



AUT

Auckland University of Technology

Disability Action Plan

2024-2026

Contents

Quick facts on Deaf and disabled students at AUT.....	3
Acknowledgements.....	4
A note on terminology	4
Recording disabilities and access needs	4
Section 1. Background	6
Introduction	6
Strategic context	6
Support for disabled students	7
Section 2. Developing and implementing the Disability Action Plan	10
The Plan development process.....	10
Incorporating the voices of our disabled staff and students.....	10
Implementing the Disability Action Plan	12
Section 3. AUT’s Disability Action Plan	13
Objectives and purpose	14
Disability Action Plan	16
Section 4. Communication, evaluation, and monitoring.....	20
Communicating our Disability Action Plan	20
Evaluating our Disability Action Plan	20
Measuring the success of our Disability Action Plan	21
Appendix 1. A profile of disabled students at AUT.....	23
Appendix 2. Tables and graphs	27
Appendix 3. Responses from Deaf and disabled students and staff	33

Quick facts on Deaf and disabled students at AUT

Our students self-identify with one or more of many different disabilities. We categorise them this way

Autism spectrum	Blind/Low vision/Deafblind	Brain injury
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	Learning	Medical (chronic)
Medical (temporary)	Memory/Speech/Intellectual	Mental health
Other	Physical	

9% of AUT students are Deaf or disabled (2023)

9% of students have a disability

The three most common disabilities amongst our students are so-called **invisible disabilities**

Invisible disabilities

Most common disabilities: Learning; Chronic medical conditions; & Mental health

Single disabilities

1 in 5 (20%) of Deaf and disabled students had two or more disabilities

Multiple disabilities

For the years 2020 to 2022, **nearly half (48%) of Deaf and disabled students had an accommodation plan with Disability Support Services**

Accommodation plans help support students with disabilities

From 2020 to 2022, **the number of students with an accommodation plan increased by 33% (763 vs. 1,018)**

Consistent year-on-year growth in students with accommodation plans

Disabled students have achieved parity in course completion rates with non-Deaf/non-disabled (each 83%) Data in this section are for domestic students from 2021 and 2022 (combined)

Students with multiple disabilities still have a small parity gap (80%)

Students with an accommodation plan did better than those without one (85% vs. 80%). This is also higher than students who are neither Deaf nor disabled (83%)

AUT has achieved parity between disabled and non-disabled students

Acknowledgements

The Disability Action Plan working group wishes to acknowledge the staff and students who helped to shape this plan. This includes members of the AUT Access and Inclusion Network, our Deaf community, the Student Reference Group, the AUTSA Disabilities Affairs Officer, the Centre for Person-Centred Research, and the students who responded to the survey.

A note on terminology

Our staff and students provided strong feedback on the name of the plan and the terminology used within it. Our initial use of the term *students/staff with disabilities* was felt to be deficit based and excluded groups such as our Deaf and neurodiverse communities. Some of the recommended alternative terms were:

- Students/staff who are Deaf or who have disabilities
- Students/staff with access needs
- Students/staff who are living with disabilities

However, none of these options received wide-ranging acceptance. We considered the umbrella term [tāngata whaikaha](#) but based on feedback from students have followed the approach of Whaikaha Ministry of Disabled People, and adopted the term *disabled people*. While not perfect, it was agreed that this approach put the emphasis on the system that was disabling, rather than the individual. In response to specific concerns raised by our Deaf community, we have used the phrase *Deaf and disabled people* where this is appropriate.

Recording disabilities and access needs

Students and staff are asked about Deafness and disabilities on application to AUT. They also have the right to update the disability information we hold at any stage during their enrolment or employment. The categories we use in recording student Deafness and disabilities are listed below, matching those used by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). We have heard from our students and staff that several of these terms are outdated as they reflect a deficit model. We encourage TEC to update the reporting categories accordingly. In the meantime, the terms used in this report are described below.

TEC categorisation	Used in this Plan	Examples
Autism Spectrum Disorder	Autism Spectrum Condition	
Chronic medical conditions	Medical (chronic)	Conditions such as diabetes, asthma, cancer, auto-immune conditions, and chronic fatigue syndrome
Hearing (Deaf)	Deaf	

TEC categorisation	Used in this Plan	Examples
Hearing (Hearing impaired)	Hard of Hearing	
Intellectual/cognitive impairment	Memory/Speech/Intellectual	
Physical disabilities	Physical	Mobility and agility issues, repetitive strain injuries, and occupational overuse syndrome
Psychological and mental health conditions	Mental health	Depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, panic attacks
Speaking	Memory/Speech/Intellectual	Speech impairments
Specific Learning Disability	Learning	ADHD, dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, Twice Exceptional (2E), Auditory Processing Disorder, Visual Processing Disorder
Temporary medical conditions	Medical (temporary)	Injuries or short-term illnesses
Undeclared disabilities	Other	
Vision (Blind)	Blind or DeafBlind	
Vision (Vision impaired)	Low Vision	

Several of the categories on this list can also be categorised as invisible disabilities. According to the [Invisible Disabilities Association](#), this can be any “physical, mental, or neurological condition that is not visible from the outside, yet can limit or challenge a person’s movements, senses, or activities. This would include learning disabilities, chronic medical conditions, and mental health conditions, amongst others.

Section 1. Background

Introduction

At AUT I feel comfortable and a sense of belonging. My message is that if you have an impairment and you think it will prevent you from getting into work, give it a go. More and more places like AUT are learning how to remove the barriers to work and study.

- Anna Nelson, Disability Service Manager, AUT

AUT has a long-standing reputation for supporting the access and success of disabled students. We have a relatively high proportion of Deaf and disabled students amongst our student body and are committed to the principles of the Kia Ōrite Code of Practice, for creating an inclusive environment that enables Deaf and disabled students to achieve success.

We are proud that, at the overall level, our disabled students have achieved parity in success rates with other students over the last few years, and that we are known for providing personalised and mana-enhancing support. We have long-standing relationships with advocacy groups such as Achieve, Workbridge, and Be.Lab. We offer specific programmes designed to support the Deaf community, including the Bachelor of Arts major in Sign Language and Deaf Studies, and the Bachelor of Arts (NZSL – English Interpreting).

The development of the Disability Action Plan has been timely for guiding our next steps, including a push to understand the needs of our students and staff better, establishing formal evaluation procedures, and tackling some of the more challenging barriers they face.

