



PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure students with a disability are provided with the same learning opportunities as students without a disability and the same opportunity to perform and complete assessments as those without a disability.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and students Veritas Institute Australia.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
Assessment	The process of collecting evidence and making judgements on whether competency has been achieved, to confirm that an individual can perform to the standard required in the workplace, as specified in a training package or VET accredited course
Student	Active, on-campus student with a current course of enrolment with Veritas Institute Australia. Includes a person (whether within or outside Australia) who holds a student visa as defined by the ESOS Act, but does not include students of a kind prescribed in the ESOS Regulations.
Reasonable adjustment	Term applied to modifying the learning environment or making changes to the training and assessment delivered to assist a student with a disability.

POLICY

Veritas Institute Australia enables reasonable adjustments to be made to assessment procedures for people with special needs, such as people with disabilities or with language or literacy difficulties.

Under the Disability Standards for Education 2005, education providers must make reasonable adjustments for people with a disability, to the maximum extent that those adjustments do not cause that education provider unjustifiable hardship. While 'reasonable adjustment' and 'unjustifiable hardship' are different concepts and involve different considerations, they both seek to strike a balance between the interests of education providers and the interests of students with and without disability. The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 includes a very broad definition of disability, including illness or disease, past disability and present disability. VET students could have a range of disabilities such as:

- Learning disabilities
- Sensory impairments (including vision, hearing or speech impairment)
- Physical or mobility impairments
- Psychological or psychiatric impairments (or mental illness)
- Disabilities, such as cerebral palsy or head injury, which may result in multiple impairments
- Medical conditions such as HIV or AIDS, cancer, or chronic fatigue syndrome (which may result in multiple disabilities)
- Intellectual disabilities.

Veritas Institute Australia treats every case relating to reasonable adjustment individually. Students can inform Veritas Institute Australia of their disabilities through the Pre-Training review and the Application for Enrolment Form.

Disclosure of a disability is the choice of the student and is not a requirement for participation in a VET course or non-accredited course. But encouraging students to share information about the impact of their disability on their learning helps to justify and make the necessary reasonable adjustments.

Any information about a student's disability is shared and decisions about reasonable adjustment made collaboratively with the student, trainer, RTO manager and Student Support officer. Consideration in the decision-making process will include students' special needs such as:



- Writing
- Reading
- Hearing
- Communicating with others or getting ideas across
- Moving or manipulating objects
- Paying attention / staying on track
- Sitting for long periods
- Moving around the learning environment
- Remembering / retention
- Dealing with frustration

The RTO Manager will design suitable training for the individual and assign the student to a particular trainer. Minutes will be taken of all meetings held and any related documentation, including file notes, will be kept in a separate welfare student file (restricted access). As part of professional development, each trainer will be made aware of policy relating to this process. If the course is not suitable for the particular student, Veritas Institute Australia will offer counselling about alternative training and career path options.

The following examples may be applied for reasonable adjustment but are not limited to:

- Modifying workstations
- Modifying premises
- Modifying or providing equipment
- Adapting delivery strategies
- Ensuring that course activities are sufficiently flexible
- Providing additional support to students where necessary
- Customising resources and activities within the training package or accredited course
- Modifying the presentation medium
- Making information accessible both prior to enrolment and during the course
- Monitoring the adjustments to ensure student needs continue to be met

Any changes or modifications to courses and assessment need to be done in a way that maintains the integrity of the course and the qualification. Veritas Institute Australia will not make changes to any accredited or non-accredited courses which would undermine the academic integrity of the course.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

An adjustment is reasonable in relation to a student with a disability if it balances the interests of all parties affected. In assessing whether a particular adjustment for a student is reasonable, Veritas Institute Australia has regard to all the relevant circumstances and interests, including the following:

- The student's disability;
- The views of the student or the student's associate;
- The effect of the adjustment on the student, including the effect on the student's:
 - Ability to achieve learning outcomes; and
 - Ability to participate in courses or programs; and
 - Independence;
- The effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including Veritas Institute Australia's personnel and other students; and
- The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.



