

# Teacher Standards elaborations

Effectively implementing the Disability Standards  
for Education 2005

The [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers](#) (Teacher Standards) help you understand and develop teaching practice and expertise. Elaborations to the Teacher Standards aim to describe, clarify and make more explicit the legal responsibilities of teachers and leaders under the [Disability Standards for Education \(DSE\) 2005](#).

## How to use the DSE elaborations to the Teacher Standards

The DSE elaborations to the Teacher Standards address Teacher Standard Focus Area 1.6: *Strategies to support full participation of students with disability* at the Proficient career stage (see Table 1).

<b>Table 1</b>	
<b>Teaching domain</b>	Professional Knowledge
<b>Teacher Standard</b>	1: Know students and how they learn
<b>Focus area</b>	1.6: Strategies to support full participation of students with disability.
<b>Descriptor</b>	Design and implement teaching activities that support the participation and learning of students with disability and address relevant policy and legislative requirements.
<b>Career stage</b>	Proficient

To assist with implementation, this resource lists each elaboration description (see Table 2), the purpose aligned to obligations of the DSE and includes 'examples in practice' separating the roles of teachers and leaders to support full participation of students with disability.

The resource also includes a table listing terminology and definitions to further support your understanding of the DSE.

Table 2. Summary of DSE elaborations

Elaboration	Description
<a href="#"><u>1.6 A</u></a>	<p>The teacher will determine reasonable adjustments by considering the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guardian/s and associates and student’s view about the disability</li> <li>• If the adjustment is likely to be effective for the student</li> <li>• The effect of the proposed adjustment on the education provider, staff, and other students</li> <li>• The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>1.6 B</u></a>	<p>Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to design, implement and evaluate an effective transition plan. This plan records actions to equip the new learning environment, and the student, with the knowledge, skills, and resources to address the interests, ability and needs of the student.</p>
<a href="#"><u>1.6 C</u></a>	<p>Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to design, implement and evaluate agreed adjustments.</p>
<a href="#"><u>1.6 D</u></a>	<p>Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to provide agreed adjustments within the agreed reasonable timeframe.</p>
<a href="#"><u>1.6 E</u></a>	<p>Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to teach or facilitate learning of disability–specific skills. This means that teachers must ensure that students are given the opportunity to learn and practice skills that are needed due to their specific disability.</p>
<a href="#"><u>1.6 F</u></a>	<p>Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to design and plan excursions and activities outside the classroom to include the student.</p>
<a href="#"><u>1.6 G</u></a>	<p>In circumstances where a student cannot participate in an activity due to their disability, consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s to offer an activity that constitutes a reasonable substitute that addresses the overall aims of the course or program.</p>
<a href="#"><u>1.6 H</u></a>	<p>Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to implement learning programs at least once per year that explicitly and effectively address prevention of disability-related discrimination, harassment and victimisation.</p>

### Elaboration 1.6 A

The teacher will determine reasonable adjustments by considering the following:

- Guardian/s and associates and student's view about the disability
- If the adjustment is likely to be effective for the student
- The effect of the proposed adjustment on the education provider, staff, and other students
- The costs and benefits of making the adjustment.

### Purpose

To meet the legislative requirement to ensure no discrimination against students with disability, and equal access and participation in education on the same basis as all students.

## Examples in practice

### In consultation with student, guardian/s and associates and/or service providers

#### Teachers to:

- Read the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
- Ask – are any adjustments necessary?
  - What are the student's educational goals, interests and abilities?
  - What progress has been made towards achievement of outcomes?
  - What adjustments have been provided in the past to achieve these outcomes?
- Explore – what might those adjustments be?
  - What services and equipment are available to the student within the school?
  - What specialised services beyond the school are available and how might they be accessed?
- Consider – which adjustments are reasonable?
  - Will they alleviate any disadvantage?
  - Does the student think the adjustment will help?
  - Does the adjustment help the student achieve learning outcomes? Participate in programs? Increase independence?
- Enact - have I communicated decisions about adjustments? Will they be implemented within a reasonable timeframe?

#### Leaders to:

- Read the [Disability Standards for Education 2005](#)
- Support teachers to evaluate what adjustments are practical, necessary and helpful for students with disability.
- Support teachers to locate relevant services and equipment within the school and locate specialised services and equipment outside of the school.
- Assist teachers to implement reasonable adjustments within an appropriate time frame and consistently review and check the adjustments in comparison to outlined goals.
- Calculate the cost and benefit of proposed services and equipment.
- Consider if the provision of these agreed reasonable adjustments causes unjustifiable hardship to the school?

**Note:** The DSE requires leaders to 'balance the interests' of all parties affected. This means to consider the advantages and possible disadvantages affecting all parties by the adjustment (if it were to be implemented) and weigh up if the advantages outweigh the disadvantages (if any).

### **Elaboration 1.6 B**

Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to design, implement and evaluate an effective transition plan. This plan records actions to equip the new learning environment, and the student, with the knowledge, skills, and resources to address the interests, ability and needs of the student.

### **Purpose**

To prepare the student and receiving teacher/s, teacher assistants (teacher aides) and relevant staff as well as the physical environment so that the student has equivalent opportunities to participate in all aspects of school life, with reasonable adjustments in place on the student's first day in the new environment.

## **Examples in practice**

### **In consultation with student, guardian/s and associates and/or service providers**

#### **Teachers to:**

- Develop a transition plan (with receiving teacher) one term before the student is to begin in a new education setting; the student's transition is evaluated after the first, third and fifth week of attendance.
- Consider and plan for relevant professional learning for teachers and school's personnel that will support the teaching practice to be informed by the latest knowledge pertaining to the student's disability and learning needs. This will need to be evaluated through self-reflection and included in the cycle of check in at first, third and fifth week of attendance.

#### **Leaders to:**

- Plan for any building and spatial adjustments where students require mobility assistance to access classrooms (e.g., ramp) and relevant learning spaces, to be installed before the student's first day.
- Work with the Diversity Inclusion teacher and plan for appropriate systems (e.g., Soundfield) to be installed in all relevant classrooms for the student requiring amplified speech

**Elaboration 1.6 C**

Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to design, implement and evaluate agreed adjustments.

**Purpose**

To facilitate maximum participation for the student with disability in courses and programs; achievement of learning outcomes and increased independence.

## Examples in practice

### In consultation with student, guardian/s and associates and/or service providers

**Teachers to:**

- Organise assessments to allow for additional time where appropriate.
- Consider adjusting the visual presentation of materials such as using dark coloured text on a light (not white) background for students with dyslexia.
- Arrange for digital resources to support students to complete tasks, for example when a task requires handwriting the use of a computer removes a barrier for a student with Cerebral Palsy.

**Leaders to:**

- Support teachers to consider adjustments to assessments such as additional time where appropriate.
- Provide professional learning opportunities for teachers to develop their knowledge of evidence-based adjustments for students with disability.

**Elaboration 1.6 D**

Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to provide agreed adjustments within the agreed reasonable timeframe.

**Purpose**

To promptly implement reasonable adjustments so that the student with disability can participate in courses and programs and achieve learning outcomes and independence on the same basis as students without disability.

## Examples in practice

### In consultation with student, guardian/s and associates and/or service providers

**Teachers to:**

- Organise physical supports such as a wiggle cushion to be provided within 2 weeks of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting agreement.
- Organise resources such as a sensory box to be provided within 2 days of the IEP meeting agreement.
- Participate in training of computer software prior to use in classroom.

**Leaders to:**

- Locate and purchase computer software needed within 4 weeks of the IEP meeting agreement.
- Support teachers to be able to participate in training such as computer software prior to use in the classroom.

### Elaboration 1.6 E

Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to teach or facilitate learning of disability-specific skills. This means that teachers must ensure that students are given the opportunity to learn and practice skills that are needed due to their specific disability.

### Purpose

To address identified disability-specific needs of the student with disability and facilitate participation, achievement of learning outcomes and increased independence.

