Staff Disability and Accessibility Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure describe how to request, develop and implement a reasonable adjustment to accommodate a disability/medical condition, including temporary medical conditions.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to staff members who have a temporary, episodic or permanent disability/medical condition or needs that may impact on the accessibility of the work environment or their ability to perform the work associated with the role.

(3) This Procedure is important to:

a. All Staff;
b. Managers and Supervisors;
c. People and Culture Business Partners.

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) Nil.

Section 4 - Policy/Regulation

(5) Staff Disability and Accessibility Policy

Section 5 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Staff	Where reasonable adjustments are required, disclosure of their need for an adjustment to the University, via their manager and / or People and Culture, and provide relevant documentary information. In consultation with the Supervisor, discuss and record in writing, a Reasonable Adjustment Plan for implementation of reasonable adjustments (where approved).

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Supervisor/Manager	May request a reasonable adjustment on behalf of a staff member. Receive and determines requests for reasonable adjustment from new or existing members of staff. In consultation with the Staff member, discuss and record in writing, a Reasonable Adjustment Plan for implementation of reasonable adjustments (where approved). Implement the adjustment(s) in the workplace in a timely manner. Ensure records are retained in accordance with this Procedure. Record items supplied as part of reasonable adjustment on the University Asset Register.
Hiring Manager	Receives and determines requests for a reasonable adjustment from a job candidate or a prospective staff member during a recruitment process.
People & Culture	Provide support to Supervisors/Managers and Hiring Managers throughout the process. Manage the collection of information from third parties, where further evaluation is required to determine an application. Ensure records are retained in accordance with this Procedure.

(6) This Procedure describes how to request, develop and implement a reasonable adjustment to address staff accessibility requirements.

(7) This Procedure applies to staff members who have a temporary, episodic or permanent disability/medical condition that may impact on the accessibility of the work environment. Reasonable adjustments are modifications that take account of a person's disability/condition so that they can fulfill their roles at the University and access the same benefits, terms and conditions of employment as other employees.

(8) The requirement to provide reasonable adjustment or accommodation for people with a disability applies to all areas of employment, including, but not limited to:

a. recruitment, selection and appointment;
b. training, professional and career development;
c. staff performance and development and associated discussions;
d. promotion, transfer, termination or any other employment benefit.

(9) Adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

a. provision of appropriate equipment or assistance to ensure there is no unreasonable barrier in the selection process;
b. changes to work practices and the introduction of flexible work arrangements, such as flexible working hours and days;
c. training or retraining;
d. professional development;
e. providing essential information in suitable formats, for eg. enlarged format;
f. modifications to equipment or the supply of specialised equipment, furniture or work related aids;
g. alterations to premises, work areas or job design and suitable or alternative workplace parking arrangements.

(10) Adjustments to accommodate disability may be permanent, episodic or temporary, depending on the nature of the disability/medical condition and the needs of the individual. Adjustments may be required at the work unit level (eg. equipment or reorganisation of the work role), or by a College or business area (eg. training materials in accessible format). The level and nature of the adjustment may also change over time.

Part B - Disclosure of Disability and/or Medical Condition

(11) A staff member or potential staff member has no obligation to disclose a disability or medical condition where no

accommodation or adjustment is required.

(12) If a staff member or potential staff member with a disability or medical condition requires an adjustment, disclosure of their need for an adjustment to the University, via their manager and/or People and Culture, is required. If the need for adjustment is not disclosed, the University cannot take steps to meet the need.

(13) The staff member will usually be required to provide relevant documentary information from the staff members' treating medical practitioner, psychologist or other relevant allied professional or evidence regarding any functional limitations and suggested reasonable adjustments.

(14) Where information provided is insufficient, with the consent of the staff member, the University may request or refer the staff member to a medical practitioner, psychologist or other relevant allied professional for assessment and recommendations regarding the adjustments required in the workplace.

(15) Information about the staff member's disability/medical condition will only be sought in so far as it relates to the request for adjustment. At all times, the staff responsible for assisting with the adjustment will respect the privacy and confidentiality of the staff member. Privacy principles as outlined in the University's Privacy Policy will apply at all times.

Part C - Making A Request for Reasonable Adjustment

(16) A request for a reasonable adjustment may be made by a staff member (or potential staff member) or their supervisor during the recruitment process or at any time after recruitment.

Part D - Recruitment Process

(17) A person who discloses a disability will not be unlawfully discriminated against in any recruitment and selection process.

(18) A request for a reasonable adjustment from a job candidate or reasonable adjustment from a prospective staff member would normally be made through the relevant Hiring Manager for the position (often in conjunction with the relevant Recruitment Officer and/or People & Culture Business Partner).

(19) Job candidates are encouraged to complete the relevant sections of the recruitment forms to ensure the University is aware of the request and can make contact, if required, to implement the adjustment. Applicants are encouraged to disclose their need for adjustment in order for the University to effectively provide suitable support.

Part E - Post-Recruitment Process

(20) A request for reasonable adjustment from a new or existing member of staff should be made through their supervisor. Alternatively, a staff member may prefer to seek advice or discuss reasonable adjustment issues initially with their People and Culture Business Partner.

