



DISABILITY AND SPECIAL NEEDS POLICY

Date Approved:	1 January 2023
Date Effective:	1 January 2023
Policy Category:	Student
Policy Owner:	National Manager – Student Support

1. Context, Purpose & Key Principles

SEDA Group Pty Ltd (“SEDA”) is committed to supporting a diverse community by taking reasonable steps to assist students to achieve their educational goals.

This Policy clarifies SEDA’s process for the identification of students with a disability or additional learning need and the processes that may be implemented in accordance with the obligations outlined by the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005.

2. Scope

- Student Services/Student Support
- All Trainers and Assessors
- All VET and VETiS students
- Prospective students enrolling in a SEDA course.

3. Policy Statement

SEDA recognises the individual needs of students and respects the rights of all students to participate inclusively and fully in all facets of the SEDA experience in particular the access and equity of student engagement outcomes.

SEDA is committed to providing opportunities and access to students with a disability, mental health or medical condition that are comparable to students without additional needs. The following Policy Principles are consistent with SEDA’s legislative responsibilities and demonstrate SEDA’s commitment to access and equity for all students.

4. Policy Principles

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 includes a requirement for academic environments to be free from discrimination on the grounds of disability. It unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of a disability.

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The Act is supported by the Disability Standards of Education 2005 which clarify and elaborate the legal obligations in relation to education. The Standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and harassment and victimization.

Under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic), Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA) and Anti-Discrimination Act 1996 (NT), Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (NSW), SEDA has a positive duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' for students with a disability. An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, SEDA, staff and other students. Refer to **Reasonable Adjustment Policy**.

Key Terms Defined

Disability – SEDA defines disability in accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

A student with a disability refers to an enrolled student of SEDA with a disability that in relation to a person means:

- a total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- a disorder without the disorder or malfunction; or
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

and includes a disability that:

- presently exists; or
- previously existed but no longer exists; or
- may exist in the future; or
- is imputed to a person.

resulting in a reduced ability to access educational services provided by SEDA including assessment tasks and requirements for reasonable adjustments and/or support services to address these barriers.

Reasonable Adjustment – SEDA defines reasonable adjustment in accordance with the Commonwealth Disability Standards for Education 2005, subsection 3.4:

An adjustment is a measure or action (or groups of measures or actions) taken by SEDA to assist a student with a disability, mental health, or medical condition to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students.

The measure or action assists a student with a disability to:

- apply for admission or enrol in a program.
- participate in the course or program; and
- use the facilities or services.

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on the same basis as a student without a disability, mental health or medical condition and includes an aid, a facility, or a service that the student requires because of his or her disability.

An adjustment is reasonable if it considers the student’s learning needs and balances the interests of all parties affected, including those of:

- the student with the disability
- the education provider (SEDA),
- staff
- other students

5. How does SEDA identify a need?

SEDA may be informed of or identify an additional learning need during the following:

- entrance interview - a direct question about ‘specific needs’ is asked.
- pre-training review
- direct parent/carer contact during the first few weeks of enrolment (where required)
- staff/trainer/teacher observation
- student self-disclosure

SEDA encourages students, parents, and carers to inform SEDA of any additional learning needs at an early stage.

6. When a need is identified

If there is a requirement for ‘Reasonable Adjustments’ to be considered, students are referred to the **‘Reasonable Adjustment Policy,’** to register via the ‘Reasonable Adjustment Registration Form which is submitted via info@sedagroup.com.au

Students who request reasonable adjustments will also be required, in a timely manner, to provide appropriate documentation from a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional.

Supporting documentation is also required as part of the application process to support a student’s disability, mental health or medical condition and must be dated and signed by a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional outlined in the conditions of the **‘Reasonable Adjustment Policy.**

The Process

At SEDA we encourage students to apply for Reasonable Adjustments by the end of week 4 of the first teaching period or as soon as practical should a change in circumstances require support. A meeting with the Student Enrolment Manager or Student Support Coordinators or equivalent can be arranged to support you through this process.

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The process involves the following steps:

1. Submit the Reasonable Adjustments Registration Form and the supporting documentation from a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional to info@sedagroup.com.au
2. The National Manager Student Support and National Training Manager or equivalent will review and approve the reasonable adjustments requested in the documents.
3. Based on the adjustments requested you may be required to attend a meeting with the National Training Manager or equivalent.
4. Meet with the Student Enrolment Manager or Student Support Coordinators or equivalent to finalise the RAP.
5. Sign the final documentation for approved adjustments.
6. Keep a copy of the redacted RAP for requests that require supporting evidence.

