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DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

A GUIDE FOR EMPLOYEES
WITH A DISABILITY, THEIR
SUPERVISORS AND
COLLEAGUES



The Australian
National University

ABILITY

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DISABILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

A Guide for Employees with a Disability, Their Supervisors and Colleagues



This booklet has been written jointly by the Disability Adviser, Margaret Miller, and the EEO Coordinator, Maureen McInroy, of the Australian National University with considerable advice and assistance from Michael Quaass of the Disability Access Support Unit, Canberra. Mr Quaass represents disability interests on the University's EEO Committee. The work was patiently keyed and regularly amended by Sonia Hathaway of the EEO Unit.

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INTRODUCTION

The Australian National University offers a supportive workplace environment for all staff including those with a disability.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and the Disability Policy both state clearly the University's position on equity in employment. This handbook may be used as a guide for employees with a disability, their supervisors and colleagues.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* took effect on 1 March 1993 and renders it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in employment. The Act also proscribes the harassment of people with a disability when seeking employment, or by an employer or another employee.

WHAT IS DISABILITY?

Definitions

University Council has noted the following definitions provided by the World Health Organisation:

- **impairment** refers to any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological or anatomical structure or function;
- **disability** refers to any restriction or lack (resulting from impairment) of ability to perform an activity within the range considered normal for a human being;
- **handicap** refers to a disadvantage for a given individual, resulting from an impairment or a disability, that limits or prevents the fulfilment of a role that is normally possible for that individual.

Examples of impairment, disability and handicap:

- Spinal cord damage of a person resulting in paraplegia is an **impairment**.
- The effect this has on the person's ability to walk is a **disability**.
- If the person's employment prospects or other life roles are adversely affected by difficulties in such matters as:
 - access to buildings
 - transport
 - discriminatory attitudes

then these disadvantages are **handicaps**.

WHAT IS DISABILITY?

In addition the University has noted the following definitions provided by section 4 of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*:

"*disability*", in relation to a person, means:

- (a) total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions; or
- (b) total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
- (c) the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
- (d) the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness, or
- (e) the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body; or
- (f) a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
- (g) a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought process, perception of reality, emotions or judgment or that results in disturbed behaviour;

and includes a disability that:

- (h) presently exists; or
- (i) previously existed but no longer exists; or
- (j) may exist in the future; or
- (k) is imputed to a person.

Types of disabilities

- Intellectual Disability
- Physical Disability
 - Cerebral Palsy
 - Paraplegia
 - Quadriplegia
 - Hemiplegia
- Sensory Disability
 - blindness and vision impairment
 - profound deafness and hearing impairment
- Other types of disabilities and disabling conditions include:
 - Chronic fatigue syndrome
 - Speech impairment
 - Asthma
 - Head injury
 - Arthritis
 - Epilepsy
 - Work related injuries
 - Learning disabilities
- Mental illness
 - Depression
 - Schizophrenia

WHAT IS DISABILITY?

Causes of disability

Disabilities may be caused by a variety of factors:

- congenital
- hereditary
- trauma
- stroke
- disease and chronic illness
- infection
- physical deterioration

Many disabilities can occur at any stage of one's life. Some people may have several disabilities. A person who has intellectual disabilities may also have physical or sensory disabilities; people with physical and sensory disabilities have a wide range of abilities and intellectual capacities.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY'S POSITION?

Policy statement for persons with a disability

A policy statement relating to persons with a disability was adopted by University Council in May 1993:

The Australian National University strongly supports the right of people with disabilities to be involved in higher education both as students and as employees.

The University will foster and encourage among its staff and students positive, informed and unprejudiced attitudes towards people with disabilities and shall make provision, insofar as resources may reasonably permit, for any service needed by or for, people with impairments.

The University will take positive steps to encourage people to seek admission to or employment with the University regardless of impairment or disability and shall apply the principle of reasonable adjustment in providing access to any benefit provided by the University to its staff and students who do not have a disability.

Principle of reasonable adjustment

The following statement of principle was adopted by University Council in May 1993:

The principle of reasonable adjustment allows that wherever it is **possible, necessary and reasonable** to do so, the usual policy or practice will be varied to meet the special needs of a person with a disability.

Adjustment may be made to enable people with disabilities to compete on their merits for a student place or a staff position.

Such variations as are required to enact this principle may be made in relation to both the education of students and the employment of staff.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY'S POSITION?

Adjustments may be made to employment arrangements for staff or course presentation for students, to the buildings or grounds of the University, or by way of the provision of equipment.

