



A p p e n d i x 7

Commonwealth Disability Strategy

The department reports its performance against four core performance roles: policy advisor, employer, provider and purchaser.

The department does not have a role as regulator.

Role	Performance Indicator	Performance measure	Current level of performance
Policy advisor	New or revised policy/ programme proposals assess impact on the lives of people with disabilities prior to decision	Percentage of new or revised policy/ programme proposals with documentation showing that the impact of the proposal was considered prior to the decision-making stage	<p>When developing and reviewing policy and programme proposals within the department, an assessment is generally made of the impact on people with disabilities.</p> <p>The Disability Standards for Education under the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (DDA) will clarify and make more explicit the obligations of education and training service providers under the Act, and the rights of people with disabilities in relation to education, while at the same time, balancing the needs of students with the interests of all parties affected, including providers. The standards seek to ensure that students with disabilities can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. The standards were tabled in Parliament by the Attorney-General on 17 March 2005 and they are expected to take effect on or about 16 August 2005.</p> <p>The department works in partnership with each of the education sectors: school education, vocational education and training, and the higher education sector. It is involved in the development and review of national policy and programmes in relation to each of the education sectors and provides funding for many national programmes to support students with disabilities. A particular example is the development, with the states and territories through MCEETYA, of the Disability Standards for Education under the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>.</p> <p>Proposals to establish and operate Australian Technical Colleges are assessed against a number of selection criteria. The colleges will be required to ensure equitable access for students and implement appropriate student support policies.</p> <p>The <i>Jobs Pathway Programme</i> is aimed at 13–19 year olds and has eight target groups, one of which is young people who have a disability. The programme providers must ensure that 60 per cent of participants are from targeted groups.</p> <p>The documentation of a model facilitating opportunities for <i>Structured Workplace Learning</i> by <i>Students with Disabilities</i> project developed 10 case studies of students with disabilities and their outcomes; a 'generic' model for service delivery to students with disabilities based on the Youth Connections Inc model; resource materials which support students with disabilities and a final report that formulates options for students with disabilities for <i>Structured Workplace Learning</i> opportunities.</p>

Role	Performance Indicator	Performance measure	Current level of performance
Policy advisor	People with disabilities are included in consultation about new or revised policy/ programme proposals	Percentage of consultations about new or revised policy/ programme proposals that are developed in consultation with people with disabilities	<p>A revised Bridging Pathways Blueprint was released in November 2004, following agreement by Australian Government and state and territory Ministers of training. The revised Blueprint, which was developed after consultations with disability groups, sets out the future key priorities to improve outcomes for people with a disability in vocational and technical education (VTE). Following the transfer of Australian National Training Authority functions to the department from 1 July 2005, new national training arrangements are being negotiated with the states and territories. Under the new arrangements it is proposed that disability issues in VTE be addressed through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ national client advisory arrangements which are to be in place from 1 January 2006 (an action group will develop recommendations to the Ministerial Council on Vocational and Technical Education on the best mechanisms to support ongoing high level advice on the needs of all learners, particularly people with a disability and Indigenous Australians) ■ disability representation on the National Quality Council, which will monitor quality assurance procedures in the VTE system and ensure national consistency in the application of the standards for auditing and registering VTE providers under the <i>Australian Quality Training Framework</i> ■ including in the role of the new National Industry Skills Committee the provision of advice to the Ministerial Council on ways that industry can work with governments to improve outcomes for people with a disability.

Role	Performance Indicator	Performance measure	Current level of performance
		<p>The proposed 2005–2008 Commonwealth–State Agreement for Skilling Australia's Workforce includes a national target of providing 10 000 additional training places over three years for people with a disability.</p> <p>Following the review of higher education equity initiatives under <i>Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future</i>, increased funding for disability support measures in universities was consolidated under the new <i>Higher Education Disability Support Programme</i>. The programme comprises three components: <i>Additional Support for Students with Disabilities</i>, which meets individual high cost support needs; performance-based funding for measures to attract and retain students with disabilities; and the Regional Disability Liaison Officer initiative. Guidelines for the programme were developed in consultation with the higher education sector and came into effect in December 2004 under the <i>Higher Education Support Act 2003</i>. Universities' equity and disability support officers had the opportunity to discuss disability matters at the National Higher Education Student Equity Forum which took place in Canberra in May 2005, and at face to face meetings with DEST equity unit officers at the first set of equity visits which took place at institutions in Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia in 2004–05.</p>	<p>During 2004, consultations on arrangements for the 2005–2008 quadrennium funding for schools were held with government and non-government stakeholders in every state and territory. Discussion included introduction of the overarching <i>Literacy, Numeracy and Special Learning Needs Programme</i> which is aimed at those students who are most in need of additional assistance, including students with disabilities; and additional funding over 2005–2008 to improve the basis of distribution of funds to education authorities under two elements of this programme.</p>
Policy advisor	<p>Public announcements of new, revised or proposed policy/programme initiatives are available in accessible formats for people with disabilities in a timely manner</p>	<p>Percentage of new, revised or proposed policy/programme announcements available in a range of accessible formats</p> <p>Time taken in providing announcements in accessible formats</p>	<p>The department's web sites take account of web accessibility as part of their design and development. The department's corporate website (www.dest.gov.au) provides improved accessibility and information is available in multiple formats (eg HTML, PDF and RTF) to provide greater accessibility. Some sites contain a text alternative site that provides greater accessibility for visually impaired clients.</p> <p>Closed captioning was available on television commercials, such as those for New Apprenticeships.</p>

