

Performance of Students with a Disability or Long Term Medical Condition at La Trobe University 2001 – 2006

Summary

This report contains statistical information and analysis relating to the enrolment, retention and success levels for students with a disability or long term medical condition at La Trobe University. The DEST indicators used to monitor students with a disability at Australian universities are: access, participation, retention and success. Definitions of these measures are set out in Appendix 1. The information is presented by Faculty and by Campus, and a campus comparison giving a snapshot of 2006 information is also included.

The analysis considers the patterns of enrolment, retention and success in comparison with the state and national averages for the higher education sector, and with benchmark targets. The benchmark target reflects the numbers of people with a disability in the Victorian state population, and seeks to achieve a similar percentage of students with a disability in the University student population.

Overall, the enrolment levels for students with a disability at La Trobe University are very pleasing. The number of new commencing students with a disability has steadily increased (except for a slight drop in 2005) since 2002 and in 2006 new enrolment numbers were above the benchmark target. New commencements have also been above both the state and national average for every year since 2001. A similar trend has occurred for the enrolment levels of all students with a disability at La Trobe.

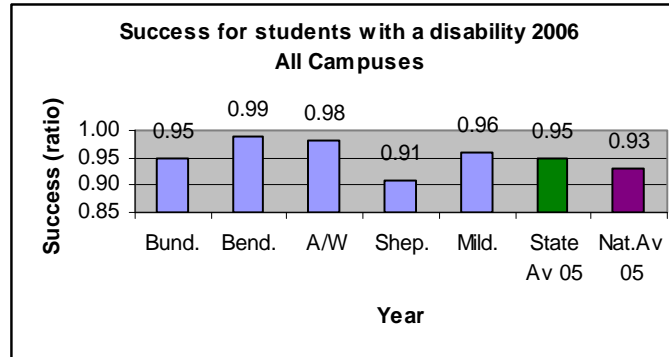
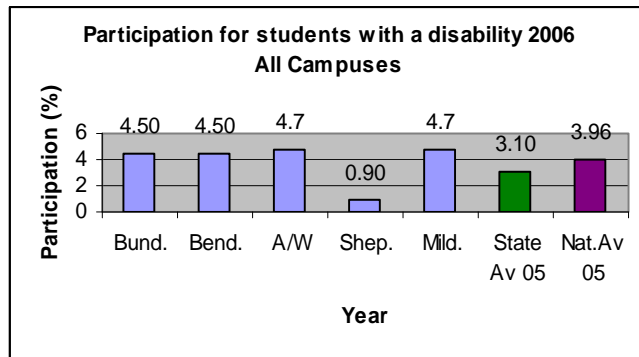
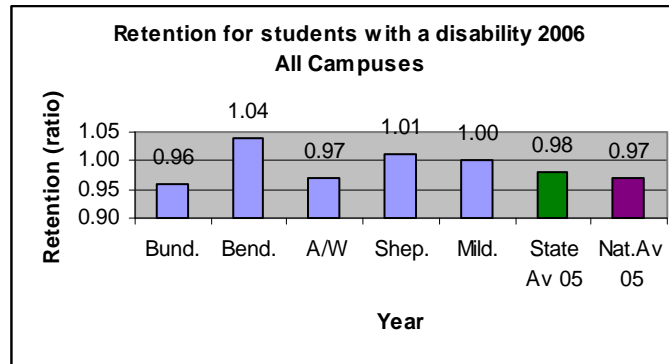
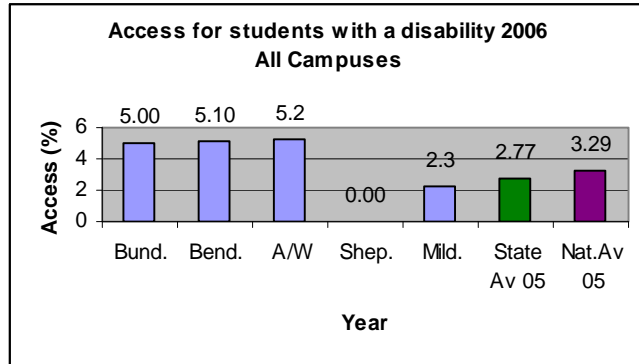
Retention levels indicate that students with a disability are slightly less likely than other students to persevere with their studies, however retention levels were similar to the sector averages for 2005 and 2006. Success levels indicate that these students are slightly less likely than other students to successfully complete all units of study. This indicates the need for Faculties to consider additional study support initiatives to assist students with disabilities.

Students with a Disability at La Trobe University 2001 - 2006

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	State Av	Nat.Av	Target
Access %	3.7%	3.2%	3.3%	3.6%	3.4%	4.6%	2.77	3.29	4.00
Participation %	3.9%	3.8%	3.9%	4.2%	3.9%	4.2%	3.10	3.96	4.00
Retention r	0.94	0.94	0.95	0.96	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.97	1.00
Success r	0.94	0.95	0.97	0.96	0.95	0.96	0.95	0.93	1.00

In 2006 the Faculty of Law and Management had slightly less commencing students with a disability than the other Faculties, however this Faculty has the most consistent and strong levels of retention and success for these students. In 2006 students with a disability (across all years of study) were most heavily enrolled in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, followed by the Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering.