This Disability Action Plan is founded on an ongoing programme of engagement between AUT and our disabled students. In 2018 a series of workshops explored our students' preferred terminology. As a result, we retained the name Disability Support Services (DSS). The feedback from our students was that this term was clearly identifiable, easily understood, and supported an inclusive message. This was followed two years later by Barriers to Learning, a major qualitative research project exploring the experiences and challenges facing disabled students. Resulting actions included ensuring that our new learning management system (Canvas) has built-in accessibility features; more quiet spaces on campus, including a nap room in the Library; improved communication between teaching staff and DSS; and extended use of videos (including those in New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL)) on our website and to support the enrolment process. This plan is also informed by a 2022 kōrero on *Ki Uta Ki Tai* between the Acting Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) and Deaf staff and students.

While the emphasis remains on students, we have also included disabled staff in the Disability Action Plan. We recognise there are significant opportunities to provide greater support and create a more inclusive and accessible workplace.

Strategic context

AUT is in the process of introducing a new strategy and the Disability Action Plan will form part of our planning framework. The companion document to our strategy is [Te Aronui](#), which

outlines AUT’s Tiriti response (Picture 1) and provides the foundation for how our people interact with one another, and with our students and communities. It is centred on our core values of pono, tika, and aroha (Tier 2 of the framework). These values guide AUT to communicate with integrity and purpose (pono), then take considered and appropriate actions (tika) that are designed to restore, maintain, or enhance the mana of both parties (aroha).

When engaging with our disabled staff and students, the three Māori principles (at Tier 4) and two Tiriti enactments (Tier 5) are also relevant: whanaungatanga (relationality), manaakitanga (enhancing mana), and kaitiakitanga (guardianship), leading to whakamana (equitable outcomes for all) and whakanui (the elimination of racism and discrimination). Taken together, Te Aronui sets the course for AUT in supporting our disabled students and staff. We are to be welcoming, accessible, and inclusive. We are to listen carefully to each person’s aspirations and needs, to actively reduce or mitigate barriers wherever possible, and to care for each person as we support them to achieve their goals.

Picture 1. Te Aronui, AUT’s Tiriti framework



The Disability Action Plan will be incorporated into our governance structure for Ki Uta Ki Tai, AUT’s student success plan, which was developed in 2022. It has five focus areas, all of which are closely aligned with the Disability Action Plan: executive leadership; responding to Te Tiriti; building cultural capability; transition to university; a whole-university service model; and integrated, targeted academic support. The Ki Uta Ki Tai Steering Group, a group of senior executives at the University and led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Academic, will be responsible for the implementation of the Disability Action Plan.

Support for disabled students

In line with Kia Ōrite, AUT is committed to providing an accessible environment for our students. Some students and staff may not disclose (or be aware of) having a disability, and

reducing and mitigating barriers is beneficial for all. Some of the standards we have already adopted include a learning management system with in-built screen readers and other accessibility features. All AUT students have access to Studiosity, an online assessment feedback and study service. Sign language interpreters support all major university events, including orientation and graduation. All students receive free access to the Microsoft platform with embedded accessibility features. Our website includes guides and handbooks on maximising the use of these and other relevant applications. Our staff intranet includes information on developing accessible content, supporting colleagues and disabled students, and hiring diverse talent. Our learning and teaching development centre provides a professional development course on accessible learning design and technology. All our newer facilities are built to Be.Lab's Gold standards for accessibility, while older facilities are either upgraded or due to be phased out of use in the coming years.

For students who do elect to disclose Deafness or a disability, DSS is the primary point of contact. DSS staff proactively case manage and offer support to every student who notes a disability on their application form. Current students may also connect with the service independently, or be referred by a staff member. Students who indicate an interest in additional support attend an individual needs assessment, where they and a DSS staff member identify the specific support needed to be successful. During that assessment, DSS seeks to understand what supports students have previously accessed, how these have worked for them, and any adjustments they would like to explore at university. AUT provides a wide range of support for students, including:

- personalised evacuation plans in the event of an emergency (also known as PEEPs);
- access to, and training in the use of, assistive technology to support independent learning, note-taking, writing, and spelling;
- sign-language interpreters;
- mobile campus maps with guidance for finding accessible routes;
- alternative arrangements for exams and assessments;
- assistance with managing the study load;
- access to study materials and lecture content in appropriate formats;
- support for discussing specific needs with lecturers;
- access to in-person support, such as reader/writers, digital notetakers, and personal assistants; and
- access to the Te Mātāpuna AUT Library adaptive technology lab.

The University is also in the process of implementing two new accessible systems: a smartphone-based lift call system; and in response to requests from Deaf and Hard of Hearing students, a fire alarm system that will send alerts directly to students' phones or smart watches.

When students have not previously accessed a diagnosis, DSS case manage their needs and can provide funding for assessments for students with suspected learning disabilities,

attention deficit disorders, or autism spectrum condition.¹ As the diagnostic process can be lengthy, we provide interim support through an academic accommodation plan, which can be enhanced once the final diagnosis has been shared.

The DSS team includes staff with backgrounds in social work, educational psychology, counselling, supportive employment, recruitment, teaching, and occupational therapy. They also have an adaptive technologies co-ordinator, who specialises in working with students to identify technological solutions that will support their learning. This has a focus on both hardware and software, and they have a key role in managing and maintaining the adaptive technology resource library.

¹ To date in 2023, 196 students have benefited from this service (data as of 31 October)

Section 2. Developing and implementing the Disability Action Plan

The Plan development process

AUT commenced developing our Disability Action Plan with an analysis of our available data (Appendix 1). An initial investigation considered the demographic characteristics of our students, along with their study preferences, growth patterns, success rates, and the uptake and impact of accommodation plans across the University. The resulting 'Students with Disabilities' paper was shared with senior leaders and the TEC, and provided the foundation for the development of our Plan.

That initial analysis has subsequently been established as a formalised reporting system and shared on UniAssist, our internal reporting portal, where all staff can access up-to-date information on the backgrounds and success rates of disabled students. The student-focussed report is now accompanied by a staff-focussed report, which aims to increase the profile of disabled staff at AUT.

With the evidence base established, we completed a gap analysis based on Achieve's [Kia Ōrite toolkits](#). This commenced with a presentation to staff at an Academic Board meeting, along with internal communications articles and a [video](#) featuring the Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Academic and the Disability Service Manager. The toolkits were shared with senior leaders of relevant portfolios and their teams around the University, including the following:

- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)
- Dean, Graduate Research School;
- Group Director Estates
- Director Marketing and Recruitment;
- Director Health, Safety, and Wellbeing
- Senior Events Manager;
- Student Inclusion Manager (Rainbow);
- Director Student Administration
- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Pacific)
- Associate Deans Academic;
- Group Director People & Culture;
- Director Academic Quality;
- Senior Manager Student Communications;
- Disability Service Manager;
- Faculty registrars and student success managers.
- Employability and Careers

Members of the development team met with each of the senior leaders to assist completion of the toolkits, and we shared relevant material with our Student Advisory Committee, which includes representatives from the AUT Students Association (AUTSA). The information gathered during the gap analysis was combined with the results of our earlier investigations to create a draft plan.