## Examples in practice

### In consultation with student, guardian/s and associates and/or service providers

#### Teachers to:

- Support students to develop capacity to use of disability-specific skills such as lip reading, Auslan (Australian sign language), orientation mobility training and Braille.
- Advocate for more collaboration between complementary experts such as with an Auslan certified teacher (for students who are deaf) and/or an Occupational therapist (for students with sensory overload).
- Practice and apply relevant new skills to teaching practice, encouraging whole class inclusion where possible, such as teaching Auslan words so the class can communicate more effectively with their peer who uses Auslan.

#### Leaders to:

- Support teachers to be able to develop knowledge in disability-specific skills such as lip reading, Auslan (Australian sign language), orientation mobility training and Braille.



### **Elaboration 1.6 F**

Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to design and plan excursions and activities outside the classroom to include the student.

### **Purpose**

To meet the legislative requirement to ensure no discrimination against students with disability, and equal access and participation in education on same basis as all students.

## **Examples in practice**

### **In consultation with student, guardian/s and associates and/or service providers**

#### **Teachers to:**

- Consider physical barriers such as paths or stairs that may be unsuitable for students with mobility challenges and arrange for alternative resources such as all terrain wheelchair or locating ramp entrance.
- Consider sensory barriers such as those experienced by students with low vision attending museums and other visual exhibitions. Explore and plan for supportive adjustments such as tactile maps and audio guides that allow the student to fully participate in the experience.
- Reflect on how neurodiverse students will experience the activity and whether or not there is risk for sensory overload. Propose and plan for a range of adjustment options such as noise cancelling headphones and breaks.

#### **Leaders to:**

- Support teachers to access supportive resources to assist students with disability to participate fully in excursions and activities outside the classroom.
- Consider and plan for adjustments to staffing and volunteer levels for the proposed activities to support students with disability to participate fully in excursions and activities outside the classroom.

### Elaboration 1.6 G

In circumstances where a student cannot participate in an activity due to their disability, consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s to offer an activity that constitutes a reasonable substitute that addresses the overall aims of the course or program.

### Purpose

To ensure participation on the same basis as their peers and achievement of equivalent learning outcomes.

## Examples in practice

### In consultation with student, guardian/s and associates and/or service providers

#### Teachers to:

- Where environmental barriers exist such as not being able to swim due to gastrostomy tube, offer student an alternative activity that allows them to achieve the same outcomes and benefits such as golf or another suitable sport.
- Where physical barriers exist such as not being able to walk for long distances due to Cystic Fibrosis, offer student an adjustment such as meeting the class part of the way so they can still do some walking and finish the activity with the group.

**Note:** Where adjustments such as these are made, the teacher can offer the student a classmate as a support person, so they are not completely isolated from their peers.

#### Leaders to:

- Support teachers to have the agency to organise alternative activities to suit the needs of students with disability.
- Consider and plan for adjustments to staffing and volunteer levels for the proposed activities to support students with disability to participate fully in excursions and activities outside the classroom.

### Elaboration 1.6 H

Consult with the student with disability, their guardian/s and associates and service provider/s, to implement learning programs at least once per year that explicitly and effectively address prevention of disability-related discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

### Purpose

To meet the legislative requirement to ensure no discrimination against students with disability, and equal access and participation in education on same basis as all students.

## Examples in practice

### In consultation with student, guardian/s and associates and/or service providers

#### Teachers to:

- Develop or source a preventative program that will include information about:
  - Awareness of the long-term harm caused by discrimination, harassment and victimisation.
  - The human right to freedom from discrimination, explicitly stating everyone's responsibilities in maintaining an environment free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of disability.
  - The legal definition of discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of disability and how this behaviour constitutes a criminal act.
  - How to detect behaviour that causes harassment and victimisation on the basis of disability, or a person associated with a person with a disability (e.g., guardian/s, sibling, friend)
  - How to follow the school's complaints procedure about discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the basis of disability.

