MyPLUS STUDENTS' CLUB

Series 3 : Recruitment process

Ebook 1 : Recruitment process adjustments

REALISING NEW POSSIBILITIES

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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

ADJUSTMENTS IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS AND REQUESTING SUPPORT IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS.

INTRODUCTION

If you have applied for a job, you may have encountered this question on an application form – "Do you need any adjustments to be made in the recruitment process?"

The Equalities Act 2010 states: "Employers have a duty to make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure that a disabled employee is not treated less favourably than their non-disabled counterpart." If you have a disability or long term health condition, "reasonable adjustments" provided by employers might include additional accessibility support or a change in the assessment format to enable you to demonstrate your full potential on the day of your interview or assessment.

If you require an adjustment, it is your responsibility to inform the employer of what you need and why. By helping them understand your requirements and what the adjustments will enable you to do, the employer can ensure that these adjustments can be implemented throughout the recruitment process. In this ebook, we answer five of the most common questions around adjustments and provide practical tips on requesting support in the recruitment process:

1. What is an adjustment?
2. What is 'reasonable' to ask for; what adjustments do I need?
3. How can I request adjustments?
4. Who should I contact about adjustments?
5. What about the financial cost of adjustments… Who pays?

This is the first ebook of the Recruitment Process series. Visit www.myplusstudentsclub.com for careers advice and more information on applying with a disability. Become a member on the website to download more ebooks on topics such as informing an employer about your disability and requesting workplace adjustments.



1. WHAT IS AN ADJUSTMENT?

An adjustment is a change to the format or conditions of the recruitment process to accommodate any disability-related needs you may have. The aim of an adjustment is to enable you to perform to the best of your ability, and allow the employer to accurately assess you on an equal basis to your peers.

The term "disability" is very broad and therefore the different types of adjustments required are hugely varied. Some adjustments are very simple to implement and have little or no cost associated with them. Others are more complex and may require substantial financial support or additional resources.

Examples of adjustments include:

- Additional time to complete the assessment
- Provision of assistive technology
- Use of a sign language interpreter
- Rest breaks in between the interview / assessment day
- Alternative formats of written, numerical tests in audio, Braille and large print

Employers are committed to making adjustments to the recruitment process to enable you to demonstrate your full potential.

Employers are looking to recruit the best and brightest talent in the industry and you can be confident that they will support you throughout the recruitment process if you are open about your disability and have requested adjustments or support.

To help you to work out what you may need, it may be helpful to think about what you may require at each stage of the recruitment process prior to discussing this with the employer.



2. WHAT IS 'REASONABLE' TO ASK FOR; WHAT ADJUSTMENTS DO I NEED?

Employers often refer to the term 'reasonable' adjustments but how do you know what is reasonable to ask for? A good question to ask yourself is 'what do I need in order to demonstrate my potential?' The key word here is 'need'; if you need it rather than simply want it, it is likely to be reasonable.

To work out what you need you will firstly have to find out what the process involves. You should then challenge yourself to think broadly about what you need at each stage of the process remembering that adjustments go way beyond extra time and access.

Examples of adjustments you may need at each stage of the process:

The adjustments you need will vary depending on what type of assessment it is, how it is structured and how you are required to perform the tasks.

Online Testing → Telephone Interview → Assessment Centre

- **Online testing:** request additional time, print version of the test, audio / Braille.
- **Telephone interview:** schedule a video / face-to-face interview.
- **Assessment centre:** provision of a sign language interpreter, use of a PC, orientation visit, regular breaks, change to the assessment / interview format.

Find out what each stage of the recruitment process involves in order to determine what adjustments you will require.

Research the recruitment process of the firm you have applied to and update your list of adjustments. If you are not sure whether an adjustment is reasonable or not, you should ask yourself 'do I need this in order to demonstrate my potential?'

Requesting adjustments is a two way process involving both you and your employer. When you submit a request for an adjustment, your employer will be assessing what is reasonable and they may wish to get in contact with you to discuss the best solution.

Remember that you must inform the recruiter of the adjustments you require prior to completing each stage of the recruitment process; leaving it until afterwards is too late and you may not be given the opportunity to re-sit the assessment.



3. HOW DO I REQUEST ADJUSTMENTS?

Once you are clear about the adjustments you are going to request, you then need to work how to request them. Following these 3 steps is a great way of working out what to say:

1. This is my disability / condition
2. This is the implication for the recruitment process
3. As a consequence, this is what I require.