Students with a Disability All Campuses 2006



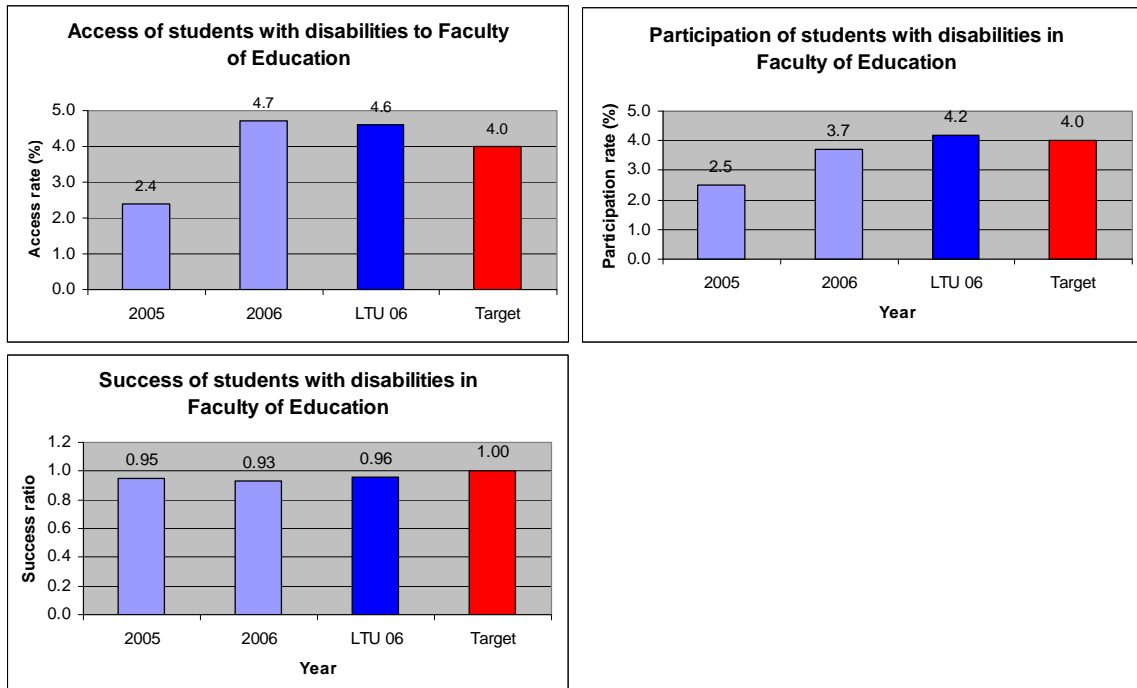
Disability	Bund.	Bend.	A/W	Shep.	Mild.	State Av 05	Nat. Av 05
Access %	5.00	5.10	5.2	0.00	2.3	2.77	3.29
Participation %	4.50	4.50	4.7	0.90	4.7	3.10	3.96
Retention r	0.96	1.04	0.97	1.01	1.00	0.98	0.97
Success r	0.95	0.99	0.98	0.91	0.96	0.95	0.93

The percentage of commencing students with a disability was above the state and national average in 2006 at Bundoora, Bendigo and Albury Wodonga campuses. Shepparton campus had no commencing students from this group in 2006 and only three continuing students. The percentage of all enrolled students from this group was above the state and national average for all campuses except Shepparton.

The retention ratio indicates that students with a disability at Bendigo, Shepparton and Mildura were just as likely, or more likely, than other students to persevere with their studies. At Bundoora and Albury Wodonga these students were slightly less likely than other students to persevere, however the ratio was close to the state and national averages.

The success ratio indicates that this group of students were slightly less likely than other students to succeed in their studies, however success levels were equal to slightly above the national and state averages, except for Shepparton campus.

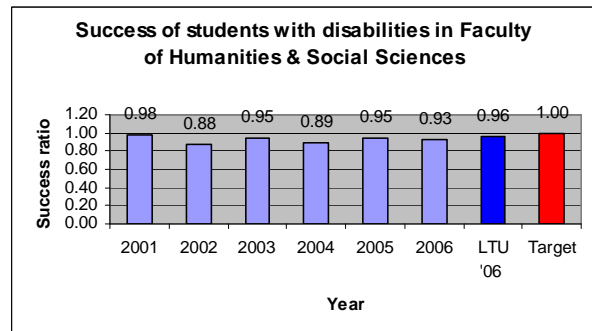
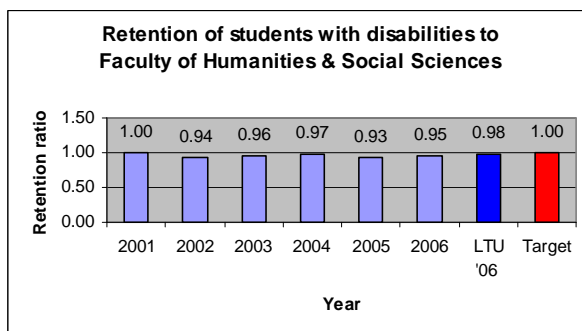
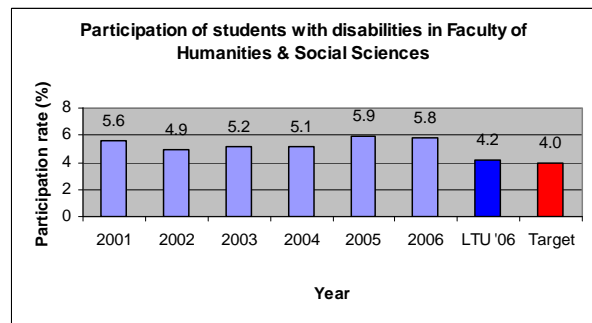
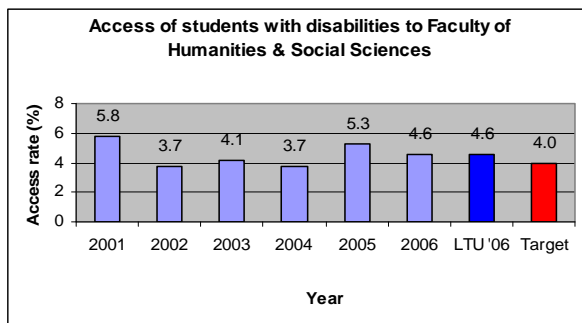
Faculty of Education



As the Faculty of Education is a new Faculty, data is only available for the past two years. Students with disabilities are now well represented in the Faculty of Education and the enrolments target has been surpassed for first-year students, and almost reached for this group across all Faculty programs.

