



Disability Action Plan 2025 - 2027

Introduction

Disability Action Plans are an important tool to enable tertiary education organisations (TEOs) to evidence their support of disabled learners.

To encourage and support TEOs to take a strong and proactive approach to improving outcomes for disabled learners, in 2022 the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) introduced a new Investment Plan requirement – Disability Action Plans (DAPs).

DAPs ensure TEOs avoid discrimination against disabled people, and disabled learners experience better outcomes throughout their education journey.

2. Definition

For the purposes of this DAP EmployNZ has used the New Zealand Disability Strategy definition of disability, which utilises the social model of disability. The New Zealand Disability Strategy states that, “disability is not something individuals have. What individuals have are impairments. They may be long-term, short-term and/or temporary experiences of disability including, but not limited to the experiences related to impairments and health issues listed below:

- Physical - head injury, mobility, speech
- Sensory – vision, hearing
- Neurological - dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Psychiatric - anxiety, depression, Schizophrenia, Bipolar
- Temporary impairment – injuries, Occupational Overuse Syndrome
- learning or other impairments (source Waikato University DAP)

Therefore, “disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world only for their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have.”

We refer to disabled people or disabled learners, to make the point that people with impairments are often disabled by their environment. That is, disability is something that happens when people with impairments face barriers in society; it is society that disables, not an individual’s impairments. This occurs through negative attitudes, lack of physical, communication and information access, etc.

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to outline the approach that EmployNZ will take to ensure a fully inclusive tertiary education environment for disabled learners. This includes a commitment to always be working with the intent of meeting the goals of Kia Ōrite which ensure that:

- disabled learners have equitable opportunities to achieve their individual capabilities and participate in all aspects of tertiary education life
- all interactions with disabled learners are characterised by respect for their rights, dignity, privacy, confidentiality and equality, and building a partnership with these learners to identify their learning support needs and the barriers to participation and achievement they face

- policies, procedures, services and facilities, including strategic planning and resource allocation, enable disabled learners to achieve equitable access to tertiary education and the full range of activities that encompass all aspects of their learning environments
- an equitable learning environment is created by considering the needs of disabled learners in all aspects of the learning process, including course design, curriculum, delivery, placements, assessment and support strategies
- staff are trained to meet the requirements of disabled learners, and they invite these learners to discuss their requirements and treat requests promptly and seriously
- they create a safe environment for disabled learners to:
 - make their requirements known in advance, so appropriate services are provided
 - share responsibility for negotiating and developing solutions, where possible
 - advise institutions of difficulties they encounter.

This plan gives specific actions that will be taken to ensure that we understand and respond to the needs of our learners and to ensure that our disabled learners have the same opportunity to reach their potential as any learner that chooses us for their education pathway.

This plan also commits to and gives effect to our vision statement 'Te Taumata Oranga – We Change Lives', and our purpose 'To provide a supportive learning environment which inspires our students and clients to achieve their educational and employment goals'. To achieve this, we continue to refine our processes and look for opportunities to improve, respond to changes and diversify to stay viable, current and innovative.

Responsibilities

Responsibility for leading the review of the plan, and communication of policies and programmes is designated to the EmployNZ Education Division Manager.

The EmployNZ Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for the development and implementation of this plan.

Implementation of procedures and actions in accordance with the plan are designated to the EmployNZ Education Division Manager, Quality Assurance Manager, Education Manager, Programme Manager, Tutors, Support and Administrative staff.

Plan Structure & Review

EmployNZ approach to implementing the plan will see it included as an addition to and alongside current self-reviews of our organisation's performance. To achieve this EmployNZ will align the Kia Ōrite Toolkit Management and Learning support responsibilities and DAP best practice standards with the responsibilities that EmployNZ has for the learners under The Education (Pastoral Care of Tertiary and International Learners) Code of Practice 2021.

This will result in an overarching self-review conducted annually which will:

- examine the priority areas as outlined in the Kia Ōrite Toolkit for achieving equity. The plan will consider the strengths and areas for development identified from working through the Management and Learning support responsibilities preparation and implementation toolkits.

