

Skills Disability Support

Guidelines for service

Skills Disability Support (SDS) is administered by the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT). It is a participation strategy to ensure equitable participation in vocational education and training (VET) by Queenslanders with disability.

To ensure quality outcomes, SDS draws on the Queensland VET Quality Framework to provide specialised services to pre-approved registered training organisations (RTOs), known as Skills Assure suppliers (SAS).

DESBT encourages SAS to embed [inclusive practices](#) in the training environment to support all students to gain the skills, qualifications and experience they need to enter and stay in the workforce.

For students with disability, inclusive practices form the foundation for specialised services tailored to individual needs.

Objectives

SDS provides flexible training support to enhance an individual's opportunities for economic participation.

The principle aims of the strategy are to:

- encourage and support the participation of students with disability through flexible support at a SAS of their choice
- assist SAS to deliver quality services that meet the needs of their students with disability
- encourage efficient and effective use of specialised technology
- increase the understanding and consistency of support through a coordinated approach.

The services available are applied as reasonable adjustment under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. They facilitate learning and participation in training on the same basis as students without disability and help reduce the impact of an individual's disability on training and employment outcomes. They do not duplicate, or affect an individual's eligibility for/receipt of, a package under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Who can apply?

Queensland SAS are eligible to apply for Skills Disability Support services. They must be based in and deliver training in Queensland.

Applicant organisations must be able to demonstrate the use of inclusive practices that enable and form the foundation of effective specialised support strategies.



Who will the services support?

SDS services assist students with disability who require the services as reasonable adjustment under the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*.

Services assist individual students in mainstream programs. Programs that are specifically designed for and delivered to groups of students with disability are the responsibility of the SAS.

To be eligible, students must:

- have an identified disability
- be undertaking DESBT subsidised training in a non-school environment
- not be eligible to receive the same resources through other programs, initiatives or services.

Applicant organisations are responsible for screening students, subject to the above criteria. Students and/or circumstances outside the above criteria need to be discussed with DESBT.

What assistance is available?

SDS provides specialised technology and support services as reasonable adjustment to facilitate learning.

Assistance related to infrastructure, accessibility of learning resources and systems, general health or care, general foundation skill needs, course fees and teacher costs are not supported. Activities such as administration, coordination, staff induction and professional development are not supported.

Specialised technology

Specialised technology is purchased by DESBT and provided on a loan basis to SAS for use by eligible students. Examples include assistive software, magnification aids and specialised computer accessories.

To assist workforce preparation and continuity of support, technology available through SDS is applicable to most work environments.

Specialised support services

SAS can seek pre-approval for the reimbursement of specialised support services.

Specialised support services include:

- Auslan interpreters
- disability support workers, coaches or mentors
- notetakers/readers/scribes
- educational support needs assessments (when effective support strategies cannot be identified from the information available)
- student training in how to use SDS technology.

What outcomes are expected?

Outcomes are aligned to the training program students are undertaking and will vary according to their learning pathway and goals. Expected outcomes include:

- increased ability to enter and stay in the workforce
- achievement of personal and social development to enhance social inclusion and make progress towards employment.

Applicant organisations are required to submit 'completion reports' which detail outcomes, student destinations and reasons for withdrawal (if applicable). These reports, are used to inform future disability investment priorities and opportunities.

What is the application process?

Applicant organisations should submit an [application form](#) with attachments as noted on the form.

Only complete applications will be considered. Outcomes of the application process will be provided within 5-10 business days from the receipt of all of the necessary information.

Applicant organisations can email SDS at SkillsDisabilitySupport@desbt.qld.gov.au to seek assistance in completing the application.

How will applications be assessed?

Applications are assessed against the following criteria. Assessors will also draw on local knowledge and experience and may reference other information held by DESBT.

Assessment criteria	How this will be assessed – including but not limited to:
Capacity to manage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• commitment to inclusive practice• training delivery tailored to support student needs• employees or links with organisations experienced and/or qualified in supporting students with disability
Servicing student needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• how the support will mitigate the impact of a student's disability on their capacity to learn• evidence that the student's teachers/trainers and employer support the application, where appropriate• promotion of student independence• identified gap or complementary to existing strategies/services (applications that duplicate other programs or services will not be funded)
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• evidence of student progression (for continuing students)
Reasonableness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cost, outcome and transferability of the support to an employment environment.

What level of service is available?

SDS provides specialised technology and support services based on an individual student's needs. The level and type of service is dependent on the assistance required, stock available and reasonableness of the request.

What are the conditions?

SDS technology and funds for specialised support services can only be used for the delivery of the services as reasonable adjustment to students with disability.

Applicant organisations should ensure their student has provided consent to disclose personal information to DESBT and that their organisation's Personal Liability Insurance complies with DESBT purchasing requirements.

Successful applicants need to acknowledge and comply with the SDS [Terms of Use](#).

SDS services are available for the duration of a student's training. Applicant organisations are responsible for monitoring the ongoing effectiveness of the services they receive in accordance with the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*. Any changes needed to pre-approved applications must be communicated to SDS as soon as possible and are subject to approval.

End of semester student progress reports and a final student completion report are required.

Feedback about the services from students and staff is encouraged and can be submitted at any time.

Specialised technology loans

Technology loans are available for direct implementation and/or for student or employee trial. Applicant organisations are responsible for ensuring technology on loan is kept safe, secure and in good condition. This includes responsibility for electrical safety tagging each June and December. Fair wear and tear excepted, applicant organisations must indemnify DESBT against loss of or damage to the technology.

Specialised support services

Specialised support services are provided through reimbursement for pre-approved applications. Applicant organisations are required to arrange the support and invoice SDS at the end of each semester for the actual services provided, not exceeding the pre-approved amount. If the support was provided by a third party, evidence that their invoice has been paid is required.

Specialised support services are negotiated in advance and can be pre-approved for the current semester only. Backdating of up to eight weeks is permissible but remains subject to approval. Services for future semesters can be provisionally approved pending reconfirmation of needs at the end of each semester. Final invoices will be paid once all technology and finalisation documents (completion report and proof of learning outcomes) have been received.

Appeals process

Applicant organisations may request a review of a decision made by DESBT. The appeals process has been established to help identify any problems in the application process, ensuring these processes continue to improve.

Appeals must be lodged via email to SkillsDisabilitySupport@desbt.qld.gov.au.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of the appeal within 21 business days from receipt of the appeal.

More information

For more information about Skills Disability Support visit desbt.qld.gov.au or phone 1300 369 935.