



DAVID C. ONLEY INITIATIVE
FOR EMPLOYMENT & ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT

INITIATIVE DAVID C. ONLEY
POUR L'EMPLOI ET L'ENTREPRENEURIAT

EMPLOYMENT GUIDEBOOK

FOR

Students and Graduates with Disabilities





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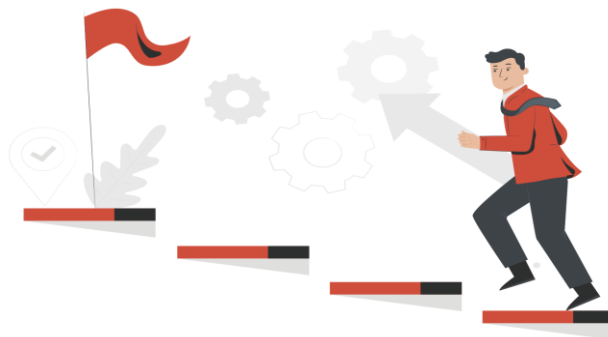
Introduction

Are you a student or job seeker with a disability who is finding it a challenge to find work, secure a placement or obtain a co-op work term? Are you unsure about the process and about how to talk about your disability? Perhaps you do not have a disability, but you have a family member, classmate, colleague or friend who does. In either case, gaining an understanding of how disability intersects with employment is important in navigating your future relationships, search for work, and career.

For anyone searching for work in today's competitive job market, finding a job can be a difficult and demanding task. For a student or graduate with a disability, the job search process may bring about other distinct challenges. These challenges affect many students in Ottawa. Some 9,400 students in the city's four post-secondary institutions registered with these schools' disability services offices during the 2017–2018 school year.

Though persons with disabilities may face some distinct challenges, we also know that persons with disabilities are uniquely valuable to employers in several different ways. When an employer hires a person with a disability, they tap into underused talent, generate more diverse perspectives, create a workforce reflective of society, increase accessibility for all, and support the elimination of barriers.

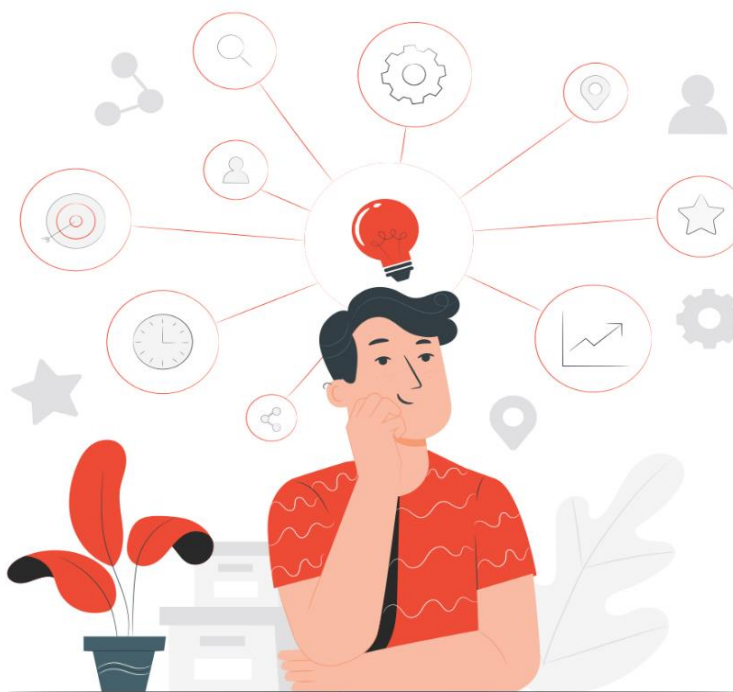
Everyone should have an equal opportunity to participate fully in the workforce; therefore, this guidebook is intended to broaden your awareness and provide you with the information and resources you need to be more successful throughout your employment journey.





This guidebook will enable you to:

- broaden your understanding of disability;
- differentiate between essential and non-essential job duties;
- recognize how disclosure and accommodation interact with employment;
- know your rights and responsibilities as stipulated in employment legislation;
- learn strategies for disclosure, interviews and job searching;
- access information about online, on-campus and community resources and supports; and
- increase positive dialogue about disability on campus and in the workplace.





Understanding Disability

Disability is common for students in many post-secondary institutions. It is important that we have an understanding of what it means. The term “disability” is a complex and continually evolving concept that covers a range of different conditions. There is no single, all-encompassing definition of disability. Disability typically means someone experiences physical, mental, or sensory barriers that affect their day-to-day life. In an employment context, having a disability does not mean that someone cannot do a job. Rather, it means that the person with a disability may do the job differently than someone else. When we are able to see disability as an opportunity to remove barriers, everyone benefits.

