

“Guidance for candidates with a disability or who think they might have a disability”

What is the University’s position on disability?

We want to describe our approach to disability. This is so that you will not be put off applying for a job or letting us know you have a disability.

We believe that what really disables someone is not just their disability. It is more likely to be the physical features of their environment, how organisations work and other people’s attitudes. These features may seem fine for the majority of people but may fail to take into account the requirements and aspirations of someone with a disability. We know that some people need practical adjustments, support or guidance and we have things in place here to help. We provide support to disabled staff and their managers.

The Application Stage:

- We use the website for all our vacancies unless it says otherwise. If you have a disability which makes it difficult for you to apply on-line please contact the relevant Human Resources team. Their email address will appear in the contact details for the vacancy. We can make the application available in large print, audio tape or Braille.
- Like many other organisations we ask everyone to fill in a section asking about “Equal Opportunities” including whether or not you have a disability. We keep this information separate from the rest of the recruitment process. We use the information to check how well people with different characteristics, such as disability, gender, ethnic origin or age, are doing in their applications. We don’t need to know who is who, just the numbers of people in different groups. If we find out something we need to change, we will do so.

The Interview stage:

- If you are successfully short-listed for interview, your interview letter will ask if you have a disability. It will ask for details of your disability and what arrangements you would need to help you attend the Interview.
- If you did not respond to the Equal Opportunities monitoring questions when you applied, it is not too late to tell the person arranging the interviews. Then they can make the necessary arrangements for you to attend.

The offer of employment stage

- If you are successful and are offered employment with us, the Recruiting Manager and /or Human Resources staff will ask you for more detail about your disability so that they can discuss any “reasonable adjustments” needed for you to start work.

- If you and your manager need help to decide what adjustments are needed there is plenty of help available. There are Human Resources and other staff in the University who have experience of supporting disabled staff. They can advise and arrange what you need.
- If we need help from outside the University we will ask you to apply to the “Access to Work” part of Job Centre Plus. They can help with deciding what adjustments are needed and also help towards the costs. It is important to apply within the first 6 weeks of starting work to qualify. They can also provide help directly to you with fares to work, support workers or communicator support for interview.

How do I know if I am disabled?

There are many kinds of disability, some more widely understood and visible than others. Many of us who work at the University may have a disability that is covered by the Equality Act 2010 without even realising it.

The Equality Act 2010 describes a disabled person as:

“anyone who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.”

The effect must be:

- substantial – in other words, not minor or trivial
- long-term – which is usually taken to mean that it has lasted, or is likely to last, for more than 12 months
- normal day-to-day activities - include the sorts of things people regularly do such as writing and reading, using the telephone, using a bus or train and other things like that

When deciding if you come within the definition, think about the effect of your impairment without treatment or medication (except for eyesight that can be corrected by glasses or contact lenses).

This definition may include people with long term health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and epilepsy, severe facial disfigurement, depression, schizophrenia and dyslexia, cystic fibrosis or repetitive strain injury as well as mobility, visual or hearing disabilities. It also includes cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV from point of diagnosis. If you are registered blind or partially sighted or certified blind or partially sighted by a consultant ophthalmologist you will also automatically be considered as disabled.

What information will you need to know about my disability?

We will ask you if you think that you meet the definition of the Equality Act 2010.

If you are offered employment, we will ask you to complete a form to tell us more about your disability and which one (or more) of the following categories your disability comes into:

- Specific learning disability such as dyslexia or dyspraxia
- General Learning disability such as Down's syndrome
- Cognitive Impairment (such as autistic spectrum disorder or resulting from a head injury)
- Long standing illness or health condition such as cancer, HIV, diabetes, chronic heart disease or epilepsy
- Mental Health condition such as depression or schizophrenia
- Physical impairment or mobility issues such as difficulty using arms or using a wheelchair or crutches
- Deaf or serious hearing impairment
- Blind or other visual impairment
- Other type of disability

What can the University do to assist me?

It is your right under the law to receive support from your employer. We also know that having 'reasonable adjustments' in place for disabled staff means that you can work safely and do your job well for the University. We want disabled staff to have equal opportunities with non-disabled staff.

'Reasonable Adjustment' is the legal term for any adaptation made in the workplace to ensure equal access for a disabled person. The most common types of adjustment include:

- equipment (for example assistive computer software or an adjustable height desk)
- adjustments to workplaces or the physical environment
- adjustments to an employee's duties or working routine
- transcription of written materials into accessible formats (for example Braille or large print)
- the services of a support worker (for example, a personal assistant or sign-language interpreter)

The "reasonable adjustments" we make will be right for your needs. We will explore the options available and reach a conclusion on what is reasonable. You will be fully involved in any discussions about adjustments. Our Occupational Health Staff and the Access to Work Service (part of Job Centre Plus) are also available to advise us.

I think I am disabled. Should I talk to anyone in the University about it?

It is up to you whether or not you tell the University that you are disabled. However, we are working hard to create an environment in which applicants and staff feel happy to disclose their disability.