Disability Inclusion: Self-Assessment Tool

Medical Deans (MDANZ) endorses this Disability Inclusion Self-Assessment tool as a valuable next step to help schools with implementing the Inclusive Medical Education guide (released in 2021).

Medical schools work to foster a culture of inclusivity and the provision of equivalent opportunities to access medical programs for people who have the capabilities to become good doctors, but who have been historically disadvantaged or under-represented. Increasing the number of health professionals with a disability may also contribute to removing barriers to best practice healthcare for patients with disability¹.

This tool has been prepared by the MDANZ Disability Support Special Interest Group, to accompany the MDANZ Inclusive Medical Education guidelines. These guidelines are designed to assist medical schools in their approach to and discussions with prospective and current students with a disability, to identify and consider the adjustments or supports that may be needed for them to commence or continue in a medical program.

This self-assessment tool draws from the questions posed in the guidelines, as well as relevant literature and expert advice, to provide a series of questions for medical schools to consider as they reflect on their progress towards Inclusive Education. Schools may use these questions, and the responses generated, as suits their local context. Their responses may inform updates of policy and practice, as well as internal or external accreditation requirements. There is no requirement to report back to MDANZ or any other group regarding the outcomes of this self-review, however it is hoped that the review tool will assist schools to identify both areas of strength and opportunities to develop and thereby will contribute to removing barriers to effective inclusion of students with disabilities.

We have structured this document in line with diagram 3 from the MDANZ Inclusive Medical Education guidelines; Key areas to promote an inclusive culture and support students with a disability (see Figure 1)

Notes on language: Please note that references throughout this document to "students with a disability" refer to both applicants and current medical students who have a disability as defined in Australia by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 or in New Zealand by the Human Rights Act 1993. Please also note that we have used personfirst language in this document (e.g., student with a disability), however it should be recognised that some individuals and groups prefer identity-first language (e.g., disabled student, autistic student).



Figure 1. Key areas to promote an inclusive culture and support students with a disability

Promoting Inclusiveness

Review	AMC	Explanatory notes or suggested	Self-	What has been achieved to date?
Questions		evidence	Evaluation	Describe what you want to do in the future.
Is a culture of	4.1.4	Fostering a culture of inclusion includes	Not yet	
inclusivity and	4.2.1	considering the values and attitudes of the	commenced	
respect (across all	5.3.2	medical program and how they are embedded in		
dimensions of	5.3.4	the day-to-day activities and processes of the		
diversity) valued	5.4.1	medical school. Culture can influence whether		
and actively		or not applicants consider applying to a	In progress	
supported in the		particular school, whether students with a		
school, by all		disability feel supported in talking about their		
members of the		circumstances and needs, and whether	Advanced	
school community?		students will seek support within the university	progress	
		environment ²⁻⁶ .	progresso	
		 Audit of all policies and procedures 		
		(including recruitment, admissions,		
		assessment, progression and student		
		support) for appropriate content relating to		
		equity and inclusion, and specifically		
		disability.		
		 Evidence of relevant, up to date, co-created 		
		codes of conduct for staff and students,		
		which contain specific reference to disability		
		as a valued aspect of diversity and		
		expectations for disability inclusion.		
		 Audit of training programs, teaching and 		
		instruction on disability, diversity and		
		inclusion for staff and students to examine		
		how disability is represented, that support		
		faculty development, and are tailored to the		
		staff member's role		
		 Audit of relevant policies and pathways for 		
		reporting and responding to incidents of		
		harm, mistreatment or discrimination to		
		ensure they have adequately taken into		
		account disability.		