In implementing the principle of reasonable adjustment it is necessary to focus on adjusting the procedures to meet the needs of the person rather than requiring the person to adjust to procedures which may have been developed with other circumstances in mind.

Employment of people with disabilities

People with disabilities are people with abilities capable in and eligible for a wide range of positions at the University. For ANU purposes, anyone who has a physical, sensory, mental or intellectual impairment which restricts activities of daily living, may identify as having a disability. This may be either temporary or permanent.

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* it is unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of physical or mental disability in appointments, transfers and promotions. Since March 1993, discrimination based on HIV/AIDS status or *perceived status* has been unlawful. It should be noted, however, that if, after taking into account the qualifications, training and relevant experience of a person with a disability and after reasonable consideration of other relevant factors, it is found that because of the disability the person is unable to fulfil the **inherent requirements** of the position then it is not unlawful discrimination to not appoint the person. Where the person's disability would require the provision of services or facilities the level of which would impose **unjustifiable hardship** on the University then this too may constitute a ground for not appointing the individual with a disability.

Where the person with a disability is able to fulfil the inherent requirements of the position and any additional services or facilities would not impose unreasonable hardship the **principle of reasonable adjustment** should be applied. This means that wherever it is possible, necessary and reasonable to do so, the employer varies the usual employment policy or practice to fit the needs of a person with a disability rather than requiring the employee to adapt to the usual environment.

WHAT IS THE UNIVERSITY'S POSITION?

Many forms of adjustment can be made to working arrangements or environments to reduce or eliminate the effects of disabilities and enable people with disabilities to compete on their merits for recruitment and career advancement opportunities.

Reasonable adjustment may mean:

- swapping some duties between a worker with a disability and other people in a team, such as where deafness prevents a person using a standard phone;
- adapting usual equipment or providing something specially designed, for example a voice synthesised computer for a person who is blind;
- providing assistance such as readers for staff who are blind and sign language interpreters for staff who are deaf;
- rearranging the physical layout of the workplace to accommodate those in a wheelchair;
- accepting that there may be alternative ways of accomplishing a given task or objective which were not taken into account during the preparation of the duty statement or selection criteria.

Only where the University would suffer "undue hardship" by having to make the necessary adjustment, is it "reasonable" not to do so.

ADVICE FOR THOSE IN UNIVERSITY WORKPLACES

Working with people with a disability

The University encourages departments to offer work experience to people with disabilities. If your department would like to participate in this please contact the Senior Industrial Officer Ph: 249 4738.

Certain University job advertisements are sent to CRS and CES so that they can encourage suitable clients to apply.

The University includes under all job advertisements the statement that it is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The use of non discriminatory and gender neutral language is also required.

The Disability Adviser is located in H-Block, Old Administration Buildings Ph: 249 5036. The EEO Unit may also be contacted at the same address on Ph: 249 3868.

The phrase *person with a disability* is to be used when referring orally or in writing to an individual. He or she is a person first with any disability being secondary.

Guidelines for supervisors of people with disabilities

Staff Development & Training Unit programs for supervisors include content on working with people with disabilities.

If necessary ensure workplace preparation in consultation with the EEO Coordinator or Disability Adviser. This may include providing guidelines on communication and interacting with workers who have disabilities or information about specific disabilities.

- introduce the new recruit to co-workers;
- observe the reaction of co-workers to the new recruit and resolve any tensions that may arise;
- be available for consultation;

- provide clear course instructions on job requirements;
- work out new divisions of workload if this is required;
- make sure that the recruit is familiar with the immediate working environment - location of kitchens, toilets *et cetera*;
- familiarise co-workers with the recruit's disability (only if necessary and with his/her permission); and
- advise fire wardens about the location of staff with disabilities and ensure appropriate evacuation procedures are developed eg. visual and aural alarms.

The selection process

All selection criteria documents are required to include a commitment to EEO principles and practices.

The Staff Development Training Unit, in conjunction with the EEO Coordinator and the Industrial Office, conduct courses on EEO awareness, staff selection and briefing and the role of the supervisor, all of which have information on disability incorporated.

All committees must comprise 2 members who have attended this course, the Chair and one other member.

- If, in their letter of application, the applicant nominates that they have a disability and requests assistance eg. sign interpreter, wheelchair access, information in alternative formats such as braille, these should be provided.
- The applicant may request to be accompanied by an advocate/support person at interview and arrangement should be made to accommodate this request.

