



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**

Taking the Next Step

Kia Ōrite Achieving Equity: New Zealand Code of Practice for an Inclusive Tertiary Education Environment for Students with Impairments

'Kia Ōrite Achieving Equity' has now been launched. We have developed some resources to assist you and your organisation with the implementation of the Code of Practice.

These resources include:

1. Some steps that your organisation can take to implement the Code of Practice.
2. An Implementation Toolkit to assist with gathering information to implement the Code.
3. Information that you can use and adapt to meet the needs of your organisation.
4. Networks, publications, planning checklists and tools to support you.

So How Can You Take the Next Step with the Implementation of *Kia Ōrite Achieving Equity*

There are a variety of ways that this Code of Practice can be implemented by a university, polytechnic, private training establishment, wananga or college of education. We have developed some ideas for discussion. It is important that this project is coordinated using a partnership model which as much as possible helps to inform staff about the needs of students with impairments and the solutions required to support them.

Here are some steps that your organisation can take to implement the Code of Practice:

1. Senior Management including the Council, Chief Executive and Senior Management Team endorse the implementation of this Code of Practice. They provide strong leadership with the implementation of the Code, throughout the process.
2. A senior manager/s is identified to drive and promote the implementation of the Code.
3. They, together with key people involved with students with impairments, develop some written information to present to people involved with the various parts of campus life covered by the Code of Practice. Remember that the Code is a practical tool to assist all staff within an institution in meeting their responsibilities, and is not just for those working in Disability Support Services.

It would therefore be good to send this information to:

(a) Key staff and other people within your organisation who have responsibility for:

- Policy and Planning.
- Recruitment, Selection, Admission, Enrolment and Withdrawal.
- General and Specialist Support Services.
- Funding.
- Services for Māori.
- Buildings, Facilities and Equipment.
- Teaching and Learning.
- Examinations and Assessment.
- Staff Development.
- Complaint and Appeal Policies and Procedures.
- Monitoring and Evaluation.

- (b) The Student Association.
- (c) Māori networks.
- (d) Staff, students with impairments and whanau involved with Disability Support Services.
- (e) Relevant community representatives (e.g. DPA, the Disabled Persons Assembly, and other agencies supporting students with impairments attending your campus).

The aim of this stage is to inform people about what you are trying to achieve. This will start the process of getting their 'buy in' to be involved. Some staff may view this process as an audit and have real concerns about it, so this information should allay any fear that they may have. This should be a process of learning to inform those involved about the needs of people with impairments and to identify steps to be taken in the future to create a more inclusive environment.

The implementation resources include a guide for the written information to present to people – [Background Information to Assist Implementation](#). This includes the key messages, vision statements and general principles for *Kia Ōrite Achieving Equity*. Some of this information could also be used for posters and other marketing material.

4. For the next stage a hui could be held with key people who were sent the information in the third step. Try to create a relaxed atmosphere to discuss the proposed process and make any changes. By providing this opportunity people may feel that they have more ownership of the process and may be more willing to be involved.

This would also provide a great opportunity to discuss:

- (a) Whether an advisory group to oversee the project would be helpful.
- (b) Who this should include and how people should be invited to join this group.
- (c) How students with impairments and their whanau will be involved in the project.

An advisory group could include the senior manager/s driving and promoting the implementation process, Māori, key staff from different parts of the campus, disability support staff and representatives of the student association, students with impairments, their whanau and external community groups who could give advice and support. It may also be good to include representatives of key committees within the institution (e.g. Disability Advisory Committee, EEdO Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee, Access Committee, Academic Board).

5. Implementation Toolkit

We have developed an [Implementation Toolkit](#) to assist you with gathering information to implement the Code of Practice. We have designed this toolkit to integrate the 'Best Practice Standards' from the Code of Practice.

The Implementation Toolkit consists of a three step process:

Step One

The toolkit is divided into the activities included in the Code. Under each activity there is:

- (a) A vision of an inclusive environment for that activity.
- (b) A set of best practice standards indicating the outcomes required to achieve the vision.

