

## **POLICY TITLE: Learning Access**

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### **Purpose**

This policy outlines support available to students in order to reduce the impact of a student's enduring personal situation or serious health condition which genuinely and significantly affects their capacity to maintain engagement with their studies. The purpose of this policy is to describe the additional support available to students, in addition to those specified in the Assessment policy, Disability Access policy, and Student Consultation and Support policy.

This policy applies to Vocational Education and Training (VET), undergraduate, and post graduate higher degree (HE) students at Photography Studies College (Melbourne) (the College), domestic and international.

### **Policy**

The College is committed to providing support to all students and acknowledges that some students may be disadvantaged due to circumstances such as physical disability, mental health conditions, or extreme life events, referred to as disability by the Disability Standards for Education (2005). This policy provides a transparent and equitable set of principles that describe the College's approach to supporting students to maintain satisfactory academic progress. These principles aim to maximise students' learning and support through the provision of course-wide, ongoing learning and assessment adjustments. Measures and adaptations are put in place for students with a disability to facilitate their participation in the course or subject(s) while ensuring that academic standards and inherent requirements of the course are not compromised.

Nothing contained in this policy, nor its supporting procedures, is intended to alter or limit the full extent of the College's right to suspend or exclude a student at its discretion, subject to relevant legislative and/or regulatory requirements.

### **Procedures**

The Learning Access Plan (LAP) is a formal document that assists a student with disability to communicate their negotiated learning adjustments and/or other supports within the College.

The LAP outlines:

- How the disability impacts on a student's ability to participate in education.
- The student's own strategies to address these impacts.
- The adjustments required within the student's academic program.
- In-class adjustments.
- Off-campus activity adjustments.
- Other services required.

The specific details of the LAP Implementation Procedures are located in the LAP Implementation Procedures document attached to the policy. They are summarised here as follows as a series of steps to formalise and action the LAP:

## **1. Recognition**

Activating this policy requires student self-registration for the LAP. Students may be encouraged to register by the Course Director, VET Training Manager, Year Level Convener, or Student Support & Engagement Coordinator. Grounds for students to apply for LAP may include medical reasons, compassionate grounds, hardship/trauma, or other significant cause that adversely impacts their ability to engage with their studies.

## **2. Disclosure of Information**

Students disclose their information regarding their disability or the impact of their disability on their education with the Student Support & Engagement Coordinator. A valid and current document from an eligible health care professional containing sufficient information about the disability and its resulting impact must accompany an application.

## **3. Planning and negotiating**

The LAP will be developed through a consultation with the Student Support & Engagement Coordinator, and Year Level Convener. Implications of disability are assessed against course demands, environment, assessments, and inherent requirements. A discussion including possible reasonable adjustments with the Year Level Convener will be arranged to accommodate for the identified disability while preserving academic integrity and achievements.

## **4. Implementing**

The Year Level Convener communicates and oversees implementation of the adjustments as outlined by the LAP by teaching staff and identifies any issues or barriers in implementing these adjustments for review.

## **5. Reviewing**

The LAP needs review on an “as needs” basis or once a semester at minimum to discuss issues identified by teaching staff, Year Level Convener, or the student. The Student Support & Engagement Coordinator will facilitate the review process by negotiation between the student’s needs and the Year Level Convener. A review may include:

- Amendments for reasonable adjustments with Year Level convener to resolve identified issues.
- Addition of new adjustments for new subjects
- Changes to the student’s situation (i.e., worsening or easing of their condition)

## **6. Duration**

The LAP automatically expires at the end of each calendar year. It is up to the student to seek a renewal of the Plan.

## **Confidentiality and privacy**

The LAP must be treated by all parties as strictly confidential. Information contained in the LAP shall only be discussed with, or made available to, a person who is:

- A party to the plan.
- Is or has been legitimately involved in the management of that plan.

- Has a formal management role in following up the consequences or implications of the plan.

### **Communication**

The LAP outcome will be communicated by the Year Level Convener to teaching staff during a staff meeting scheduled soon after the completion of the LAP.

The student will receive a copy of their LAP once completed.

Students will receive information regarding the availability of the LAP during Orientation, in Student Handbooks, on MiPlace, and on the PSC portal.