However, success rates for students with disabilities are below those of the general student population and below those of students with disabilities in other Faculties. This indicates a need for more study support initiatives for this group of students.

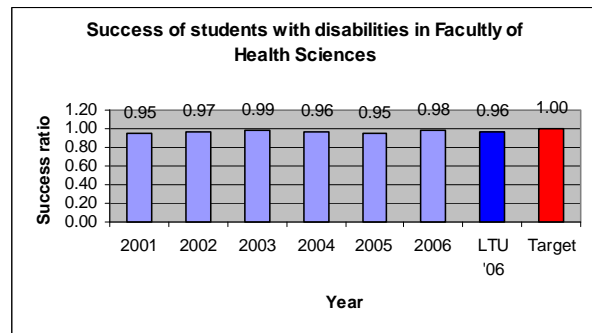
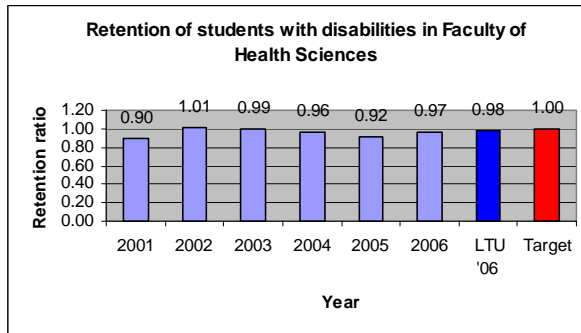
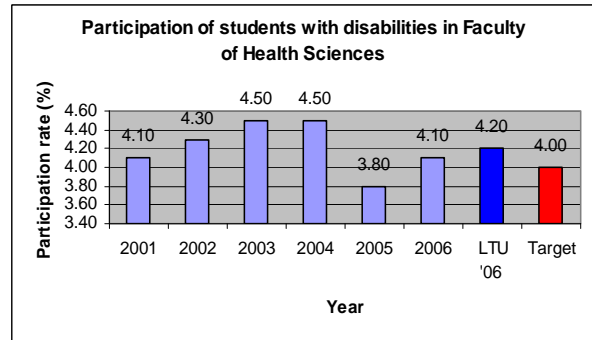
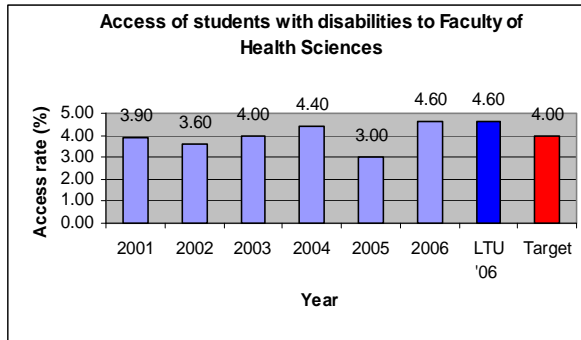
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences



Contrary to patterns for other equity groups, students with disabilities are accessing and participating in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at excellent rates: the percentage of students from this group who commenced study in the faculty in 2006 and those in all Faculty programs were above the target. The Faculty is commended for this result.

Retention and success indicators are also quite strong, although it is to be noted that they are lower than those for students with disabilities in other Faculties, and for the general student population. This indicates that further study support initiatives may be needed to ensure that students with disabilities succeed at similar levels to the general student population.

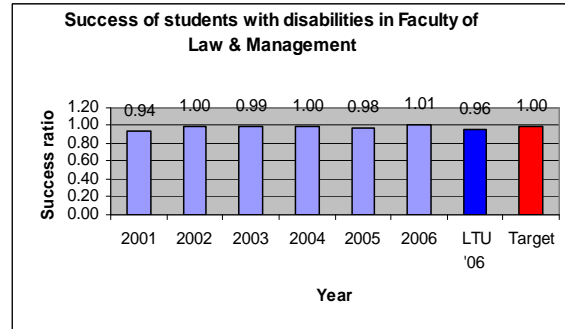
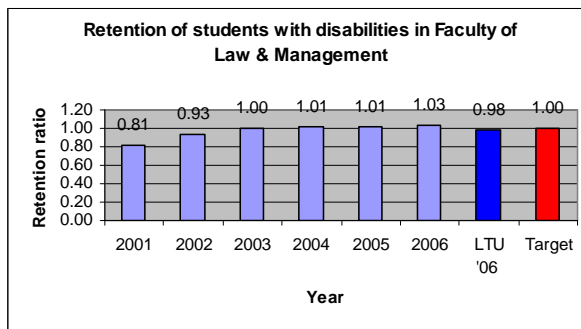
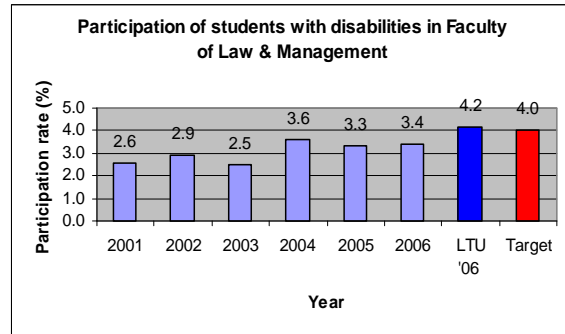
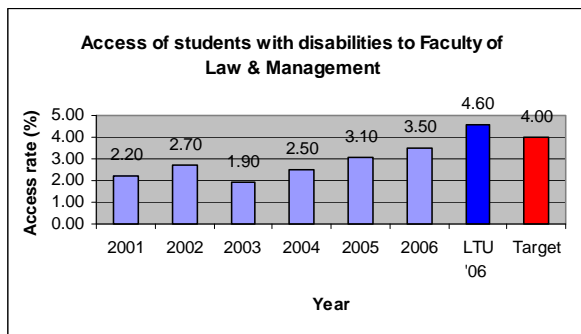
Faculty of Health Sciences



The Faculty is above target for students with disabilities who are commencing and re-enrolling in their studies, and these figures are in line with students with disabilities in other Faculties.