We suggest that people firstly choose an activity (e.g. Policy and Planning). Then, for each best practice standard for that activity, *tick* the most appropriate column, (Met, Partially or Not Met), which best describes whether you feel the institution has met that standard. If you feel actions are required to meet a standard, write these in the right column - Action Required. There is also room to write any additional notes or comments resulting from your discussion about the best practice standards.

Step Two

Having reviewed the best practice standards for the activity, now identify:

- (a) What barriers may exist for people with impairments with this activity?
- (b) What solutions would resolve these barriers?

Under each activity we have developed a section for you to answer these questions. People with impairments face a range of barriers to participation and achievement.

These barriers may include:

- Inaccessibility of some parts of the campus for some students with impairments.
- Difficulties with the provision of equipment.
- Some staff not altering their methods to accommodate students with impairments.
- Staff lacking awareness and staff training about disability support strategies, overcoming communication and language barriers.
- Material presented in inaccessible formats.
- Lack of support staff (e.g. note-takers, readers/writers, interpreters).
- No clear or appropriate process to get feedback from people with impairments or to actively involve them.

Step Three

You have now:

- Reviewed the best practice standards for the activity.
- Identified what barriers may exist for people with impairments with this activity and the solutions for resolving these barriers.

Step three asks you to consider *the next step for this activity*:

- (a) Firstly identify the best practice standards for the activity where you felt the institution had *partially or not met* that standard and *action was required*.
- (b) Then using the planning chart we have designed, *Planning the Next Step for this Activity*, plan the steps that are required to meet these standards, complete the actions required and overcome any barriers.

For each standard or activity there may be more than one goal. We have designed the planning chart to allow you to do all the planning associated with each goal. If there is more than one goal for an activity or standard, this chart can be copied or photocopied. We have also included a Word template of this planning chart, as well as the other parts of the toolkit from steps one and two. This allows you to copy the template, so you are able to type your ideas into the toolkit and adapt it to meet your specific needs.

6. Implementing the Toolkit

The toolkit can be implemented in a variety of different ways:

- (a) A team of people could work their way through the toolkit. For example an advisory group who are responsible for coordinating the project or the equity committee in partnership with the disability advisory group on campus.
- (b) The advisory group or senior manager/s responsible for coordinating the project could delegate different activities to the key people with responsibility for:
 - Policy and Planning.
 - Recruitment, Selection, Admission, Enrolment and Withdrawal.
 - General and Specialist Support Services.
 - Funding.
 - Services for Māori.
 - Buildings, Facilities and Equipment.
 - Teaching and Learning.
 - Examinations and Assessment.
 - Staff Development.
 - Complaint and Appeal Policies and Procedures.
 - Monitoring and Evaluation.

These people could be asked to complete specific *activities* and then report back to those coordinating the whole process.

- (c) The toolkit could be divided up and those responsible for different *activities* (e.g. examinations and assessment, staff development, recruitment, selection, admission, enrolment) could be given the task of reviewing and implementing their activity, in consultation with people using these services (eg. disability support staff, students with impairments).
- (d) Particular faculties could use the code to review their support and services for students with impairments by identifying, reviewing and implementing the parts of the code that are relevant. Once again this should occur in consultation and for example, involve students with impairments associated with the faculty.

7. Consulting Students With Impairments

We believe it is important that the implementation process actively involves students with impairments giving their feedback about the campus facilities, services and systems. Having an effective process for consulting with students with impairments, where they are seen as a *critical reference group* and *equal participant* is essential to the success of the implementation process and will add value to your organisation.

Feedback from students with impairments can be obtained in a variety of different ways:

- (a) You could include student representatives as part of the advisory group coordinating the implementation process.
- (b) The people responsible for completing specific *activities* could meet with a group of students with impairments.
- (c) The Disability Advisory Group on campus could be delegated the responsibility of consulting with students with impairments in relation to the implementation process and have representation on the advisory group.