### **Responsibility**

Student Support & Engagement Coordinator

Higher Education Course Director

Course and Year Level Conveners & Academic Staff

VET Training Manager & VET Teaching Staff

### **Definitions**

#### **Disability [as defined by the Disability Standards for Education (2005)]**

In relation to a person, means: Total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or Total or partial loss of a part of the body; or The presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or The presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or The malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or A disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or A disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour; and includes a disability that: Presently exists; or Previously existed but no longer exists; or May exist in the future; or Is imputed to a person

#### **Reasonable Adjustment**

Measures and adaptations put in place for students with a disability to facilitate the participation in the course on the same basis as students without a disability while ensuring that academic standards and inherent requirements of the course are not compromised.

Reasonable adjustments as a result of a disability and outlined in a Learning Access Plan are relevant for the duration of the Learning Access Plan. Students with a disability can re-negotiate, update, or cancel adjustments and/or supports at any stage.

#### **Special Consideration**

Acknowledgement by the Higher Education Course Director (HE), Training Manager (VET) or academic staff that a student has experienced or encountered some form of disadvantage or impediment that has prevented them from performing on their merits in an assessment task/s. In such circumstances, the particular disadvantage or impediment will be taken into account when assessing the student's work. To enable

the student to demonstrate their achievement of the course learning outcomes, they may be granted a supplementary assessment, an extension of an assessment due-date or altered attendance requirements. Such allowances may be made for one or more assessment tasks or courses within any teaching semester. Grounds for a student to apply for Special Consideration include medical reasons, compassionate grounds, hardship/trauma, or other significant cause.

### **Learning Access Plan**

A Learning Access Plan is a formal document that assists a student with a disability to communicate their negotiated reasonable adjustments and/or other supports.

## **Related Documentation**

### **Policies**

Fair Treatment and Equal Benefits and Opportunity  
Student Progress and Exclusion  
Assessment  
Academic Appeals  
Academic Integrity  
Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure (for Academic and Non-Academic Matters)  
Staff Code of Conduct  
Student Conduct  
Access Equity and Anti-Discrimination  
Disability Access  
Monitoring, Notifying & Reporting of International Students  
Privacy and Personal Information Procedure  
Support for Students

### **Procedures, Forms & Documents**

Student Engagement Strategy  
Learning Access Plan (LAP) Student Report  
Learning Access Plan Registration Form  
Individual Training Plans (VET)  
Academic Consultation reports  
At Risk Letters  
Record of Students Referred to Student Support & Engagement Coordinator  
Student Grievance, Complaints and Misconduct Register  
Disability Discrimination Act (1992)  
Disability Standards for Education (2005)  
Privacy Act (1988)  
Educational Services to Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000 (as amended),  
Educational Services to Overseas Students (ESOS) Regulations 2001 and National Code of Practice 2007  
Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010  
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

## Publishing Details

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Julie Moss – Managing Director

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## **Learning Access Plan (LAP) Implementation Procedure**

### **Purpose**

These procedures propose operational activities and assign responsibilities that are required to support the legislative requirements of the Disability Standards for Education (2005) and the implementation of the Learning Access Policy. It navigates the practical actions required to ensure negotiated reasonable adjustments are implemented appropriately in accordance with the legislation.

These procedures apply to Vocational Education and Training (VET), undergraduate, and post graduate higher degree (HE) students at Photography Studies College, domestic and international.

### **Procedures**

These procedures outline student and staff actions and responsibilities encompassing a student's application and approval process, negotiation of reasonable adjustments between the parties, finalising and implementing the LAP and its reviewing processes.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

Any LAP developed must be treated by all parties as strictly confidential – refer to PSC's Privacy and Personal Information procedure.

Information forming part of the LAP shall only be discussed with, or made available to, a person who is:

- A party to the plan
- Is or has been legitimately involved in the management of that plan
- Has a formal management role in following up the consequences or implications of the plan.

Parties must be aware of the consequences if there is a breach of confidentiality, which may include disciplinary action.

#### **1. Student registration (Responsibilities: Student Support & Engagement Coordinator)**

- Student identifies their need for reasonable adjustment, and initiates appointment with the Student Support & Engagement Coordinator. Alternatively, the student may be encouraged to apply for the LAP by the Course Director, VET Training Manager, Year Level Convener, or Student Support & Engagement Coordinator. Appointment may be arranged via face to face, video link or on the phone.