Incorporating the voices of our disabled staff and students

The draft Disability Action Plan was then shared with disabled staff and students. We met with several groups including the AUT Access and Inclusion Network, some members of our

Deaf community, disabled student members of the Student Reference Group, and the AUTSA Disabilities Affairs Officer. The draft was also emailed and shared through the AUT app to all current students who had registered a disability with AUT, along with a survey requesting their feedback. We received 63 responses to the survey.

We have introduced several specific actions that resulted from student and staff engagement. These include:

- Introduce a disabled staff and student advisory group;
- Evaluate opportunities to recruit staff to support specific groups; and
- Assess opportunities for external accreditations.

Students and staff also provided additional context for the Plan, which will shape the way we approach the implementation phase. This next section provides a summary of the feedback we received. Refer to Appendix 3 for further details, including supporting quotes.

While there is room to improve, students appreciate the support they receive

Students were generally satisfied with the support provided by DSS, and their academic accommodation plans.

A broad endorsement of the proposed actions and objectives

Disabled students and staff largely agreed with the barriers identified during the self-review process, and our proposed remedial actions. In many cases, students and staff provided further examples of how these barriers have affected them, and or a more nuanced understanding of the experience of Deafness and disability at AUT. Several respondents noted the need for adequate resources to fulfil the intent of the Disability Action Plan.

A good experience rests on having proactive, informed, and supportive teaching staff

The feedback process again demonstrated the importance of engaged and informed frontline teaching staff, especially for disabled students. While centralised support (including from DSS and other support services) is vital, it cannot alone create a good learning experience. Students told us that the experience can vary between faculties, and even between courses. This support includes proactive contact from staff, flexibility of deadlines, forwarding course materials in advance, and providing recorded lectures. Postgraduate students agreed that there were gaps in the support they were able to offer.

Rather than just broad categories, students and staff wanted to see where they fit

Following input from our students and staff, we changed our terminology and included more specific information on the categorisation of disabilities, including ADHD, learning disabilities, and invisible disabilities. We have also used the term *Deaf and disabled* students where appropriate. Appendices 1 and 2 are unchanged as they reflect the current data structure.

A safe, welcoming, and inclusive atmosphere benefits everyone

Students recognised the importance of a diverse range of voices in the enactment of the Disability Action Plan, including a clear articulation of Māori strengths and the Disability Action Plan's alignment with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Staff specifically noted the work required to create an inclusive environment where people feel safe to disclose disabilities. Greater visibility can result in a more accepting environment, where Deafness and disability are normalised. This helps break down barriers for students as well as staff, and is beneficial for all.

Implementing the Disability Action Plan

The Disability Action Plan 2024-2026 is outlined in Section 3. We have adopted an intervention logic approach to implementing the Plan, starting with the self-review and identification of the key barriers experienced by our staff and students. The actions described in the next section have grown from our understanding of those barriers.

Following the intervention logic approach, once the Plan has been submitted to TEC, our next steps are as follows:

1. Conduct a full scoping exercise to determine the exact nature of the intervention required. This will include analysis of the needs, benefits, and likely investments associated with each action.
2. Identify those actions with the greatest expected benefits and prioritise accordingly, ensuring they are resourced correctly.
3. Identify those actions that can be included within our existing programme of work, so they can be delivered efficiently and all intersecting dependencies managed appropriately.
4. Develop a detailed delivery plan for the Disability Action Plan, which will be overseen by the Ki Uta Ki Tai Steering Group.

This Group will be responsible for the Plan's implementation, with specific members charged with overseeing each objective. The AUT Transformation Management Office will provide the programme management rigour to ensure visible progress towards achieving the Plan goals, and that experiences gained and lessons learned can be shared with other senior leaders. The full programme of activity will be reviewed annually as part of AUT's planning processes, so that it remains aligned with other transformational initiatives. The annual review process also allows AUT to take stock and reshape our approach if necessary.

Section 3. AUT's Disability Action Plan

The Disability Action Plan has three over-arching aims, which emerged from early discussions held with staff and students on the draft Plan, and were tested with subsequent contributors.

1. Normalise the experience of Deafness and disability within AUT

In the past, disability has often been viewed through the lens of deficit or as something negative. In today's society, this perception appears to have transformed into the belief that disability is a problem that needs to be fixed to align with societal norms.

- [Dr Sally Britnell](#) (School of Clinical Sciences)

We recognise that within AUT's context, this phenomenon unconsciously results in Deaf and disabled people shouldering much of the accompanying administrative load. This is a significant barrier to their full participation in, and satisfaction with, their study experience. While individual matters can be remedied, this relies on the student or staff member having the agency and capacity to raise it, and does not address the underlying issue. A university-wide understanding of access-related issues will help to normalise the experience of Deafness and disability for all.

2. Ensure our interactions are mana-enhancing

Pathways to discuss your disability ... without feeling like it's embarrassing or you're making excuses.... I really wanted my tutors to understand what I face daily and why I am the way I am, but didn't know how to broach it.

- Student survey respondent

With a normalised view of Deafness and disability, the University can identify and address the hitherto hidden barriers our people experience. Each staff member shares in the responsibility for creating an inclusive and accessible environment, and for engaging with disabled students and colleagues in a mana-enhancing way.

3. Introduce a university-wide support system

My grades directly reflect the amount of support I received in that course.

- Student discussion group participant

This final aim ties directly to Objective 5 of *Ki Uta Ki Tai*: A whole-university service model. At present, the University's services largely operate alongside but independently of one another. As the above quote shows, the experience can vary largely depending on the knowledge and support provided by staff, especially by teaching staff. A more integrated and targeted system, plus improved knowledge-sharing between various services and academic staff, would ensure that Deaf and disabled students receive holistic support, informed by an intersectional understanding of their various cultural, demographic, and access needs.

Objectives and purpose

The Disability Action Plan has a three-year tenure (2024-2026) and is split into five objectives, each with a series of associated actions. A summary of the plan’s objectives and purposes is provided below, along with the member of the Ki Uta Ki Tai Steering Group with delegated responsibility for their implementation.