- (d) The student association could establish a network for students with impairments, with representation on both the Student Association Executive Committee and on the advisory group. This could be an avenue for consultation with students with impairments. The role that student associations can play in the implementation of the Code is discussed in more detail in the section - *Student Associations and Implementation*.
- (e) Another option could be training some students to facilitate discussion groups to get feedback from students with impairments. This training could include developing a list of questions to ask students and a process for recording feedback.
- (f) The advisory committee could include students with impairments from the key parts of the campus and these students could be those who are trained to facilitate groups. There would need to be a process for selecting these students and to ensure that they are able to be active participants on the advisory committee.

When involving students with impairments there are some key things to remember:

- (a) Make sure that the consultation is genuine and involves students with impairments as an active and equal participant throughout the implementation process.
- (b) Consult with students with different impairments, involved with different parts of the campus.
- (c) Adapt the implementation process so these students can be active participants. Check:
 - Material is presented in accessible formats.
 - What support or resources they require to be actively involved.
 - Make sure that there is some coordination of the consultation processes with these students. Otherwise they may become bombarded by staff from different parts of the campus.
 - Remember that students with a range of impairments will have different needs and viewpoints and their opinion about services, facilities and systems may differ from those of whanau and other support networks.
- (d) Consultation may need to occur in different ways to meet the range of needs:
 - Structured focus groups.
 - Student surveys that question whether people are satisfied with the support and services they received from staff in relation to their impairments.
 - Electronic feedback.
 - Climate surveys to assess if staff feel confident creating an inclusive environment and providing support.

8. Implementation or Disability Action Plan

The information gathered using the Implementation Toolkit can provide the basis of an overall implementation plan or disability action plan for the campus.

This should:

- (a) Be coordinated by someone or some group (e.g. the manager/s driving the implementation process, an advisory or equity committee).
- (b) Include measurable goals, a regular process of review and reporting.
- (c) Be endorsed by Council and driven by the Senior Management Team.
- (d) Be integrated into business planning for the institution, faculties and departments.

We have designed a Word template, [Disability Action Plan](#), which provides a format for this plan. The [Planning Checklists](#) also have information to assist coordination of the implementation process. All of these resources can be adapted to meet your specific needs.

9. There are some other aspects which are worthy of consideration:
- (a) The process used, the information provided and the outcomes may need to be modified to ensure they are culturally appropriate for the participants in your location. Having Māori and other ethnic groups as active participants is important.
 - (b) We would suggest piloting the implementation process with one part of your campus first. Then review how this went with those involved and make any changes to the process that are required.
 - (c) It may be a good idea to prioritise the order of the activities and the parts of the campus involved. Those coordinating the process may feel that there are some activities which have a higher priority.
 - (d) Prior to asking people to provide their feedback about activities, give them an opportunity to digest the material in their own time. Material will need to be provided to them in an accessible format. Remember a copy of *Kia Ōrite Achieving Equity* is on the Achieve website for people to access free of charge.
 - (e) Once a group of people has gathered information using the Implementation Toolkit, one or two members of the team could draft the outcomes. This could then be circulated to the rest of the team for peer review before being finalised. This obviously needs to be in an accessible format for the people with impairments involved and coordinated by those people who have an overview of the different *activities* being implemented.
 - (f) The information gathered for different activities may highlight staff development and training issues and areas where specialist knowledge is required. It would be helpful to have a process for coordinating this.
 - (g) We have suggested involving external people from the local community who could give feedback, ongoing support and expertise (e.g. staff from key agencies supporting students attending your campus, a Barrier Free Auditor). [Networks to Assist Implementation](#) is a list of available disability and wider community networks. We have also included the names of the *Code of Practice Steering Committee*.
 - (h) We have also developed [Publications to Assist Implementation](#). This is a list of *publications and other resources* that can be used as background material to support implementation of the Code of Practice.
 - (i) This should be a positive learning process for staff, rather than them losing face in a process that shows up what hasn't been done.
10. If you have any other ideas or any feedback about these steps, please email ACHIEVE at info@achieve.org.nz.