

Disclosing a Disability or Health Concern: Advice & Support

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What does the Careers Service offer?

The Careers Service aims to offer equality of service for disabled students and graduates.

If you need clarification about any of the following services or require additional support, please contact us by phone 0161 275 2829 or email careers.info@manchester.ac.uk

Accessible Careers Information

- We can provide material in alternative formats where possible and a fully accessible venue. Please let us know if we can put anything in place to meet your needs.
- The University web pages are designed to be accessible using assistive technologies (disability software)
www.manchester.ac.uk/careers

A flexible Guidance Service

By prior arrangement we can offer you the following:

- An extended 60 minute Guidance appointment with a careers consultant specialising either in your subject area or disability issues. In peak periods we offer 30 minute appointments.
- A careers interview at an alternative venue on campus to suit your needs.
- Careers advice by Skype or telephone.

Please mention your disability when you request an appointment so we can ensure that you are offered the time and expertise to meet your needs. For more information on our services, visit:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/services

Mentoring

Our Manchester Gold mentoring programme enables disabled students to be matched with a professional mentor who can provide insights into their industry, role, organisation and sector plus advice about career

planning. Mentors offer specific support for any issues relating to disability that a mentee feels may impact on their employability.

For more information visit:

www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/experience/mentoring

Disclosing a disability when applying for jobs

Deciding whether or not to disclose your disability or health condition to a prospective employer is a decision most disabled students have to make at some point. It is often difficult to know when and how this information should be conveyed. The decisions you make about these issues will be personal to you and there are likely to be positives and negatives connected with each choice.

Reasons for Disclosure

- Many employers are committed to employing disabled people and actively recruit them as they wish to demonstrate their commitment to a diverse workforce and also to reflect their customer base. Look out for the Disability Confident symbol on job advertisements, plus check out employers' equality policies.
- If an employer uses the Disability Confident symbol it means that they are positive about employing disabled people and guarantee to interview all disabled candidates who meet the minimum requirements for the job.
- The 2010 Equality Act covers disability discrimination in employment. If you declare your disability and feel you have been discriminated against during the application process, you can take your case to an Employment Tribunal.
- You can take the opportunity to describe your disability in a positive light and may be able to use it to provide evidence of the competencies employers seek e.g. flexibility, creative problem solving, overcoming barriers, negotiation etc.

- There are financial schemes available such as the Access to Work grant, which helps to pay for practical support if needed to do your job.
- You may feel more comfortable knowing that you have been open and not kept anything back from the employer.

Reasons against Disclosure

- You may feel that you will be discriminated against and rejected by employers with pre-set ideas about the effects of disability and that your application will not be viewed on its own merits.
- You may feel you do not wish to discuss your disability with a stranger.
- You may feel your disability has nothing to do with your ability to do the job, so why draw attention to it.
- You may feel that an employer will not view your application objectively and will focus on your disability rather than your abilities.
- You may feel an employer will be concerned about the implications of your disability in terms of requiring additional time off through illness, specialist equipment etc.

How and When to Disclose

If you do decide to tell an employer about your disability then the next important decision is how and when to do this. You need to decide if you are happy to disclose the fact you have a disability at the outset i.e. when you complete a CV or application form or whether you would prefer to see how your applications go and bring the subject up at, or prior to, the interview stage.

Employers will be very interested in the skills that you can offer them. Living with your health issue or disability may in fact have honed skills in areas which are highly rated by employers such as: flexibility, time management, communication and negotiation. You will have to decide whether you wish to use examples related to your disability in a positive way to highlight these skills or prefer to concentrate on non-disability related examples.

There are several possible times to disclose your disability or health to a potential employer.

Covering Letter

You could mention your health or disability in the letter accompanying your CV as this is usually a good place to raise any extra issues which do not easily fit onto your CV or application form such as extended time away from your course and/or employment. If so, it should be done briefly in a positive manner making sure you highlight any particular achievements e.g. successful past employment or voluntary work and/or strategies you have used to overcome potential problems during your studies. You need to ensure that you don't make your disability the focus of your letter but just a small part, concentrating instead on the relevant skills and experience you have to offer.