However these students are slightly less likely than other La Trobe students to persevere and succeed at their studies, and the Faculty may wish to consider additional study support initiatives for students with disabilities.

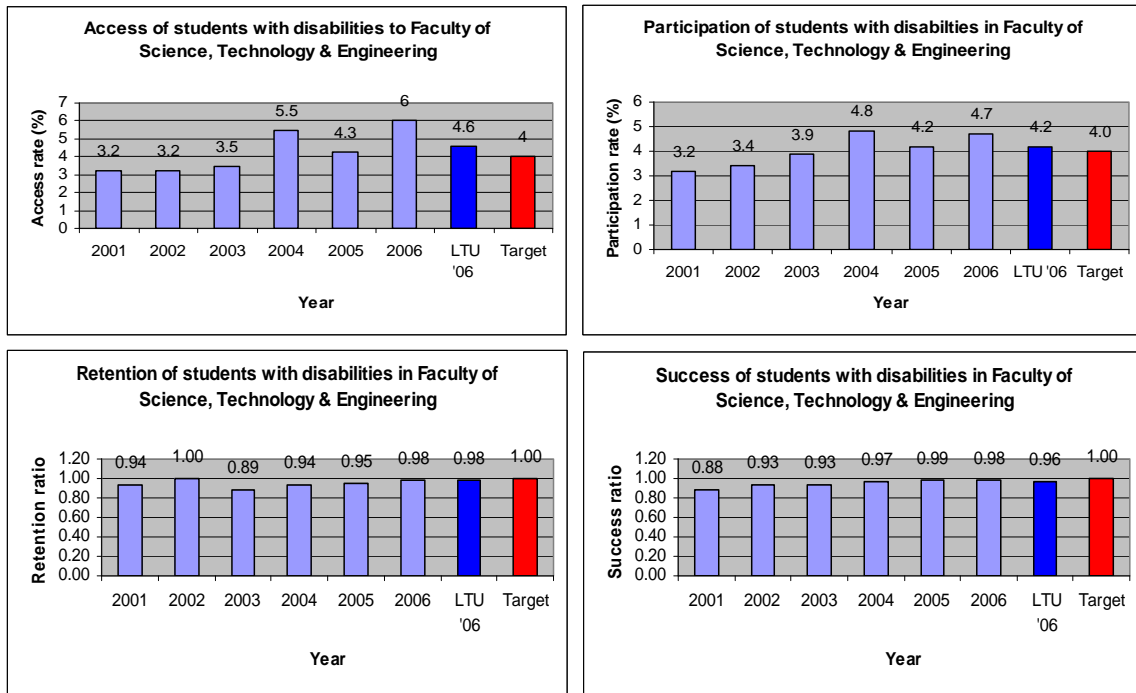
Faculty of Law and Management



Although students with disabilities remain underrepresented in comparison with other faculties and with the general population, there has been a marked improvement since 2001 in terms of their enrolments in first year and all years' courses.

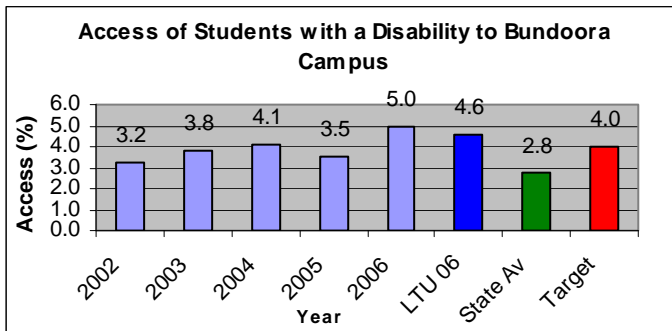
Also commendable is the strong retention and success rates for students with disabilities in the Faculty, which indicate they are persevering and successfully completing their courses at a higher rate than students with disabilities enrolled in other Faculties, and when compared to the general student population.

Faculty of Science, Technology and Engineering

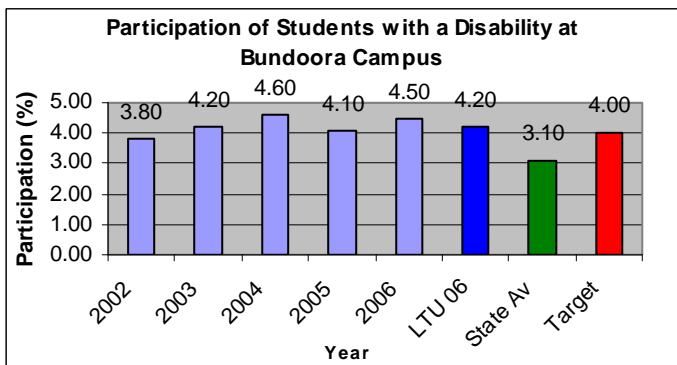


Enrolment rates for first year and all year students with disabilities are above target levels. Retention levels for these students are similar to those of other Faculties, and slightly less than all La Trobe students. Success rates for these students are slightly better than for students with disabilities in other Faculties, however they are still below success rates of other La Trobe students, indicating some additional study support initiatives may be required.