- utilise the Code Self review toolkit (Tool A) to review our learner wellbeing and safety system, learner voice, ascertaining safe, inclusive, supportive and accessible physical and digital learning environments and our learner's safety and wellbeing.
- review our current practices against what good looks like (Disability best practice standard). This will identify any lack of provision and any barriers that exist for disabled learners within an area or activity and offer solutions to resolve these barriers to participation and achievement.
- proactively build and maintain effective relationships with disabled learners with different impairments through the Student Voice. This collaboration between students and EmployNZ has the objective to better support and improve the overall student learning experience and learner engagement and promote improved learning outcomes. Student voice will be used proactively to work in partnership with learners from the start of the EmployNZ DAP development with a view to increasing the likelihood that learner needs will be met effectively and efficiently.
- Result in an action plan which will:
 - Include policy and or operational change actions with a view to resolving any gaps where the requirements of the code or disability best practice standards have been partially or not met.
 - identify who is responsible for implementing the planned next steps, and by when.
 - state how we will monitor our plan to ensure that it is implemented.
 - measure how we know that the actions we took were successful
- The plan will make a statement(s) which represents the current approach for each of the responsibilities and where there is an area for development, identify goals and set targets.

The structure of the plan will be divided according to six areas of our organisation (below) and following a gap analysis using the Kia Ōrite Toolkit will detail specific actions that will be taken within each of the areas to allow for development, the activity to take place, and monitoring and assessment of outcomes. The plan will be reviewed annually, with reporting on progress to the executive team on a regular basis.

- **Governance**

- **Policy and planning**

EmployNZ has Strategic Direction documents which allow us to position ourselves so that we can respond to opportunities as they arise and respond quickly to government agency and organisational changes as they are confirmed. Executive team members receive sector news, insights, updates and considers any changes for improvement from findings from ongoing or operational planning activities, evaluative quality assurance activities and events, self-assessment and any external reports which input into long and short-term planning. The Executive team members ensure that significant changes are considered in all planning and risk management processes prior to implementation and where necessary risks and their mitigations are recorded and/or updated.

• **Management**

The Executive Members are supported by line managers and support staff to manage the operational and administrative aspects of each division and to ensure there is support for the frontline or teaching staff so they can focus their efforts on our students and clients.

Programme Managers monitor each of the programmes under their responsibility. They meet with the tutors individually and as groups to ensure that core activities are implemented and to review the month that was. This allows Programme Managers to identify and make small adjustments/changes, corrective actions, interventions or provide support as required.

- Recruitment, selection, admission and enrolment processes

Robust processes are in place for recruitment, selection, admission and enrolment. Programmes are designed to have open entry where possible, with the exception of meeting the academic requirement for the level of study, and for those which require special conditions, such as passing a Vulnerable Children's check. Learners undertake an enrolment process which during an interview, induction and orientation period determines their eligibility, their commitment to the programme which is aligned with each individual's needs and desired pathway.

- Funding and withdrawal tools

EmployNZ is committed to maintaining our approach of open access to all eligible for funding, reducing our withdrawal rates, and increasing the level of support staff to make more of an impact in this area. We support learners who have made the effort to start their programmes to have the opportunity to gain the life skills and qualifications and then move on to the next step in their pathway, which may be denied if they withdraw from their programme. To do this EmployNZ uses data to better understand and identify the precursors to withdrawals. Issues leading to withdrawal and solutions to prevent withdrawal are discussed between the tutor, the learner with all withdrawals being approved by the programme manager prior to a learner being withdrawn.

- Complaint and appeal policies and procedures

Clear policies and processes are in place around complaints and appeal procedures with all complaints overseen by the Management team which means that there is consistency applied across all programmes and delivery sites.

Learners and staff are provided with full information about complaints and appeals through the induction and orientation process and accessibility to the Student Handbook allows this information to be readily available at any time. EmployNZ is solutions focused in regard to conflict resolution or solving the problem rather than taking punitive action. Possible outcomes may include doing nothing, mediation, referral to counselling, taking disciplinary action, revising policies, referral to the police, providing compensation, etc.

- Learner wellbeing and safety

EmployNZ Limited is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of all learners by providing and maintaining a safe physical and emotional learning environment. This is a key focus of all staff and is supported by a culture of continuous improvement and through effective methods of identifying, assessing and controlling hazards, recording and investigating injuries, and reporting serious harm incidents.

We ensure that we are continually reviewing and ensuring our structure and roles, internal support services, pastoral care, support networks and stakeholders are relevant and current so we can support the needs of our learners including referring them to local services or agencies as required.