Objective	Purpose	Senior leader
Become disability confident	At present, disability confidence is limited to a specific group of staff. This creates a significant barrier for students at the intersections of disability, sexuality, gender identity, and/or ethnicity. One of our major objectives for this Plan is to build greater staff understanding of disability issues across all academic and pastoral support services.	Group Director People and Culture
Implement inclusive policies and procedures	This objective focusses on creating a positive environment and removing or mitigating administrative barriers that cause difficulties for our students and staff. AUT’s approach until now has been to place strict limits on access to disability-related information due to privacy concerns. However, we have identified that this creates additional barriers and an environment where students are having to disclose their deafness/disability on multiple occasions.	Group Director Student Services
Improve accessibility in learning and teaching	This objective addresses accessibility in the classroom, including assessments, curriculum design, and classroom practices. Along with professional development opportunities for academic staff, we have identified a need for a consistent standard and approach to lecture recordings, and clarification of expectations and processes for programmes that include a fitness to practice component.	Pro Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching
Support our students	Under this objective, we will seek to fill the identified gaps in our understanding of our students and their experiences, and reshape our support systems appropriately. This includes centralised reporting and monitoring, along with gathering qualitative feedback from our students, particularly those with intersectional experiences of disability. We will evaluate our existing support services, and address areas where our students continue to experience barriers, including securing employment.	Group Director Strategy and Planning

Objective	Purpose	Senior leader
Support our staff	This objective is centred on building understanding of our Deaf and disabled staff and their experiences of working at AUT. We want to make AUT a place where staff feel safe to disclose disabilities and receive the support they need to progress their careers.	Group Director People and Culture

Each objective is underpinned by a series of actions the University will take, which are outlined in the following table.

Disability Action Plan

Objectives and actions
Objective: Become disability confident
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand existing training on disability issues and relevant legislation to all academic and pastoral support services. • Promote Achieve Disability Confidence training and our internal disability awareness programmes to all staff • Identify and evaluate opportunities for specific roles that support Deaf and disabled students and staff
Objective: Implement inclusive policies and procedures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an advisory board of Deaf/disabled students and staff • Re-write Council Policy 05 (Equal Opportunities) to be the University's overarching equity, diversity, and inclusion policy. • Deepen disability awareness and an understanding of intersectionality across the University through regular kōrero between DSS and other student support services, including those focussed on students who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Māori, ○ Pacific, ○ members of the Rainbow community, ○ postgraduate researchers; ○ from refugee backgrounds; and ○ migrants to New Zealand • Establish expectations for the use of Kia Ōrite toolkits (or other relevant accessibility awareness tool) to support decision-making in key areas. These may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ programme and project evaluations; ○ capex bids; and ○ business cases. • Reset privacy settings and systems access to ensure that all relevant staff are informed of a student's Deafness or disability and agreed accommodations (where appropriate). Establish annual review of privacy settings to ensure they remain fit for purpose.

Objectives and actions

- Streamline administrative processes that currently act as barriers to students receiving timely and effective support, including:
 - Applications for special consideration;
 - Dissemination of academic accommodation plans to all relevant staff (and the associated resource plan for students receiving people-based support); and
 - Improvement in awareness of referral options to specialist services
- Explore opportunities for connection with Te Kura, Ko Taku Reo, Deaf Aotearoa, and Homai College
- Establish Disability Champions within each faculty to act as a point of contact for sharing information, provide appropriate guidance on learning design and curriculum delivery in accessible formats, and supporting teaching staff to meet students' needs.

Objective: Improve accessibility in learning and teaching

- Establish University-wide standards for recording lectures and accessible content
- Ensure teaching staff are informed when there are disabled students in their class, relevant details of any academic accommodation plans in place, and any changes to support needs
- Investigate opportunities for external accreditations
- Embed the use of the Kia Ōrite learning and teaching toolkit (or equivalent) into:
 - programme and course reviews; and
 - new qualification development processes.
- Include accessibility standards in new assessment guidelines
- Establish regular connection and kōrero between Student Services and faculties and schools to ensure clear communication and ongoing improvements to academic administration practice.
- Include metrics focussed on Deaf and disabled students in quality assurance activities, including:
 - programme reviews; and
 - faculty assessment boards
- Include accessible learning design in professional development programmes for new teaching staff, and audit compliance with participation

Objectives and actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate making embedded accessibility features open to all students, not just those with an accommodation plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify programmes where a fitness-to-practice component may create a barrier for some students and ensure this is clearly stated on all promotional material. Where necessary, work with prospective students to select an appropriate alternative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance professional development opportunities in accessible learning design, including the formation of communities of practice
Objective: Support our students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish regular, centralised monitoring and reporting on success, retention, participation, graduation, employment, and satisfaction rates of our Deaf and disabled students and graduates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate if, and why, disabilities are under-reported in particular groups, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pacific students; ○ Asian students; ○ those from a low socio-economic background
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with staff and students to deepen our understanding of the different cultural norms of each group under the disability umbrella (such as the Deaf and neuro-diverse communities), and ensure our material and support are tailored and relevant to each community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite groups of students with intersectional experiences of disability and/or specific needs to share their perspectives and shape targeted support systems, including potentially the opportunity to indicate their preferred main support provider. The groups we engage with may include (but are not limited to) students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ with multiple disabilities; ○ with disabilities where there is a lingering parity gap; ○ from diverse ethnicity groups; ○ who are gender diverse; ○ in postgraduate study; ○ with mental health conditions; and ○ enrolled in qualifications with a persistent achievement gap. • Use the insights gathered to improve support for these students

Objectives and actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate accommodation plans (including students’ perspectives), with a view to understanding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Which elements are most effective, especially for those from lower socio-economic areas (and if there are elements that can be scaled to the wider student body) ○ If we need to, and subsequently how we can, improve the effectiveness of plans for students who are Blind/Low Vision/Deafblind, Deaf/Hard of Hearing, or have autism spectrum condition ○ Opportunities to improve the flexibility and applicability of accommodation plans as students’ needs change.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide additional support for disabled students and graduates through the career search, job application, and employment processes.
Objective: Support our staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and promote opportunities for staff to disclose disabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise the profile of disabled staff, sharing their lived experience with the aim to increase awareness of the diverse nature of our staff community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and establish personalised evacuation plans for staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support line managers to create and maintain accommodation plans for staff use, enabling accessible practices in the workplace to become embedded.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Access and Inclusion Network to identify and mitigate remaining barriers for staff in disclosing disabilities and receiving appropriate support

Section 4. Communication, evaluation, and monitoring

Communicating our Disability Action Plan

Communications for the Disability Action Plan commenced with an internal campaign designed to raise staff awareness of the development process, and encouraging their involvement. The campaign included articles, videos, and a dedicated site on our staff intranet, presentations to key committees (including the Senior Leadership Team, Academic Board, and the Learning and Teaching Committee), and the release and promotion of the Disabled Students and Disabled Staff reports. The response to this campaign was overwhelmingly positive.

With the Plan now complete, AUT will establish a permanent site for the Disability Action Plan on our external website. As well as the Plan itself, the site will provide links to appropriate, informed support services, a high-level profile of our students, and a clearly defined complaints process. We intend to invite students and staff with lived experience of disabilities to share their experiences and to profile their achievements. Where appropriate, we will share findings from the kōrero to be held with various student groups and any proposed changes or enhancements to our services, and invite further input from students. For staff, we will continue to raise awareness of Disability Confidence training and other professional development opportunities, lift the profile of the Access and Inclusion Network, profile disabled staff, and report on the progress of Disability Action Plan-related initiatives as they are implemented.