Disability is not a static or linear concept. It can be:

- visible or non-visible;
- mild, moderate or severe;
- permanent, long-term, short-term or episodic; and
- present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time.



A Visible Disability describes the nature or degree of disability that is visible to others (e.g., mobility-related impairments).

A Non-Visible Disability describes the nature or degree of the disability that is invisible to others (e.g., chronic fatigue syndrome, a mental health condition or a learning disability). Conditions could simply not be apparent to the unknowing eye, or the conditions might remain hidden because they are episodic (e.g., epilepsy or environmental sensitivities). Other disabilities may become apparent only through interacting with an individual and could take multiple interactions to notice (e.g., hearing loss or learning disabilities). Still others may never be apparent (e.g., mental health diagnoses).



Common types of disabilities and their associated impacts on the job include:

Disability Type	Functional Impact	Examples of Diagnoses
Physical and Mobility	Can affect a person's motor skills and may require the use of a mobility aid.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cerebral palsy • epilepsy • narcolepsy
Sensory	Can affect a person's senses: vision, hearing, smell, touch, or taste.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deafness • blindness • chemical sensitivities
Intellectual and Developmental	Can affect a person's ability to learn and use information, creating limitations in reasoning, learning and problem solving, as well as social and practical skill building, known as adaptive behaviours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • autism spectrum disorder • Down syndrome • fetal alcohol spectrum disorder
Learning	Can affect the way a person takes in, stores, or uses information as well as a person's oral and written language skills, reading skills, mathematics skills, organization, and social skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • dyslexia • dysgraphia • auditory processing disorder
Mental Health	Can affect a person's mental alertness, concentration, organization, and anxiety levels.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anxiety disorders • depression • post-traumatic stress disorder • obsessive-compulsive disorder • bipolar disorder • schizophrenia



Persons with disabilities represent a significant portion of our population. They include students in our post-secondary institutions and our current and future workforce. It is valuable to learn about visible and non-visible disabilities, challenge any personal biases and improve our understanding of how we can promote an inclusive and accessible future.

According to research conducted by the David C. Onley Initiative in 2019, more than 50% of students registered with disability service offices across Ottawa's four post-secondary schools had a primary diagnosis of either a learning disability or a mental illness. This finding tells us that students and graduates with disabilities entering the workforce have disabilities that we cannot necessarily see. Employers need to be aware of this fact and learn how to accommodate this need.

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Essential vs. Non-Essential Duties

Every job has essential and non-essential duties. An inclusive employer is able to differentiate between the essential requirements of the job and those that are flexible or optional. In the event that they do not know the difference, look at the following definitions so you can identify these duties during your job search.

- Essential duties are critical and fundamental responsibilities of the position. You must be able to perform these functions with or without reasonable accommodation. Ask yourself:
 - What are the parts of the job that are required and can be modified?
- A duty is considered essential if at least one of the following is true:
 - The position exists to perform the duty.
 - A limited number of employees can perform the duty.
 - The duty is highly specialized.
- Non-essential duties are performed either very infrequently or could be performed by others without altering the underlying reason the job exists. Ask yourself:
 - Are there non-essential parts of the job that can be removed?



Remember, disclosure is not always necessary if the disability you have has no effect on the duties of the role you are applying for or are currently working in. However, having an understanding of the essential and non-essential duties of a job will help you decide whether to disclose your disability and ask for accommodations.

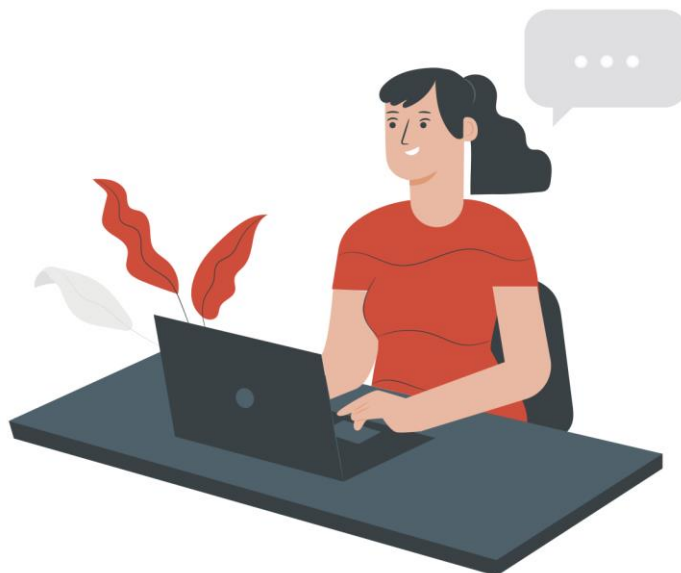


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Disclosure

Disclosure is the act of making your disability known to others. For many individuals, it is normal to experience different concerns or questions about the disclosure of your disability. It can be useful to take the time to consider what disclosure might look like for you, as there are many factors to consider. First and foremost, it is essential to understand these two facts:

- Disclosure is an important and personal choice. You are the owner of the decision. Deciding if, when, and how you would like to disclose is completely up to you. You are encouraged to not feel pressured from outside sources; make the decision that is best suited to you.
- Disclosure is not a one-size-fits-all concept. There is no one right way or right time to disclose your disability. What, when, and how you disclose is based entirely on your individual circumstance. Disclosure also looks different for every individual, employer and job opportunity. Always use your discretion based on your current situation.

Whether to Disclose

When deciding whether to disclose your disability, consider how your disability affects your ability to perform the job. You may also consider whether you need adjustments to be made in order to perform the essential duties of the job. Remember, the choice to disclose is yours and self-reflection can be helpful as you make your decision.

When making your disclosure decision, consider how you might answer these questions:

- Is your disability visible or non-visible? If your disability is visible, you may feel inclined to address it head on; however, if it is not visible, you may decide to not disclose at all.
- Do you know the essential requirements of the job?
- Will your disability impact your ability to perform in an interview and complete the essential elements of the job?
- Will you need accommodations on the job to be successful?



- Without accommodations in the workplace, is your safety or the safety of others at risk?
- Are you confident in framing your disability as an asset and articulating your strengths to an employer?
- Have you disclosed your disability in the past? What was the reaction you received? How did that make you feel? What did you learn?
- Do you think your employer will understand your disability? If not, are you prepared to explain it?
- What do you know about this employer's policies and experiences regarding persons with disabilities?
- Have you practiced disclosing your disability? Have you created a script to help you practice?
- Will disclosing your disability help you reach your goal of getting work?

If you were not able to answer these questions, take some time to think more about them. Consider reaching out to someone to discuss them, such as a professional at your campus career services or disability office.





When to Disclose

Consider the following, based on The University of Guelph's [Disclosure Timing Options chart](#), for more considerations of advantages and disadvantages at each stage.

Disclosure Timing Options

On a Resumé or Application

- Advantages: Honesty and peace of mind. Allows the employer to decide if disability is an issue. The organization may be looking to recruit diverse employees.
- Disadvantages: Might disqualify you with no opportunity to present yourself and your qualifications. Does not allow you to address employer concerns.
- Considerations: You may have a harder time finding work, but usually you will have no disability-related problems.

When the Employer Calls to Set up an Interview

- Advantages: Honesty and peace of mind. Reduces catching the interviewer “off guard” if you have a visible disability.
- Disadvantages: Employer may have preconceived notions about disability before you can demonstrate your skills.
- Considerations: If you need accommodations for the interview itself, you should address them now.

During the Interview

- Advantages: Employer is already interested in you. Gives you the opportunity to advocate for your abilities and demonstrate positive self-perception. Discrimination is less likely to happen in person.
- Disadvantages: “Shock value” may make employers uncomfortable. If you focus too much on presenting your disability, it could indicate a potential problem to the employer.
- Considerations: Be prepared to explain your needs clearly and to answer questions about your disability. Make sure the focus is on your ability to do the job well.



After a Job Offer is Made

- **Advantages:** You will know you landed the job because of your abilities. Gives employer time to prepare accommodations. If disclosure changes their decision and you are certain you can do the job, legal recourse is an option.
- **Disadvantages:** Employer may feel as though you should have told them earlier, which may lead to distrust. The offer may be rescinded.
- **Considerations:** If you know you will require accommodations, you should consider disclosing at this point. You will need to clearly explain that your disability will not interfere with the requirements of the position.

After You Start Work

- **Advantages:** Opportunity to prove yourself on the job and develop a good understanding of the job tasks and any accommodations you may need. Allows you to respond to disability-related questions with peers at work.
- **Disadvantages:** Nervousness on the job. Your employer may accuse you of falsifying your application. It could impact your interactions with co-workers.
- **Considerations:** It may be difficult to identify who you should disclose to. The longer you put off disclosing, the harder it becomes.

After a Problem on the Job

- **Advantages:** Allows you to prove yourself on the job prior to disclosure.
- **Disadvantages:** Your employer may accuse you of falsifying your application. Could impact relationships with your manager and co-workers.
- **Considerations:** Be aware if job problems are actually related to disability. If so, address your concerns as soon as possible.



Never

- **Advantages:** You will not be asked to explain your disability. Employers and co-workers will not assume that work performance issues are a result of your disability.
- **Disadvantages:** If serious problems occur, you run the risk of being fired. You may unintentionally perpetuate disability myths and misunderstandings.
- **Considerations:** If you require no accommodations and you are certain that your disability will not be an issue for your job performance, the issue of disclosure becomes less critical.





How to Disclose

Planning and preparing for your disclosure conversation can give you a sense of empowerment. If you decide to disclose your disability, you might then wonder: How will I say it? And to whom? These are great questions. Here are some steps to take:

1. Answer the following questions to get started:

- What strengths and abilities do you have that relate to the position you are applying for?
- What challenges or limitations do you have that are either related to the job you are applying for or the job you are doing now?
- What are the job duties that could be difficult to perform?
- Have you used strategies, tools or accommodations in the past that have enabled you to perform certain duties more successfully?

2. Using your answers to the questions above, develop a disclosure script that frames your disability as an asset, highlights your abilities, and clearly states your limitations and needs. Use caution when speaking about your limitations. Speak only about limitations related to the job. Here is a suggested script:



“I have/am (highlight your strengths/skills/abilities/qualifications relevant to the job) and can perform the essential functions of this job. But sometimes (mention your limitations) might impact my ability to (describe the duties you may have difficulty performing). I work best when (describe the specific accommodations you need to support the duties you have difficulty performing).”



You do not have to name the disability; however, if you feel comfortable talking about it more directly, you could say something like this:



“Although I don’t anticipate any problems, I did want to mention that I have (preferred term for your disability). I know that my (one or two strengths) will allow me to excel in this position; however, sometimes (indicate your limitations) might interfere with my ability to (describe the duties you may have difficulty performing). In the past, I have found that I can overcome this issue with (describe specific accommodations you need).”

Here is a complete example:



“I am an extremely detail-oriented worker and a skilled communicator who can perform the essential functions of this job. But sometimes my limited motor skills impact my ability to type quickly. This may impact how efficient I am when taking notes, writing reports and documenting meeting minutes. I work best when I am able to use speech recognition software, such as Dragon. This accommodation worked really well for my employer and me in my last job.”

3. Now it is time to practice!
4. Once you are comfortable, approach a trusted source, such as your manager or human resources professional. They will respect the privacy of your information and be able to direct you to the right sources if you are seeking an accommodation.
5. Request your accommodation in writing and invite your manager or human resources manager to discuss it further.
6. Be open and willing to collaborate with your employer on your accommodation needs.



Try your best to not be too stressed about the process. Your campus disability services office would be glad to help you identify your strengths, limitations and accommodation needs.



Visit the [Job Accommodation Network](#) to find out more about common limitations associated with different diagnoses.

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Interviewing

The Ontario Human Rights Commission prohibits discrimination based on age, marital status, children, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability and more. The Commission also protects job seekers against unlawful questions. An employer's interview questions must be related to the skills and abilities needed to perform the job. Here are some examples of questions that employers are and are not permitted to ask.

Questions employers are permitted to ask:

- How would you perform this particular task?
- Are you able to work full-time hours?
- Are you able to perform the requirements of this position?
- Is the lighting okay? Does this desk meet your needs?

Questions employers are not permitted to ask:

- Do you have any disabilities or medical conditions? What are they?
- How did you become disabled? What is your diagnosis?
- How often do you miss work for medical appointments?



If you choose to disclose your disability during an interview, an employer can ask about your accommodation needs and your ability to perform the essential duties of the job with accommodation. For example, they could ask, “Do you require any accommodations to perform the job functions?”



Answering Inappropriate Questions

Interviews are conducted sometimes by employers or employees who may not understand that certain questions are actually illegal to ask. If you are asked an inappropriate question, it may not have been intended to be offensive. In some cases, the interviewer may not have realized it was an illegal question. In any case, you can follow some different strategies if you find yourself in this situation:

- Answer the question directly if you are comfortable doing so. Be sure to not share more information than necessary.
- Think about the intent behind the question. Then answer it in the context of performing the job. For example, if you are asked whether you miss a lot of work because of your disability, you could respond with “It sounds like you are wondering if I am dependable. I am very dedicated to my job. My previous manager would agree that I have had an incredible attendance record.” Try to provide concrete examples if possible.
- Ask the interviewer to clarify the meaning of the question or ask how the question applies to the job.
- Politely decline to answer.

Although the question may be inappropriate, it is important to give a professional and tactful response. The interviewer may not realize why the question is inappropriate and perceive your reaction as defensive. Reflect on the situation after the interview and decide whether you still feel that your values correspond with this employer or organization.





Disclosure and Interview Tips

Here are some strategies that will help you disclose your disability:

- **Role-play your disclosure conversations.** If you are nervous about discussing your disability, plan what you are going to say. Take the time to rehearse with a family member, support staff or close friend. You will feel more confident and prepared for what you are going to say.
- **Keep it simple.** You do not need to give all of your personal details. Decide how much you are comfortable sharing, and stick with that.
- **Do not present your disability as a weakness.** Focus on what you can do for the company. Do not let your disability stand in the way of highlighting your capabilities. You have developed unique skills as a result of meeting the challenges of your disability, such as creativity, flexibility, positive attitude, problem-solving skills and determination.
- **Focus on highlighting your skills and qualifications as they relate to the position.** Give concrete examples of how you performed your job duties in the past. This move will help the employer visualize you in the role. If you are comfortable, talk about the valuable contributions you have made in other environments.
- **Be able to identify your workplace accommodations.** The more you can tell an employer about the required accommodations, the more confident they will feel in knowing how to support you. It will also be helpful to provide examples or reflect on academic or employment accommodations you have received in the past. If you have resources that you can provide to help the employer gain a better understanding of your needs, leave this information with them.
- **Research the costs and funding available for any accommodations you may need.** When possible, be responsible for your individual needs by offering any software or equipment needed for your accommodation that you already own. Sharing this information with the employer is helpful and creates a sense of reassurance that you are prepared for your new work environment.



- **Be prepared to answer questions about your disability.** Questions are an opportunity for an employer or colleague to learn. Providing an educated and thorough answer will be an opportunity to break down perceived barriers.
- **Talk about the business case for hiring persons with disabilities.** There are strong motivations for businesses to hire employees with disabilities, which is why it is helpful to inform employers of the benefits of adding a person with a disability to their team. For example, they are diversifying their workforce, showing their commitment to employment equity, broadening perspectives, building a positive image in the community, widening their talent pool, and encouraging and improving accessibility practices for everyone.
- **Ask the right questions.** Remember that an interview is not only for the employer to interview you, but also for you to interview the employer. Informing yourself about prospective workplace environments and cultures is an important part of your job search. Pick one or two questions that you are comfortable asking and see what you can learn. See below for some ideas:



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- How flexible is your work environment for those with diverse needs?
 - Do you have resources and activities in place to promote workplace balance and well-being?
 - Do you offer a range of tools, training and technology to support persons with different learning styles?
 - Do you have an accessibility policy?
 - What do inclusive hiring practices mean to your organization?
 - In what ways does your company value diversity?
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Accommodations

In the interview process and the workplace itself, persons with disabilities are entitled to access the same opportunities and benefits as those who do not have disabilities. For some persons with disabilities, this right means certain adjustments may need to be made for the individual to perform the duties of their job. Any such adjustment is known as an accommodation. The accommodation process is a shared responsibility. Each person involved is expected to collaborate, share appropriate information and consider possible solutions—all in a sensitive, confidential and timely manner.

Employers have a legal duty to accommodate. This obligation ensures that employees who are otherwise fit to work are not unjustly excluded when workplace adjustments can be made. Employees will be most productive when given the tools needed to do their jobs.

Consider the following facts on making workplace accommodations:

- Accommodation needs vary widely from person to person. These needs may be related to the individual, the environment, and the tasks or tools needed to perform a task/job.
- An employer is not obligated to provide the exact accommodation preferred by the individual involved. Consultation with the individual must take place before accommodations are implemented.
- The need for accommodations cannot be a factor in considering an applicant's merits.
- An accommodation may be needed at any stage in the employment relationship, including pre-employment (e.g., testing, interviews), establishing a work environment, training, employment, and evaluating for promotion.
- The probationary period should start after the employee has been accommodated.



Examples of Common Accommodations

Most accommodations are easy to introduce, involve flexibility rather than expenditures, and often cost very little. You may even be able to provide your own accommodation. Workplace accommodations can come in many different forms:

Accommodation Form	Accommodation Examples
restructuring work or daily tasks	larger tasks divided into smaller ones
acquiring or modifying equipment, providing software or devices needed to do the job	computer screen magnifier, voice input or speech recognition aids, ergonomic chair
changing work locations or improving the facility	quiet workspace, working from home, improved lighting, accessible door opener
creating flexible or modified work schedules	flexible hours, frequent breaks, self-paced workload
offering retraining options or job reassignment	being assigned to a new position
providing assistance through a support service or person	using an ASL interpreter



Perhaps you are person living with a mental illness and you are wondering how employers can accommodate your specific workplace needs. Mental Health Works provides a detailed overview of [mental health accommodations](#).

Employee Responsibilities



A person with a disability is not required to disclose their disability if they can perform their work without an accommodation and they do not pose a danger at work to themselves or others.

A person with a disability who requests an accommodation at work is required to:

- make their accommodation needs known to the employer, preferably in writing;
- answer questions or provide information to their employer on their limitations, which may include information or documentation from a health care provider;
- discuss potential accommodation solutions with their employer;
- collaborate with experts when assistance is needed to manage the accommodation process;
- work with their employer to manage the accommodation process;
- meet performance standards and job requirements once accommodations are put in place; and
- discuss disability and associated needs only with those who need to know.



Employer Responsibilities



An employer is allowed to ask questions about an employee's ability to perform the functions of the job, but does not have the right to ask for specific information about the employee's disability such as the diagnosis.

Whenever possible, an employer must attempt to provide needed accommodations without requesting information not absolutely necessary. Typically, the employer does not have the right to an employee's confidential information, unless the information clearly relates to the accommodation being requested.

Employers are also required to:

- be aware that a person may need an accommodation even if they have not requested one;
- accept a person's request in good faith;
- obtain the opinion of an expert or further advice, if needed;
- examine alternative approaches and possible accommodation solutions;
- keep a record of accommodation requests and document what actions were taken;
- maintain confidentiality and respect the dignity of the person requesting accommodation;
- request only information related to the nature of the limitation mentioned;
- process and implement accommodation requests in a timely manner; and
- cover the cost of any medical information or documentation being requested.



Undue Hardship

The Ontario Human Rights Commission states that an employer has an obligation to accommodate all disabilities up to the point of [undue hardship](#). Three considerations are used to determine whether an accommodation would cause undue hardship: cost, outside sources of funding (if any), and health and safety regulations (if any).

Understanding Your Accommodation Needs

It can be a challenge to know whether you will need accommodations when beginning a co-op, placement or new job. The challenge is especially daunting if you have limited or no work experience. You might be asking yourself, how do I know what I need? Perhaps you have recently acquired a disability, or you are simply unaware of how your disability will impact your ability to do a job. More than anyone else, you will be the first to know what you need. Talk directly with your employer to come up with solutions together.

A good starting point for understanding your needs is to reflect on the academic accommodations you may have received. How might they transfer to a workplace setting? Below you will find a resource to help answer that question.



University of Guelph's [Academic Accommodations Translated into Employment Settings](#).

Understanding your accommodation needs is a learning experience for you and your employer. Remember, you may not know what you need to be successful until you are doing the job. Also consider that your needs may change over time and look different depending on requirements of each position. If you want to learn more about accommodations you might need, explore the Searchable Online Accommodation Resource offered by the Job Accommodation Network.



Job Accommodation Network provides a comprehensive database of key [accommodation examples](#) by disability type, limitations, and work-related functions.

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Job Search Tips

Here are some tips to keep in mind as you continue to search for your next opportunity.

- **Maintain a positive attitude.** Some persons with disabilities may fear entering or re-entering the workforce, especially if they have acquired a disability recently or they have had a negative experience associated with their disability. If you are feeling negative about your disability or situation, this may come across in your behaviour. Do your best to work on maintaining a positive outlook.
- **Seek out companies that support diverse hiring practices.** You can find information about different organizations and their practices around the support of persons with disabilities. Try networking, conducting informational interviews, working with disability employment support agencies, and researching companies directly.

Consider the following to help you with your research:



When researching organizations, pay attention to employment equity statements on company websites and on job postings. Such statements let applicants know that the organization takes employment equity seriously, and that practices are in place to accommodate applicants at each stage of the hiring process.

- **Be open-minded and create opportunities.** There are many companies that have never hired a person with a disability. If this situation applies to a company that you really want to work for, do not be afraid to reach out. Suggest to an employer the possibility of a job trial, so that you can showcase your skills and abilities on the job and they can evaluate your work performance before deciding to hire you. This move also gives you the opportunity to decide if this opportunity will be the best fit for you.



- **Connect with employment-based disability service providers.** Two heads are better than one! If you do not want to go through this process alone, enlist the help of a community service provider. Some service providers are disability-specific. They can offer programs on job search support and connect you with disability-friendly employers. Find a list in the “Community Disability-Employment Resources” section.
- **Stay motivated.** Job searching can take a long time. It is easy to lose your initial hopefulness during a long search. Stay motivated by celebrating your successes, even if you have not obtained employment; any opportunities you have had to discuss your skills with others is an achievement. Keep track of your efforts by documenting and reviewing all that you have accomplished. This action will keep you on track. It will also enable you to evaluate whether there is anything more you can do.
- **Coordinate logistics.** Ensure that you have made the appropriate arrangements for transportation, recurring medical appointments, and childcare. These may or may not be formal workplace accommodations, but they may be aspects of your life that are impacted by your disability. They should be addressed prior to starting a job.
- **Identify a solid support network.** It is not always easy during the search for employment. To help you maintain your enthusiasm, identify people in your life whom you can rely on for encouragement, support and sound advice. Network with other job seekers and other persons with disabilities who have been successful in finding work. Find ways to support your networks and they will find ways to support you.