Application

Under the 2010 Equality Act employers are not allowed to ask questions about health or disability on an application form, or at interview. They are however allowed to ask whether you require any reasonable adjustments to be made to enable you to participate fully in the recruitment process. You need to make a judgement as to whether it would be beneficial to use positive examples related to your disability in response to the competency questions which often feature on application forms. For example, it is much more of an achievement to get a degree in three years if you have ME, than if you don't.

Pre-interview

If you are invited for an interview and require reasonable adjustments in order to participate equally in the process, you will need to get in contact with the employer in advance to enable them to make suitable arrangements. Many employers offer this in their invitation letter and this may be a good time to instigate a brief discussion around your disability.

Interview

It may be that your disability will be visible at interview and therefore it would be helpful to inform your interviewer about it in advance so that they are fully prepared. It also could be that your disability is hidden but that you prefer the interviewer is aware. In any interview you need to be relaxed and present yourself in a positive manner and this is particularly important if you feel the interviewer has little experience of your particular disability and is feeling anxious because of this. You may need to take the initiative by introducing what you feel are the relevant issues in this context and by offering to clarify anything they need to know.

Key points to consider

- Be very positive about your skills and abilities. Don't assume that an employer will view you in a negative way.
- Try to anticipate the interviewer's anxieties and address these. Don't allow room for doubts in the mind of the interviewer.
- Provide factual information that is related to your ability to do the job but do not use complicated medical terminology. Remember, you know what your health situation or disability means and how it affects you, others may not.
- Be prepared to make suggestions about what adjustments you would need in order to carry out the duties of the job effectively.
- Give positive examples of how you have met your challenges in the past.
- Demonstrate that your disability has not limited your personal achievements, study or work performance.
- Take along any relevant literature about funding or sources of information an employer could follow up if you feel this would be useful.

Be positive

Job seeking can be a frustrating business for everyone but don't be tempted to use the interview as a chance to air past grievances. Employers will want you to be positive and enthusiastic so concentrate on achievement and skills rather than your health or disability. If you

time the declaration of your disability this will give you more control over the way it is seen by the employer.

Further advice on disclosing a disability to employers is available on the Target Jobs website: <https://targetjobs.co.uk/careers-advice/equality-and-diversity>

You can also find information on disclosure, managing your disability when applying for graduate jobs and going through the recruitment process on the My Plus Student Group website: <https://myplusstudentsclub.com>

If you want to discuss any of these issues in more detail, contact us to book a guidance appointment to speak to a Careers Consultant.

Sources of employment support and advice

The following organisations offer a range of advice, guidance and support on recruitment and employment issues including disclosure:

- **AADD-UK**
Raising awareness, help and support for adults with ADHD. Includes list of regional support groups.
<http://aadduk.org/help-support/support-groups>
- **AbilityNet** helps people with any disability to use technology
<https://www.abilitynet.org.uk/homepage>
- **Association of Disabled Professionals**
Provides employment advice, information and/or peer support for disabled professionals.
www.adp.org.uk
- **Blind in Business**
General support for visually impaired job applicants including interview training. Also can provide readers for selection tests and assessment centres.
www.blindinbusiness.org.uk

- **Breakthrough UK**
 Manchester based organisation offering employment support and training to disabled people.
www.breakthrough-uk.co.uk
- **British Dyslexia Association**
 Provides dyslexia information for those in or seeking employment. Includes advice on getting an assessment, help in finding a job and reasonable adjustments.
www.bdadyslexia.org.uk
- **Disability Rights UK**
 Support and advice on a range of work issues including benefits and careers, education and leadership.
www.disabilityrightsuk.org
- **EmployAbility**
 Offers support, advice and guidance on the recruitment process including application advice and disclosure. Works directly with many employers including Google, Goldman Sachs, NHS and Barclays.
www.employ-ability.org.uk
- **Employ My Ability**
 Practical help on employability skills for disabled students including advice on disclosure.
www.employmyability.org.uk
- **Equality and Human Rights Commission**
 Provides information on disability related legalisation, plus general advice and examples of good practice.
www.equalityhumanrights.com
- **Lexxic**
 Dyslexia consultancy who provided dyslexia services for Higher Education and the workplace.
www.lexxic.com/home
- **MIND**
 Advice and resources on mental health in the workplace.
www.mind.org.uk
- **National Autistic Society (NAS)**
 Offers support to students and graduates with preparation and

transition to work through their employment service.