More broadly, we will continue to advocate for a more inclusive and accessible tertiary sector. We have identified several opportunities where AUT could share expertise and resources with smaller tertiary institutions. Our ability to respond to these needs at present is constrained by finances; a collaborative approach between TEC and the sector would benefit all students and providers. We also strongly support the establishment of a sector-wide community of practice, dedicated to enhancing the learning experiences of disabled students.

Evaluating our Disability Action Plan

Initiatives introduced under the Disability Action Plan will be evaluated for their effectiveness as part of the wider Ki Uta Ki Tai programme evaluation strategy. Exact details are yet to be determined, and are likely to include quantitative and/or qualitative analyses of staff and student feedback, contribution to the University's wider learner participation and success goals, efficiency and return on investment, lessons for future initiatives, and scalability. The evaluation programme will be managed by the University's Strategy and Planning Office, with oversight from the Group Director Strategy and Planning and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Academic.

More broadly, the University will implement a series of metrics (discussed below) that are associated with the Disability Action Plan. The Ki Uta Ki Tai Steering Group will receive biannual reports on progress against most of these metrics (particularly those related to

student participation and achievement), and annual reports on others (including retention and satisfaction rates). These will also be included in our Annual Report.

Measuring the success of our Disability Action Plan

The actions outlined in the Plan are designed to carry AUT closer to a genuinely inclusive and accessible environment. As such, we have identified several measures that will help AUT determine whether we have made progress towards this goal. These are centred on the participation, experiences, achievement, and successful workforce transition of our disabled students, along with greater visibility of disabilities amongst our staff.² We will report against these in the Annual Report, along with regular updates to the Vice-Chancellor's Executive, the Ki Uta Ki Tai Steering Group, and Council.

² Several of these metrics are drawn from Ki Uta Ki Tai

Indicator	Metric	Student cohort	2022 result
Participation	Proportion of students with noted disabilities	All students	10%
		Postgraduate	8%
		Pacific students	6%
		Asian students	6%
		School leavers	10%
Course completion rate	Students with noted disabilities	Pre-degree	72%
		Undergraduate	82%
		Postgraduate	81%
Retention rate	Students with noted disabilities	Undergraduate	79%
Graduate profile	Proportion of graduates who have noted disabilities	Undergraduate	8%
Student experience	Proportion of students with noted disabilities who would recommend AUT		82%
	Proportion of Pacific students with an academic accommodation plan		26%
Transition to workforce	Proportion of available graduates with a noted disability who are employed full time		88%
	Proportion of employed graduates who are applying all or some of the skills learnt in their qualification in their current role		87%
	Proportion of graduates who completed a placement and were subsequently offered a role at the same organisation		40%
Staff participation	Proportion of AUT staff with a noted disability	Academic staff	2.5%*
		Allied staff	3.8%*

Appendix 1. A profile of disabled students at AUT

This section presents some unique features of our disabled students, including their various backgrounds, experiences at AUT, and success rates. Rather than providing a comprehensive profile, it focusses on the key insights arising from our analysis. Where relevant, we have identified the corresponding objectives included in the Disability Action Plan (see [Support our students](#) below for an example).

Reporting of disabilities at AUT

Almost a quarter (24%) of New Zealanders have some form of disability.³ While AUT is still well short of achieving this level of participation amongst our student body, both the number and proportion of students reporting disabilities have grown steadily in recent years, up 25% to 2,400 in 2023 (Graph 1⁴). This equates to 9% of all students, and 11% of domestic students. By far the most common types of disability reported by AUT students are learning disabilities, including dyslexia and dyscalculia. These are followed by two other so-called invisible disabilities: chronic medical conditions and mental health conditions (Table 1). A significant minority (around 20%) of students also report having multiple disabilities. While most students with multiple disabilities report two, a small number of students report five or more.

Disability and demography

When viewed by various demographic characteristics, we can see some clear patterns emerge for disabled students.

Ethnicity | Māori and European students are the two groups with the highest recorded rate of disabilities. Around 15% of European and 13% of Māori students report having a disability, compared with just 6% of Asian and Pacific students. We expect that disabilities are under-reported in these two communities. [Support our students](#).

Gender | There is a definite intersection between gender and disability amongst AUT students. While 11% of women and ten percent of men report having a disability, almost half of all students who are gender diverse have at least one disability (42%). They are also significantly more likely to report having multiple disabilities.⁵ With around 170 gender diverse students at AUT in 2023, they are a key group with unique insights to share and potentially specialised support needs. [Support our students](#).

³ Office for Disability Issues. *New Zealand Disability Strategy 2016-2026*, [Ministry of Social Development](#), 2016, p. 12

⁴ Refer to Appendix 1 for tables and graphs

⁵ 46% of disabled students who are gender diverse report having multiple disabilities

Socio-economic status | Around 15% of Deaf and disabled students come from lower socio-economic backgrounds.⁶ It is likely that disability is under-reported amongst this cohort due to the higher concentration of Pacific peoples. **Support our students**

Disability type | While most student groups reflect the same predominance of learning disabilities, chronic medical conditions and mental health conditions, there are some key variances for particular students. Table 2 shows the degree of intersectionality between some demographic characteristics and type of disabilities reported.

Disability and programme choice

Disabled students are still slightly under-represented at the highest levels of study; just 7% of postgraduate students report a disability, compared to 10% of pre-degree and undergraduates). However, the number of postgraduate students with a reported disability is increasing sharply, up 46% since 2020 (from 268 students to 391 in 2023). AUT has an opportunity to increase our understanding of, and support for postgraduate students. **Support our students**. The larger programmes (including the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business, and the Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing)) generally attract the highest number of disabled students. However, a different picture emerges when looking at the programmes with the highest proportion of disabled students, which are the BA in Sign Language Interpreting, BHSc in Health Management, and BHSc (Occupational Therapy) (Table 3).

Accessing specialised support

As previously described, AUT provides comprehensive and well-regarded accessibility support. On average, around four in ten students (42%) with a reported disability will go on to establish an academic accommodation plan with DSS, a statistic that has remained relatively consistent as the number of students reporting disabilities has grown. Students with multiple disabilities are more likely to secure an accommodation plan (57%). In 2023, DSS is actively supporting almost 1,100 students.

The student experience at AUT

The 2022 University Experience Survey showed that disabled students are generally less satisfied with the University and its services than other students (Table 4). This is true for all satisfaction items except Student Services, which scored a relatively high satisfaction rate for both groups. A similar pattern is observed in the 2020 and 2021 surveys. **Support our students**.