References

Government of Alberta. “[Resources for Persons with Disabilities](#),” Tools & Resources. Accessed July 5, 2023, alis.alberta.ca/tools-and-resources/flyers-and-resources

Job Accommodation Network. “[Accommodation Examples](#).” Accessed July 5, 2023, askjan.org/soar.cfm

University of Guelph, Co-operative Education & Career Services “[Academic Accommodations Translated into Employment Settings](#),” Accommodations. Updated February 2019, recruitguelph.ca/cecs/students-alumni/students-disabilities/accommodations



Resources

Job Search Resources

In addition to the regular job search websites, access the following resources for more information on diversity hiring.

[Canada's Best Diversity Employers](#) is a website that recognizes and lists employers across Canada that have exceptional workplace diversity and inclusiveness programs.

canadastop100.com/diversity

[Career Edge](#) offers paid internships (from four to twelve months) in a variety of industries for current students and recent graduates with disabilities.

careeredge.ca

[Disabilities Mentoring Day](#) is an annual one-day mentoring event where job-ready persons with disabilities pair with companies to put their skills to use.

disabilitiesmentoringday.org

[Discover Ability Network](#) is a job-matching online portal and resource that connects persons with disabilities directly to Ontario employers.

discoverability.network

[DiversityCanada](#) is a job-posting site dedicated to encouraging workforce diversity.

diversitycanada.com

[Employment Accessibility Resource Network](#) is an employment resource for persons with disabilities, employers and service providers in Ottawa and the National Capital Region.

earn-paire.ca



[INNoVA](https://theinnovasolution.ca) provides career guidance and job postings for Canadians with disabilities.

theinnovasolution.ca

[Lime Connect](https://limeconnect.com) is for university and college students and alumni with disabilities. It matches them with top Canadian corporations that offer full-time employment, co-op employment, internships and scholarship opportunities.

limeconnect.com

[Ontario Job Opportunity Information Network](https://joininfo.ca) is a community-sponsored job board for persons with disabilities.

joininfo.ca

[Specialisterne](https://ca.specialisterne.com) connects autistic and neurodivergent job seekers with jobs in a variety of industries in Canada.

ca.specialisterne.com





Community Disability-Employment Resources

Once you graduate, consider enlisting the help of a community service provider. There are many disability-specific service providers who offer programs that can support you throughout your job search. Take a look at the list below. Research the different organizations' eligibility criteria and services to decide which one might be the best fit for you.

[Acclaim Ability](https://www.acclaimability.com) offers a wide range of tailor-made programs and services designed to assist individuals with disabilities in their efforts to return to work and activities of daily living.

[acclaimability.com](https://www.acclaimability.com)

[Canadian Hearing Services](https://www.chs.ca/employment-services-chs) specializes in the unique needs of adults aged 16 and over who are Deaf or hard of hearing. The organization assists in finding jobs and succeeding at work.

[chs.ca/employment-services-chs](https://www.chs.ca/employment-services-chs)

[Canadian National Institute for the Blind](https://www.cnib.ca/en/programs-and-services/work/im-looking-employment-come-work?region=on) "Come to Work" program connects job seekers who are blind or partially sighted with employers who want to discover the full potential of Canada's talent.

[cnib.ca/en/programs-and-services/work/im-looking-employment-come-work?region=on](https://www.cnib.ca/en/programs-and-services/work/im-looking-employment-come-work?region=on)

[Causeway Work Centre](https://www.causewayworkcentre.org/find-work) is an approved Ontario Disability Support Program service provider. It helps persons with mental illness and other challenges find rewarding work and live more independently.

[causewayworkcentre.org/find-work](https://www.causewayworkcentre.org/find-work)

[CVE Inc.](https://www.cve.ca) works with Ontario Disability Support Program recipients and Opportunities Fund recipients to identify skills and abilities, and develop the tools required to confidently enter the workforce.

