



Considering Adjustments

Guidance

Guidance – Considering Adjustments

Contents

1. Introduction	2
2. Disability & Neurodiversity	2
3. What is a ‘Reasonable Adjustment’?	3
4. Roles & Responsibilities	3
5. The Reasonable Adjustment Process	5
5.1 Become Aware	5
5.2 Prepare	6
5.3 Explore & Identify	7
5.4 Agree & Implement	8
5.5 Record & Review	8
6. Reasonable Adjustment Passport	9
7. Additional Support	9

1. Introduction

The University aims to maintain a people-centred and inclusive working environment where colleagues feel valued and supported and can enjoy a fulfilling career.

Alongside this commitment, the University has a duty under the Equality Act 2010 to make 'reasonable adjustments' to workplace arrangements to remove, reduce and prevent barriers or disadvantage to disabled and neurodivergent colleagues.

This guide is part of the [Support for Disabled and Neurodivergent Colleagues Portal](#) and aims to support managers and colleagues when exploring potential adjustments by outlining the typical process to be followed. Additional advice can be sought via the [HR Helpdesk](#), [local People & Organisational Development Teams](#) or from the [Occupational Health Service](#), depending on individual/specific circumstances.

The University has also developed a [Reasonable Adjustments Passport](#). The passport is optional, but can be used in conjunction with this process and whilst primarily designed to capture and record agreed adjustments the form can be helpful at any stage of dialogue when considering adjustments.

2. Disability & Neurodiversity

Under the Equality Act 2010, 'A person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and the impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

Neurodiversity refers to the diversity of the human brain, with a recognition that not all brains think or feel in the same way and that these differences are natural development variations. People across society are neurodiverse and experience the world in different ways, with different individuals being poorer at some things and better at others. Neurodivergence includes a range of conditions, including Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia and Dyspraxia.

The University's approach supports the social model of disability which views environmental, physical, structural and attitudinal barriers as disadvantaging – or disabling – disabled people. As such, this guidance prefers 'identify first' language over 'person first' language and thus refers to 'disabled colleagues/individuals/applicants' throughout.

3. What is a 'Reasonable Adjustment'?

It is good practice to consider making adjustments which remove or overcome barriers to work in any case, however the Equality Act 2010 places a legal obligation on employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to make sure disabled employees are not substantially disadvantaged when carrying out their roles.

A 'reasonable adjustment' is a change to remove, reduce or prevent the obstacles a disabled worker or job applicant faces.

Reasonable adjustments can be made to:

- the workplace
- the way things are done
- get someone to help the employee in work

When considering whether an adjustment might be 'reasonable', the following should be considered:

- the effectiveness of the adjustment in overcoming an identified disadvantage
- the practicality of implementing the adjustment
- any financial or other costs, including any potential disruption caused
- the extent of the resources (including financial) available
- the availability of financial or other assistance (e.g. Access to Work Scheme)

Whilst professional advice and support is available, it is ultimately the responsibility of the line manager to determine whether or not they deem it reasonable to implement any recommended adjustment(s). (i.e. if Occupational Health suggest adjustments, it is still decision of the line manager to determine if the suggested adjustments can be accommodated). Managers should remain mindful of the legal obligations to make adjustments and seek further advice should considered adjustments be deemed unreasonable.

It is essential that managers complete the [Implementing Reasonable Adjustments Training](#), particularly ahead of discussing, exploring and agreeing adjustments. In complex cases, or where there is any uncertainty, managers are encouraged to seek additional advice from their [local HR Team](#).

4. Roles & Responsibilities

The following is a list of the typical responsibilities expected of those involve in the process of considering and making adjustments.

Individuals

- to notify line managers of any disability which requires or may require support or adjustments in work (e.g. in order to overcome barriers)
- to familiarise themselves with the 'Support for Disabled and Neurodivergent Colleagues' toolkit and available resources
- to self-refer to Access to Work (if deemed appropriate by the individual themselves) and to update line managers on progress as appropriate where this is relevant to making adjustments in the workplace
- to support the process of considering adjustments through sharing relevant information or experiences (as far as the individual is comfortable to do so) to support wider understanding of the barriers (or potential barriers) faced at work and to ensure effective consideration of appropriate adjustments
- to continue to review the effectiveness of any agreed/implemented adjustments and to notify line managers accordingly if their effectiveness changes