⁶ Lower socio-economic background is defined as a student's first residential address being located in a census area meshblock that is assigned a New Zealand Deprivation Index score of 9 or 10

Disability and student outcomes

Progress towards parity

At the overall level, disabled students attained parity in success rates in 2021, and have maintained it in subsequent years. Māori students followed suit the following year. (Table 4). Many noted that the shift to blended learning during the pandemic was helpful.

While we have noticed these significant shifts at the overall level and for Māori students in recent years, the relationship between disability and success rates has been stable for other priority groups. Both Pacific students and those from lower socio-economic areas consistently have a higher success rate if they have a recorded disability. Students with multiple disabilities, by contrast, have not yet reached parity and tend to have lower completion rates than those with a single disability (Table 5). [Support our students](#).

Intersecting factors

Other demographic and study factors can also affect a student's chances of success. These are discussed in more detail below.

Disability type | While AUT has achieved parity for disabled students at the overall level, this is largely due to the predominance and high achievement of students with learning disabilities. Other than this group, and students with brain injuries and physical disabilities, a performance gap remains for students with all other disability types, ranging from the small (-1pp for students with chronic medical conditions) to the significant (-6pp for students with mental health conditions) (Table 6). [Support our students](#).

Level of study | The impact of having a noted disability on a student's success rate varies significantly by level of study. Disabled students at pre-degree level consistently report higher success rates; undergraduate students are at parity; a gap remains for postgraduate students (Table 7). [Support our students](#).

Programme of study | When viewed by programme of study, there are clear differences in success rates for disabled students. These largely follow the University's overall pattern; students in the BHSc (Nursing), Bachelor of Design Te Tohu Paetae mō te Hoahoa, BHSc in Paramedicine, and the Bachelor of Education (Specialty) Teaching all achieve well above average completion rates. A second group of programmes (including the BHSc (Oral Health), BHSc in Counselling, and Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science) have both high course completion rates for disabled students and a lingering parity gap. The programmes that are of most concern are in the third group, where completion rates are lower than average, and in some cases have a considerable parity gap. This group includes the Bachelor of Communication Studies, Bachelor of Computer and Information Sciences, and the Bachelor of Engineering Technology (Table 8). [Support our students](#).

Accessing disability support services | Overall, students with an academic accommodation plan have a significantly higher success rate than students who do not (+4 percentage points). The correlation between accommodation plans and success rates is even stronger for certain

priority cohorts, including students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, Pacific students, and those with multiple disabilities (Table 9). [Support our students](#).

Effectiveness of an academic accommodation plan | While at the overall level, an accommodation plan is associated with a higher success rate, the importance of having one varies by disability. Students with brain injuries, for example, have a 23-point higher completion rate if they have an accommodation plan, compared with those who don't. Students with memory, speech, and intellectual disabilities, and chronic or temporary medical conditions also have much higher success rates with an accommodation plan. On the other hand, students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Blind/Low Vision/Deafblind, or who have autism spectrum condition, tend to do better without an accommodation plan (Graph 2). We will explore the reasons for these results, and adjust our approaches to developing plans where appropriate. We will also ensure that students who have disabilities that are shown to benefit from having a plan are aware of its potential importance. [Support our students](#).

Post-study outcomes

The 2022 AUT Graduate Survey showed that disabled graduates were much less likely to be in employment, between six and nine months after graduation, and slightly more likely to be in further study.

When looking just at those respondents who identified as available for full-time work, 88% of disabled graduates were in full-time employment, compared with 84% of other respondents. This suggests that graduates who are seeking full-time work are relatively successful in securing it (Table 11). For graduates now in full-time employment, disabled people were more likely to be working in not-for-profit organisations, and less likely to be in the private sector. However, these graduates were also more likely to be employed on fixed-term contracts or in temporary or casual work, and less likely to be applying the skills they had learnt during their qualification at their current role. Both these results suggest that disabled graduates may find it harder to secure meaningful, rewarding employment on completing their studies. Of those who had completed a work placement, disabled graduates were less likely to be offered a role at the same organisation (Table 12). [Support our students](#).

Further actions

These findings present some key insights for student success at AUT, beyond the Disability Action Plan. Disabled students from lower socio-economic areas are within reach of achieving our overall parity target, if they have an accommodation plan.⁷ AUT will seek to understand the reasons why this level of support is helpful, and whether some elements could be expanded sustainably to a wider group of students. [Support our students](#).

⁷ Students who are not Māori or Pacific, and do not have a disability, had an overall course completion rate of 87% between 2020-2022, compared with 82% for students who have a disability and come from lower socio-economic areas

Appendix 2. Tables and graphs

Deaf and disabled students at AUT: Tables and graphs

Graph 1. Number of students with a reported disability, 2020-2023



Table 1. Most common disabilities reported by AUT students, 2020-2023

Disability type	Students
Learning	1,083
Medical (chronic)	683
Mental health	535
Blind/Low Vision/Deafblind	355
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	195
Autism spectrum	152
Physical	140
Medical (temporary)	73
Brain injury	61
Other	39
Memory/Speech/Intellectual	37

Table 2. Intersectionality of reported disabilities and varying demographic characteristics

Student cohort	Most common disabilities reported
All	Learning Medical (chronic) Mental health
Pacific	Medical (chronic) Blind/Low Vision/Deafblind Mental health
Gender diverse	Mental health Autism spectrum Learning
Aged under 25	Learning Medical (chronic) Blind/Low Vision/Deafblind
Aged 40 and over	Medical (chronic) Learning Deaf/Hard of Hearing
Multiple disabilities	Learning and mental health Medical (chronic) and mental health Autism spectrum and learning
From lower socio-economic areas	Medical (chronic) Blind/Low Vision/Deafblind Learning

Table 3. Programmes with the greatest proportion of disabled students (combined data 2020-2022)

Programme of study	Deaf & Disabled students (#)	Deaf & Disabled students (%)
Bachelor of Arts (NZSL-English Interpreting)	18	27%
Bachelor of Health Science in Health Management	15	22%
Bachelor of Health Science (Occupational Therapy)	92	16%
Bachelor of Health Science in Psychology	69	16%
Bachelor of Health Science in Counselling	23	15%
Bachelor of Creative Technologies	41	15%
Bachelor of Health Science in Paramedicine	148	14%

Table 4. Rates of satisfaction with AUT, University Experience Survey 2022⁸

Item	Deaf & Disabled students	Non-Deaf/Disabled students	Gap
Student life	73%	77%	-4pp
Facilities and environment	78%	83%	-5pp
Student services	81%	81%	-
Administration	72%	77%	-5pp
Library collection	83%	84%	-1pp

⁸ The response rate for this survey was 27% for Deaf & disabled students (559 respondents out of a total population of 2,083). This is higher than the overall response rate, which was 23%.