STUDENT RIGHTS AND VERITAS INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSIBILITIES

ENROLMENT	
Students' Rights	Veritas Institute Australia's Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Right to seek admission and enrol on the same basis as prospective students without disability or disadvantage including the right to reasonable adjustments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Take reasonable steps to ensure that the enrolment process is accessible.Consider students with a disability or disadvantage in the same way as students without disability or disadvantage when deciding to offer a place.Consult with the prospective students or their associates about the effect of the disability or disadvantage on their ability to seek enrolment; and any reasonable adjustments necessary
PARTICIPATION	
Students' Rights	Veritas Institute Australia's Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Right to access courses and programs; use services and facilities; and have reasonable adjustments, to ensure students with disability or disadvantage are able to participate in education and training on the same basis as students without disability or disadvantage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Take reasonable steps to ensure participation.Consult with the student or their associate about the effect of the disability or disadvantage on their ability to participate.Make a reasonable adjustment if necessary.Repeating this process over time as necessary.
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, ACCREDITATION AND DELIVERY	
Students' Rights	Veritas Institute Australia's Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Right to participate in courses and relevant supplementary programs that are designed to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, on the same basis as students without disability or disadvantage and to have reasonable adjustments to ensure they are able to participate in education and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enable students with disability or disadvantage to participate in learning experiences (including assessment and certification).Consult with the student or their associate.Take into consideration whether the disability or disadvantage affects the student's ability to participate in the learning experiences.
STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES	
Students' Rights	Veritas Institute Australia's Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Right to access student support services provided by education institutions, on the same basis as students without disability or disadvantage. Students with disability or disadvantage have the right to specialised services needed to participate in the educational activities they are enrolled in.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ensure that students with disability or disadvantage are able to use general support services.Ensure that students have access to specialised support services.Facilitate the provision of specialised support services.
HARASSMENT & VICTIMISATION	
Students' Rights	Veritas Institute Australia's Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Right to education and training in an environment that is free from discrimination caused by harassment and victimisation on the basis of their disability or disadvantage.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implement strategies to prevent harassment or victimisation.Take reasonable steps to ensure that personnel and students are informed about their obligation not to harass or victimise students with disability or disadvantage.Take appropriate action if harassment or victimisation occurs.Ensure complaint mechanisms are available to students.



PROCESS FOR CONSIDERING ADJUSTMENTS

Veritas Institute Australia provides equitable access to all required educational and support services, so that no student is disadvantaged regardless of their mode of study or location. Where there may be limitations regarding access to these resources, Veritas Institute Australia provides clear advice in pre-enrolment information so all clients can make an informed choice about which RTO and course of study best meets their needs.

Veritas Institute Australia embraces the responsibility of ensuring that all personnel acquire the knowledge and skills to relate to students without direct or indirect discrimination. All personnel are aware of and know how to use available Veritas Institute Australia's or external resources or be able to confidently refer students to appropriate tutoring and community support services. All personnel continue to expand their knowledge or access and equity issues through induction processes when joining Veritas Institute Australia, and in structured professional development on a regular basis (at least annually) in access and equity issues and resources. Veritas Institute Australia's personnel have access to a range of access and equity materials designed to assist students in undertaking and completing courses and qualifications. In assessing whether an adjustment to the course or program in which the student is enrolled, or proposes to be enrolled, is reasonable, Veritas Institute Australia is entitled to maintain the academic requirements of the course or program, and other requirements or components that are inherent in or essential to its nature

CONSULTING THE STUDENT

Before Veritas Institute Australia makes an adjustment for the student, the student or their associate is consulted about:

- Whether the adjustment is reasonable; and
- The extent to which the adjustment would achieve the aims in relation to the student; and
- Whether there is any other reasonable adjustment that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial for the student.

DECIDING ON AN ADJUSTMENT TO BE MADE

In deciding whether to make a particular reasonable adjustment for a student, Veritas Institute Australia:

- Assesses whether there is any other reasonable adjustment that would be less disruptive and intrusive and no less beneficial for the student; and
- Assesses whether the adjustment may need to be changed over the period of a student's education or training.

