



The National Post-Secondary Education Disability Network, NZ, Inc.

Kia Ōrite

Achieving Equity

**New Zealand Code of Practice for an
Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment
for Students with Impairments**

**Background Information
to Assist Implementation**



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New Zealand Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments

Key Messages

1. Purpose of this Code of Practice:

To assist tertiary education providers to create a fully inclusive tertiary education environment for students with impairments within New Zealand.

2. The Code of Practice Aims:

- (a) Set out 'Best Practice Standards' that describe the outcomes needed to create a fully inclusive tertiary education environment for students with impairments.
- (b) Assist tertiary education providers to:
 - i. Understand the status of people with impairments in tertiary education in New Zealand.
 - ii. Evaluate their progress towards an inclusive environment.
 - iii. Identify barriers to participation and achievement that people with impairments face.
 - iv. Improve tertiary outcomes for students with impairments.
 - v. Be aware of policy and legal obligations relating to people with impairments in tertiary education.

Kia Ōrite Achieving Equity includes the vision, best practice standards, policy and legal framework to create a fully inclusive tertiary education environment.

Part 3 covers different *activities* of a tertiary institution. Each *activity* includes:

- (a) A vision for creating an inclusive environment.
- (b) Best Practice Standards, which are outcomes to achieve the vision.
- (c) Examples to amplify the readers understanding of the standards.

3. This Code of Practice is not just for Disability Support Services:

- (a) It is designed to assist tertiary education providers to identify and remove barriers in all areas of campus life.

- (b) Council and Senior Management commitment is essential for the successful implementation of this Code of Practice.
- (c) We hope that the implementation of the Code in each institution will be endorsed by the Council and driven by senior management in partnership with students with impairments, Māori, staff from different areas of the institution, student association and community representatives.
- (d) For the purposes of the Code of Practice we have used the New Zealand Disability Strategy definition of disability. This states that, “*disability* is not something individuals have. What individuals have are impairments. They may be physical, sensory, neurological, psychiatric, intellectual or other impairments.” Instead, “*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”.¹

4. Rationale for Using this Code of Practice:

It can assist tertiary education providers to:

- (a) Improve tertiary education outcomes for students with impairments.
- (b) Meet their specific obligations relating to students with impairments under the New Zealand Disability Strategy, Tertiary Education Strategy, STEPS, and Charters and Profiles.
- (c) Avoid the possibility of an institution or organisation receiving a disability-related complaint under the Human Rights Act or other legislation, through the proactive identification and removal of barriers to participation and achievement.
- (d) Review services for students with impairments thus enabling them to get the greatest value out of resources.

This Code is intended to have an impact on the participation and achievement of students with impairments at all levels of learning and at all types of tertiary providers including universities, polytechnics, wananga, colleges of education and private training establishments.

5. Development of the Code of Practice:

- (a) This Code of Practice has been developed by Achieve, The National Post-Secondary Education Disability Network, NZ, Inc. It has been completed in partnership with various stakeholders involved with tertiary education for students with impairments.

¹ Ministry of Health. (2001). *The New Zealand disability strategy: Making a world of difference. Whakanui oranga*. Wellington, New Zealand: Ministry of Health. p. 1.

The development of the Code of Practice involved:

- i. The 2002 Code of Practice Consultation Survey. This was a guide for drafting the Code and was completed by students with impairments, disability groups, academic, general and disability support staff.
- ii. A Steering Committee made up of various stakeholders involved with tertiary education. Established by Achieve, this group provided advice about the development of the Code.
- iii. Seeking feedback about the Draft Code of Practice:
 - Copies were sent to Chief Executives, disability support staff, student associations at universities, polytechnics, wananga and colleges of education, to distribute and provide feedback.
 - These were also sent to other stakeholders with coordination roles in education or the disability community.
 - Forums were held in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Palmerston North, Nelson, Christchurch and Dunedin. 165 people attended these forums, including staff from at least 30 different tertiary education providers and 15 Students Associations.
 - An opportunity to provide 'individual feedback' was also available on the ACHIEVE website. 30 written submissions were received.