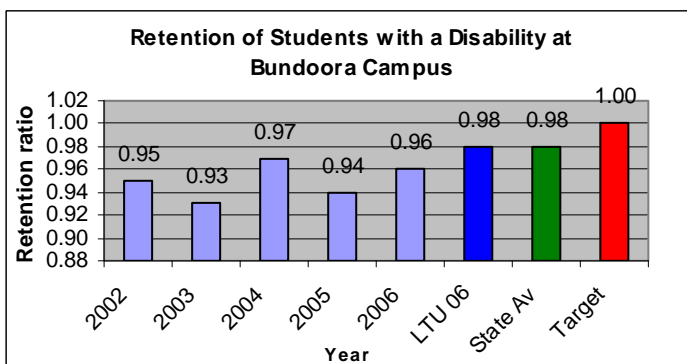
Bundoora Campus



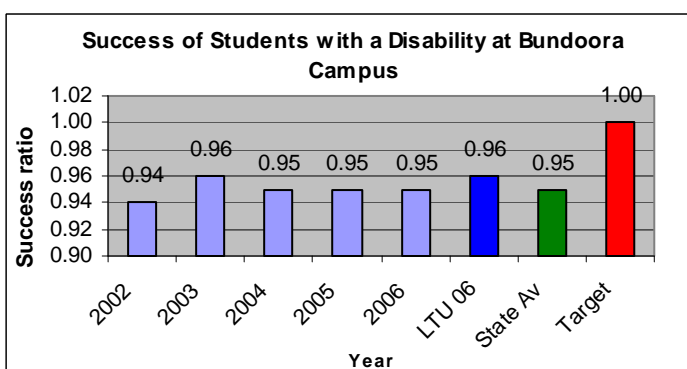
The percentage of commencing students with a disability has been close to, or above target, and consistently above the state average, for the five year period.



The percentage of students with a disability enrolled across all Bundoora Campus programs has been above target for every year except 2002. This measure has been above the state average for every year of the period. This is a commendable effort for the Campus.

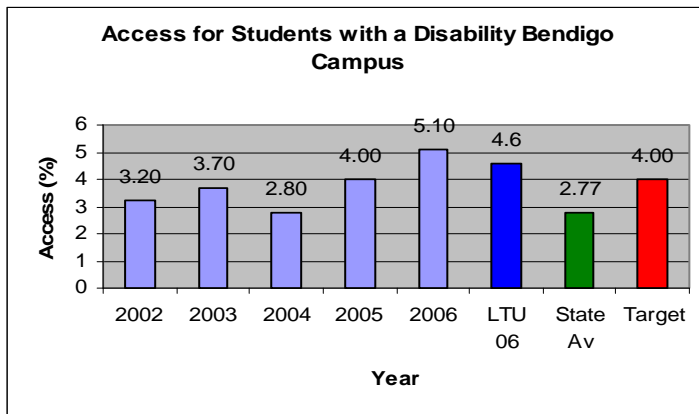


Retention and success levels for this group have remained slightly below target indicating that these students are slightly less likely than other students to persevere with their studies. Retention has also remained below the state average, and below the retention level for this group across the University.

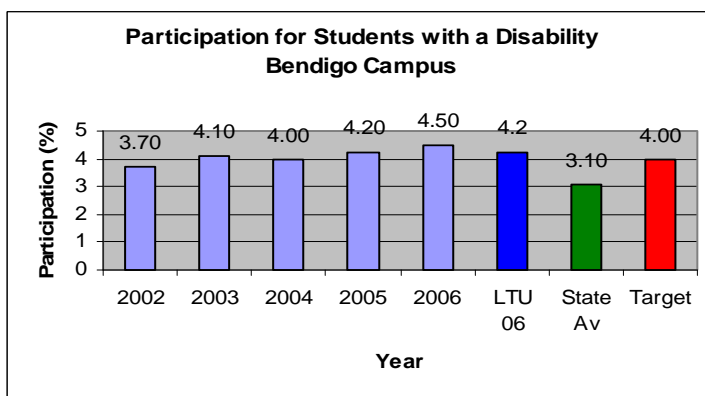


Students with a disability at Bundoora Campus are also slightly less likely to remain in their programs than their counterparts across all campuses of the University. This indicates a need to consider further additional study support initiatives for this group of students. While success levels remain below those of other students, they have been above the state average for every year since 2003.

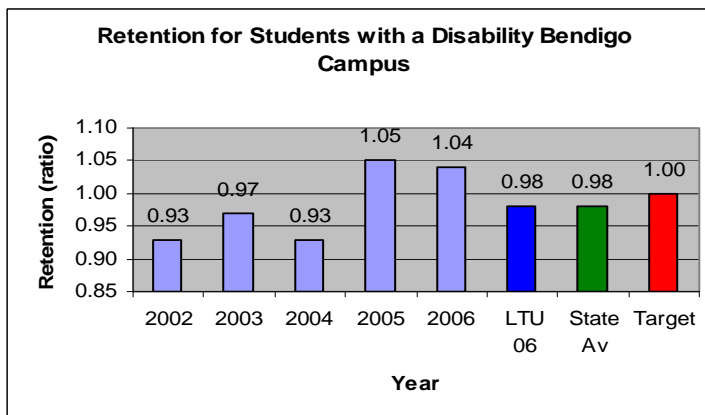
Bendigo Campus



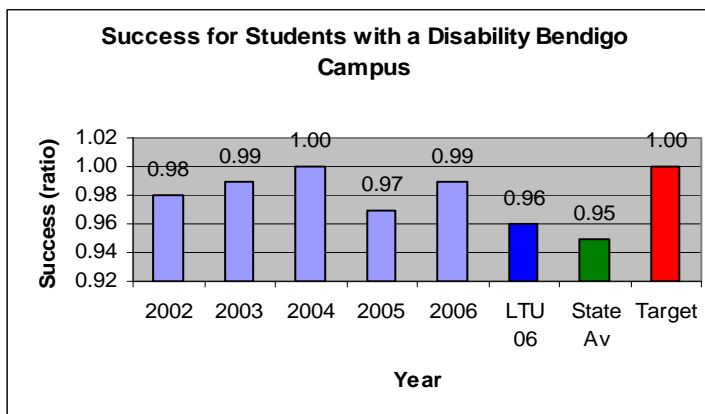
There has been a pleasing improvement in the numbers of commencing and continuing students in this group, and the Bendigo Campus is commended for this effort. In 2005 commencing student numbers reached the target, and remained well above the target in 2006. The access level for this group is also greater than for students with a disability across the University and well above the state average.