Roles & Responsibilities

SEDA maintains its responsibility to:

- Ensure that this Policy is accessible to all staff and students.
- Ensure that this Policy is implemented and applied consistently across all campuses of SEDA including its online learning environment.
- Ensure SEDA is fully compliant with the State National Laws and regulatory bodies' mandatory reporting requirements.

It is the student's responsibility to:

- Identify themselves as a student with a disability, mental health, or medical condition and to request reasonable adjustments based on the identifying condition.
- Provide appropriate supporting documentation from a Registered Australian Qualified Medical Professional. based on the presenting condition.
- Be actively involved in managing their condition within a learning environment and to seek support and solutions when required.

Student Support

SEDA is committed to providing accessible support for students. At all times SEDA respects an individual's rights to privacy and confidentiality when providing support services.

SEDA has partnered with Access Programs to provide students with a voluntary and confidential counselling service, known as the Student Assistance Program for Diploma level students, whilst SEDA Colleges for VETiS students have other equivalent inhouse resources. For Diploma (VET) students who wish to access confidential counselling 24/7. This service can be accessed by phoning 1800 959 or via 192 or info@accesseap.com.au

VETiS students through SEDA Colleges, for counselling support should reach out to their Pastoral Care Support or equivalent inhouse resources.

Confidentiality

Information provided to SEDA support staff and to the nature of a student's disability, mental health or medical condition is protected by the Student Privacy Policy and will not be disclosed outside of the nominated support team unless:

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- SEDA has reasonable grounds for concern about the health or safety of the student or other persons; or
- The student gives express consent; or
- Where there is a serious threat to your life, health, safety or welfare or that of another person.
- Disclosure of the information is required by law; or
- It is necessary for SEDA to obtain legal advice.

Information regarding the functional impact of a student's disability, mental health or medical condition may be included in the RAP and shared with staff solely for the purposes of determining what Reasonable Adjustments can be made to assist the student with their learning, teaching and assessment requirements.

Complaint or Grievance

Students who have a complaint or grievance, academic or non-academic, should refer to the **Complaints and Appeals Policy**.

Students who have a complaint or grievance related to disability or reasonable adjustment should first contact their Student Support Coordinator or equivalent.

Definitions

Academic Integrity – in the making of reasonable adjustments for students with disabilities, SEDA must continue to ensure the integrity of its courses or programs and assessment requirements and processes, so that those upon whom it confers an award is able to present themselves as having the appropriate knowledge, experience, and expertise implicit in the holding of a particular qualification.

Advocate – a representative appointed by the student to assist in consultation with SEDA to determine appropriate support and reasonable adjustments for the student. An advocate could be a family member, close friend, carer, medical professional, or other party chosen by the student.

Assessment – is the process of forming a judgement about the quality and extent of student achievement or performance, and therefore by inference a judgement about the learning itself.

Duty to Disclose - refers to a responsibility or agreement to disclose information that may be relevant in a decision-making process.

Learning Outcomes - are the expression of the set of knowledge, skills and the application of the knowledge and skills that it is essential that a person has acquired and is able to demonstrate because of learning in a subject or course to preserve the academic integrity of SEDA qualifications.

Special Consideration – students may apply for Special Circumstances when a decision has been made by SEDA upon application of the relevant policy that may require reassessment due to extenuating circumstances. For example, students may apply for an extension of a written assessment or deferral of an examination if a situation occurred that was beyond the student's control which affected the student's participation in study.

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For further information refer to the relevant **Special Consideration Policy**.

Student – is an individual person who is formally enrolled to study at SEDA. The individual person is that who appears on SEDA’s documents such as enrolment, admission and payment documents, and who is assigned an individual student ID.

Support – SEDA connects students with a disability to specialised services or adjustments with the aim of assisting them to achieve personal and educational goals at SEDA. This support enables SEDA to meet its access and equity commitments as well as disability legislative requirements under Commonwealth law. For further information refer to the Disability Policy and the Access and Equity Student Handbook or Access and Equity Student Handbook – VET

Teaching period - as advertised on the relevant published College calendar/s for your enrolment, a Block (VET) or Term (as per VET in Schools - VETiS).

Training Package Requirements - the specific skill, knowledge, performance, or behavioural requirements that a student must meet in order to successfully complete a VET training package delivered by SEDA and to enable graduates to register with professional associations or licensing bodies.

Disability Standards for Education 2005 - <http://deewr.gov.au/disability-standards-education>

Version Number	Date Approved	Effective Date	Owner	Summary of Change(s)
2.0	01/11/23	1/01/23	NTM	Existing Policy - Revised and split out from Student Handbook. Reference to Reasonable Adjustment Policy included and application process.

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