Role	Performance Indicator	Performance measure	Current level of performance
Provider	Providers have established mechanisms for quality improvement and assurance	Evidence of quality improvement and assurance systems in operation	Mechanisms for quality improvement and assurance for providers occur through the department's Service Charter.
Provider	Providers have an established service charter that specifies the roles of the provider and consumer and service standards which address accessibility for people with disabilities	Established service charter that adequately reflects the needs of people with disabilities in operation	The department's Service Charter Bureau handles the full range of enquiries relating to its education, science and training programmes. The bureau utilises the National Relay Service for hearing impaired individuals as required. Details of the Service Charter are provided in Chapter 8. Service providers, including Centrelink, deliver most of the department's programmes and services. Centrelink provides the full range of services to people with disabilities, including a dedicated phone service.
Provider	Complaints and grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, in place to address concerns raised about performance	Established complaints/ grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, in operation	The department's Service Charter Call Centre clients are given the option of using phone, fax or email. The email system accepts documents in a number of accessible electronic formats and some hotlines include an interpreter service for the hearing impaired.

Role	Performance Indicator	Performance measure	Current level of performance
Employer	Employment policies, procedures and practices comply with the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>	Number of employment policies, procedures and practices that meet the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>	<p>The department's employment policies, procedures and guidelines meet the requirements of the <i>Public Service Act 1999</i> and its associated legislation, departmental workplace agreements and the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>. These policies, procedures and guidelines are posted on the departmental intranet:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ engagement of ongoing and non-ongoing employees ■ procedures for determining breaches of the APS Code of Conduct (Handbook for Dealing with Misconduct) ■ whistleblowing ■ review of actions ■ non-performance of duties ■ working from home ■ harassment-free workplace ■ leave ■ working hours ■ nursing mothers ■ engaging in employment outside DEST ■ mobility and reintegration policy ■ termination of employment.

The department's Workplace Diversity Plan identifies a commitment to the promotion of equitable and flexible working arrangements to encourage people with disabilities to apply for employment opportunities in the department.

In 2004-05, the department continued a formal induction process, requiring all employees (ongoing and non-ongoing) to attend. Sessions address the APS Values, the APS Code of Conduct, ethics and fraud awareness, occupational health and safety, diversity and the need for all staff to ensure the department maintains a harassment-free workplace.

Role	Performance Indicator	Performance measure	Current level of performance
Employer	Recruitment information for potential job applicants is available in accessible formats on request	Percentage of recruitment information requested and provided in accessible electronic formats and accessible formats other than electronic Average time taken to provide accessible information in electronic formats and formats other than electronic	All current and prospective departmental employees have access to online and hard copy formats for selection documents. Intranet design takes into account access issues for people with visual impairment. Formatting of all information on the intranet takes into account 'best practice' approaches, in consultation with experts in this area. Average time taken to provide information in any requested format is within 48 hours.
Employer	Agency recruiters and managers apply the principle of reasonable adjustment	Percentage of recruiters and managers provided with information on reasonable adjustment	All case managers ensure staff and supervisors/managers apply the principle of reasonable adjustment where appropriate. All departmental employees and contractors have access to information on reasonable adjustment. The department's standard services contract includes the requirement for compliance with obligations under the <i>Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999</i> and due regard to Australian Government policies on employment and requirements under occupational health and safety laws.
Employer	Training and development programmes consider the needs of staff with disabilities	Percentage of training and development programmes that consider the needs of staff with disabilities	All training and development programmes in the department take into account the needs of people with a disability. People are not prevented from attending learning and development programmes owing to disability – where a person identifies a disability, appropriate arrangements are made for them to participate so that learning is not prevented or inhibited. Interpreters are offered and engaged when requested by hearing impaired staff or their managers. Auslan interpreters are engaged for corporate events where the Minister or the Secretary address all staff.

Role	Performance Indicator	Performance measure	Current level of performance
Employer	Training and development programmes include information on disability issues as they relate to the content of the programme	Percentage of training and development programmes that include information on disability issues as they relate to the programme	Where it is appropriate to the content of a corporate learning programme, the department takes into account disability issues.
Employer	Complaint/grievance mechanism, including access to external mechanisms, in place to address issues and concerns by staff	Established complaints/grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, in operation	The department has well-established processes for handling complaints. They include internal processes and access to external processes such as the Merit Protection Commission. The Handbook for Dealing with Misconduct was written as a user-friendly handbook with the aim of simplifying procedures for determining breaches of the APS Code of Conduct. An analysis of complaints received during 2004–05 indicates that there were no disability issues involved.
Purchaser	Publicly available information on agreed purchasing specifications are available in accessible formats for people with disabilities	Percentage of publicly available purchasing specifications requested and provided in accessible electronic formats and accessible formats other than electronic	100% of the department's publicly available tender documentation was available in electronic format. No requests for provision of the documentation in other than electronic format were received in 2004–05.
		Average time taken to provide accessible material in electronic formats and formats other than electronic.	

Role	Performance Indicator	Performance measure	Current level of performance
Purchaser	Purchasing specifications and contract requirements for the purchase of goods and services are consistent with the requirements of the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>	Percentage of purchasing specifications for goods and services that specify that tender organisations must comply with the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> . Percentage of contracts for the purchase of goods and services that require the contractor to comply with the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i>	100% of the department's pro-forma tender and contract documentation requires compliance with Commonwealth legislation including the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> .
Purchaser	Complaint/grievance mechanism, including access to external mechanisms, in place to address concerns raised about the providers' performance	Established complaints/ grievance mechanisms, including access to external mechanisms, in operation	The department's Service Charter Call Centre clients are given the option of using phone, fax or email. The email system accepts documents in a number of accessible electronic formats and some hotlines include an interpreter service for the hearing impaired.

