

What to Consider When Recruiting People with Disability

Why is it important to consider these factors?

Recruiting people with disability (PWD) should follow an inclusive and accessible process that recognises the diversity of disability experiences and enables all candidates to demonstrate their strengths and potential. An inclusive recruitment approach supports organisations to identify the best person for the role and contributes to building a diverse and high-performing workforce.

When advertising roles and interviewing candidates with disability, organisations should consider the following key inclusive practices.

Guiding Principles

- **Equity over Equality:** Offer fair recruitment opportunities by removing barriers and making reasonable adjustments – not by treating everyone identically.
- **Human Rights-Based Approach:** Align recruitment practices with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- **Strengths-Based Mindset:** Focus on a candidate's skills, talents and potential, not their limitations.
- **Co-Design Where Possible:** Involve PWD in reviewing recruitment policies and practices.
- **Proactively Address Bias:** Acknowledge and disrupt ableist assumptions in role design, language, screening, and interviews.

Inclusive Recruitment Best Practices

Job Design & Advertising

Before you advertise a role, review the tasks, skills, and capabilities genuinely required for the position. This allows you to focus on inclusive outcomes and avoids unintentionally excluding qualified candidates.

When preparing your job advertisement:

- Use inclusive, plain English language
- Only list genuine role requirements

- Highlight willingness to make adjustments
- Publicly state your commitment to disability inclusion
- Promote vacancies through disability employment services (e.g., JobAccess).

Your organisation may wish to provide a contact number for a person that applicants can contact, with any questions about the application process. This helps build trust and confidence, and potentially mitigates barriers and challenges PWD applicants might usually face.

Application Process

- Offer accessible formats (screen-reader compatible, printable, large print)
- Accept alternative application methods (e.g., video, phone)
- Allow extra time to submit applications if needed.

Shortlisting & Interview

Interviews can unintentionally disadvantage candidates with disability if not planned inclusively. Adjustments such as offering interview questions in advance, allowing extra time, or modifying the format can enable candidates to showcase their full potential. Employers should focus on whether a candidate can perform the inherent requirements of the role, with or without adjustments, rather than assumptions about their disability. Ensure all panel members understand what is appropriate to ask and how to assess candidates fairly.

- Focus on core job requirements and potential, not assumptions
- Offer interview adjustments upfront (e.g., format, Auslan interpreter location, time)
- Ask about support needs rather than personal disability details
- Use structured interview questions to reduce bias.

Reasonable Adjustments

- Be clear about how to request adjustments throughout the recruitment process
- Assign a contact person trained in inclusive hiring.

Selection & Feedback

- Make decisions based on capability, not perceived limitations
- Offer constructive feedback and invite unsuccessful candidates to apply again

- Monitor and report on disability inclusion in recruitment outcomes.

Onboarding

An inclusive onboarding process sets the tone for a successful and supportive working relationship. Provide accessible welcome materials, offer flexible start dates where needed, and ensure reasonable adjustments are in place from day one. Ongoing conversations about support needs, preferred communication styles, and team awareness can help new employees feel welcomed and included. Assigning a buddy or mentor can also support integration into the team and organisation culture.

- Provide accessible induction materials
- Offer buddy or mentoring programs
- Schedule check-ins and review adjustment effectiveness.

Accountability and Continuous Improvement

Inclusive recruitment is not a one-off initiative, it requires regular reflection, review, and improvement. Organisations should set measurable goals for disability inclusion, monitor recruitment outcomes, and seek feedback from candidates and employees with disability. Embedding disability inclusion into HR policies, performance frameworks, and diversity reporting ensures it remains a shared responsibility across teams. Continuous improvement is a shared responsibility that strengthens organisational culture and creates a fairer, more responsive recruitment experience for everyone. Providing regular training on inclusive hiring and evaluating recruitment practices through an accessibility lens helps build capability, reduce bias, and create long-term change.

- Set internal targets for disability representation in recruitment pipelines
- Review and adjust recruitment processes regularly based on feedback
- Collect and report disability data ethically and voluntarily, ensuring privacy
- Provide training to employees and managers on disability confidence.

Further Support

- JobAccess Employer Toolkit (www.jobaccess.gov.au)
- [Employees with disability | Fair Work Ombudsman](#) - Information on workplace disability rights and entitlements for employees and supervisors.
- [What are Reasonable Adjustments? | Australian Federation of Disability Organisations](#) - Information about reasonable workplace adjustments.
- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) – guidance on lawful questioning and recruitment rights under the [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#).
- [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#).
- [Center for Universal Design website](#) – Principals of Universal Design
- The Australian Government provides funding through the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) to pay for workplace adjustments, such as modifications and equipment. [For more information about EAF, visit the JobAccess website.](#)
- [Disability \(Access to Premises—Buildings\) Standards 2010 \(Cth\)](#).
- [People with Disability Australia, Language Guide \(Web Page\)](#)