

## DISABILITY SERVICES - STUDENT STORY 1 (VIDEO TRANSCRIPT)

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UOW Student: I am in the third year of my PhD in biological sciences. So I work over at the Illawarra Health and Medical Research Institute. So I'm legally blind and I'm working in a research lab. We use a lot of really small pieces of equipment, very small volumes, um, little teeny tiny plates that we have to put things in and look for bubbles. And um, with a visual disability it's really hard to see those things. And if it hadn't been for disability services, I actually wouldn't even be able to do the PhD that I'm doing now.

I did do one semester here, one session here at the University of Wollongong as an exchange student and I was registered with disability services then. Um, and during that time they gave me extended, um, exam times, so I was able to complete exams, um, within a reasonable time frame for me 'cause it takes me longer to read things. So disability services has provided me with a variety of assistance. Um, the main thing that they've done for me, it was provided me with a facilitator so that person can step in and do the small things that I can't see to do in the lab. And they've also provided me with a piece of equipment that, um, has a camera on it and it can zoom down on a table that I'm working on and enlarge everything and it shows up on a screen in front of my face. Um, so I can actually work more independently in the lab and rely on my facilitator less. And they've also allowed me to extend my study time. So PhD students are generally given three and a half years and after that three and a half years, we're star..., Um, we'll be charged tuition. Um, so by seeking assistance with disability services, I've been able to waive that tuition charges I would have accrued (sic).

Studying at university is hard and it's even harder if you have some sort of physical or mental disability. Um, so don't let that hinder yourself. Um, you have every opportunity to be successful and you should take advantage of all of the assistance that the disability services has to offer you. Don't ever be afraid or embarrassed to put your hand up for help. Um, yeah, it's not something to be ashamed of.