Does the school or program's public facing information, images and messages and the language used (including websites, open days, webinars) promote disability inclusion?	1.4.6 4.1.2 4.1.4 4.1.5	Schools should consider whether the information they provide is effectively promoting the school's position on inclusivity and diversity. Medical schools should make it clear that students with a disability are valued by the school and that this is reflected in teaching practices, and that individualised reasonable adjustments are implemented when required. Review of published information should include non-written information that is used, such as images and pictures of students and groups and the medical school environment. • Audit of websites, marketing collateral, promotional material and presentations.	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	
Does the school ensure that teaching practices and the taught curriculum are inclusive, with appropriate language and audiovisual material?	2.3.1 4.1.4 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3 4.2.5 4.2.7	What language and images are used to demonstrate visible and invisible disabilities? How do staff communicate with and about people with a disability, including in cases used for teaching? How do the school's teaching materials support its policies on inclusivity and accessibility? Does the school community recognise that some students who do not identify as disabled may still require additional support? Effective support for students often goes beyond provision of formal adjustments. Universal Design for Learning may lessen the need for individual students to request adjustments. • Audit of requirements for teaching qualifications and professional development, including understanding disability and principles of inclusion for staff • Evidence of inclusive practices guidelines provided to educators and other staff • Evidence of regular curriculum review and development to meet and update inclusive guidelines, with feedback and input from students	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	

lo thoro o focus or	111	What propositive proposes are in place to	Notvot	
s there a focus on	4.1.4	What proactive processes are in place to	Not yet	
nealth and	4.2.1	prompt students to reflect on their own health,	commenced	
wellbeing in the	4.2.2	attitudes, and abilities? Does the school follow		
school, including	4.2.3	a best-practice framework such as Every		
proactive processes	4.2.4	Doctor, Every Setting, and the MDANZ guide on	In progress	
and links to	4.2.5	preventing bullying and harassment? Do		
professional	4.2.6	discussions around self-care acknowledge that		
expectations of self-	4.2.7	whilst individuals should be empowered to seek		
care?		help where needed, there are also broader	Advanced	
		systemic factors which influence health and	progress	
		wellbeing?		
		Evidence of review of curriculum and		
		student support processes, including		
		transition programs		
		Evidence of relevant staff training		
		Evidence of support systems and incident		
		management protocols		
Are staff connected	5.3.2	Medical Deans facilitates a community of	Not yet	
to other medical	5.5.2	practice for medical schools through which staff	commenced	
schools, other		have access to others' experiences, insights,		
areas of the tertiary		and initiatives on a range of relevant matters (to		
education sector		join, contact admin@medicaldeans.org.au). A	l., ., ., .	
and external		range of programs and services external to the	In progress	
resources, to share		medical school or university may also be		
best practice and		available to students who are eligible, including		
resources?		targeted, government-funded initiatives (e.g. the	Advanced	
		National Disability Insurance Scheme in	progress	
		Australia, local councils or community		
		organisations).		
		Disability Services within each University often		
		provide helpful resources and training for staff.		
		In addition, organisations such as ADCET, DCA		
		and Docs with Disabilities provide extensive		
		relevant resources.		

mechanisms for ongoing data	6.2.1 6.2.2 6.2.3 6.2.4	Universities commonly track self-reported student disability at the point of enrolment, and this data may be available at the course level. However, it is well recognised that the proportion of medical students who confidentially report a disability is higher than the number who formally disclose for the purpose of seeking adjustments ³ , in part reflecting cultural and structural barriers to inclusion. To gain a clearer picture of the student cohort and their support needs, schools are encouraged to explore additional sources of data which are not contingent on student disclosure, including tracking of students seeking support outside formal adjustments pathways (for example, number of students accessing support services, retention, completion and satisfaction of students with a disability compared to those without).	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	
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Early engagement

Review	AMC	Explanatory notes or suggested	Self-	What has been achieved to date?
Questions		evidence	Evaluation	Describe what you want to do in the future.
Is information on the requirements of the course clearly accessible and described in a manner appropriate for applicants unfamiliar with medical training?	1.4.6 4.1.2 4.1.4 4.1.5	Potential applicants require information in accessible formats regarding the learning environment, learning and assessment activities and clinical placements in order to make informed decisions prior to application. However, this information can be difficult to locate on school websites, or described in language that is opaque to applicants without a healthcare background. • Audit of course website and pre-application information	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	
Does the information provided include or draw from the MDANZ guidelines or a similar resource?	1.4.6	Is the MDANZ Inclusive Medical Education document (or excerpts) available for applicants? Are applicants guided on how to engage with this document, for example providing the Annexe as a set of reflective questions for consideration? Are staff familiar with this document and the way that it relates to their area of work and influence?	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	

