



Students with disabilities policy

Biblical frame

This policy is framed within the broad general principles of the biblical view of humanity. The Bible affirms that all people are created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-28) and therefore have intrinsic value and worth.

Introduction

MC is committed to providing equal opportunity for all students and appreciates and values diversity. MC supports the right of people with disabilities to access and participate in higher education.

This policy is based on the principles contained within the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC) *Guidelines Relating to Students with Disabilities (2006)*. The policy outlines MC's approach to ensuring that as far as circumstances reasonably allow, there is no discrimination against a person on the grounds of that person's disability. For the purpose of this policy, "disability" has the same meaning as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Discrimination and Other Human Rights Legislation Amendment Act 2009.

Services and Assistance

Prospective and current students with a disability are encouraged to notify the Registrar and Dean of Students at an early stage of specific requirements they may have so that MC can attempt to plan for any special support required. Information provided in relation to a disability will be treated as confidential and revealed only with the student's permission.

Recruitment, Admission and Enrolment

Applicants with disabilities will be assessed under the same criteria as applies to other applicants, and are subject to meeting course entry requirements.

In line with AVCC (2006) guidelines, when assessing the educational qualifications of an applicant with a disability for the purposes of considering whether they have met the admission criteria to the standard necessary to gain admission, MC may make an adjustment to the admission requirements to compensate for disadvantage experienced by

an applicant in prior educational settings. In the consideration of a possible adjustment, MC will seek advice from appropriate health professionals or other educational institutions concerning the likely effect of the disability on the person's educational achievements.

Academic Support

MC is committed to making reasonable modifications to academic programs to accommodate students with disabilities. However, in so doing it will not compromise the academic standard or any essential component of a program.

Where, because of disability, a student requires special provisions for learning and/or assessment (including examinations), application should be directed to the Registrar. Applications must be supported by a statement of the nature and extent of the disability and documentation from an appropriate registered practitioner (e.g. doctor, physiotherapist, psychologist).

Where the disability is permanent, documentation need only be provided on initial application for special provisions. Approval will be at the discretion of the Vice Principal in consultation with the Dean of Students, relevant Course Coordinator, subject lecturer/s and Registrar (where it involves end of semester examinations).

Flexible approaches to learning and assessment are encouraged, where appropriate, to help meet the diverse needs of all students, not just those with disabilities. However, it is recognised that there are some specific activities and skills that are expected or required depending on the qualification being sought. In order to provide an environment that fosters learning, procedural variations and/or alternative assessment strategies are available to assist students with substantiated disabilities (see Appendix II), where required skills are not compromised.

Physical Access

MC was established in 1961 and its buildings predate current disability access standards. As resources allow MC will seek to modify building access to cater to the needs of students with disabilities.

Language

MC will promote the use of appropriate language in reference to disabilities and people with disabilities and will make every effort to ensure that any College publications reflect this.

Grievances

If a student with disabilities has a grievance in relation to access or equity matters they are encouraged to use the MC's grievance procedures, as appropriate, outlined in the relevant policies.

Procedures

In order to provide an environment that fosters learning, procedural variations and/or alternative assessment strategies are available to assist students with substantiated disabilities, if required, and may include:

- relocating class sessions to a more accessible location, where feasible;
- allowing a student to take notes by alternative means (Steps should be taken to cause minimal disruption to other students where such arrangements are in place);
- providing printed material in larger print or on appropriately coloured paper if required;
- modifying assessment arrangements (while still meeting normal academic standards), and may include allowing:
 - a. extra time for the submission of assignments;
 - b. alternative modes for the presentation of assignment work or the sitting of tests or examinations (e.g. oral rather than written);
 - c. extra time for the completion of tests or examinations where a disability is likely to impede the student's speed of performance. Additional time would normally be allowed at the rate of 10 minutes per hour of examination;
 - d. a laptop or desk top computer to be used by the student in tests or examinations where the student's handwriting ability may pose a serious disadvantage. In such circumstances the student would be located in an area that prevents disturbance to other students;
 - e. a scribe to write for the student in tests or examinations where the disability prevents writing or use of a computer. In such circumstances the student would be located in an area that prevents disturbance to other students;
 - f. a reader for the student in tests or examinations where the disability prevents reading a written paper. In such circumstances the student would be located in an area that prevents disturbance to other students;
- ensuring examination venues are accessible;
- allowing an alternative subject or course component (if non-essential) where the disability prevents a student fulfilling a particular requirement; and
- as resources permit, supplying or lending appropriate equipment required as a result of a disability, to allow a student to participate in learning activities and to access services provided by other academic support services (e.g. library, IT).

Procedure for applying for special services due to a disability:

- The student (or prospective student) makes an appointment with the Dean of Students to discuss any special services or accommodation required and available. If the student is unable to meet directly with the Dean of Students, contact should be made by phone or email.
- The student (or prospective student) completes and submits the *Applications for Special Services due to a Disability Form* to the Dean of Students. Documentation from

an appropriate registered practitioner (e.g. doctor, physiotherapist, psychologist) to substantiate the nature of the disability must be attached. Submission of this form registers the student with the Dean of Students and facilitates helping the student (or prospective student) make appropriate arrangements.

- The Dean of Students assists the student (or prospective student) to identify options available to reduce the impact of his/her disability while at MC.
- Where special consideration is required in relation to learning and/or assessment procedures the Dean of Students discusses these with the student (or prospective student) and assists him/her to communicate with the relevant Course Coordinator and lecturer/s to determine the student's specific requirements. If the assessment procedures involve end of semester examinations the Vice Principal and Registrar are to be involved in the discussions. Except in extenuating circumstances, applications for special arrangements in examinations, because of disability, are to be made prior to the publication of the examination timetable.
- Where it is determined that special learning and/or assessment procedures will be implemented for the student (or prospective student), they will be confirmed in writing by the relevant Course Coordinator (or Registrar for examination procedures) and copies sent to:
the student (or prospective student)
the relevant lecturer/s
the Dean of Students
- This written confirmation is to be received by the student no later than 10 working days from the application for special services being received by the Dean of Students.
- The relevant Course Coordinator monitors the implementation of the special learning and/or assessment procedures to ensure they are consistent with what was approved.
- The Dean of Students arranges any other special services required by the student, due to the disability.
- Special requirements approved for a student with a disability are reviewed by the Dean of Students and the relevant Course Coordinator at the conclusion of each semester.
- Where circumstances change for a student in respect to his/her disability the student (or next of kin) is to inform the Dean of Students of the change, in writing, as soon as possible to enable a review of the services provided to the student to occur.

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