (for instance those with hearing impairments) may need to record lectures in order to re-listen to them later
- There may be Support Workers in your class providing note taking or mentoring for disabled students
- The success rates and safety record of disabled students are similar to those for other students
- The Disability Service is here to help you - call 4321 with any queries.

Planning the course

- Check on SAMIS (Reports) whether any students in your class have a Disability Access Plan. This will provide guidance in how to meet each student’s needs.
- Meet with the disabled student where possible, to discuss any particular needs that they may have to fully participate in the course.
- When considering any disability related adjustments to your course, teaching style or assessment, it is useful to define the essential requirements of the course:
  - What is the purpose of the course?
  - What methods of instruction are absolutely necessary? Why?
  - What outcomes are absolutely required of all students? Why?
  - What methods of assessing student outcomes are absolutely necessary? Why?
  - What are acceptable levels of performance on these student outcome measures

Lectures

- Make learning resources available before class – This enables all students to come prepared for the lecture but particularly assists those who have difficulty hearing, seeing or taking notes
- Consider how you present information e.g. the style of paper you're using, font and clarity of text to ensure that all students can read the content.
- Try and face the class as much as possible and avoid turning away to write while speaking
- Use the microphone in lecture theatres as Loop systems (for hearing impaired students) are dependent on this
- Where possible verbalise any information you write, draw or show your class
- Write new terminology, specialist words or unfamiliar names on the board.
Seminars
- **Repeat any questions** or comments from the group so that no information is missed.
- **Agree ‘ground rules’** e.g. only one person can speak at a time to make it easier for students to hear what is being said.
- **Encourage students to be open** about how they learn best and what they need to fully participate.
- When students have assistants such as note-takers or interpreters, **direct questions and comments directly to the student**.

Laboratory and workshop safety
- **Involve the disabled student** e.g. in any risk assessments and in implementing changes to activities.
- **Provide at least one adjustable workbench** for students with wheelchairs as well as students of smaller stature.
- Ensure that the laboratory/workshop **aisles are clear** and materials/equipment are within reach.
- **Provide an outline** of the laboratory or studio work prior to each session to allow students to prepare and discuss any potential barriers.
- **Develop virtual activities** that simulate fieldwork to complement practical work.

Group work
- Look out for groups which require a higher degree of informal supervision than others.
- Provide a clear point of contact throughout the tasks, and a process for students to discuss concerns relating to disability and the group work.

Placements, fieldwork and off campus activities
- Discuss any off campus activities with students to identify any support requirements.
- Have a pre-placement discussion with your students regarding any disability related issues e.g. location, accessibility, health and safety and other reasonable adjustments.

Assessment
Some students are recommended assessment provisions such as additional time or use of a smaller or separate room. These provisions are detailed on their Disability Access Plan (DAP) and generally apply to in-class tests as well as exams.

---