



## Guidance for Classroom Teachers Trying to Safely Make Adjustments for Students with Disabilities

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Twenty-five years post the introduction of federal disability discrimination legislation, Australian teachers continue to be challenged by how they can safely adhere to its requirements. Of particular challenge is the lack of clarity of the phrase reasonable adjustments, and its application to curriculum. This study explored 92 Australian judicial decisions involving 54 students with disabilities identifying four key reasons why adjustments to curriculum pose such a challenge for schools. First, teachers across Australia were, and continue to be, challenged by the discrepancy between the legislated definition of disability, and that used by education jurisdictions to identify students eligible for additional resourcing. A second identified challenge involved finding ways in which students, and their families, can meaningfully engage in educational decision-making given time and other constraints. Third, teachers were challenged by how to balance the theoretical and philosophical benefits of including students with disabilities against the economic constraints faced by schools. A final challenge was working out how to meet the desires of families while also upholding the requirement for academic integrity. As the first comprehensive Australian study that has examined judicial decisions with a specific focus on adjustments to curriculum, this session offers teachers a better understanding of how they can safely negotiate adjustments to minimise the likelihood of future litigation.