



LE CORDON BLEU

New Zealand

Disability Action Plan



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Introduction

The United Nations has indicated that the New Zealand education system is failing disabled learners and falling short of international standards for inclusive education (Kai Orite Toolkit for Achieving equity, 2021). 24% of people in New Zealand have some type of impairment lasting six months or more, therefore the potential of disabled learners is and fundamental to the sustainability of tertiary education providers.

Improved economic growth and social outcomes in New Zealand's similarly depends on equal opportunities and access and for all learners. "Disabled learners have the same right to education and to realise their potential as non-disabled people and are increasingly seen as a priority group in education" (Kai Orite Toolkit for Achieving equity, 2021, p.13).

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) require all tertiary providers to develop a Disabilities Action Plan (DAP) to eliminate learning environment barriers. Tertiary providers will be expected to cover the following in a DAP: review of current activities – including how disabled learners are achieving, devising of policies and programmes, evaluation strategies, allocation of responsibility and resources and the communication of policies and programmes.

Le Cordon Bleu New Zealand (LCBNZ) is committed to the future of inclusive education and eliminating barriers for people with disabilities.

Background

The New Zealand Disability Strategy (2016) explains that:

Disability is not something individuals have. What individuals have are impairments. They may be physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual or other impairments. 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. Disabled people or disabled learners include those with permanent impairments. (para 2.)

Statistics New Zealand (2018) Census' for household labour force information indicates that disabled people are less likely than non-disabled people to hold a formal qualification. In June 2018, 59.6% of disabled people held a formal qualification, compared with 83.2% of non-disabled people, a gap of 23.6% and 19.5% for those aged 15-64 years.

Statistics New Zealand (2020) disability gap shows that 48.2% of young disabled people (15–24 years) were not in employment, education or training, compared with 10.6% for non-disabled youth. Statistics New Zealand (2020) disability status between 2012 and 2017 indicates that only 2% of disabled people gained a Bachelors or higher qualification compared to 8% of non-disabled people. However, of the disabled learners enrolled in Bachelors or higher qualifications, 58% completed their qualification, a rate similar to their non-disabled peers.

TEC (2019) found that if given the right support these disabled learners were equally likely to complete their qualification as their non-disabled peers. The difference in completion rates at Bachelors and all other levels, compared with non-disabled learners, wasn't statistically significant. Disabled people are also more likely to work part time, mostly in manual, low skilled and low income jobs, and are under-represented in higher-income occupations.

New Zealand's economic growth and improved social outcomes depend on equal access and equal opportunities for all learners, including disabled people. Kai Orite Toolkit for Achieving equity, (2021) states:

a fully inclusive tertiary education system recognises and values diversity, including disabled learners, and is fundamental to the ongoing sustainability of tertiary education. Disabled learners have the same right to education and to realise their potential as non-disabled people, and are increasingly seen as a priority group. (p.13)

Present Support

LCBNZ teaching and student services staff are committed to an inclusive education avoiding discrimination against disabled people leading to a better experience throughout the education journey. Presently Whitireia & WelTec (W&W) compliments LCBNZ support staff under a Service Level Agreement. W&W's Disability Support Team are able to provide a confidential tailored support service for specific needs. LCBNZ's Support flowchart illustration is used to show the allocation of responsibility and resources for Student Support process between LCBNZ and W&W. Arrangements can be made before course starts, if identified during the application process or orientation, or at any time during a programme. Encouragement is given to alert staff as early as possible in the students learning journey that support is required and acted upon as quick as possible.

W&W's and LCBNZ student services teams are dedicated to supporting students with:

- confidential support
- information and guidance regarding disabilities and teaching/learning strategies
- working with Student and the family/whānau in preparing to study
- connection with external and internal support providers (i.e., mentors and learning advisors)
- development of Educational Support Plans
- pastoral care
- specialized equipment
- exams support (Reader/Writer, separate accommodations, extra time)
- helping LCBNZ tutors find the right learning method to suit.

The type of learning challenges supported:

- neurodiversity, such as
 - autistic spectrum disorders
 - adhd
 - asperger's
 - dyslexia
 - dyspraxia
- mental health
- emotional wellbeing support needs
- difficulties with numeracy and literacy
- English for Speakers of Other Languages

- hearing and visual impairment

Current Activities

- 1:1, small group and drop in sessions
- Teaching Support Assistants working in class and offering support outside of class
- Specialist Teachers (for example English)
- Communication Support Workers
- Mobility support
- Equipment loans
- Use of assistive technology
- Course materials adjusted to suit need
- Assessments for exam concessions
- Note takers
- Study skills support
- Individual learning plans
- 24/7 LCBNZ emergency support staff with training in mental health and immediate support strategies to aid student before professional aid is available/activated.

Additionally, a screening system is available which is used to identify learners who have difficulty with their English and maths skills. All teaching rooms in our buildings are accessible and have lifts, and there are accessible toilets and showers on most floors. There is a variety of assistive technology, including hardware and software, available through W&W.

LCBNZ encourage all learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to disclose to us so that, if necessary, we can discuss reasonable adjustments at an early stage.

All the information supplied is handled sensitively and is given only to staff that need to know. The W&W Support Team will distribute information to lecturing and support staff about reasonable adjustments that may be needed and all applications from disabled applicants are monitored by the W&W Support team to ensure that they are treated fairly and with consideration of the reasonable adjustments the learner may need.

Exams and assessments

Students who have a learning difficulty and/or disability, should not be disadvantaged in exams or assessments. NZQA allow access arrangements such as extra time or a reader, depending on individual needs. Depending on the type of access arrangement being requested, LCBNZ may ask for a letter from the students GP or specialist, an Educational Psychologist's report or some other documentation, or assessment of the student can be arranged to gain this information. These documents may only be valid for a fixed period and must include specific information required by the awarding body.

Review of current activities

LCBNZ does the utmost to aid all students to succeed in their chosen courses. To date the school has had good results in supporting learners to gradation. With the support from LCBNZ teaching staff, pastoral services, W&W team, external councillors, local practitioners and student deferrals where required, many learners with impairments have succeeded.

A record of disabled learners' achievement will now be kept as an indication for LCBNZ of how well their strategies are working and as reflective practice to make improvements going forward.

Communication of policies and programmes.

The following related Policies and Procedures are all in LCBNZ Quality Management System (QMS) accessible to all students and staff: Student Support Policy, Assessment Policy, Pastoral Care, Health Safety and Sustainability. Student support processes is also described to students in their orientation and in a pastoral care workshop. And the details placed on student physical notice board and the student portal LCBMe.

All new staff are encouraged to view the QMS sections on their commencement of employment and is part of all employee's induction programme. Staff Professional development (PD) is also centred around breaking down learning differences such as dyslexia and asperges, even about different cultural expectations.

Evaluation strategies

All policies and procedures have been recently reviewed and will be reviewed again on a 3 year cycle. On each 'senior management' meeting health and safety and student progression is an agenda point for discussion. Any exams and assessment access arrangements also discussed at this time. As mentioned above a record of disabled learners' achievement will now be kept as an indication for LCBNZ of how well their strategies are working and as reflective practice to make improvements going forward.

References

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