Item	Deaf & Disabled students	Non-Deaf/Disabled students	Gap
ICT services	75%	80%	-5pp
Recommend AUT	82%	85%	-3pp

Disability and outcomes: Tables and graphs

Table 5. Progress towards parity of achievement in course completion rates for all and Māori students, 2020-2023 (S1)

Cohort	Year	Parity	Course completion rate	
			Deaf/Disabled students	Non-Deaf/Disabled students
All students	2020	×	84%	85%
	2021	=	84%	84%
	2022	=	81%	81%
	2023 (S1 only)	=	84%	84%
Māori	2020	×	78%	80%
	2021	×	78%	81%
	2022	+	79%	77%
	2023 (S1 only)	=	82%	82%

Table 6. Course completion rates for students who are Pacific, from low socio-economic areas, or with multiple disabilities, overall 2020-2022

Cohort	Parity	Deaf/Disabled students	Non-Deaf/Disabled students
Pacific	+	69%	67%
From lower socio-economic areas	+	76%	74%
Multiple disabilities	×	81%	84%

Table 7. Course completion rates by type of disability, overall 2020-2022

Type of disability	Course completion rate	Parity ⁹
Learning	89%	+
Medical (chronic)	83%	×
Mental health	78%	×
Blind/Low Vision/Deafblind	79%	×
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	81%	×
Physical	86%	+
Autism spectrum	81%	×
Medical (temporary)	82%	×
Brain injury	84%	=
Memory/Speech/Intellectual	80%	×

⁹ Parity is measured against the overall course completion rate for non-Deaf/non-Disabled students from 2020-2022, which was 84%

Table 8. Course completion rates by level of study, 2020-2022 overall

Cohort	Parity	Deaf/Disabled students	Non-Deaf/Disabled students
Pre-degree	+	73%	69%
Undergraduate	+	84%	84%
Postgraduate	×	84%	90%

Table 9. Course completion rates for Deaf and disabled students in key programmes of study, overall 2020-2022

Programme of study	Deaf & Disabled students (#)	Deaf & Disabled students (CCR)
<i>Programmes with high success rates</i>		
Bachelor of Health Science (Nursing)	193	88%
Bachelor of Design - Te Tohu Paetahi mō te Hoahoa	154	91%
Bachelor of Health Science in Paramedicine	148	89%
Bachelor of Education (Specialty) Teaching	119	90%
Bachelor of Health Science (Physiotherapy)	119	93%
Bachelor of Health Science (Occupational Therapy)	92	94%
Bachelor of Health Science (Midwifery)	65	94%
Bachelor of Creative Technologies	41	91%
Bachelor of Visual Arts Te Tohu Paetae mō Toi Ataata	32	91%
Graduate Diploma in Secondary Teaching	28	94%
<i>Programmes with high success rates, but a consistent parity gap</i>		
Bachelor of Health Science (Oral Health)	26	86%
Bachelor of Health Science in Counselling	23	88%
Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science	21	91%
Bachelor of Architecture and Future Environments	21	87%
<i>Programmes with lower completion rates, and/or a consistent parity gap</i>		
Bachelor of Arts	326	79%
Bachelor of Health Science	166	70%
Bachelor of Laws	156	74%
Bachelor of Science	150	77%
Bachelor of Communication Studies	165	79%
Bachelor of Computer and Information Sciences	157	76%
Bachelor of Health Science in Psychology	68	77%
Bachelor of Engineering Technology	58	78%
<i>Other</i>		
Bachelor of Business	308	82%

Table 10. Course completion rates for students with and without an accommodation plan, overall 2020-2022

Cohort	Deaf & Disabled students		Non-Deaf/Disabled students
	With an accommodation plan	Without an accommodation plan	
All students	85%	81%	84%
From lower socio-economic areas	82%	71%	73%
Pacific	71%	68%	67%
Māori	80%	77%	80%
With multiple disabilities	82%	79%	84%

Graph 2. Difference in success rates for students with an accommodation plan, by type of disability (single disabilities only)

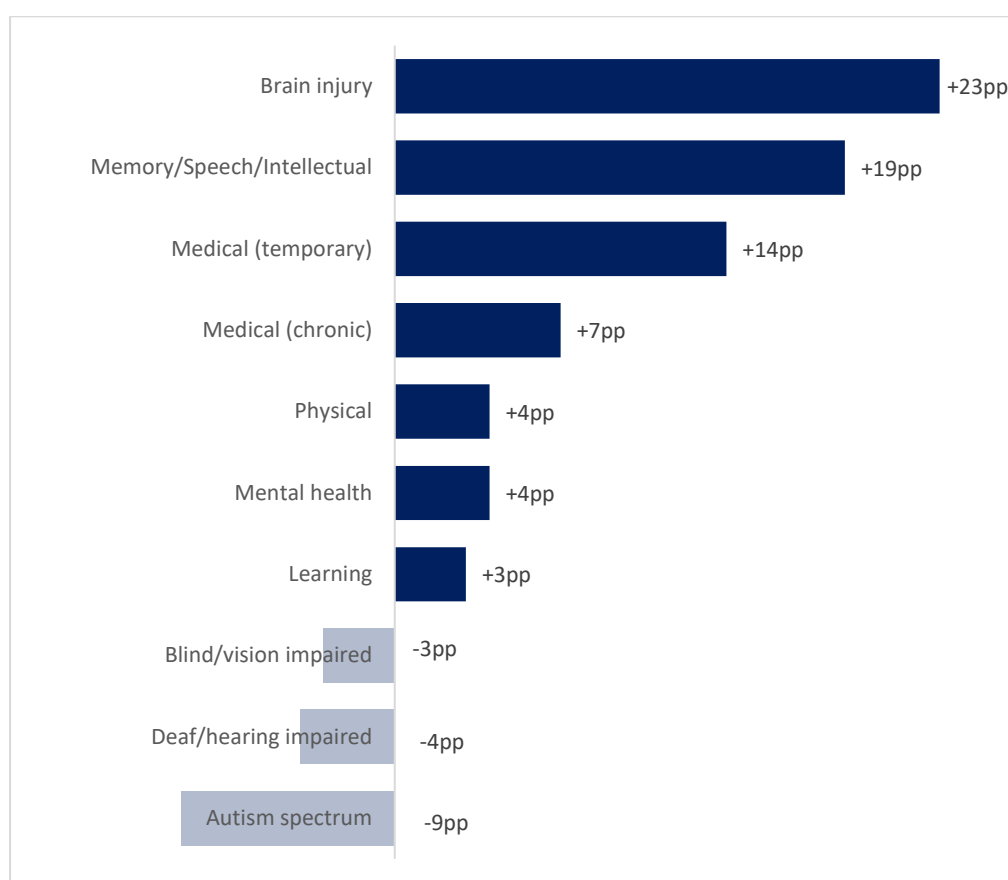


Table 11. Employment and study status, 2022 Graduate Survey¹⁰

Graduate Survey section	Deaf/Disabled graduates	Non-Deaf/Disabled graduates
Work status (GS Table 7)	57% full-time 21% part-time 22% not in paid employment	65% full time 23% part-time 12% not in paid employment
Work-ready graduates (GS Table 9)	64% full-time 20% part-time 16% not in paid employment	69% full time 21% part-time 10% not in paid employment
Graduates available for full-time work (GS Table 11)	88% full-time 5% part-time 7% not in paid employment	84% full-time 11% part-time 5% not in paid employment
Study status (GS Table 40)	20% in further study (full-time and part-time combined)	19% in further study (full-time and part-time combined)