Managers

- to familiarize themselves with the 'Support for Disabled and Neurodivergent Colleagues' toolkit and available resources, following in particular the process and expectations outlined in this guide
- to discuss and explore adjustments with disabled colleagues as soon as possible after being notified and to consider all potential adjustments with an open-mind, ensuring reasonable adjustments or requests are supported
- to support disabled colleagues as required with any self-referral to the [Government Access to Work Service](#)
- to seek specialist support, where required, from Occupational Health and/or People and Organisational Development
- if the process commenced via self-service, to [update the record to confirm dialogue has taken place](#)
- to continue to review the effectiveness of any agreed/implemented adjustments and to respond accordingly to review and/or adjust where appropriate

Occupational Health

- to support the consideration of adjustments through making recommendations in more complex cases where more specific advice is required

People & Organisational Development

- to support the overall process through maintaining and adjusting guidance and toolkit contents accordingly
- to offer specific advice and support as required on a case-by-case basis, including where disagreement or uncertainty arises over reasonable adjustments

- to maintain oversight of self-service records and resultant workflows where support is requested (and to prompt dialogue accordingly where this has not taken place).

5. The Reasonable Adjustment Process

The reasonable adjustment process has 5 steps:

- Become Aware
- Prepare
- Explore and Identify
- Agree and Implement
- Record and Review

This process may not be linear and thus this information is intended as a non-prescriptive guide. It may be appropriate to repeat or revisit any given stage depending on the circumstances.

The [Process Diagram – Support for Disabled and Neurodivergent Colleagues](#) provides a visual overview of the process.

5.1 Become Aware

Disabled colleagues may notify their manager through several different routes, including:

- self-declaration through updating their disability information on their employee record (i.e. via [HR self-service](#))
- during the recruitment process (e.g. requesting adjustments at interview and/or discussing adjustments ahead of the start date)
- during routine or day-to-day contact (e.g. a one-to-one meeting)
- as part of an absence management process
- via Occupational Health advice, possibly linked to the above scenarios

Colleagues cannot be compelled to share information relating to their disability, however doing so naturally makes it easier for managers to ensure any potential barriers are identified, understood and mitigated or overcome (e.g. via adjustments). It is also recognised that some disabled colleagues may wish to notify the University (e.g. for recording purposes) but may not wish to (or need to) engage in any further dialogue.

Colleagues who are updating their disability information in the [HR self-service portal](#) can select the 'Request Workplace Support Discussion' option. This then sends an automated message to their line manager to prompt them to set up a discussion and all parties are

signposted to the available resources to support constructive dialogue. This does not replace the option to discuss adjustments at any other point but this route is recommended as it also allows for tracking the progress of related dialogue (i.e. that meetings have taken place) and supports the setting of periodic reminders to review adjustments. Colleagues can find more information on how their data is processed in the [privacy notice](#).

Colleagues who would prefer not to follow the above route may still directly approach their line manager to request support however this would not include the functionality of automatic reminders etc.

5.2 Prepare

Once a disabled colleague has requested additional support, managers should follow the steps in this guide (and/or advice in any automated alerts if these are received).

Arrangements should be made for a support discussion to take place as soon as possible (and ahead of the start date, if possible, for new employees) and similarly any colleague approach to Access to Work should also be made at the earliest opportunity (particularly for new employees) if applicable.

In any case, managers should consider the following at this stage:

- Plan time to meet informally to discuss and explore support, options and adjustments in the most suitable format
- Check if the individual would like to be accompanied at the meeting by an appropriate support contact, if required
- Consider an appropriate environment for the meeting, which will likely include sensitive and confidential information. If meeting face to face this should be done in a quiet location, accounting for any accessibility requirements. It may be suitable to meet virtually or by phone
- Prepare for the meeting by reviewing the 'Support for Disabled Staff' toolkit, focusing in particular on key elements (e.g. information on Access to Work if applicable)
- Complete the mandatory '[Implementing Reasonable Adjustments](#)' training course on Moodle (if not already done so)
- Build broader understanding and awareness of any notified disability by researching any available resources. This should be for the express purpose of building general awareness and it is vitally important not to make any general assumptions on individual circumstances. Managers should prepare to let colleagues lead by sharing their experiences and the barriers or challenges they may encounter.
- Familiarise themselves with the [Reasonable Adjustments Passport](#) if this is being used

5.3 Explore & Identify

Having prepared appropriately, managers should meet with the individual to discuss, explore and identify possible adjustments. This stage is critical to building a greater shared understanding of the role and how reasonable adjustments may help to remove or reduce any obstacles or barriers. If the process commenced through self-service, a reminder will be sent if no meeting has taken place within two weeks of notification.

The conversation should focus on:

- Building an understanding of what the colleague's needs and experiences are, including what they can and cannot do (e.g. tasks, activities etc)
- Assessing possible barriers faced (or potentially faced) at work which may impact upon their ability to perform their role as effectively and safely as they can
- Discussing whether or not the individual should make a referral to [Access to Work](#)
- Considering any adjustments or supports which might assist in overcoming these barriers (the [Examples of Reasonable Adjustments](#) page may help with this)
- Considering whether or not [Occupational Health](#) advice may be required (*it is not required by default*). Colleagues should always be consulted prior to any referral to Occupational Health and further information on the Occupational Health Referral process can be found in [Guidance – Occupational Health Referrals](#).
- Reviewing any health and safety risk assessments in light of any proposed adjustments
- Considering the reasonableness of any proposed adjustments
- Exploring timescales for implementing adjustments
- Setting review dates to measure the effectiveness of any adjustments implemented

Adjustments need not be difficult or expensive and solutions can often be found through open dialogue. Managers may also find the [Examples of Reasonable Adjustments](#) and [Having a Constructive Conversation](#) pages helpful.

Colleagues may also find it helpful to refer to the [Support for Disabled and Neurodivergent Colleagues Portal](#) page.

The [Reasonable Adjustments Passport](#) is also available as an optional form primarily designed to capture and record agreed adjustments, but likely helpful as a complementary tool at any point when considering adjustments. The passport can also support individuals to discuss and/or share information with colleagues or, for example, with a new line manager.

Managers should seek further advice (e.g. Occupational Health, Equality & Diversity Unit, People & Organisational Development) at any point if it is required to help both themselves and the individual to make informed decisions. Medical advice is particularly relevant in more complex cases or where there are gaps in either party's understanding (e.g. understanding

how a condition may impact the employee in the workplace), whilst being sensitive to an individual's knowledge and lived experience of their condition(s).

Where the process commenced through self-service, line managers should update the self-service record to track that a meeting has taken place (and to add notes on adjustments if required). Managers may find the [Guidance – Managing the Adjustment Conversation Record](#).

5.4 Agree & Implement

Identified adjustments should be implemented as quickly as possible and any delays should be kept to an absolute minimum. This may range from immediately altering start/finish times range through to procuring identified equipment or booking in work with Estates colleagues (e.g. for building/workspace adaptations). Some adjustments such as these will naturally take different lengths of time to implement and it may be appropriate to consider interim plans until they are ready.

It may also be appropriate to share details on the adjustments with other colleagues (e.g. the wider team) however this should only be done with the individual's full agreement and where sharing information is likely to be beneficial in making an adjustment effective (or more effective).

Where agreement can't be reached on suitable adjustments, further advice should be sought as required (for example, from Occupational Health or from the relevant local People and Organisational Development team. If agreement isn't reached, it is vital that there is a strong justification as to why the adjustments would be unreasonable.

5.5 Record & Review

Managers (and individuals) should keep their own record of adjustments made (this could be as simple as sending an email confirming what has been agreed (and any plans for implementations/timescales if appropriate). If the process was initiated through self-service, line managers can also add notes to the record in self-service to comment on the nature of adjustments (or their status). An agreed review date can also be added, bringing the benefit of automated reminders to review adjustments at that point.

Colleagues can also use the [Reasonable Adjustment Passport](#) as a means of recording their adjustments for their own records and to support conversation about their adjustments with others (e.g. a new line manager) should they wish to do so. The passport can be self-uploaded to individual records if desired.

Implemented adjustments should be closely monitored and reviewed in the early days, then periodically as needed to assess how effective they have been in removing any barriers to work. If adjustments are temporary (e.g. alternative duties), clear timescales for review should be agreed and recorded at the start. It is particularly important to establish if more regular reviews are required where individuals have a progressive condition, are undergoing treatment or where they have had a period (or periods) of disability-related absence, or their disability needs change over time.

Managers should maintain an open mind that further adjustments may be required in the future. Whilst set dates may act as a good reminder, managers should remain proactive and consider how any other workplace changes or initiatives may impact on individuals and any adjustments that are already in place.

It is also important to remember that new health and safety risk assessments may be required, or existing ones reviewed, as a result of any changes.

6. Reasonable Adjustment Passport

Colleagues may also wish to utilise the [Reasonable Adjustment Passport](#). This is an optional complementary form which can act as a live record of adjustments discussed and agreed between colleagues and their manager. It can be used in a number of ways - to record adjustments already discussed and in place; to facilitate discussion about what adjustments might be possible; or to review and make changes to agreed adjustments.

Colleagues can [save their passport onto their HR self-service record](#) if they wish and can choose to share it with anyone they deem appropriate to aid conversation about their adjustments.

7. Additional Support

A wider range of related resources are available in the [Support for Disabled and Neurodivergent Colleagues Portal](#).

For additional support in relation to any of the contents of this guidance note, please contact your [local People and Organisational Development Team](#).