Where Inherent Requirements are in place, is there consideration from the University to move towards the use of MDANZ guidelines or similar frameworks?	1.4.6	The extensive review process undertaken by the MDANZ Disability Inclusion working group concluded that it was appropriate to take an updated view of disability inclusion, and recommended the use of the updated MDANZ Inclusive Medical Education guidance document in place of Inherent Requirements where possible ⁷ . However, it is recognised that many schools continue to maintain Inherent Requirements for their courses. Schools can consider working with their University to explore whether these continue to be appropriate in their local context.	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	
Where Inherent Requirements are in place, are they clearly framed as participation requirements with scope for reasonable adjustments, rather than graduate capabilities?	1.4.6	Schools who continue to use Inherent Requirements are encouraged to review the content and application of these documents in light of current research and best practice ⁸ . In particular, Inherent Requirements should acknowledge the role of reasonable adjustments.	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	
Is information regarding possible adjustments and support structures clearly accessible prior to application?	1.4.6 4.1.5 4.2.2 4.2.3	All Universities are required to provide reasonable adjustments to course requirements in order to support students with a disability. Is information about embedded inclusive practices, possible accommodations and support structures clearly accessible prior to application? • Audit of course website and pre-application information	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	
Are applicants with disability encouraged and provided with clear pathways (including contact details) to access further	1.4.6 4.1.2 4.1.4 4.1.5	The information provided by medical schools should encourage potential applicants with a disability (or other personal circumstances of relevance) to engage with the medical school at an early stage if they have questions or concerns about their capability to undertake and complete a medical program. This should	Not yet commenced In progress	

information and initiate discussions regarding application processes and course requirements?		include easily accessible contact details for appropriate staff members who have received training on disability inclusion in their course context. Are applicants provided with information on the benefits of disclosure and assured that their application will not be disadvantaged? • Audit of course website and pre-application information	Advanced progress	
Is it clear to potential applicants that discussions regarding potential pathways and supports are confidential, constructive, and clearly separated from selection processes?	1.4.6 4.1.2 4.1.4 4.1.5	Applicants should be able to explore the requirements of the course and the capability of the University to support their participation, free of concerns that this may influence the likelihood of admission. Staff involved in such discussions should not be involved in admissions decisions regarding the applicant. • Audit of course website and pre-application information	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	

lo it algor to	1 1 6	Displacure may facilitate gethering additional	Notvot	
Is it clear to	1.4.6	Disclosure may facilitate gathering additional	Not yet	
applicants whether	4.1.2	information regarding course requirements or	commenced	
disclosure is a	4.1.4	the availability of reasonable adjustments.		
requirement of	4.1.5	However, it remains the right of the applicant or		
application or		student to determine when or if they choose to	In progress	
enrolment, or when		disclose. It is the responsibility of the school to	In progress	
and why they may		clarify whether disclosure is a requirement		
choose to disclose?		under any circumstances, and what the		
		outcomes of disclosure might be.	Advanced	
		 Audit of course website and pre-application 	progress	
		information, in particular with regards to	progresse	
		relevant legislation regarding disclosure		
		(e.g. Section 4.2: Enrolment Standards,		
		Disability Standards for Education 2005)		
Are application	1.4.6	Is there a clear process for applicants with a	Not yet	
processes and	4.1.2	disability to request adjustments in selection	commenced	
selection	4.1.4	processes (for example the GAMSAT or selection		
procedures	4.1.5	interviews). Is the content and process of		
transparent and		selection processes (e.g. interview or situational		
non-discriminatory?		judgement test scenarios) inclusive and non-	In progress	
		discriminatory?		
		Evidence of review of selection processes		
		for potential bias and discrimination,	Advanced	
		including content and delivery of processes		
		and training of assessors and associated	progress	
		staff (e.g. unconscious bias training)		
		 Audit of process for applicants to request 		
		adjustments during selection		
			l .	<u>I</u>