(21) Where practical to do so, a request for reasonable adjustment should be discussed verbally between the staff member and the relevant supervisor/manager in the first instance.

(22) Where appropriate to the circumstances, a subsequent formal request can be made in writing outlining:

a. details of the requested reasonable adjustment
b. the reasons for the request

Part F - Receiving a Request for Reasonable Adjustment

(23) On receipt of a request, the manager/supervisor will consult with the staff member on matters relevant to the specific circumstances and needs identified.

(24) Information about the staff member's disability/medical condition will only be sought insofar as it relates to the request for reasonable adjustment.

(25) A manager or supervisor may seek further advice. Advice can be sought from the following:

a. Manager's Hotline and the relevant websites;
b. People and Culture Business Partners.

(26) The following matters may guide relevant discussion between the manager and staff member:

a. the functional limitations placed on the staff member by the disability or medical condition;
b. whether the disability or medical condition is likely to change over time and may require review;
c. what specific adjustments, if any, have been suggested by the staff member;
d. cost estimates;
e. whether further specialist evaluation is required to identify and implement appropriate adjustments.

(27) Where the manager and staff member identify the need for further evaluation, additional information should be sourced from People and Culture or OHS (as appropriate and with the written consent of the staff member) who may engage the following support:

a. a medical practitioner;
b. occupational therapist or other allied health provider; and/or
c. disability service provider.

(28) All requests for reasonable adjustment will be seriously considered by the relevant supervisor/manager. Each request will be considered on its merits taking into account the following factors:

a. the University's values and commitment to increasing employment of staff with disability;
b. determination of what constitutes 'reasonable accommodation' in the circumstances;
c. the reason(s) for the request;
d. where relevant, information/advice provided by medical and health practitioners;
e. compliance with Occupational Health and Safety policies and procedures;
f. consideration of the impact of the arrangement on the work area and the inherent requirements of the role.

(29) Supervisors/Managers will not unreasonably refuse a request. Where a request cannot be granted (for example where the financial implications are too high) the supervisor/manager will seek advice from People and Culture, and explore reasonable alternative options with the staff member and other relevant stakeholders to determine whether a mutually agreeable solution can be found.

Part G - Managing and Implementing Work Related Adjustments

(30) Once a request for reasonable adjustment has been made, received and approved, a Reasonable Adjustment Plan (RAP) for implementation of the adjustment(s) will be discussed and recorded in writing between the supervisor/manager and the staff member.

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(31) The supervisor will be responsible for developing and implementing the adjustment(s) in the workplace in a timely manner.

(32) Appropriate adjustment will be made as soon as possible following approval of the plan.

(33) The supervisor will keep the staff member informed of progress. Where appropriate and possible, an interim plan will be agreed for the period before the adjustment can be made.

Part H - Expenditure

(34) he costs of implementing the adjustment (i.e. further medical or other allied health evaluation or advice requested by VU, provision of specialised equipment or individual workplace modifications) will be funded by the work area.

(35) The University will not fund the cost of personal aids that are required by the staff member for private purposes or the cost of treatment for a temporary or permanent medical condition or disability excepted as indicated within the University's OHS policies.

(36) The University will fund costs associated with reasonable adjustments and for equipment, to be utilised for work. Equipment purchased remains the property of the University and, when not in use by the staff member, may be used by other staff requiring the same equipment, except in the case of personal equipment which should not be shared due to hygiene considerations.

(37) All items supplied as part of reasonable adjustment will be recorded on the University Asset Register by the relevant Manager.

Part I - Records Management and Storage

(38) Relevant Managers and People and Culture Staff will ensure that any documentation related to reasonable adjustment in the workplace, including Reasonable Adjustment/s Plans for Staff, or any accompanying notes regarding reasonable adjustment will be retained both locally and at People & Culture.

(39) The reasonable adjustment information will be retained in accordance with the University’s Privacy Policy and the University's Records Management Policy.

Part J - Monitoring

(40) The relevant supervisor/manager will organise follow-up with the employee approximately one (1) month from the date when the RAP was completed. The purpose of the follow-up is to ensure that the adjustment is appropriate and effective and to discuss any other concerns or issues.

(41) At the follow-up meeting, the manager/supervisor and staff member should develop an agreed plan of regular monitoring arrangements and, if required, seek advice and support from the relevant People and Culture unit.

(42) In the event a staff member relocates or commences a new position within VU, they should consult the new manager and work unit, in order to ensure awareness of the requirements regarding reasonable adjustment and continuity of support.

Part K - Complaints

(43) Staff members who believe that they have been treated unfairly under this Procedure may seek further advice from People and Culture or may make a complaint in accordance with the University's Complaints Policy.

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(44) Nothing in this Procedure precludes a staff member seeking resolution via the Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission.

Section 6 - Guidelines

(45) Nil.

Status and Details

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Accountable Officer	Lisa Line Deputy Vice-Chancellor Enterprise and Digital Lisa.Line@vu.edu.au
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