A detailed assessment, which might include an independent expert assessment, may be required in order to determine what adjustments are necessary for a student. The type and extent of the adjustments may vary depending on the individual requirements of the student and other relevant circumstances. Multiple adjustments may be required and may include multiple activities.

ASSESSING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

In assessing whether a particular adjustment is reasonable for the student with a disability, Veritas Institute Australia takes into account:

- The nature of the student's disability;
- The information provided by, or on behalf of, the student about how the disability affects the student's ability to participate;
- Views of the student, or an associate of the student, about whether a proposed adjustment is reasonable and will enable the student with a disability to access and participate in education and training opportunities on the same basis as students without disabilities;
- Information provided by, or on behalf of, the student about his or her preferred adjustments;
- The effect of the proposed adjustment on the student, including the student's ability to participate in courses or programmes and achieve learning outcomes;
- The effect of the proposed adjustment on anyone else affected, including Veritas Institute Australia's operations, personnel and other students; and
- The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.



In making a reasonable adjustment, Veritas Institute Australia ensures that the integrity of the course or program and assessment requirements and processes are maintained. Veritas Institute Australia acts upon information about an adjustment in a timely way that optimises the student's participation in education or training. In meeting its obligations to provide reasonable adjustments, Veritas Institute Australia may provide an alternative adjustment to the student's preferred form of adjustment, if the alternative is effective in achieving the desired purpose.

UNJUSTIFIABLE HARDSHIP

Once a reasonable adjustment has been determined, Veritas Institute Australia's adjustment may consider if the adjustment would impose unjustifiable hardship on its operations. In determining what constitutes unjustifiable hardship, all relevant circumstances of the particular case are taken into account including:

- The nature of the benefit or detriment likely to accrue or be suffered by any persons concerned; and
- The effect of the disability of a person concerned; and
- The financial circumstances and the estimated amount of expenditure required to be made by the person claiming unjustifiable hardship.

In determining whether unjustifiable hardship applies, Veritas Institute Australia:

- Takes into account information about the nature of the student's disability, his or her preferred adjustment, any adjustments that have been provided previously and any recommended or alternative adjustments. This information may be provided by the student, an associate of the student or independent experts (or a combination of those persons);
- Ensures that timely information is available to the student, or an associate of the student about the processes for determining whether the proposed adjustment would cause unjustifiable hardship; and
- Ensures that these processes maintain the dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality of the student and the associates of the student, consistent with the rights of the rest of the community.

Where a claim of unjustifiable hardship is made, Veritas Institute Australia has taken into account all the financial and other resources that are reasonably available for the purpose of making any necessary adjustments for the student, and the impact of those adjustments on its capacity to provide education of high quality to all students while remaining financially viable. Veritas Institute Australia considers all costs and benefits both direct and indirect that are likely to result, the student and any associates of the student, and any other persons in the learning or wider community, including:

- Costs associated with additional personnel, the provision of special resources or modification of the curriculum;
- Costs resulting from the student's participation in the learning environment, including any adverse impact on learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers; and
- Benefits deriving from the student's participation in the learning environment, including positive learning and social outcomes for the student, other students and teachers, and any financial incentives, such as subsidies or grants, available to the provider as a result of the student's participation.

Where Veritas Institute Australia decides to rely on unjustifiable hardship, it ensures that a notice stating the decision and the reasons for the decision is given to the student, or an associate of the student, as soon as practicable after the decision is made.



IMPLEMENTING REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

Veritas Institute Australia takes reasonable steps to ensure that any adjustment required to be made is made within a reasonable time. Whether the time is reasonable depends, in particular, on whether and when the student, or his or her associate, has provided:

- In a timely way, any relevant information in the possession of the student or associate about how the disability affects the student in relation to education or training; and
- The student's or the associate's opinion about the matters. Where reasonable adjustments are implemented, a detailed training and assessment plan including timetables, notes regarding the required adjustments, and any related communications regarding the adjustments is maintained in the student's file.