Using this checklist you can put together your 'openness statement' which you can share with employers as and when you need to.

Decide what you want to tell an employer and how you are going to articulate this.

Be confident to ask for an adjustment and be prepared to explain why you require it. Start by briefly describing your disability / health condition. Rather than going into the detail, focus on the impact your condition has on your ability to perform the tasks in the recruitment process. Then, present your request for adjustments and support.

By following these 3 steps, you are helping an employer to understand what you need and the potential consequences of not receiving the support you require.



3 examples of openness statements:

Wheelchair user

- **Condition:** I am a wheelchair user.
- **Implication:** Unable to walk and use a wheelchair at all times.
- **Requirements:** Require access, a toilet and a parking space.

Dyslexia / Dyspraxia

- **Condition:** I have dyslexia and dyspraxia.
- **Implication:** I have weak short-term memory and I am unable to write comprehensive notes while I am listening.
- **Requirements:** To have handouts in advance and be able to record conversations. I will also require additional time.

Anxiety Disorder

- **Condition:** I have an anxiety disorder.
- **Implication:** Very nervous and anxious particularly in new situations.
- **Requirements:** Useful for me to have an orientation visit prior to my interview, a schedule of the day's events and for people to be aware that I may be more anxious than others.

Practice sharing your openness statement with family or read your statement aloud to friends to build your confidence to have these conversations with an employer. It is important to be open and honest, if you want to gain the best support possible.

You can find out more about being open and informing an employer about your disability in our Openness series ebooks.

4. WHO DO I CONTACT ABOUT ADJUSTMENTS?

Who you should speak to about the support and / or adjustments you require will vary between organisations. During the recruitment process it will usually be someone from the recruitment team who will liaise with you regarding adjustments.

You can find dedicated disability contacts for a number of employers on www.myplusstudentsclub.com or on the recruitment pages on the employer's website.

Example ways to contact the recruitment team:

- Send the recruitment team an email enquiry about adjustments
- Have a phone conversation with the dedicated disability contact
- Submit an e-message on your candidate portal
- Attend employer events on campus and speak to a recruiter in person

It is a recruiter's job to find skilled candidates and there are many ways which they can adapt the recruitment process to assess your skillset.

If a particular assessment is not accessible to you or if it puts you at a disadvantage compared to a non-disabled applicant, do inform the recruiters of what you need. Recruiters will be experienced in making adjustments and, if you tell them in advance, they may design a different method of assessing for the same skills.

A recruiter may want to schedule a follow up phone conversation with you to discuss adjustments. Remember to keep an open mind and be ready to provide reasonable solutions during your discussion.

If you have any concerns or are unsure of what reasonable adjustments are available, get in touch with a member of the recruitment team. Details of the dedicated recruitment contacts for individual firms are listed on www.myplusstudentsclub.com

5. WHAT ABOUT THE FINANCIAL COST OF ADJUSTMENTS... WHO PAYS?

At the start we mentioned that some adjustments in the recruitment process can be made very easily and have no cost associated. Others are more complex and can become expensive. In most cases, employers will have the responsibility and resources to pay for any adjustments you need.

However, if you have difficulty communicating and require an interpreter or other support at a job interview, Access to Work (AtW) can help to pay for these adjustments. Access to Work (AtW) is a government funding covering the additional costs of employing disabled people.

Costs should rarely, if ever, be a barrier to accessing what you need in the workplace.

You can always ask an employer for what you require, regardless of the cost. If your employer is limited on the resources they have to implement adjustments, speak to them about applying for the Access to Work fund and ask them for help in completing the forms.

If you have spoken to your employer and it is clear that you will need external funding, go onto the website to familiarise yourself with how Access to Work operates and what it can fund.



Top Tips:

- Expertise. Become an expert in what you require and engage the recruitment team in a dialogue about adjustments.
- Be reasonable. Ask just for what you need; remember adjustments are there to level the playing field, not to provide you with an advantage.
- Understanding. Help employers to understand what you need and why. You may explain the consequences of not receiving the support that you require.
- Cost is no barrier. Do not let cost considerations deter you from asking for what you really need.

CONCLUSION....

We hope this ebook has given you a good basis for understanding adjustments and support in the recruitment process. Now that you know what types of support you can request for different assessments and how to discuss adjustments with a recruiter, practice asking for what you need in your next application.

For more advice and information, become a member on **www.myplusstudentsclub.com** to download ebooks on topics such as informing an employer about your disability and requesting workplace adjustments.