Accessibility and Inclusion

Aligned to Waikato He Wai Māu — The Waikato Way

THE UNIVERSITY OF WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Every student at Waikato deserves to learn, belong, and succeed — and to do so in ways that reflect who they are and where they come from. This commitment is expressed through Waikato He Wai Māu — The Waikato Way, our Academic Excellence and Student Success Plan, where education is intentionally designed to be coherent, inclusive, and connected across the student journey.

Our 2023–2025 Disability Action Plan has informed and shaped the work that continues today. We are focusing on being clear and direct about what we have achieved, what is underway, and what students and whānau can expect from us. Accessibility and inclusion are part of how we design learning, support students, and invest as a university — not a separate compliance exercise.

Accessibility at a glance

~1,000	86.6%	-1.6 pp	79.5%
Students registered (2025)	**Completion rate**	**Equity gap**	**Retention rate**
Up from 308 in 2021	Exceeds 83% target	Smallest gap on record	At parity with peers

What we have achieved

- Paper completion rates have risen to **86.6%**, exceeding our 2025 target of 83.0% — the strongest result in the reporting period.
- The equity gap between students with and without disabilities has reduced to – **1.6 percentage points**, the smallest on record.
- First-year retention has **reached parity with peers** at 79.5%, indicating sustained progression beyond enrolment.
- Demand for Accessibility Services has grown from **308 students (2021) to nearly 1,000 (2025)**, demonstrating increased reach and trust.

How we work

Embedded — Accessibility is integrated into our investment planning, student systems, and campus operations — not a standalone programme.

Student-centred — We work alongside students to understand what is working, what is not, and where to focus next.

Continuous improvement — We use outcome data, service usage, and student feedback to keep raising the quality of the experience we provide.

What you can expect

Whether you are a current student, a prospective student, or a family member, here is what you can expect from us:

- **A clear pathway to support** — Accessibility Services supports nearly 1,000 students annually and our team will work with you to put the right adjustments in place.
- **A Reasonable Adjustment Plan** — that is consistently applied across all your papers and learning environments.
- **Accessible spaces and environments** — actively mapped and improved across Hamilton and Tauranga campuses.
- **Staff who are equipped to support you** — we invest in inclusive teaching capability so you are not navigating accessibility on your own.
- **A university that listens** — we use student voice, service data, and feedback to keep improving.



Our current priorities

Making Our Campuses Easier to Navigate

A comprehensive accessibility mapping project is underway with professional services firm BarrierFree, contracted April 2026. Data already shows 86 accessible toilets at Hamilton campus and 9 at Tauranga. Accessible bathroom upgrades continue as part of the Campus Masterplan 2017–2037.

Consistent, Personalised Student Support

Reasonable Adjustment Plans have been digitised and systematised — securely shared with paper convenors each semester. CRM integration enables better tracking of student touchpoints and improved consistency. The next phase focuses on further integration and staff training.

Technology to Support Learning

AI-powered note-taking technology is prioritized for investment. A centralised assistive technology catalogue has been developed in the Alma library system, providing a searchable database of hardware including C-pens, electronic magnifiers, and remote microphones. This has streamlined access and improves allocation tracking.

Inclusive Practice and Engagement

Coordinated communications delivered up to 43,850 impressions on targeted campaigns. A comprehensive 2026 communications plan is being finalized. Staff capability in inclusive teaching and Universal Design for Learning continues to be developed.

Our journey — a commitment to continuous improvement

2022	2023	2024	2025	Now
Developing the Disability Action Plan in partnership with disabled students and staff.	Policy foundations strengthened; Students with Disabilities and Impairment Policy completed; peer support pilot programmes launched.	Accessibility Services expanded; accommodation improvements on both campuses.	Accessibility embedded in Waikato He Wai Māu; completion rate exceeds target at 86.6%; equity gap at record low of –1.6pp. Reasonable Adjustment Plans digitised and systematised.	Campus mapping underway with BarrierFree; assistive technology catalogue live; communications strategy delivering results; improving continuously.

How we know this is working

Outcome indicators

Completion rate	Equity gap
86.6%	**-1.6 pp**
Exceeds 2025 target of 83.0% Up from 78.8% In 2022 .	Students with/without disability Narrowed from –5.6 pp in 2022
Retention	**Service reach**
79.5%	**~1,000**
First-year retention (2024 cohort) At parity with peers	Students registered (2025) Up from 308 in 2021

We are committed to being transparent about progress and continuing to improve the student experience. Data shows strong progress against our Disability Action Plan targets, with improved completion rates, sustained retention, and a significant narrowing of equity gaps.

System and engagement indicators

Reasonable adjustment plans	Digital reach
Scaled	**43,850**
Digitised, integrated workflows Shared with convenors each semester	Campaign impressions (peak) Growing social engagement
Campus mapping	**Assistive technology**
Underway	**Centralised**
Wsp contracted November 2025 86 Accessible toilets mapped (Hamilton)	Catalogue live in Alma system C-pens, magnifiers, microphones available

We continue to use student feedback, service data, and performance measures to guide improvement and ensure that accessibility support remains consistent, effective, and responsive to student needs.

This work is led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic and delivered through the University's student support, academic, and campus operations teams as part of our core institutional investment. We report on progress through our governance structures, including the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Committee and University Council.

Accessibility Services: waikato.ac.nz/students/accessibility-services

FOR THE PEOPLE
KO TE TANGATA