• Staff

- Staff development tools

EmployNZ is committed to the ongoing development of all staff and in maintaining specified stakeholder requirements for specific roles. We professionally develop staff to remain current, to remedy areas that could be improved and to recognise and reward quality performances. We self-select staff development opportunities for growth and career enhancement in alignment with the organisation's goals, objectives and priorities which includes extending professional expertise and/or teaching, learning practices to be more inclusive and to meet the diverse needs of our students. It is a requirement of all tutors to hold or be working towards achieving US 4098 and a New Zealand recognised qualification in adult education and the National Certificate in Adult Literacy and Numeracy Education.

Staff development will be further supported by the EmployNZ Health and Disability Employment Specialist who will provide workshops for staff during term breaks to lift their awareness, inform their practice and introduce them to the people, organisations and resources available for individual learners.

- Examination and assessment tools

EmployNZ has national quality diagnostic, formative and summative assessments that have undergone both internal and external pre moderation to ensure they are fit for purpose and are aligned to programme needs. Our assessments meet national standard requirements which are valid, fair, accurate, consistent, authentic, manageable and in keeping with the organisation's goals, objectives, priorities and national excellence aspirations. Our assessment practice caters to the needs of our learners by offering solutions when difficulties arise in meeting evidence sufficiency requirements.

- **Learners**

- **Learning support and teaching tools**

Prospective learners indicate their needs and may disclose their disability status on their Enrolment Form. EmployNZ proactively seeks to understand what supports the individual has had, how these have worked for them in the past, and any adjustments they would like to have moving forward. We consider the viability of offering assistance with a view to managing the support needs the learner has identified or requested. EmployNZ supports existing relationships between students and their Youth Coaches, community and counselling services. Tutors help learners develop education and employment goals, and counsel students on pathways enabling the students to achieve their goals.

Our Student Voice and Student Website/Hub provides a dedicated communication channel between learners and staff where information and help can be provided, and feedback can be received. This Online Student Portal is an access point for student support and student voice initiatives. This is a live and interactive environment which is monitored and regularly improved upon.

- **Learning support for Māori disabled learner tools**

EmployNZ fosters a culture that recognises the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua of Aotearoa and acknowledges iwi rights as mana whenua. We have developed practices where relationships between tutors and students, are based on acknowledging all skills and talents and respectful of mātauranga Māori and we support underrepresented groups with a focus on meeting their needs.

- **Environment**

- **Facilities and equipment**

EmployNZ utilises compliant premises and provides the resources necessary for operating successful training programmes. New and updated equipment and materials are used and or made available, as they are needed, to ensure that training remains effective and keeps pace with industry requirements and Standard Setting Body expectations and to align with our organisation's strategic direction and national quality aspirations at all times. Physical resource requirements for the delivery of programmes are determined by the Programme Managers working alongside the teaching staff.

EmployNZ's learning environments are designed to be inclusive, through the layout and visible learning resources displayed prominently. Our intent is to provide learning environments that are welcoming and functional for all learners based on their communicated needs. Learners that identify as having a disability disclose their disability and specific support needs to the tutor during the recruitment process. The tutor then ensures that their classroom is set up to allow full access and participation so that the learner feels welcomed on their first day. If a tutor requires additional support or resources they can be requested from the Programme Manager who is able to access resources, support, or procurement options as required.

- **Health and safety**

EmployNZ is committed to providing and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace with the health, safety and wellbeing of all students, staff and other people in our workplace seen as a key focus area for all staff. We have appropriate resources and processes in place to bring effect to our Health and safety management system which operates across all EmployNZ sites at all times.

– New technologies, digital platforms and procurement

EmployNZ is committed to providing information and undertaking processes in a digital environment.

EmployNZ has adopted Microsoft Dynamics, Power apps and Power BI for our data management and reporting systems which work in conjunction with our third-party student management system and CRM. Procurement policy and procedures are written into its Quality Management system.

Performance

– Monitoring and evaluation tools

EmployNZ schedules ongoing evaluative quality assurance activities throughout the academic year to manage the quality of our programmes and operations. This is a part of everyday operations and is a part of the student journey and programme lifecycles. The practice of self-assessment has become integral to how we think, review and reflect on, what we have achieved, and what we could change, and forms the basis of our continual improvement. Although we have a range of diverse groups with our student population, we set achievement targets for students who fall into any of these under-served groups:

- Māori learners
- Pacific learners
- Learners under 25 with low prior attainment (LPA)
- Disabled learners

Refer: Learner Success Plan Appendix 2 – QAD Insert – Learner Success Commitment (defines Learner Success at EmployNZ)

Refer: Learner Success Plan Appendix 7 – EmployNZ Programme Performance Reports (participation rates, achievement and outcomes by disability dimension)

Refer: Appendix 8 - Programme Progression Tool example (ECE example managing live parity in the classroom)

Integration of Disability Data into Achievement and Outcome Framework

To better identify the supports needed for disabled learners and to ensure their needs are consistently understood and met, EmployNZ will capture detailed disability and support information during the enrolment and induction process. This data—including the nature of impairments, existing support strategies, and any learner-identified needs — will be recorded in our student management system, and by extension our PowerApps and PowerBI reporting systems.

