

Practice Guide

Student Supports and Services

Overview

This guide outlines responsibilities related to providing student supports and services. This includes internal, external and specialised supports and services. Registered training organisations (RTOs) must inform students about the availability of these supports and services. They must also ensure students with disability can access and use them on the same basis as a student without disability, without experiencing discrimination.

What are supports and services?

To maximise the student successfully completing their training, RTOs need to:

- identify any support individual learners need prior to their enrolment or commencement (whichever is the earliest)
- provide access to required supports throughout their training.

At minimum, this should include:

- identifying particular requirements that students would need to meet to complete each course. This might include language, literacy, numeracy and digital skills (LLND), English language, individual learning needs or reasonable adjustments
- developing strategies to provide support and adjustments available where reasonable and necessary.

The types of support services provided will vary. A larger RTO may have a student services or disability support services team. A smaller RTO may have a dedicated staff member who provides student supports and services.

General student supports and services may include:

- LLND programs or referrals to these programs
- assistive technology

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- ergonomic furniture
 - financial counselling
 - pre-enrolment materials
 - study support and study skills programs
 - learning resource centres
 - mediation services or referrals to these services
 - flexible scheduling and delivery of training and assessment
 - counselling services or referrals to these services
 - digital literacy skills and support
 - learning and assessment programs contextualised to the workplace
 - any other services that the RTO considers necessary to support learners to achieve competency.

Specialised supports may include:

- learning materials in alternative formats (e.g., braille or large print)
- extra tutorials including online tutorial support
- specific adaptive equipment or assistive technology
- Auslan interpreting
- captioning and transcripts
- specialised third-party services and supports (e.g., occupational therapy assessment to assist in identifying reasonable adjustments)
- other mechanisms (e.g., training to use technology for online delivery components or support to be able to use assistive technology).

Providing supports and services

RTOs must be able to demonstrate that for each student:

- additional support is identified, where required
- that support is made available (either directly or through arrangements with a third party).

While a formal assessment process is not required, the RTO must be able to demonstrate how they identified support needs. For example, by requiring students to complete an Australian Core Skills Framework test or a self-assessment as part of the enrolment process.

Where additional or specialised support needs have been identified, the RTO must be able to demonstrate that this support has been made available, or that there is an unjustifiable hardship that prevents them from providing this support.

Practice considerations and checkpoints

The RTO must ensure that the student is able to access support services used by students in general and that this access is on the same basis as a student without disability. The RTO must provide access to specialised support services where reasonable and necessary. This means the RTO should ensure:

- a range of general and specialised student supports and services are available to all learners
- any student supports and services provided are accessible to students with disability
- specialised/internal and external) and how students can access them
- all students are informed of the student supports and services available and are aware of how to access them
- where the provision of specialised supports, services or equipment for the student is reasonable and necessary, the RTO will organise for this to be made available
- all staff are trained in disability awareness and inclusive education practices.

Links to the relevant legislation and standards to meet RTO obligations

[Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\) \(DDA\)](#)

The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person on the basis of disability in education.

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

Standards for Student Support Services – Part 7: The education provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the student is able to use support services used by the students of the institution in general on the same basis as a student without disability, and without experiencing discrimination. This includes having available internal and external services and supports, informing students of what is available, and providing access to specialised services and supports as necessary.

[Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015 \(Cth\)](#)

Standard 1: The RTO's training and assessment strategies and practices are responsive to industry and learner needs and meet the requirements of training packages and VET accredited courses.

Standard 5: Each learner is properly informed and protected. The RTO must ensure learners are adequately informed about the services they are to receive, their rights and obligations, and the RTO's responsibilities under the RTO Standards.

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](#)

Benefits

- Student – is confident the RTO can provide access to supports and services throughout their student journey. This allows them to participate on the same basis and without discrimination.
- Trainer and assessor – is aware of what student supports and services are available and has the knowledge and confidence to support students with and without disability to access them.
- RTO – has confidence that students have the supports and services they need. They have confidence that staff are equipped to support students with disability and facilitate access to the relevant supports and services.

Training and resources

[Users' Guide to the Standards for RTOs 2015: Chapter 3 – Support and progression \(Australian Skills Quality Authority\) \(ASQA\)](#)

[Fact Sheet - Providing quality training and assessment services to students with disabilities \(ASQA\)](#)

[Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training](#)

[Assistive and Inclusive Technology \(disabilityawareness.com.au\)](#)

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. More information on this disclaimer can be found at adcet.edu.au/vet/disclaimer or by contacting the [Department of Employment and Workplace Relations](#).