The numbers of students with a disability across all the Bendigo campus programs reached target levels in 2003 and have remained above the target since that time. In 2006 there were 75 commencing students with disabilities and 171 students from this group enrolled across all Campus programs.

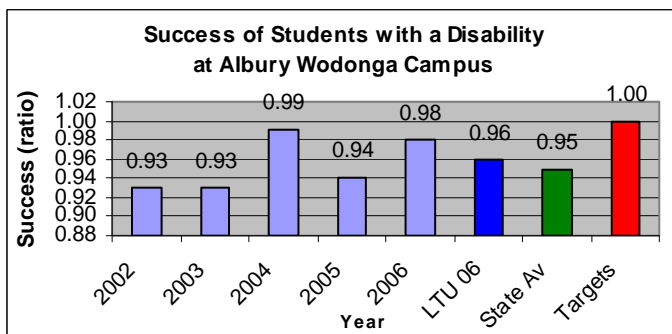
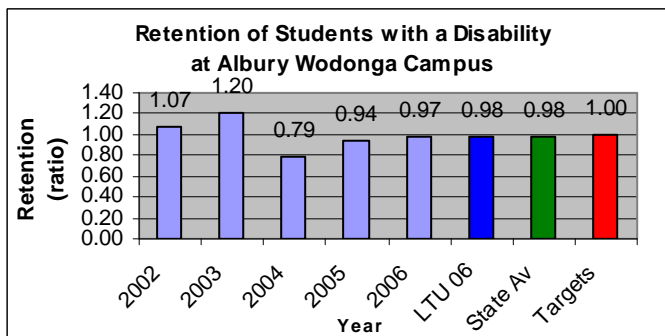
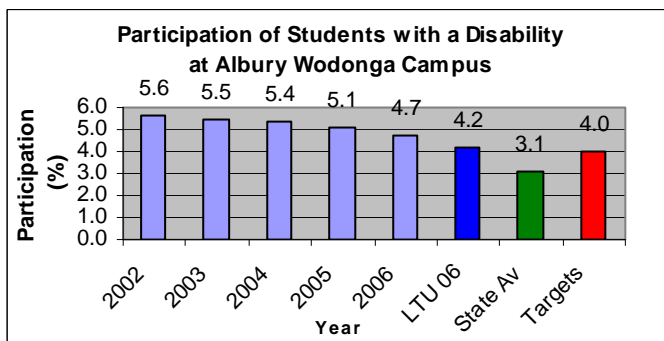
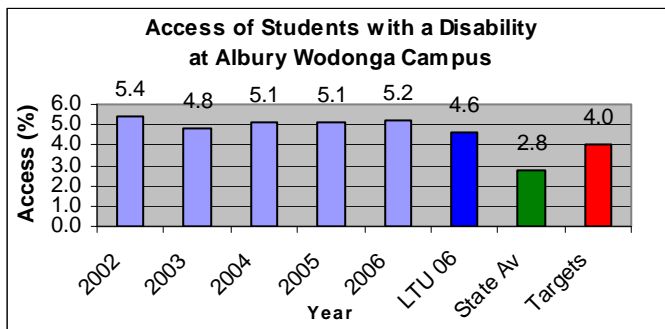


Retention levels for these students have been above target and the state average in 2005 and 2006, indicating that these students are persevering with their studies at a greater rate than other students, and at a greater rate than students with a disability across the University.



Success levels are almost as strong as they are for other students, and they are stronger than for students with a disability across the University. Success levels have also been consistently stronger than the state average.