#### Leaders to:

- Support teachers to provide individualised reasonable adjustments (including equipment and services), to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to disability.
- Support teachers to develop or source preventative programs that include comprehensive information (see teacher column)

# Terminology

Term	Definition
<b>Accommodations</b>	Adjustments may occasionally be referred to as ‘accommodations’ by education providers. Use of the term ‘accommodations’ in this context is discouraged as it is not consistent with the terminology within the DSE.
<b>Adjustment</b>	An adjustment is any action taken to achieve the provision of comparable “opportunities and choices”, so discrimination is eliminated and the equal rights of persons with disability are maintained.
<b>Adjustment – necessary adjustment</b>	A necessary adjustment may be identified by an “independent expert” who is qualified to recommend the type and extent of the necessary adjustment.
<b>Adjustment – reasonable adjustment</b>	A reasonable adjustment is an action taken to enable a student with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as other students.
<b>Adjustment – unreasonable adjustment</b>	<p>Education providers are not required to make unreasonable adjustments. An adjustment is considered to be reasonable when all relevant circumstances and interests are taken into account.</p> <p>This includes considering the student’s learning needs and disability, the view of the student (or associate), and the effect of the adjustment on the student’s ability to achieve learning outcomes, participate in learning, and gain independence.</p>
<b>Associate</b>	An associate of the student with disability includes a relative; carer; spouse; another person who is living with the person on a genuine domestic basis; and another person who is in a business, sporting or recreational relationship with the person. When students are under the age of 18 or deemed legally not competent to make decisions about their education and training, consultation must always include the student’s legal guardian.

Term	Definition
<b>Consultation</b>	Consultation is a discussion held between multiple parties with the aim of sharing knowledge and options before making a decision. Under the DSE, students with disability and their families/associates have the right to be consulted about reasonable adjustments to enable them to participate in education on the same basis as students without disability.
<b>Disability</b>	A wide range of health and learning conditions meet the legal definition of 'disability'. Disability is defined very broadly in the DSE and includes loss of bodily function, damage to bodily function, disease or illness, and disorders of thought processes, emotions, judgements or behaviour.
<b>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)</b>	The <a href="#">Disability Discrimination Act 1992</a> (DDA) is Federal legislation which aims to provide protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability.
<b>Disability-specific skills</b>	Skills that are needed due to a student's specific disability. For example, a student who is deaf may benefit from learning Auslan, whereas a student who experiences sensory overload may need to learn how to address sensory sensitivities.
<b>Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE)</b>	The <a href="#">Disability Standards for Education (DSE) 2005</a> is supplemented by a series of Disability Standards and Guidelines. These provide more detail on rights and responsibilities about equal access and opportunity for people with a disability. There are Disability Standards for access to premises, education, public transport, world wide web access and disability services.
<b>Discrimination</b>	<p>Discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain personal characteristics. This is known as 'direct discrimination'.</p> <p>It is also discrimination when an unreasonable rule or policy applies to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people because of a personal characteristic they share. This is known as 'indirect discrimination'.</p>

Term	Definition
<b>Education provider</b>	An education provider is an educational authority, an educational institution, or an organisation whose purpose is to develop or accredit curricula or training courses used by other education providers. People who work within an education provider are deemed to have the same legal responsibilities as their employer under the DSE. This includes teachers, principals (and other staff in leadership positions) and administrative staff.
<b>Equity</b>	In contrast to the concept of equality, where all people are treated in exactly the same way, equity recognises the need to take into account individual differences so that all people can access equal opportunities.
<b>Guardian</b>	The DSE refers to ‘associates’. This includes the guardian and service providers of the student with disability. Guardians must be consulted when the student is under the age of 18 or if it has been legally determined that a student who is aged 18 or over does not have the intellectual capacity to make informed decisions.
<b>Harassment</b>	Harassment is an action that is reasonably likely to humiliate, offend, intimidate or distress the person with disability.
<b>IEP</b>	An individual education plan (IEP) is a written statement that describes the adjustments, goals and strategies to meet a student’s individual needs so they can reach their full potential.  An individual education plan is also referred to as a reasonable adjustment plan; learning support plan; individual learning plans; individual language plan and negotiated education plan. The DSE uses the terminology reasonable adjustment plan.
<b>Inclusion</b>	The experience of belonging and being valued.
<b>Inclusive education</b>	Inclusive education recognises the right of every student to be included in educational settings. It involves adapting the environment and teaching approaches to ensure genuine and valued full participation of all students.
<b>Independent expert</b>	Teachers must consult with agencies or people who provide support services to students with disability. The education provider is required to facilitate the provision of specialist services “through collaborative arrangements” when deemed to be reasonable and necessary.