- The Student Support & Engagement Coordinator outlines support options available and outline the concept of negotiating reasonable adjustment, the need for disclosure of the disability and the requirement to provide medical evidence. The student should also be informed about the privacy policy in relation to storage and recording of student information and the limitation of confidentiality in relation to the provision of disability support services.
  - The student is not required or obliged to disclose a disability, health, or mental health condition; however, the College may not be able to make individual adjustments for students who do not provide documentation of their disability or health condition.
2. Disclosure of information (Responsibilities: Student and Student Support Coordinator)
- Student discloses their information regarding their disability or the impact of the disability on their education.
  - Based on the information provided, the Student Support & Engagement Coordinator will outline examples of appropriate reasonable adjustments that may be implemented if the student registers with a LAP.
  - A decision is required by the student to proceed with a LAP.
3. Evidence assessment (Responsibilities: Student Support & Engagement Coordinator)
- Student is responsible for submission of valid and current letter from an eligible health care professional containing sufficient information about the disability and the resulting impacts.
  - If no eligible evidence is provided, an interim LAP will be developed until appropriate evidence is submitted (within an agreed time-frame).
4. Determining reasonable adjustment (Responsibilities: Student Support & Engagement Coordinator)
- Report is written taking into consideration:
- The individual's description of their disability or health condition and their views on adjustments.
  - Current documentation from the individual's relevant health care professional about their disability or health condition, including the impact of the disability or health condition on their ability to participate in the College environment and any recommendations for adjustments.
  - The inherent academic requirements.
  - The effect of the adjustment on the individual with a disability or health condition, including the effect on their ability to:
    - a) Meet the inherent academic requirements; and
    - b) Participate fully in the College environment.
  - Any implications of the proposed adjustment on anyone else including other members of the College, the cost, if any, and the benefits of making the adjustment.

5. Planning the adjustment (Responsibilities: Student, Year Level Convener or VET Training Manager, and Student Support & Engagement Coordinator)
  - Discuss the implications of the disability outlined in the report with the student including the strategies they are currently using to support their studies.
  - Draft recommendations for reasonable adjustments in collaboration with the student based on the Student Support & Engagement Coordinator's report.
  - Report LAP application to relevant Year Level Convener and assess course requirements including course demands, environment, assessments, and inherent requirements.
  
6. Negotiating reasonable adjustments (Student Support & Engagement Coordinator and Year Level Convener or VET Training Manager)  
Consultation including but not limited to:
  - Provision of adaptive study materials and equipment
  - Alternative learning and assessment tasks
  - Adjustments to the assessment conditions i.e. extensions on assessment dates
  
7. Completing the LAP (Student Support & Engagement Coordinator)
  - Input all relevant detail to the LAP document and review these details with the student.
  - Student authorising and signing the final LAP and provided a copy.
  - The Year Level Convener is advised about their responsibility to inform teaching staff regarding reasonable adjustments as appropriate.
  - Store the LAP in the college's appropriate database.
  
8. Implementing reasonable adjustment (Year Level Convener or VET Training Manager)
  - Teaching staff to implement reasonable adjustments in the LAP in the subject they are responsible for in a timely manner.
  - Identify and communicate any issues or barriers and communicate these issues to the Student Support & Engagement Coordinator.
  - Report to the Student Support & Engagement Coordinator if the adjustments exceed the resources to discuss alternative adjustments.
  - If applicable, update the LAP to include changes.
  
9. Reviewing the LAP (Student Support & Engagement Coordinator)
  - Meet with the student on "as needs" basis or once a semester at minimum to review the LAP (the LAP automatically expires at the end of each calendar year).
  - Negotiate the reasonable adjustments with the Year Level Convener as required to meet the specific demands of any new subjects.
  - Update the LAP as required and obtain a signature from the student to authorise the re-negotiated process and provide a copy to the student.
  - Report any changes to the Year Level Convener.



The Learning Access Plan procedure will be introduced to staff by the Student Support & Engagement Coordinator and/or Year Level Convener or VET Training Manager during staff meetings.

Students will receive information regarding the Learning Access Plan through Information Sessions (During Orientation), MiPlace, and the Student Portal (Student Support & Engagement Page).