Open and constructive discussions

Review	AMC	Explanatory notes or suggested	Self-	What has been achieved to date?
Questions		evidence	Evaluation	Describe what you want to do in the future.
When required or requested, are structured and constructive discussions regarding course requirements and potential professional pathways (including registration) held with applicants with disability?	1.4.6 4.1.4 4.1.5 4.2.3 4.2.4 4.2.5 4.2.6	These discussions allow potential applicants to gain a better understanding of the application and selection process, the demands of the program, and their suitability or likelihood of succeeding, not just in the selection process but throughout the program. These discussions should take a person-centred and strength-based approach. It is important for all involved to recognise that the medical school does not determine a student's eligibility for registration as a medical practitioner after graduation, nor can they restrict enrolment into a course on the basis of presumed future employment ⁹ . However, staff could reasonably discuss possible future working environments or tasks in order to inform potential applicants' decision making. • Evidence of staff training and engagement with appropriate resources and policies	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	
Are these discussions informed by the questions in the MDANZ guidelines, or equivalent, as well as an understanding of the relevant legislation and support opportunities?	1.4.6 4.1.4 4.1.5 4.2.3 4.2.4 4.2.5 4.2.6	Is the Annexe to the MDANZ guidelines or a similar framework used to guide the discussion and explore with the potential applicant the range of learning activities required in the program? Do staff with the appropriate breadth of knowledge of both University policy, practicalities of clinical training, and course requirements participate as required? • Evidence of structured planning for discussions, including staff attendance	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	

Are processes in place to support the applicant during and after the	4.2.4	Are the access and communication preferences of the applicant considered in organising a discussion? Is there provision to enable a support person to attend where desired?	Not yet commenced	
discussion?		 Evidence of pathways for applicants to request adjustments or supports for discussions about access and course requirements Evidence of opportunities for applicants to ask further questions following the discussion 	In progress Advanced progress	

Available supports and services

Review	AMC	Explanatory notes or suggested	Self-	What has been achieved to date?
Questions		evidence	Evaluation	Describe what you want to do in the future.
Is appropriate disclosure and support-seeking encouraged?	4.1.4 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3 4.2.4 4.2.5 4.2.6 4.2.7	Medical schools should actively create an environment where students feel confident to raise questions or concerns about a disability that exists, has arisen, or changed during their time in the program. However schools must also recognise the potential barriers to disclosure and the right for students to not disclose. Some students may also not identify as disabled but may benefit from a Universal Design for Learning approach. • Evidence of where support seeking and the potential for reasonable adjustments	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	Describe what you want to do in the ruture.
Are support services, health programs, and disability resources clearly and regularly signposted throughout the student journey?	4.1.4 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3 4.2.4 4.2.5 4.2.6 4.2.7	are discussed and promoted in teaching activities and course information Current students should be made aware of how and to whom disclosure should be made, how the information will be managed, and how students can update or remove this information (as required by the Health Records Act). For example: by having clear and prominent information on the university's website and in information webinars; during	Not yet commenced In progress	

		the admissions and enrolment processes; and regularly during the course itself and on course websites. • Evidence of where support seeking and the potential for reasonable adjustments are discussed and promoted in teaching activities and course information	Advanced progress	
Are measures in place to ensure that the process of disclosure, seeking and implementing support or adjustments is safe, effective and inclusive?	4.1.4 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3 4.2.4 4.2.5 4.2.6 4.2.7	It should be made clear that declaration of a disability is treated with confidentiality and respect within Universities, and should not adversely affect a student's progression in the medical program. This should be reinforced in policy, procedure and the culture of the program. • Evidence of policy and procedure around confidential disclosure and effective implementation of adjustments and support	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	

