TOOLKIT:
PROVIDE SPECIALIST CAREERS ADVICE FOR YOUR DISABLED STUDENTS

myplusstudentsclub.com

Connecting students with disabilities with employers who value talent
The aim of the MyPlus Students’ Club (MPSC) toolkit is to provide information, resources and guidance to University staff who are supporting disabled students as they search for placements, internships and graduate roles.

Based on feedback we have highlighted some of the main topics raised by students during the recruitment process and created simple ‘Conversation Cards’ to be used as required, to support them in making informed choices.

The ‘Challenges’ video can be used to share information about MPSC with students or for staff training purposes, whichever way you decide to use the information we hope it will encourage more students to get into work.

| MPSC Toolkit Introduction: Why Disability Matters | 01 |
| Understanding Disability | 02 |
| Challenges Facing Disabled Students | 03 |
| Conversation Cards |

- The benefits of being open
- How to be open
- Applying for work with a disability
- Requesting adjustments in the recruitment process
- Communicating strengths
- Accessing disability confident employers
MPSC Toolkit Introduction

Why disability matters

13% of undergraduate students at UK Universities have a disability or health condition; this includes, but is not limited to, conditions such as poor mental health, dyslexia, Asperger’s Syndrome, hearing impairments, ADHD, speech impairments and physical impairments.

This number is set to increase and presents a challenge for both graduate recruiters, who historically have struggled to engage with

The Aim

The aim of the toolkit is to share the resources available online at www.myplusstudentsclub.com and enable University support staff to confidently coach and mentor students towards successfully achieving their career goals. We hope that you will find the toolkit useful as a guide and that you also encourage students to become members of www.myplusstudentsclub.com enabling them to keep up to speed with all the latest news, jobs and advice; membership of MPSC is free.

www.myplusstudentsclub.com is designed to connect talented disabled students with disability confident employers looking for the best recruits. MPSC recognises the common challenges facing disabled students entering employment and are experienced in providing practical advice and guidance to this talent pool as they search for jobs and internships and prepare for interviews.

See next page for more
Disability and long-term health conditions include, but are not limited to, visual and hearing impairments, mobility impairments, Asperger’s Syndrome, diabetes, epilepsy, dyspraxia, mental health conditions, speech impairment and major illnesses such as cancer, HIV and MS.

A person has a disability if he or she 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.
Disabled students face a number of challenges as they enter the world of work. To help support them to overcome these challenges, we first need to understand what these challenges are.

Our ‘Challenges’ video highlights the disability specific careers advice and resources available to disabled students at www.myplusstudentsclub.com, and provides insights which may provide a useful platform for discussion and training purposes within your teams.
Benefits of being open

- Students can request in advance the adjustments / support they need enabling them to demonstrate their full potential at each stage of the application process.

Q: You are the expert of your own condition. What adjustments do you need to demonstrate your ability?

- Students can discuss their disability positively with an employer. In addition to informing an employer that they have a disability, they can talk about the strengths they have gained from managing it.

Q: What skills and strengths have you developed from managing your disability on a day-to-day basis?

- Rather than trying to hide a disability, being open allows students to be themselves throughout the application process and focus on showing the employer what they can do.

Q: In what ways do you work differently because of your disability and how might you explain this to an employer?

One of the most common barriers preventing students from informing a potential employer about a disability or long term health condition is the fear of discrimination. However, being open (commonly referred to as ‘disclosing’) allows students to request adjustments and support in order to succeed in the recruitment process.

The following explores both the benefits of being open, and the consequences of not informing

- Students could lack the adjustments / support they need and miss out on their dream job.

- Making a late request for adjustments could delay the recruitment process.

- The lack of planning reflects poorly on the student and could affect their relationship with the employer.

- If a student needs adjustments to fulfil the role they have been recruited to do and has not asked for these in advance, they may not be able to perform the role they were recruited to do.

Finally...

Students should ask themselves why they are being open and what do they want an employer to do as a result of the information they share. If they decide to be open, they should also decide how they are going to present themselves and their disability in a positive light.

Potential consequences of not being open

Recruiters want the best person for the job, so by informing them early they are in a position to make any adjustments needed in order to make a fair and accurate assessment of your ability and potential.

Sam Meredith, Talent Acquisition Manager at Enterprise.

TIP

If a student informs the employer about their disability after being rejected, the employer is under no obligation to re-interview them.

See next page for more
How to be open
A checklist which students can use to put together their ‘openness statement’ and discuss their disability effectively with an employer

What to say – openness statement

1. This is my disability / condition

2. These are the implications for the recruitment process

3. As a consequence, this is what I require

Example:

I am a wheelchair user. I am unable to walk and use a wheelchair at all times. I require access, a toilet and a parking space.

Example:

I have an anxiety disorder. I become nervous particularly in new situations. It will be useful for me to have an orientation visit prior to my interview and for my interviewer to be aware of my condition on the day.

Example:

I have dyslexia. I have weak short-term memory and I am unable to write comprehensive notes while I am listening. I will require additional reading time and it will useful for me to have handouts in advance.

We strongly encourage students to be open and upfront about sharing information about a disability on the application form. This will allow us to make any necessary adjustments and ensure a fair recruitment process for all. Once candidates have informed us about their disability we will reach out via email to discuss adjustments – this can be anything from 25% extra time to installing special software for the visually impaired where written tests are involved.

Recruiter at the Bank of England

• Students can contact the graduate recruitment team by phone or email.

• Many employers provide disability contact information on www.myplusstudentsclub.com or on their careers page.

• Students may choose to discuss adjustments with a recruiter prior to applying or provide details of their disability and the support they require on the application form.

• Students should inform the recruitment team as soon as they receive an invitation to an assessment day or interview.

• If students have received a job offer and are going to need adjustments, they should discuss these prior to the start date.

Finally...

Students should tell the employer only what is relevant in terms of their providing support / implementing adjustments. They should be timely in their communication and be prepared to answer any follow up questions the employer may have about what the student requires. Applicants should supply supporting evidence where appropriate.

To access the full version of the toolkit, please contact emma@myplusconsulting.com