EmployNZ will develop systems and tools to present key support information in a clear, usable format for tutors, via our internal PowerApps, and Programme Progression Tool built in Power BI. This will allow teaching and support staff to view relevant learner support needs in the context of achievement data and risk indicators, supporting timely interventions and inclusive teaching practices.

This support data will also be interwoven through our broader achievement framework, informing programme planning, teaching strategies, learner success analysis, and our equity-related performance reporting. This enables a proactive, data-informed, and learner-centred approach across all areas of our provision.

EmployNZ will adopt the following steps in preparation of and implementation of the plan:

Implementation Step	Time frame	Progress
The governance and senior management/leadership team endorse using the Kia Ōrite implementation toolkit to support the development and implementation of EmployNZ DAP.	Prior to commencement	Endorsed in 2024
A senior manager is chosen to drive and promote the development and implementation of the DAP using this Kia Ōrite Toolkit.	Prior to commencement	August 2024 - The executive team designated the EmployNZ Quality Assurance Manager (QAM) to develop the EmployNZ DAP
Preparation - read through the best practice standards, ideas and resources.	Prior to commencing DAP first draft	QAM is familiar with the principles of the Kia Ōrite Code of Practice, the Kia Ōrite toolkits and while researching other providers DAPS online.
Build partnerships with disabled learners, staff and community groups for input and review.	Ongoing via: - EmployNZ - Student voice and information disclosed during pre-enrolment interviews and enrolment forms. - Staff professional development (via Judi Lindfield – Health and Disability Employment Specialist at EmployNZ)	See communication (below) staff workshop scheduled for term 1 break 2025. On demand advice and community network referrals as required. Workshops will be delivered in 2026 term breaks – based on learner profile and disclosed disabilities and support requirements.
Use the knowledge gained during the preparation stage (above) to develop a Disability Action Plan which demonstrates the process leading to version 1.	Prior to TEC submission date	March 2025 – TEC draft developed in consultation with EmployNZ Education Division Manager (EDM). Decision made to embed DAP review with other Quality assurance events e.g.: Code review
With the evidence base established after conducting a self-review of our organisation’s performance as per our plan structure (above) Develop V1 Disability Action Plan.	Dec 2025	

<p>Output of that review will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a set of objectives applicable to each of six defined areas of our organisation. - an action plan with a focus on prioritising areas to improve the organisation's ability to create an inclusive and supportive environment for disabled learners. - a published DAP accessible to staff students & the general public. - Allocation of timeframes and evaluation monitoring initiatives for the remaining 2-year period (2026 & 2027). 		
<p>Review years progress, results and effectiveness of actions and set objectives/ targets for the upcoming year.</p>	<p>Dec 2026 Report progress to executive team</p>	
<p>Review years progress, results and effectiveness of actions and set objectives/ targets for the upcoming year.</p>	<p>Dec 2027 Report progress to executive team</p>	

Refer: Learner Success Plan Section 3 - Road map (DAP data related specific outputs and outcomes)

Refer: Learner Success Plan Appendix 9 – Road Map Projects and Timeframes (additional actions embedded through other learner success activities)

Communication

Communications for the Disability Action Plan will commence with an internal workshop designed to raise staff awareness of the development process, and encouraging their involvement. This will induct tutors to the aim of the Kia Ōrite Toolkit which will assist them to become more disability confident and for managers and wider staff to take more responsibility for implementing the toolkit's best practices, a disability action plan, and how to effectively support disabled learners.

Evaluation & Monitoring

EmployNZ currently collects and monitors data on the participation and achievement of students from Māori, Pacific, and equity groups, including disabled students. Evaluation of the DAP will involve using this data.

Action plans drafted by the QAM as a result of this review will be approved by the executive team and then monitored by the QAM. This will ensure that actions/initiatives are conducted by those responsible within the time frames allocated and the action is evaluated in terms of meeting it's desired purpose.