www.autism.org.uk/living-with-autism/finding-work-or-in-employment.aspx

- **Shaw Trust**

Employment Advisers provide advice on searching and applying for jobs including help filling in application forms and writing letters to employers

www.shaw-trust.org.uk

- **Vercida**

Supports many forms of diversity in the workplace including disability and supplies a search and matching tool:

www.vercida.com/uk

Government Initiatives

- **Access to work**

Helps pay for practical support to assist disabled individuals seeking or in employment, such as:

- Support and equipment at work
- Help towards transport costs if public transport not accessible to the individual.
- Finance to support an individual at the interview stage.

Check if you qualify for Access to Work online:

www.gov.uk/access-to-work

- **Work choice**

This supports disabled individuals whose needs cannot be met through Access to Work.

www.gov.uk/work-choice

For more information on the benefits and services available to disabled people use the 'Disability Rights UK Handbook' accessible in the Careers library.

Employment programmes and disability friendly employers

When looking for employment you are entitled to apply for any opportunity that suits your interests and abilities. However you may wish to consider employers who run specific employment programmes for disabled people or those who are committed to having a diverse workforce.

- **BBC Extend Programme**

Extend is a BBC-wide work placement scheme which offers appropriately qualified disabled people the opportunity to gain a 6 months (24 weeks) paid work placement within the BBC.

www.bbc.co.uk/jobs/extend

- **Business Disability Forum**

Members of this organisation are positive about employing disabled people. You can download a list of members here:

<http://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/membership/become-a-member>

- **Change 100**

The Leonard Cheshire Disability charity runs this internship scheme aiming to bring together top UK employers with disabled students.

www.leonardcheshire.org/support-and-information/life-and-work-skills-development/employment-programmes/change100

- **City Disabilities**

Mentoring opportunities in London, focusing on jobs in the City

<http://citydisabilities.org.uk/>

- **Civil Service – Summer Placement Scheme**

Offers 6-9 week paid placements to develop skills and abilities for Civil Service fast stream entry.

www.faststream.gov.uk/summer-diversity-internship-programme

- **CRCC Asia British Council Scholarship**

Fully funded scholarship with the British Council Shanghai, specifically for a student with a disability.

www.crccasia.com/universities/disability-scholarship-2018

- **Evenbreak**
Matches disabled job seekers with inclusive employers.
www.evenbreak.co.uk
- **Inclusive Top 50**
Lists the top 50 employers which promote inclusion in their workplaces.
<http://inclusivetop50.co.uk>
- **Mindful Employer**
Includes a Charter of Employers who are positive about mental health and working towards a set of principles:
www.mindfulemployer.net/charter/signatories
- **Pearson Internship Programme**
Paid project based internship for recent graduates with a disability.
<http://pipuk.pearson.com/higher-education>
- **Remploy**
Employment service offering employment advice, training and placements for disabled people, including CV and application help and advice on disclosure and benefits.
www.rempoy.co.uk
- **Scope Employment Service**
Offers employment support programs for disabled graduates.
www.scope.org.uk/support/services/employment

Disability Related News Websites

- **Disability News Service**
Information and news on issues that affect the lives of disabled people.
www.disabilitynewsservice.com
- **Youreable.com**
World wide information and news service for all disabled people with an interest in disability issues.
www.youreable.com

General support for disabled students at the University

- **Disability Advisory & Support Service (DASS)**

Provides general and academic support for disabled students at The University, including support for students on placements.

www.manchester.ac.uk/disability

Second Floor, University Place (Building 37 on the campus map)

University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL

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