Table 12. Employment sector, contract, use of skills, and employment from placement, Graduate Survey 2022

Graduate Survey section	Deaf/Disabled graduates	Non-Deaf/Disabled graduates
Sector of employment (GS Table 19)	44% Private 47% Public 9% Not-for-profit	50% Private 47% Public 3% Not-for-profit
Type of enrolment contract (GS Table 21)	75% permanent 8% fixed term (more than 12 months) 14% fixed term (up to 12 months) 4% temporary/casual	85% permanent 6% fixed term (more than 12 months) 7% fixed term (up to 12 months) 2% temporary/casual
Applying the skills they learnt in their qualification to their current role (GS Table 24)	24% all 63% some 13% none	28% all 65% some 6% none
Employed full time and completed a placement, being employed from that placement (GS Table 30)	60% No offer was made	42% No offer was made

¹⁰ The response rate from graduates with noted disabilities in the 2022 Graduate Survey was 43% (159 respondents out of a population of 370). This was above the overall response rate of 38%

Appendix 3. Responses from Deaf and disabled students and staff

The following section summarises the contributions made by staff and students to the final Disability Action Plan. In some cases, quotes have been lightly edited for clarity.

While there is room to improve, students appreciate the support they receive

I have been very grateful for the support given by the Disability Support Services and feel they do an excellent job. (Survey respondent)

I think that AUT and the Disability Support Services staff have done a very good job from my experience. (Survey respondent)

A broad endorsement of the proposed actions and objectives

Disabled students and staff largely agreed with the barriers identified during the self-review process, and our proposed remedial actions.

I think that AUT and the disability support staff have done a very good job from my experience. I think that ensuring support and workplace quality for the staff are central to maintaining that. (Survey respondent)

I think it's a positive step moving forward. (Survey respondent)

AUT celebrates people from all walks of life. (Survey respondent)

Seems up to date and very comprehensive. (Survey respondent)

I found that the overall plan is great and I look forward to when it is implemented. I would also like to see how students are actively integrated into these processes (Survey respondent)

In many cases, students and staff provided further examples of how these barriers have affected them, and or a more nuanced understanding of the experience of Deafness and disability at AUT.

I had to speak with six people just to book a counselling appointment. (Deaf student)

Often disabled students are not supported to make [clinical placements] accessible. (Survey respondent)

My issues surrounded a lack of accommodation for students with ADHD who only do assessments. (Survey respondent)

A good experience rests on having proactive, informed, and supportive teaching staff

The feedback process again demonstrated the importance of engaged and informed frontline teaching staff, especially for disabled students. While centralised support (including from DSS and other support services) is vital, it cannot alone create a good learning experience. Students told us that the experience can vary between faculties, and even between courses.

Having to reach out can be the barrier to support. (AIN member)

I was shy to mention my academic accommodation plan to my lecturers. (Survey respondent)

I don't use [service] anymore, after that experience. (Deaf student)

Have teachers follow the plan ... for me personally it's being able to have someone ... go through resources with me and be clear about the requirements of a project (Survey respondent).

I would want the lecturers to learn more about the student's disability, and to study the areas the student might be struggling in, and also be able to help with their strengths (Survey respondent).

Have a support person that can provide lecturers with knowledge and awareness of a student's condition ... so the student doesn't have to keep explaining their situation ... to get extra help or extensions on assignments. (Survey respondent)

Make staff more aware of the challenges disabled students face on the daily basis. Making accommodations for the students is very important, as they already face so many challenges on top of figuring out how to make taking a lecture more possible for us. (Survey respondent)

I think the staff education and on-going accountability to change will be key. (Survey respondent)

This support includes flexibility of deadlines, forwarding course materials in advance, and providing recorded lectures

If I get the notes early, I can prepare. (Student discussion group participant)

It would be great to have a more open conversation between students and teachers regarding deadlines. (Survey respondent)

My main issue is the inconsistency in uploading lecture recordings to Canvas. (Survey respondent)

Consistency with uploading lecture videos is essential. I also think that where online lecture videos are released later during the week, these should be released earlier. (Survey respondent)

I find recordings crucial to my learning and I have some lecturers who have refused to record. It would be great to have a more open conversation between students and teachers regarding deadlines. (Survey respondent)

And providing more support for postgraduate students

Postgraduate students agreed that there were gaps in the support they were able to offer.

I'm dyslexic and a postgraduate student and I don't feel like I was able to get much support. (Survey respondent)

It would be nice to see postgrad more represented. (Survey respondent)

Rather than just broad categories, students and staff wanted to see where they fit within the document

There is only one representation of neurodiversity [in the draft] which is autism. However there is a more common neurodiverse condition which is ADHD.... This condition needs to be supported more. (Survey respondent)

Hearing society has problems communicating with us.... Add Deaf in all objectives and goals; how to support disability and Deaf people (Deaf student)

It would be great if this invisible disability was also brought to attention in the document. (AIN member)

A safe, welcoming, and inclusive atmosphere benefits everyone

Staff specifically noted the work required to create an inclusive environment where people feel safe to disclose disabilities. Greater visibility can result in a more accepting environment, where Deafness and disability are normalised. This helps break down barriers for students as well as staff, and is beneficial for all.

I am a strong believer that the staff voice needs to be further promoted in AUT for our diverse staff and accessibility needs. (AIN member)

I don't think the statistics are correct for the amount of staff.... I know four in my department, three of whom won't disclose. The other is me. (AIN member)

Students recognised the importance of a diverse range of voices in the enactment of the Disability Action Plan, including a clear articulation of Māori strengths and the Disability Action Plan's alignment with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Additional focus on Te Tiriti and Māori strengths. (Survey respondent)

It is essential to include students from Pacific backgrounds to work alongside staff from those teams to better understand the gaps that may occur. (Survey respondent)

I think having students play an active role in the promotion and prevention of discrimination and stigmas around disabilities will help them reach ... people who are going through the same thing. (Survey respondent)