<b>Term</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Obligations (legal)</b>	Obligations are the legal standards with which an education and training provider “must comply”.
<b>On the same basis</b>	The DSE requires education providers to offer opportunities and choices, admission and enrolment, participation in courses and programs, and use of facilities and services to students with disability on the same basis as a student without disability.
<b>Participation</b>	Active engagement with the physical and social environment that results in the acquisition, consolidation and generalisation of meaning, attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Under the DSE all principals and teachers have legal obligations to ensure that every student is able to participate or have active engagement in the curriculum on the same basis as their peers.
<b>Reasonable adjustment plan (RAP)</b>	Required under the DSE. Many schools refer to these as Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Learning Support Plans (LSP) or Personalised Learning Plans (PLP). The DSE uses the terminology reasonable adjustment plan. The DSE explicitly describes the content and expectations of reasonable adjustment plans as required by Australian legislation.
<b>Reasonable substitute</b>	In circumstances where a student cannot participate in an activity due to their impairment, the teacher is required to offer an activity that constitutes a reasonable substitute that addresses the overall aims of the course or program. In consultation with the student with disability and their guardian/s and associates, these students may be offered a reasonable substitute so that participation on the same basis as their peers and achievement of equivalent learning outcomes is ensured.
<b>Reasonable timeframe</b>	The DSE requires the provision of agreed adjustments within a reasonable timeframe to address identified needs of the student with disability. This may include the provision of learning materials in an appropriate format within a reasonable time. Teachers need to gain agreement with the student, their associate/s and service provider/s about what is regarded as a reasonable and realistic timeframe to provide these adjustments.
<b>Receiving teacher</b>	In the context of a student who is in transition from one classroom, school or teacher to another, the receiving teacher will be new to the student.

Term	Definition
<b>Service provider</b>	A person, agency, educational institution, medical personnel or anyone who provides support to the student with disability, including the provision of equipment.
<b>Specialised support services</b>	<p>Specialised services referred to in the DSE include health, personal care and therapy, speech pathology, occupational therapy, and physiotherapy. Specialist support services may be provided by the learning environment, for example the learning support teacher, teaching assistant, and specialised facilities such as accessible bathrooms.</p> <p>Specialised support services also include equipment such as slope boards, adaptive technology and assistive devices. The DSE also give students with disability rights in relation to specialised services needed for them to participate in the educational activities for which they are enrolled. These services include specialist expertise, personal educational support or support for personal and medical care, without which some students with disability would not be able to access education and training.</p>
<b>Support services</b>	<p>Services the student with disability requires to access education on the same basis as students without disability. These may include student support services used in general by all students within the educational institution (e.g. careers advice, school counsellor, library) as well as specialised support services such as appropriately trained staff, specialist expertise, personal educational support or support for personal and medical care.</p> <p>Support services also includes equipment to support the student to participate in learning.</p>
<b>Transition</b>	The process of adapting to change, such as moving from a class, stage, school, or environment to another.
<b>Unjustifiable hardship</b>	Unjustifiable hardship occurs when an organisation or institution believe they will experience hardship that is beyond what they can afford or would eventuate in detriment to any person concerned.
<b>Victimisation</b>	Victimisation is subjecting, or threatening to subject, a person to any detriment on the grounds of them making (or proposing to make) a complaint about discrimination).



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The bottom of the page is decorated with two overlapping triangular shapes. A teal triangle points upwards from the bottom left, and a yellow-green triangle points downwards from the top right. They meet at a diagonal line that divides the bottom section of the page.

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