

Inquiry Name: Inquiry into Access to TAFE for Learners with Disability

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Teacher

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

SUBMISSION CONTENT:

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I currently work teaching VET delivered to Secondary Schools (VETDSS). I am deeply concerned that the TAFE and Secondary systems and processes do not meet the needs of students with learning, behavioural, intellectual and/or medical conditions. This is my 5th year teaching VETDSS and in all that time I have never ever had any communication or documents to support a student up front at the commencement of the course. The onus is always on me, the teacher, to identify a problem, ask if there's anything I should know, wait, and then receive documents and Individual Education Plans that I should have received at commencement of studies. This year I have had the following students with serious need-to-know conditions for whom I received no information until request:

3 students with intellectual disabilities

a student with level 2 autism and very limited literacy skills (can not read at all) and serious epilepsy

a student with anaphylaxis

4 students (that I know of) with specific learning disorders (and many more that I suspect)

6 or more students with challenging behaviour (considered significant enough to flag a behaviour management plan that may already in place at the school).

From my experience teaching VETDSS and in all levels of qualification, I can state that we are not meeting our duty of care to students with disabilities and our legal requirement under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Educators 2005, which clearly state our legal obligation to students with disabilities.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/learningneeds/Pages/legal-obligations.aspx>

I do not believe we are meeting our obligations under the Disability Standards for Educators on a systemic level in [REDACTED]. This is particularly concerning for VETDSS students as there is a gap in the provision of student support services and and inconsistent lines of communication between the schools and the VETDSS teachers. My observation of this process is that there are too many links in the chain where a breakdown in communication can occur. The chain of communication between student and teacher is :Teacher - teacher's manager - TAFE VET co-coordinator - individual school VET coordination - school teachers - family & students.

The main concern is the lack of Individual Education Plan (IEP) being created for students and then

following that student through the education system. And a lack of training and support for teachers to know how to support students' additional needs.

There is increasing concern for adults with disabilities and additional education support needs. In my experience teaching adult course, many students fail or do not complete course where they could have with support in place. Often support is far too thin on the ground, takes too long to be established, or is the result of a lack of widespread awareness and training for teachers and managers about the issues. and their duty of care and their obligation to provide equitable access to education.

Students are not given the option to suspend or postpone their studies if experiencing an episode of serious health issue, resulting in student being financially liable for the classes they were not able to attend due to illness. This in turn threatens their access to funded study in later attempts.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter. I am more than happy to talk with anyone about my experiences and contribute to improvement in the system and processes.

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File1:

File2:

File3: