

Quick Guide

Managing employees with a disability

What is meant by disability?

According to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), a disabled person is defined as someone with a mental or physical impairment that:

- has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities
- that the adverse effect is substantial
- the adverse effect is long term (meaning that it has lasted for 12 months and is likely to last a further 12 months or for the rest of the person's life).

However, the University recognises that disability may mean different things to different people and respects a range of views and definitions.

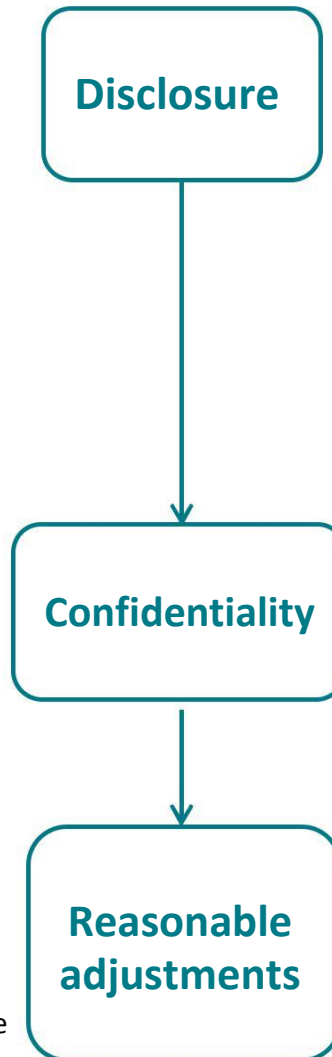
Why it matters...

The University recognises the value of diversity and is committed to the equality of opportunities within our University. As a true reflection of this, the University is proud to be a Disability Confident Employer, and is committed to employing more people who are disabled to help transform our culture, customer relations and performance.

The University aims to change attitudes towards disability and increase the understanding of disability amongst others. The University also aims to remove barriers to disabled people and those with long term health conditions in employment, and to ensure that disabled people have the opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.

Things to consider...

- Staff are encouraged to disclose a disability to enable appropriate reasonable adjustments to be made.
- When an employee discloses a disability on their equal opportunities form, they will be asked whether they would like to receive occasional information about access-related services and facilities available, and to discuss their access requirements with an appropriate member of staff. No employee will be contacted without having given their consent.
- Should a member of staff request confidentiality under the Equality Act 2010, from that point, information may **not** be passed on to any third party.
- In some cases, this may mean that an alternative reasonable adjustment will have to be provided to ensure confidentiality.
- Under the Equality Act 2010, the University is required to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled people are not placed at a substantial disadvantage in relation to their non-disabled peers. This is achieved through an [Occupational Health referral](#).
- When considering what a 'substantial disadvantage' might be, the University will take account of the time, inconvenience, effort or discomfort entailed in comparison with other people.
- If the adjustment is considered effective and practical, then the cost and the resources available to fund the adjustment will be considered by the University.



Contact your Senior Employee Relations Adviser/Employee Relations Adviser for support. [Occupational Health](#) and [Equality and Diversity](#) can also provide further support and guidance.

For more Quick Guides go to '[People Strategy in Action](#)'.

Examples of reasonable adjustments...

Adjustments to working arrangements:

- Allowing a phased return to work.
- Arranging home working, providing a safe environment can be maintained.
- Changing work hours (e.g. flexi-time, job-share, starting later/ finishing earlier).
- Improving communication (e.g. providing a reader or interpreter, having visual as well as audible alarms).

Adjustments to a job:

- Getting new or adapting equipment (e.g. chairs, desks, computers, vehicles).
- Training for disabled workers and their colleagues.
- Modifying instructions or procedures (e.g. providing written material in bigger text or in Braille).
- Arranging telephone or video conferences to reduce travel.
- Reallocating work within the employees team.

Your responsibilities as a manager...

Understand your responsibilities towards your staff:

- Understand the definition of disability.
- Be aware of the legislation, including Equality Act 2010.
- Treat disability issues discreetly and confidentially.
- Ensure disabled staff have opportunities to discuss ways they can develop and use their abilities.

Provide an inclusive approach to staff working in your department/ section:

- Be anticipatory in making reasonable adjustments.
- Understand what is meant by a reasonable adjustment.
- Be aware of additional support.

Refer to relevant sources of support for further advice and more detailed information:

- [Occupational Health](#)
- [Equality and Diversity](#)
- [Human Resources](#)

Essex Access Forum ...

[The Essex Access Forum \(EAF\)](#) is a discussion and action forum for all those with an interest in promoting access across all three campuses (Colchester, Southend and Loughton).

EAF members come from across the University and have diverse roles but a shared interest in access, disability and inclusion. Membership is open to both staff and students.

EAF contribute to a wide range of areas on access at Essex:

- Thinking and promoting informal debates
- Contributing to planning and problem-solving of the University's Physical environment.
- Assisting in developing the University's policies and practical responses to legislation and guidance.

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