Key training and assessment strategies for supporting individual needs include:

- **Knowing and respecting students:** Understanding students are time poor; communicate with them, embrace and integrate their diversity and enable contributions of their knowledge to everyone's learning;
- **Offering flexibility, variety and choice:** While upholding academic standards, offer students flexibility, choice in assessment and variety in teaching and learning strategies;
- **Making expectations clear, using accessible language:** Speak and write in plain language to ensure students understand the concepts being taught, your expectations of them and what is required to be a successful student;
- **Scaffolding students' learning:** Take a step-by-step approach to training to ensure students build on what they bring to the course and are taught the particular discourses necessary to succeed;
- **Being available and approachable to guide student learning:** In addition to being available, be approachable so that students may make use of Veritas Institute Australia's personnel expertise and guidance to improve their learning and performance; and
- **Supporting reflective practice:** Reflect and seek to act on reflections, those from peers and feedback from students, to continuously improve training practice and students' learning.

Reasonable Adjustments	
Type of disability or disadvantage	Example reasonable adjustments
Mobility impairment	Provision of wheelchair accessibility; access to aids such as for holding documents, adjustable tables, note taking support, oral rather than written presentations or exams; use of a personal computer; lifting limits
Vision impairment	Use of audio recordings, enlarged text and images, enlarged computer screen images; use of voice synthesisers on computers; good lighting or reading lamps; braille translations; provision for guide dogs; avoid moving furniture without informing the person; provision of additional writing time for assignments/tests.
Hearing impairment	Use of teletext; audio loops for individuals using hearing aids; use of Plain English documents; sign language interpreters for training and assessment.
Intellectual disability	Practical learning sessions; repetition of learning exercises; use of Plain English; use of mentors; assessment that is appropriate to the skill, i.e. avoiding written test for practical tasks; provision of additional time.
Psychiatric disability	Use of reflective listening skills; identification and avoidance of stresses; use of ongoing rather than formal assessments; providing 'time-out' breaks in assessment.
Individuals with acquired brain injury	Provision of time and patience during training and assessment; use of reflective listening skills; provision of memory aids, e.g. posters, notes; minimisation of stress.
Speech impairment	Provision of learning materials, texts and handouts ahead of the class; modify the presentation medium for example, visual, oral, print, demonstration; provision of practice opportunities; use of generic, inclusive terms when constructing learning



	activities; substitution of alternative tasks where existing ones pose a problem; extend or modify timeframes for assessment; ensure the language of assessment instruments does not create barriers; provision of customised delivery schedule, provision of one on one coaching sessions.
Mature age	Provision of customised delivery schedule, provision of one-on-one coaching sessions; extend or modify timeframes for assessment; use of paper-based resources; use of phone communication as preferred method.
Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander	Provision of customised delivery schedule, provision of one on one coaching sessions; extend or modify timeframes for assessment; use of paper based resources; use of phone communication as preferred method; provision of learning materials, texts and handouts ahead of the class; modify the presentation medium for example, visual, oral, print, demonstration; provide practice opportunities; use of generic, inclusive terms when constructing learning activities.
Low socio - economic background	Provision of customised delivery schedule, provision of one on one coaching sessions; extend or modify timeframes for assessment; use of paper based resources; use of phone communication as preferred method; provision of learning materials, texts and handouts ahead of the class; modify the presentation medium for example, visual, oral, print, demonstration; provide practice opportunities; use of generic, inclusive terms when constructing learning activities

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015: Clauses 1.8 – 1.12
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Disability Standards for Education 2005 (Cth)
- The National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018, known as 'the National Code 2018' Standard 2

RESPONSIBILITIES

- RTO Manager and CEO are responsible for the development, compliance monitoring and review of this policy.
- Students have the responsibility to inform Veritas Institute Australia of their special needs to ensure this policy is applied.
- Trainers and Assessors Required to abide by this policy