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Do students have an	2.2.7	Discussions are a collaborative effort to come	Not yet	
active role in the		to an informed decision about whether there	commenced	
process of		are reasonable adjustments and services		
determining		available to a student that would support		
appropriate		them through a medical program. Students		
adjustments or		should be recognised as experts in their own	In progress	
supports?		capabilities and needs, and should be		
		empowered to advocate for themselves as		
		students and future health professionals,	Advanced	
		without concerns regarding judgement or		
		stigma.	progress	
		Evidence of policy and procedure around		
		confidential disclosure and effective		
		implementation of adjustments and		
		support		
Is the school able to	4.1.4	Effective support for students often goes	Not yet	
identify and address	4.2.1	beyond provision of formal adjustments.	commenced	
any gaps in the	4.2.2	Schools may need to consider broader		
central support and	4.2.3	strategies to support student needs. For		
adjustments	4.2.4	example, does the school provide supports		
processes?	4.2.5	specific to medicine, such as mentoring	In progress	
	4.2.6	programs or other activities which may need		
	4.2.7	local school management?		
		Evidence of opportunities for students	Advanced	
		with a disability to feed back to the school	1 10.1 1.1.1 0 0 0.	
		regarding their experiences and needs	progress	
		Evidence of school-led activities which		
		address gaps in central processes or		
		contextualise support to medicine		
		contextualise support to medicine		

Reasonable adjustments

Review	AMC	Explanatory notes or suggested	Self-	What has been achieved to date?
Questions		evidence	Evaluation	Describe what you want to do in the future.
Is there a clear link between the university disability services and the school (as well as any relevant clinical partners) to ensure the support or adjustments provided are appropriate for the course context?	3.1.1 3.3.1 4.1.4 4.2.1 4.2.2 4.2.3 4.2.4 4.2.5 4.2.6	Provision of appropriate and effective supports may require collaboration between disability resource professionals, academic, clinical and professional staff. Regular feedback and opportunity for discussion of appropriate adjustments may be required. • Evidence of policy and procedure around confidential disclosure, adjustment decision-making discussions, and effective implementation of adjustments and support	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	
Are varying settings and learning contexts considered in the process of determining reasonable adjustments?	4.2.2 4.2.3 4.2.4	Involvement of stakeholders from on-campus and clinical learning environments may be required to ensure local contextualisation of adjustments. Can clinical educators learn from health services and other employers what practices best support health care employees with a disability? • Evidence of policy and procedure around teaching staff liaison with disability resource staff to facilitate appropriate design and implementation of adjustments	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	

Is there regular	4.2.2	Adjustments should be reviewed periodically,	Not yet
review and	4.2.3	and particularly when preparing for key	commenced
adjustments of	4.2.4	transition points during the medical program,	
support and		or when students' circumstances change, to	
adjustments in		decide whether they are still meeting student	
response to		needs. Are students empowered to advocate	In progress
changing student		for their own (changing) needs?	
needs or differing		 Evidence in policy and procedure regarding 	
learning		confidential disclosure and effective	Advanced
environments?		implementation of adjustments and	progress
		support	p. 56. 555

Student support networks

Review	AMC	Explanatory notes or suggested	Self-	What has been achieved to date?
Questions		evidence	Evaluation	Describe what you want to do in the future.
Do students with a disability have support networks within the student community?	4.2.1 4.2.2	Schools can encourage and support students to establish support networks and foster a culture of respect and inclusion. Schools can work with student representative groups to facilitate effective, stable, and formally recognised support programs.	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	
Are students with a disability connected to external networks or mentoring programs?	4.2.1 4.2.2	Schools can develop partnerships with student representative groups, external networks and mentoring programs, and facilitate student connections.	Not yet commenced In progress Advanced progress	

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