Albury Wodonga Campus



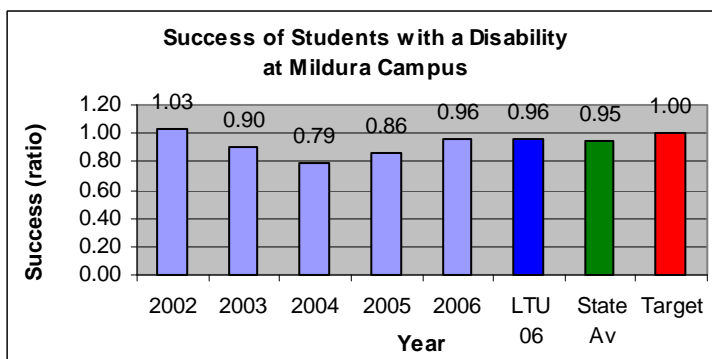
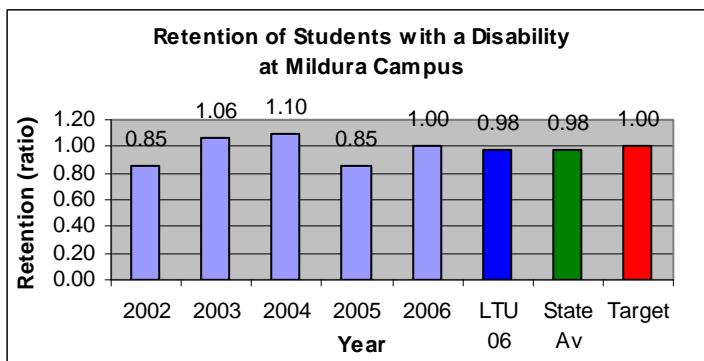
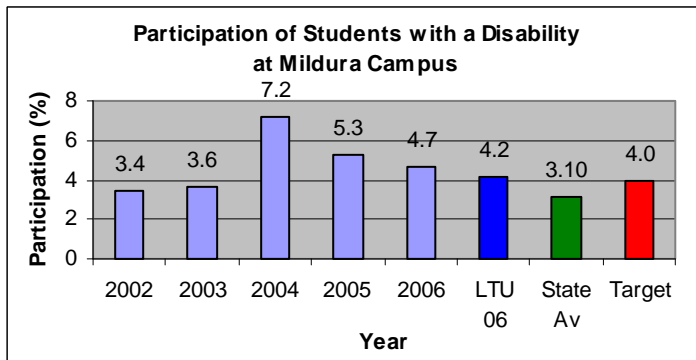
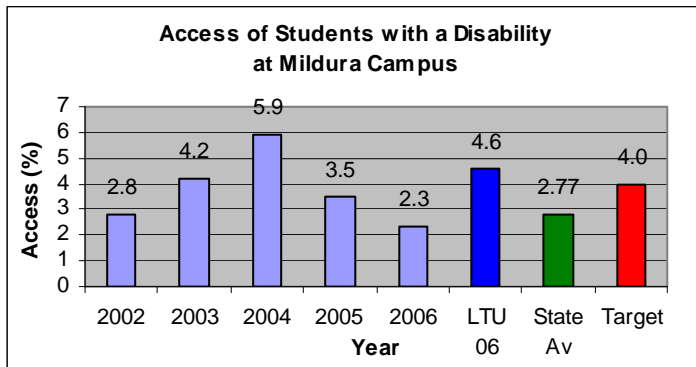
Commencing student levels have remained very strong across the five year period in this group, and the Campus is commended for this effort. For every year of the five year period, the levels of both commencing and continuing students with disabilities have remained well above the state and national average, and above levels for this group across the University.

In 2006 there were 25 commencing students with disabilities and 49 students from this group enrolled across all Albury Wodonga Campus programs.

Retention levels for these students declined sharply in 2004, and then improved again in the following two years. In 2006 these students were slightly less likely than other students to persevere with their studies, however the retention rate was almost equal to that for the group across the University. The 2006 retention rate was equal to the state average and slightly above the national average.

Success levels in 2006 were slightly above those for students with a disability across the University, and above the state and national average. However for all years the levels have remained slightly below the success levels of other students. This indicates the need to consider whether additional study support initiatives are required for this group of students.

Mildura Campus



There has been a variable pattern of access and participation for students with a disability. For the past two years the number of commencing students has fallen below the target and the state average. It also fell well below the level of access for students with a disability across the University.

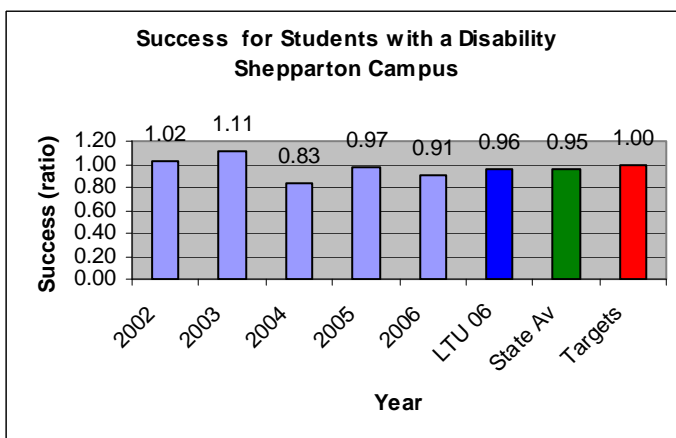
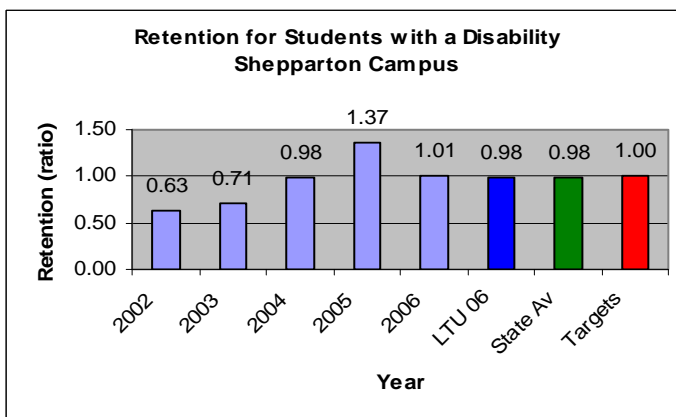
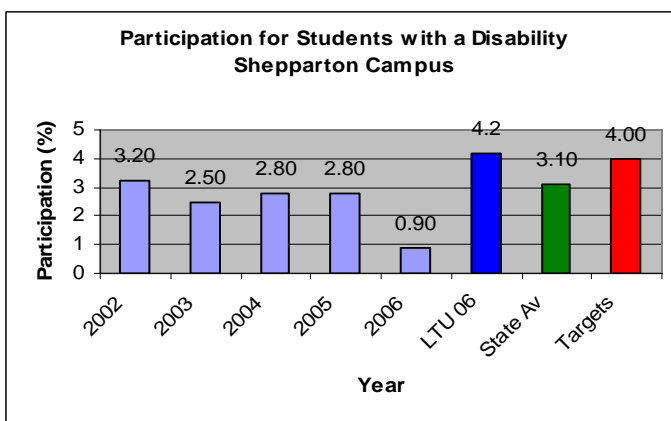
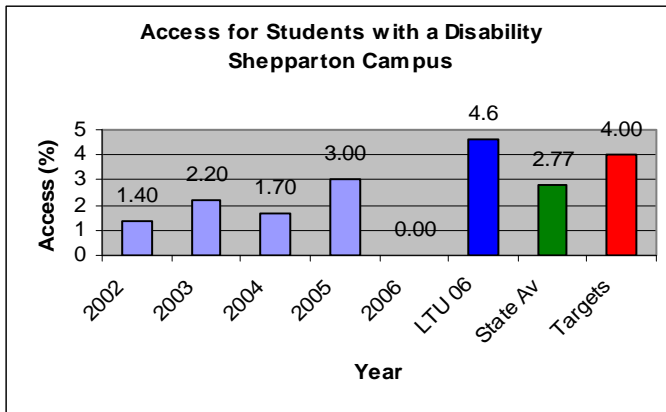
The number of students from this group remains above the target and the state average for enrolments across all Mildura campus programs. It is also just above the level for this group across the University.

