

## 4.2 FLEXIBLE CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

### Suggested Guidelines for the Flexible Design and Delivery of Training in Vocational Education and Training

#### Adjustment of Training *is* about...

- challenging existing practices and procedures in order to develop more inclusive ways of training
- examining the content and/or delivery process to find alternative ways for students to achieve equivalent learning outcomes and essential competencies
- providing a way to minimise the impact of the student's disability upon their performance without compromising industry standards
- ensuring that all students have equal opportunity to learning experiences.

#### Adjustment of Training *is not* about...

- 'watering down' competency requirements and standards
  - giving a student who has a disability an unfair advantage
- ⇒ **Adjustments should not compromise the essential skills or knowledge required for a particular course.**
- ⇒ **Flexible delivery of course training benefits all students.**

### National Code of Practice for Australian Tertiary Institutions

With regard to reasonable adjustment processes, the National Code of Practice outlines the following:

#### Minimum Standard:

G2 To ensure programs are accessible to students who have a disability, institutions make reasonable adjustments to course content, delivery and assessment methods without compromising the standards or essential components of programs.

#### Operating Guidelines:

G2.1 In establishing reasonable adjustments, institutions:

- a) vary the educational process when students are able to demonstrate that they are disadvantaged as a result of disability
- b) minimise the disadvantage resulting from disability without creating a competitive advantage in relation to other students
- c) are satisfied that the essential components and rigour of the program are maintained.

G2.5 Reasonable adjustments are embedded where possible in the development of flexible curricula that take account of student choice and preferred styles of learning.

### Suggested Process For Making Adjustments To Training Requirements

There is no one prescriptive set of guidelines which, when applied, will meet the needs of all students. The following set of guidelines outline a broad approach to the process of determining suitable adjustments which meet both the need of the student and the competency requirements of the course.

#### 1. Determine the 'essential' requirements of the training

- What is the purpose of the training?
- What are the essential competencies that need to be achieved for the student to successfully complete the training?
  - industry accreditation/award requirements
  - specific knowledge, concepts, skills to be mastered
- What methods of instruction are non-negotiable? (eg. visual presentation of graphic design)
- What methods of assessing essential competencies are absolutely necessary and why?
- Consider if it is essential for the student to 'demonstrate the skill' or 'demonstrate knowledge of the skill'

#### 2. Consult with the student to determine individual needs

- Consultation with the student is essential to determine the individual requirements.
  - Consider what skills and abilities the student needs to successfully complete the course.
  - Avoid making assumptions about what the student may or may not be capable of achieving. Such assumptions are often based on inaccurate stereotypical beliefs.
  - Is there a minimum level of proficiency in these abilities?
  - Does the competency have to be performed in a prescribed manner?
  - Can the student meet all essential requirements despite his/her disability?
  - Will the process of accommodating a student's needs pose any risk to personal or public safety?
  - Does the student understand the essential purpose of the course and any subsequent restrictions on inclusive methods of instruction?
- Prospective students should receive adequate information in appropriate formats on training, assessment, practicals and support services before they enrol in a course.**

#### 3. Consider alternative means and make adjustments

- What alternative means of achieving essential competencies can be used?
- What alternative methods of instruction are possible? eg.
  - greater focus on the practical demonstration of skills rather than theory
  - utilisation of technology, for example, making course materials available on the Internet
  - modification of practical components to accommodate the needs of students who have a mobility or sensory impairment

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- What auxiliary aids might be useful? eg
  - assistive technology
  - tutorial support and extra time may need to be planned
  - a support person to assist the student to complete physical tasks
- What other methods of assessment of competencies are possible?  
(See Fact Sheet 5.2 for suggested adjustments to assessment processes)

### 4. Further considerations

- Scheduling of training which enables convenient part-time attendance will be more inclusive.
- Mode of Learning:
  - Open Learning, mixed mode and flexible delivery provide students with options which can greatly assist their access to study.

### Practical Examples of Inclusive Practice

- ☑ The training requires that a student perform practical experiments. The outcomes rather than the manual skills are essential course components. The student has insufficient dexterity and fine motor control to do the experiments and instead works with a “buddy” to observe and record the results.
- ☑ In Office Administration, a student who is blind cannot write up petty cash vouchers and bank reconciliations but uses a computer-based bookkeeping system.
- ☑ TAFE Train courses give students the choice of studying on campus, at home or a combination of both. Access to teacher support by phone is provided and modules are structured in such a way as to allow students to complete the work at their own pace. Assessment requirements are known by the student at the commencement of the course and students choose when they are ready to be assessed.
- ☑ A computer course prescribes use of graphics-based software. A student who is blind finds that his assistive equipment for voice output and screen reading won't work with the software. He uses DOS-based applications software instead of the prescribed software.

### Source Materials

Acknowledgment is made of material used with permission from the following source:

'ResponseAbility — People with Disabilities: Skilling Staff in Vocational Education, Training and Employment Sectors',  
The National Staff Development Committee on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia, 1994 (ANTA product)  
Monash University and The University of Melbourne, 'Course accommodations for students with learning disabilities',  
(Brochure Series – Learning Disabilities in Higher Education Kit)



### Good Practice at TAFE Tasmania

Teachers of an agriculturally based course were initially concerned as to how a student who only had the use of one arm would be able to perform the manual tasks required to meet the course competencies.

#### Here's what they did:

- ☑ Examined 'what are we really on about' in terms of course outcomes.
- ☑ Focussed their attention on student learning.
- ☑ Identified standards that would need to be met.
- ☑ Acknowledged that there were potentially other ways of performing tasks and thus attaining the essential competencies.
- ☑ Approached the student to ensure that he was fully aware of the competency requirements and asked him if he considered he could meet them.

#### Outcome:

- ⇒ The student identified ways in which he could achieve the same end result and subsequently proceeded to demonstrate the required competencies.
- ⇒ Teachers adjusted the assessment process to enable the student to undertake an 'on the job assessment' with his employer.

### Who can assist

Further information can be obtained by contacting:

#### TAFE Tasmania

Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) or Student Services

- South Ph. (03) 6233 7347
- North Ph. (03) 6336 2702
- North West Ph. (03) 6434 5804

or

#### VET Programs Unit

Office of Vocational Education and Training (OVET)

Department of Education, Training, Community & Cultural Development

Ph. (03) 6233 4570

### Further reference:

☒ DEETYA

Guidelines for inclusive and key competency-rich course/module development  
<http://www.deetya.gov.au/divisions/vet/guide/appendia.htm> (1997)