

# BARRIERS TO ACCOMMODATIONS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

SHONA EDWARDS  
ORLA SPURR

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE,  
KAURNA COUNTRY

# THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE: A CASE STUDY

- South Australia reports 10.6% of the population has disability or chronic illness (SA Health 2021)
- The University of Adelaide reports 9.2% of the student population identifies as disabled (2020).
  - Three disability advisors employed by Disability Support.
- The Australian National average for undergraduates is 7.7% (DESE 2019).

# THE BARRIERS

- Registration with Disability Support
- Financial barriers: the cost of diagnosis and treatment
- Social barriers: unsupportive family, friends, self-esteem problems,  
shame, stigma

# THE BURDEN OF DISCLOSURE

A case study: asking for a chair in the lab

- Overcoming fear caused by past trauma
- Dismissiveness
- Self-doubt
- Being made to feel that you stand out, are a problem, a hassle

## Student Wellbeing and Support

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### Student Life

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[Student Life](#) is the general hub for links to a variety of student support resources. These resources include, but are not limited to:

- **Counselling Support**, where you can get free, confidential counselling to help you with anything that you're struggling with. Everybody needs help sometimes, so don't be afraid to reach out.
- **International Student Support**, where international students can receive specific guidance and support
- The **Safer Campus Community**, where you can find tips for making the campus a safer place for everyone

### Disability Support

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[Disability Support](#) is a dedicated help service to support students with a wide range of disabilities, through one-on-one appointments with a member of their support team. If you have any health condition that impacts your studies, you can reach out to them for help, even if you would not call your condition a disability. You can also find a link to their website in Student Life.

### Self-Care - The Wellbeing Hub

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It's important to look after yourself. The [Wellbeing Hub](#) contains a fantastic and broad collection of support resources, with topics including:

- strategies for improving mental health
- looking after your body
- building good study habits

# INCLUSIVE LEARNING STATEMENTS

From Prof. Han Baltussen, in summer school course material:



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# INCLUSIVE LEARNING STATEMENTS

From Prof. Han Baltussen, in summer school course material:

# Accessibility statement

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The University of Adelaide believes that education needs to be available to everyone. The University Library is actively committed to creating accessible and usable educational resources.

This course has been designed to meet [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1, level AA](#) <sup>↗</sup> by incorporating the following features:

- Alternate text and descriptive text for visual content;
- Closed captions and text transcripts for all video content;
- Text transcripts for audio content;
- Colour and contrast considerations for visual content;
- Links, headings, tables, and images have been designed to work with screen readers;
- Font size can be increased with the use of browser control;
- Microsoft Immersive Reader is enabled for all content pages.

While we aim to communicate clearly and ensure that all of our content meets different learning needs, we might not always get it right.

If you require further learning assistance, please raise this with your course teachers or [Disability Support](#) <sup>↗</sup> as a first point of contact.

For issues regarding the content in this course, or to identify non-functional items, please email the [Library's Academic Liaison team.](#)

This statement was updated on the 7th of December, 2021.

A note of caution:

‘A policy can create the illusion of doing something without doing anything.’

(Ahmed 2021: 60)

**INCLUSIVE LEARNING STATEMENTS**



## MAKING MATERIAL ACCESSIBLE

- Verbal descriptions of images, explaining their relevance to the content
- Alt-text of visual content
- Closed captions
- Transcripts

→ discipline specific issues



Runs small group consultations

Ensure your inbox or office is open to feedback

Believe the students – even without documentation

Recognise the strength it takes to ask for help

Be generous in your approach

Sometimes students don't have the capacity to give feedback when you ask

ASK THE  
STUDENTS  
THEMSELVES

# AGITATE FOR TRAINING

- Disability awareness training
- Accessible/Inclusive teaching practices
- The Australian Disability Clearinghouse on education and Training events:
  - <https://www.adcet.edu.au/events>

## DIFFERENCE IS ENRICHING

- Disabled staff and students are an underutilized source of research and scholarship
- Unique, valuable perspectives
- Understanding accessibility as an expected skill for future global citizens
- Benefits to institutional reputation

BENEFITS OF PEER  
SUPPORT AND  
INFORMAL SUPPORT

- Peer support is:
  - Self-regulation
  - Soothing anxiety and alienation
  - Encouragement to face challenges
  - Advice



FURTHER  
READING

Ahmed, S. 2021. *Complaint!* Duke University Press.

Blum, S. D. 2020. *Ungrading: Why Rating Students Undermines Learning (and What to Do Instead)*. West Virginia University Press

Dolmage, J. T. 2020. *Academic Ableism*. University of Michigan Press.

NB: Dolmage's monograph is open access as a PDF or audio book, free through Audible