## Overview

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) is the national representative organisation for children and young people with disability aged 0 to 25 years. Young people with disability are not accessing education, including university and Vocational Education and Training (VET), on an equal basis to their peers without disability[[1]](#footnote-0). To understand the experiences and perspectives of young people with disability in tertiary education, CYDA hosted two consultations and a one-on-one interview, with a total of 17 participants in September and October 2021. These consultations were co-designed by a working group of young disabled people.

### What young people said:

Discussions with participants, spanning pre-enrolment activities and course selection through to their time in their course, identified significant barriers to engaging in tertiary education. Young people identified issues such as reduced study and course options, lack of meaningful supports, poor attitudes and misconceptions from professional and academic staff, and overall inaccessibility and inflexibility in the tertiary environment as key limitations to their participation.

Participants also shared ideas and solutions to improve tertiary education access for their cohort. These included improved accountability systems for education providers, additional education and training for staff and peers, universal design approaches to learning and education, and increased holistic supports for young disabled people.

## Recommendations

### Tertiary institutions must provide adequate holistic supports for students with disability

### Tertiary institutions must provide adequate education about disability to staff and students

### Tertiary institutions must ensure courses are accessible

### Tertiary institutions must protect the education rights of students with disability

### The Australian Government must improve pathways and accessibility to tertiary education and learning.

1. AIHW. (2022). *People with disability in Australia.* Available at: [Engagement in Education (aihw.gov.au)](https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/education-and-skills/engagement-in-education) [↑](#footnote-ref-0)