

POTS in School, TAFE & University: Accessing Reasonable Adjustments



Everyone has a right to access education on the same basis as others. For people with disabilities, including those with Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS), this right is protected by federal legislation. This applies across all states and territories in both public and private institutions, including primary and secondary schools, TAFE, and universities. To support this right, schools and education providers are required to offer reasonable adjustments that help remove barriers to participation.

What Are Reasonable Adjustments?

Education providers must:

- Consult with the student and (if applicable) their parent, carer, or support person
- Make reasonable accommodations to support access to education
- Prevent discrimination and mistreatment

Adjustments may be needed for:

- Admission and enrolment
- Participation in classes and programs
- Use of campus services and facilities

Who to Talk To

Start by contacting your school, TAFE, or university to find out the right point of contact. This may be a disability support officer, counsellor, principal, or head of studies. You may also benefit from speaking with individual teachers or lecturers.

Do You Need a Formal Diagnosis?

No. You can request adjustments even if your POTS diagnosis is suspected or pending. However, bringing a doctor's letter or personal notes about your condition can help explain your needs. You might also want to bring this factsheet to help guide the discussion.

Reasonable Adjustments: Examples

The best adjustments depend on your specific needs, but here are some suggestions:

- Access to water, snacks, and medications during class and exams
- Use of a footstool or second chair to elevate legs in class
- Being placed in classes with a trusted peer who can share notes
- Access to online or recorded lessons for days missed or during brain fog
- Special consideration for assessments and assignment extensions
- Modified requirements for classes involving prolonged standing (e.g. PE, Hospitality)
- Ground floor classrooms, elevator access, air-conditioned rooms
- A second set of textbooks kept at school or campus
- Part-time study options (eg: spreading Years 11 & 12 over three years)
- Use of sick bay to rest during the day
- Exam adjustments: extra time, preferred time of day, ability to have water, snacks, or medications, use of footstool, and spaced exam scheduling
- Uniform adjustments to allow compression garments