[cve.ca](https://www.cve.ca)



[Distinct Programmes Inc.](#) is an approved Ontario Disability Support Program service provider. Specializing in psychiatric health issues, it helps persons with disabilities find and keep satisfying jobs.

distinctprogrammes.com

[LiveWorkPlay](#) is an approved Ontario Disability Support Program service provider. It supports persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, autistic persons and individuals with dual diagnosis with many facets of their lives, including employment.

liveworkplay.ca

[March of Dimes](#) is an approved Ontario Disability Support Program service provider. It helps persons with disabilities achieve greater independence by providing them with job training and finding employment.

marchofdimes.ca/en-ca/programs/es

[Neil Squire Society](#) provides opportunities to persons with disabilities to develop computer skills, build their employment skills and enter or re-enter the workforce.

neilsquire.ca

[Performance Plus Rehabilitative Care Inc.](#) is an approved Ontario Disability Support Program service provider. It specializes in providing personal employment counselling services to persons with physical, psychological or developmental disabilities looking to enter the workforce.

pprc.ca



Glossary

Accessibility is a general term used to describe the degree to which a product, device, service or environment is available to be used by all intended audiences. According to the Government of Ontario, there are five identified barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities. These barriers are attitudinal, organizational or systemic, architectural or physical, information or communications, and technological.

References

Council of Ontario Universities, Accessible Campus. "[Understanding Barriers to Accessibility.](#)" Accessed July 5, 2023, accessiblecampus.ca/understanding-accessibility/what-are-the-%20barriers/

Government of Ontario. "[OPS Inclusion & Diversity Blueprint.](#)" Updated June 20, 2022, ontario.ca/page/ops-inclusion-diversity-blueprint

Disability is a complex phenomenon that reflects the interaction between features of a person's body and mind and features of the society in which they live. A disability can occur at any time in a person's life. Some people are born with a disability. Still others develop a disability later in life. It can be permanent, temporary or episodic. Disability can worsen steadily, remain the same, or improve. It can be very mild to very severe. It can be the cause of, as well as the result of, disease, illness, injury or substance abuse.

Reference

Government of Canada. "[Federal Disability Reference Guide.](#)" Modified December 16, 2022, canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/disability/arc/reference-guide.html



Diversity is the presence of a wide range of human qualities and attributes within a group, organization or society. These can be identities, experiences, and visible and invisible qualities that shape who we are, how we think, how we engage with the world, and how we are perceived by the world. The dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, ancestry, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, language, physical and intellectual ability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

References

Council of Ontario Directors of Education. "[Equity and Inclusive Education: Going Deeper.](#)" 2014, ontariodirectors.ca/downloads/EIE-2014/Equity_and_Inclusive_Education_Eng_Final.pdf

Government of Canada. "[Employment Equity Act.](#)" Modified June 23, 2023, laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/FullText.html

Government of Ontario. "[OPS Inclusion & Diversity Blueprint.](#)" Updated June 20, 2022, ontario.ca/page/ops-inclusion-diversity-blueprint

Employment Equity is the process of achieving equality in the workplace so that no person is denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability. In the fulfilment of that goal, employment equity strives to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, Aboriginal Peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities. As such, employment equity is meant to give effect to the principle that equality means more than treating persons in the same way; it also requires special measures and the accommodation of differences.

Reference

Council of Ontario Directors of Education. "[Equity and Inclusive Education: Going Deeper.](#)" 2014, ontariodirectors.ca/downloads/EIE-2014/Equity_and_Inclusive_Education_Eng_Final.pdf



Equity is a condition or state of fair, inclusive and respectful treatment of all people. This state means making sure everyone has what they need to succeed, as well as removing barriers that disadvantage some groups over others. As such, equity is different than treating people equally.

References

Council of Ontario Directors of Education. "[Equity and Inclusive Education: Going Deeper.](#)" 2014, ontariodirectors.ca/downloads/EIE-2014/Equity_and_Inclusive_Education_Eng_Final.pdf

Government of Ontario. "[OPS Inclusion & Diversity Blueprint.](#)" Updated June 20, 2022, ontario.ca/page/ops-inclusion-diversity-blueprint

Inclusion is about creating a culture that strives for equity and that embraces, respects, accepts and values difference.

Reference

Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion. "[Diversity Defined.](#)" Accessed April 27, 2023, ccdi.ca/our-story/diversity-defined

Workplace Inclusion is an environment that accepts each individual's differences, embraces their strengths, and provides opportunities for all people in the workplace to achieve their full potential. Inclusion should be reflected in an organization's culture, practices and relationships. More broadly, workplace inclusion is about creating a sense of belonging, a sense in each employee of feeling valued for who they are, and of feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so they can do their best work.

References

Law Society of Ontario. "[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: Definitions.](#)" Accessed April 27, 2023, lso.ca/about-lso/initiatives/edi/definitions

Royal Bank of Canada. "[Diversity & Inclusion at RBC.](#)" Accessed April 27, 2023, rbc.com/diversity-inclusion/diversity-inclusion-at-rbc.html



The Government of Canada has created an [accessibility glossary](#). It contains definitions of 342 concepts, including terminology in the fields of the sociology of work and technical aids for persons with disabilities.

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