

Careers resources for students with disabilities

Disability legislation

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced existing anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand.

Under the Equality Act 2010 a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantially adverse and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Information on disability rights can be found on the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk).

Researching employers

The Department for Work and Pensions has replaced the original Two Ticks scheme with the Disability Confident Scheme.

The Disability Confident Scheme is designed to help employers recruit and retain disabled people and people with health conditions for their skills. The scheme has 3 levels and employers must complete each level before moving on to the next.

You can see a list of [employers participating in the scheme](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/employers-participating-in-the-scheme) on the gov.uk website.

Disclosing disability

- Disclosure is the process of informing a potential employer that you have an illness, learning difficulty or disability. For many people, the fear of disclosing their health condition, specific learning difficulty or disability to potential employers can mean that they do not attempt to make certain applications for employment.
- It is often difficult to know whether to tell an employer and to know when and how information should be disclosed. You may not want to disclose your health or disability, because of concerns about not being given a fair chance or you may feel that your health or disability does not actually affect your ability to do the job that you have applied for.

The decision is a personal one, but the following points may help you.

Reasons for disclosure

- The Equality Act 2010 covers employment. If you have declared your disability, the employer cannot dismiss your application on this basis if "reasonable adjustment" can be made in the workplace. However, if you do not declare your disability, an employer may have grounds for dismissal. Reasonable adjustment can mean a variety of things for example extra time to take psychometric tests, back support adaptations, flexible working hours.
- Many employers are committed to employing disabled people - see information above on the **Disability Confident scheme**. Many employers also have an equal opportunities policy.
- You may be asked to complete a medical form and if so, you must do so truthfully
- There may be a health and safety implication, or the need for workplace adaptations

How to disclose and market yourself positively

It is important to think about all the skills that you can offer an employer. Living with your health problem or disability has in fact given you transferable skills that an employer is looking for eg doing well in your studies and having to manage treatment can be considered a strength.

There are several appropriate times you may need to disclose your health or disability to a potential employer.

Application - there may be a section on the form that asks about any serious health conditions or disabilities. Do not just put dyslexia or diabetes for example - you need to give a very simple explanation outlining how this will not restrict your ability to work drawing on your achievements in the past. Remember not everyone understands the potential impact of dyslexia or diabetes.

Interview - Be relaxed and always present yourself in a positive manner. If you have disclosed any health condition or disability, the interviewer may be unsure and want clarification.

Acknowledge this and clarify things in a very positive light highlighting your strengths. The employer is looking for reassurance that you can do the job. For example:

"having to manage studying, working part time whilst combining my hospital treatment, I feel I have excellent time management skills which will be of value to your organisation"

Do:

- Be very positive about skills and abilities and not allow room for doubts

- 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 problem, learning difficulty or disability means and how it affects you; others may not.
- Be prepared that the interviewer may ask you questions about your health if you have mentioned the illness
- Give positive examples of how you have met challenges in the past

Don't:

- Let your health or disability become the focus of the interview
- Assume that an employer will view you in a negative way

Schemes and initiatives

- Established in 2006, [Employability](#) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to helping students and graduates with all disabilities, including dyslexia or long-term health conditions, into employment. They offer a range of internship, work placement or graduate opportunities and programmes, as well as events and workshops.
- Launched in 2015, the [NHS Learning Disability Employment Programme](#) supports the development of local and national solutions to remove barriers and increase employment opportunities for people with a learning disability in the NHS in England.
- [Access to Work](#) is a scheme that provides money towards the cost of special equipment at work or your travel expenses.
- [Work Choice](#) is a scheme that helps people with a disability or health condition who can't be helped by other work schemes. It can provide you and your employers with support.

Useful links

- [Blind in Business](#) helps people who are blind or have partial sight, into work. They help with completing application forms, interviews and provide advice and support on obtaining equipment for work.
- [MyPlus Students' Club](#) provides articles and case studies for students and graduates with a disability or long-term health condition. Joining the club gives access to events where students can network with employers.
- [Skill](#) promotes opportunities for people with disabilities in education
- [Shaw Trust](#) is a charity which delivers a range of employment services including The Specialist Employability Support service, which supports unemployed disabled adults.
- [London Metropolitan University's Disabilities and Dyslexia Service](#) offers advice and support to students with a disability or specific learning difficulty.

- [Change 100](#) is a programme for talented students and graduates with disabilities or long-term health conditions, including physical, visual or hearing impairments, mental health conditions and learning disabilities and difficulties like dyslexia and dyspraxia. You must be in your penultimate or final year of university or have graduated in the last two years. Change 100 aims to remove barriers experienced by disabled people in the workplace, to allow them to achieve their potential. If you are successful, you will have the opportunity to work within a leading organisation, with dedicated support to help you.
- [Disability Rights UK](#) provides advice and information which is developed by disabled people for disabled people. They also run a [Leadership Academy Programme](#) which aims to empower capable, confident disabled leaders in all sectors of employment and address the need for greater equality in the workplace. In addition they have a Disability and Skills Unit which is dedicated to supporting disabled people to pursue their goals, ambitions and aspirations in work, education and skills development. The Unit organises a range of activities and events to provide opportunities for sharing of good practice and providing resources.
- [Remploy](#) provides specialist employment and skills support for disabled people and those with health conditions. They have online advisers who can give advice and guidance on finding and applying for jobs, interviews and much more.
- [Prospect](#) is a trade union that represents over 142,000 working people across the UK and provides advice and guidance on a range of equalities issues.
- [City Disabilities](#) supports professionals in London with disabilities or long-term medical conditions that affect their working lives as well as students who would like to join a profession in London.