In 2006 there were three students with a disability who commenced studies, and 15 students from this group enrolled across all Campus programs.

Retention levels for students with a disability have been strong for three of the past four years, indicating that (except for 2005) these students have been just as likely, or more likely, to persevere with their studies than other students. Retention levels have also been just above the state average.

There has been a varied pattern of success for these students, however in 2006 success levels were equal to the state average and to the success levels for this group across the University. Nevertheless, success levels for these students have been below those of other students since 2003, indicating a need to consider further study support initiatives for this group.

Shepparton Campus



There has been a variable pattern of access and participation for students with a disability. In 2006 there were no students with a disability who commenced studies, and only 3 students from this group enrolled across all Shepparton Campus programs. This indicates a need to explore if there are barriers to university entry for these students, and also a need for a targeted outreach program.

Retention levels for students with a disability are similarly varied, however for the past two years these students have been more likely to persevere with their studies than other students. Retention levels are also higher than those for students with a disability across the University, and the state average.

For the past three years, success levels for these students have been below those of other students. They have also been below the level for this group across the University, and below the state average. This indicates a need to consider further study support initiatives for this group of students.

However the very low numbers of students with a disability makes any trends for this group quite volatile.

Definitions of Equity Indicators

Rate

'Rates' are the proportion of students in the relevant cohort who belong to the named equity group, expressed as a percentage.

Ratio

Ratios in this report are rates divided by a reference value. This measure makes a comparison between the equity group and the wider student population. A ratio of 1.00 indicates an equitable performance, while ratios of less than 1.00 indicate less than equitable performance.

Target

In order to evaluate equity indicators, it is helpful to compare them against a benchmark. 'Targets' have therefore been allocated to each equity measure. These targets are the rates or ratios which would demonstrate a completely equitable performance. For indicators measured as rates (access and participation), the target is for the representation of the equity group at the University to equal the representation of that group in the general state population. For indicators measured as ratios (low SES participation, retention and success), the target is 1.00.

In line with DEST practice, the percentages used to set targets are those collected by the ABS in the 2001 Census and are the percentage of the equity group's share of the general state population aged between 15 and 64. The following table shows each equity group's presence in the general state population according to this data.

Equity Group	% of state population
Low SES	25
People with Disabilities	4.0
Non-English Speaking Background	4.8
Rural	24.3
Isolated	4.5
Women	50

Note that since low SES is defined as the lowest quartile of the population, low SES students will be 25% of the population by definition. However for this measure DEST use the lowest quartile of the nation, not the state, so the actual representation of people of low SES in Victoria may be slightly different. 25% remains a reasonable target for this group.

State Average

The statistical analysis includes a comparison with the state average. This is the average performance against each measure for all Universities in Victoria. Appendix 2 also contains statistical averages for all Universities in Australia. However, as DEST does not compile this data until late in the year, the state and national averages are for 2005, except for success, which is for 2004.

Access

Access is a measure of whether students from particular equity groups are able to gain entry into university study. The **access rates** reported here show the percentage of the students **commencing** study at La Trobe University who belong to the named equity group.

If access were completely equitable, students from the particular equity group would be entering study at the same rate as the rest of the population. Hence the **access target** is for the access rate to equal the percentage of people in the general population of Victoria who belong to the relevant equity group. These percentages are shown in the table above.

Participation

Participation is a measure of whether students from particular equity groups are studying at university. The **participation rate** is the percentage of the students **enrolled** at La Trobe University who belong to the named equity group. (It differs from the access rate in that it takes into account all students, not only those in the first year of their course).

If participation in study at La Trobe were completely equitable, students from each equity group would be participating in study at the same rate as the population in general. Hence, the **participation target** is for the participation rate to equal the percentage of people belonging to that group found in the general population of Victoria. These percentages are shown in the table above.

Note that in line with DEST practice, participation for low SES students is expressed not as a percentage but as a **ratio** between students from low SES backgrounds and students from high SES backgrounds. The target for this ratio is 1.00, i.e. ideally low SES and high SES students would participate equally in La Trobe University study.

Retention

Retention is a measure of whether students who commence study at La Trobe University continue their course of study. An **apparent retention rate** is calculated by comparing the number of students re-enrolling in a given year with the number of students who were enrolled in the previous year (not counting those who completed their course). It is only an apparent rate in that it does not include students who deferred their course of study or transferred to another university. A retention rate of 1.0 would mean that all the students who were enrolled the previous year, and had not completed their course, re-enrolled to continue their study.

The **retention indicators** shown in the charts below are **ratios** between the retention rate of the students in that equity group, and the retention rate of all La Trobe students. The target is a retention indicator of 1.0 which implies that students in the equity group are continuing their studies at the same rate as other students.

Success

Success is a measure of whether students are passing in their course of study. A **success rate** is the proportion of units a student passed compared to the number of units undertaken. The **success indicators** shown in the charts below are **ratios** between the success rates of students in the named equity group, and all other La Trobe students. The target success indicator is 1.0, which would show that students in the equity group are passing at the same rate as other students.