

Effective Transition Planning for Secondary School Students with Disability

Where do you begin?

It is useful to begin any discussion about post school options with a consideration of the young person's interests and career aspirations. The decision making process will involve many elements such as deciding on a course of study and the most suitable institution; deciding whether a job is the preferred option; and the balance between study, work and a social life. Another consideration is the change in learning environments and the expectation that a student operates as an independent learner.

In Years 9 - 12 students with disability will benefit from seeking advice from school career staff in relation to subject course selection, undertaking work experience placements and a consideration of Vocational Education and Training (VET) courses of study while still at school. If further study is the chosen pathway, then it's important to explore course entry requirements and to discover which institutes offer the desired course of study. TAFE and University Open Days provide good opportunity for further exploration. www.vtac.edu.au/opendays.html. Another factor is whether study will be undertaken on a full or part time basis. Many institutions offer flexible study options. The other deliberation may be whether to study at TAFE or University – remember that TAFE itself can be a pathway to University if initial entry to University is unsuccessful. The Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL) may also be an appropriate option for young people or the Certificate I in Work Education. Both of these are offered by most TAFEs and in some cases secondary schools also offer VCAL courses. For transition to employment, there are a number of useful resources, for example, linking in with Disability Employment Services or Australian Apprenticeship Centres.

Access to information

1. National Disability Coordination Officer (NDCO) Program targets the barriers that people with disability face in successfully accessing and completing post-school education and training and subsequent employment. NDCOs can provide practical assistance and advice to individuals with disability and their families, education and training providers, as well as employment and community support agencies.

www.deewr.gov.au/Skills/Programs/Support/NDCO/Pages/default.aspx

2. VTAC and SEAS

School leavers with a disability who are applying for University or higher level study in TAFE can apply through VTAC for the Special Entry Access Scheme (SEAS). For further information: www.vtac.edu.au/seas-home.html

3. Futures for Young Adults (FFYA) program provides support to students with a disability who need additional assistance to make the transition to post-school options. The program is available to eligible students from when they complete school until they turn 21.

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/supports_for_people/being_part_of_my_community/futures_for_young_adults

4. Support Services available at TAFE or University: Disability Liaison Units

Disability Liaison Officers (DLOs) are employed at each TAFE Institute in Victoria and University and may be able to provide the following alternative arrangements: support for assessment requirements (for example, additional time, scribe, reader); Academic Support Workers (for example, note takers, interpreters, readers); access to adaptive technology (for example, voice activated software); alternative format course materials (for example, Braille, disk); liaison with lecturers / teachers; physical access to facilities; referral to other support services (for example, counselling, health, housing, financial aid, learning skills unit); and enrolment and campus orientation. It is a good idea to contact prospective institutes and discuss individual support needs prior to beginning the academic year. Do this as early as possible because some forms of assistance will take time to implement. In order to engage the services of a DLO, a student will need to make a disclosure of disability and will need to provide evidence of the

disability. It is best to seek clarification from individual institutions. "Preparing for TAFE: A guide for Students with a Disability in Victoria" provides further useful information.

http://ndco.wodongatafe.edu.au/Data/Sites/1/0699_ndco_disabilityguidebook_191109web.pdf

It is relevant to note that Work Education Units and Disability Liaison Units within TAFE Institutes operate under different structures and funding arrangements. Work Education students are provided with extensive support and assistance within the course and therefore are not eligible for support from Disability Liaison Units.

5. Disclosure of Disability

In order to qualify for services, disclosure of a disability is required, however, the individual can exert control over the level of information disclosed and to whom that information is disclosed. Some careful contemplation will contribute to increased confidence and enhanced self advocacy skills. '**Choosing Your Path. Disclosure: It's A Personal Decision**' website provides information about options and pathways that people with disability can use in disclosing their disability in post secondary education and employment. <http://pubsites.uws.edu.au/ndco/disclosure/>

6. Self Advocacy

It is imperative that young people with disability develop self advocacy skills. In the context of tertiary education, young people need to be encouraged to understand their disability and know how to explain to tertiary staff how the disability may impact on their learning and course requirements. In addition, it's also critical to develop confidence in explaining any necessary accommodations or adjustments that will be of benefit to their learning. This also applies to the workplace.

7. Employment

Disability Employment Services (DES) were formerly known as Disability Employment Networks and provide eligible jobseekers with disability, injury or health condition, access to individually tailored employment services suited to their needs. For more information refer to

http://jobaccess.gov.au/Services/A-Z_list/Pages/DisabilityEmploymentServices.aspx

To find your nearest DES provider:

<http://jobsearch.gov.au/provider/ProviderLocation.aspx?maplevel=2&ProviderType=DES®ionkey=VIC>

Job Access is funded by the Australian Government and offers help and workplace solutions for people with disability and their employers. <http://jobaccess.gov.au/Home/Home.aspx>

Available support for young **Australian Apprentices with Disability** includes wage support, tutorial, interpreter and mentor services. Refer to the following website for more information

http://www.australianapprenticeships.gov.au/FAQ/Documents/FactSheet_SFAAWD.pdf

8. Useful Websites

a. **Broaden Your Horizons** <http://www.imvc.com.au/content/broaden-your-horizons>

b. **Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET)** www.adcet.edu.au/. Transition guides can also be downloaded. www.adcet.edu.au/Search.aspx?l=Transition&et=Article,Link,Faq

c. **NDCO Victorian Website** www.ndcovictoria.net.au. The collection of transition experiences from tertiary students with disability provides insight about valuable coping strategies. www.ndcovictoria.net.au/Information---Resources/Tertiary-Transition-CDs.aspx

d. **Career Tips** <http://www.careertips.net.au/index.html>

e. **Towards Success in Tertiary Study** <http://www.services.unimelb.edu.au/studentequity/Publications/disability.html>

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