6. Who is Achieve?

- (a) Achieve is a national network established to ensure equal opportunity and access to post-secondary education and training for people with impairments. Achieve advocates and lobbies for people with a range of impairments transitioning into or studying in post-secondary education. It also provides information, advice, support and opportunities to network.
- (b) The Achieve website, www.achieve.org.nz, includes an electronic version of the Code of Practice. Eventually it is hoped that this website will also include the resources to support the Code implementation, including:
 - The steps that an organisation can take to implement the code.
 - The Implementation Toolkit to assist with gathering information to implement the Code of Practice.
 - Information to download, use and adapt.
 - Publications, checklists and networks of support.



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Key Objective:

To assist tertiary education providers to create a fully inclusive tertiary education environment for students with impairments within New Zealand.

Code of Practice Vision Statements:

1. Policy and Planning

All policies, procedures and planning processes take into account the goal of a fully inclusive educational environment in which students with impairments have equal opportunities for participation and achievement.

2. Recruitment

Publicity, programme details, general information and other recruitment initiatives are accessible to students with impairments and describe opportunities for them to participate.

3. Selection and Admission

Selection and admission policies and procedures are fair, transparent and assess students on their competencies and not on their impairments.

4. Enrolment Processes

Enrolment, registration and induction processes accommodate the needs of all students with impairments.

5. General and Specialist Services

Students with impairments have equal educational opportunity through access to appropriate support and services.

6. Funding and Withdrawal

Funds are adequate to provide effective support services to students with impairments and flexible withdrawal policies exist that reflect their particular circumstances.

7. Services for Māori

Opportunities are promoted for Māori with impairments to access, participate and achieve in tertiary education with demonstrable improvements in participation and achievement rates.

8. The Physical Environment

Students with impairments have equitable access to the physical environment within the tertiary institution in which they will study, learn, live and take part.

9. Facilities and Equipment

Campus facilities, equipment and events are accessible to all students with impairments.

10. Teaching and Learning

All academic programmes are accessible to students with impairments and staff design and implement appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

11. Examinations and Assessment

Assessment and examination policies, procedures and practices provide students with impairments with the same opportunity as their peers to achieve learning outcomes.

12. Staff Development

Staff development initiatives include disability issues and ensure that staff have the knowledge and skills to work effectively with people with impairments and create a fully inclusive environment.

13. Complaint and Appeal Policies and Procedures

Policies and procedures exist to deal with complaints arising directly or indirectly from impairment and these are accessible and communicated effectively to people with impairments.

14. Appropriate Use of Student Information

Communication systems are effective in providing relevant and timely information to both staff and students, and a safe environment exists for students to disclose impairment information.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

Effective monitoring and evaluation systems report on the participation, retention and achievement of students with various impairments and identify any barriers.

Code of Practice General Principles:

Some general principles underpin the creation of a fully inclusive tertiary education environment for students with impairments.

1. Students with impairments are provided with equitable opportunities to achieve their individual capabilities and participate in all aspects of tertiary education life.
2. All interactions with people with impairments are characterised by respect for their rights, dignity, privacy, confidentiality, and equality.
3. Students with impairments are able to participate in an environment that is free from harassment and discrimination, where both staff and students are aware of their rights and responsibilities under legislation.
4. Policies, procedures, services and facilities, including strategic planning and resource allocation, enable students with impairments to achieve equitable access to tertiary education and the full range of activities that encompass campus life.
5. An equitable learning environment is created by considering the needs of students with impairments in all aspects of the learning process, including course design, curriculum, delivery, assessment and support strategies.
6. Students with impairments are enabled to participate in their course of study on equal terms with other students.
7. Staff are trained to meet the requirements of students with impairments, they invite these students to discuss their requirements and treat requests promptly and seriously.
8. Students with impairments:
 - (a) Make known their requirements in advance, so appropriate services are provided.
 - (b) Where possible, share responsibility for negotiating and developing solutions.
 - (c) Advise institutions of difficulties they encounter.