ADVICE FOR THOSE IN UNIVERSITY WORKPLACES

- The committee should focus on the merit of the applicant and their abilities rather than their disabilities eg. a well qualified accountant with a speech impairment - the impairment is not necessarily a barrier to the ability to perform as an accountant.
- It is unlawful to ask discriminatory questions and to "ask for unjustified requests for information over and above those which are reasonably intended as a means of identifying necessary alterations or adjustments; in selection for employment; terms and conditions of the offer and of employment; in promotion, transfer, training or other benefits; and in dismissal". (*Link Up* 1 August 1993 quote, Elizabeth Hastings, Disability Discrimination Commissioner).
- An employer must demonstrate that the person cannot perform the "inherent requirements" of the job before stating that the persons's disability renders them unsuitable for the position.

Further advice can be obtained from the Disability Adviser or the EEO Coordinator.

Refer to the sections on particular disabilities for advice on conduct during the interview.

Ongoing supervision and development

Ensure staff with disabilities have access to on-the-job training and provision for Occupational Health & Safety.

- support staff with disabilities to develop their skills through providing access to appropriate development opportunities, eg. different work experiences and training sessions.
Employees with a disability should be encouraged to attend relevant staff training and development courses - contact Staff Development & Training Unit, H-Block, Ph: 249 4338.

It should not be assumed that it is difficult or undesirable to expect staff who have disabilities to perform multi-skilled work.

Some may **gradually** develop a disability, especially loss of hearing or sight. This could mean that their work performance may deteriorate as they determine the nature of and adjust to, their difficulty. Some people in this situation may find it difficult and embarrassing to talk to their supervisor and ask for help.

- do not encourage over-protective attitudes;
- inform staff with disabilities, in private, if their work performance is below standard. Give a reasonable time to improve and then review;
- if in doubt, seek advice from the EEO Coordinator or Disability Adviser who is available to talk at staff meetings on any disability and its effects.
- contact the Occupational Health & Safety Officer in G-Block, Old Administration Area, Ph: 249 3657 for advice on rehabilitation programs, design of office furniture and equipment, lifting regulations etc.

Attitude

- Treat people with disabilities as you would any other employee or applicant
- Use the title appropriate to the situation eg. Dr, Mr, Ms
- Do not assume that a person with a disability has additional disabilities, eg. do not shout at people with a sight impairment or in a wheelchair

ADVICE FOR THOSE IN UNIVERSITY WORKPLACES

- If you think a person with a disability requires assistance - ask "would you like assistance" and listen to their response - do not just assume that help is required
- Be receptive and accepting - people with disabilities have the same rights as any other worker or applicant;
- Be flexible - adapt procedures to the persons not the person to procedures
- Should a successful applicant or employee require equipment or adaption of usual workplace equipment or modification to make the workplace more accessible - consult the person with a disability. It may also be necessary to contact a community disability organisation for advice on appropriate equipment, or how best to modify the workplace.

EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS AND ASSISTANCE

Job subsidy schemes through the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES)

People eligible for the Disability Support Pension (which has replaced the Invalid Pension) may be referred directly to CES or Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service by a Department of Social Security worker. Staff on Disability Panels are drawn from the Department of Social Security, the Commonwealth Employment Service and the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service and may interview clients if necessary.

The Panel works with people to draw up activity plans covering training to help them find and keep work.

If your area has a job vacancy that could be filled by a person with a disability there are two programs you could consider:

Job Start

Under this scheme the person must have been unemployed for 6 months, registered with Commonwealth Employment Service for 12 months or registered as "high risk".

The scheme grants employers a wage subsidy for a variable number of weeks for employing people between the ages of 16 and 64. These subsidies vary with age and duration of registration. The Commonwealth Employment Service can provide information on current subsidy rates. The spirit of Job Start is that the job should be a continuing position where the employee is eligible to continue after the subsidy ceases. There is no compulsion to keep the person on after the subsidy ceases, although the employer is encouraged to do so. This subsidy applies to some of the ANU awards. The University's Senior Industrial Officer (Ph: 249 4738) can be contacted for advice on award applications.

Work Experience for People with Disabilities (WEPD)

To be eligible for work experience the person must be on the Disability Support pension. There is a full wage subsidy for a variable number of weeks. The person may work full or part time.

The subsidy is payable only where people are employed outside of the *Public Service Act*. Workers Compensation and Superannuation are not reimbursed. These costs must be met by the employer.

Special arrangements may be possible in relation to Workers Compensation payments where this is a barrier to taking on a person with a disability.

- Funds can be made available for **hire** of equipment under the principle of reasonable adjustment. This must not be used for capital equipment of a permanent nature.
- Further information may be sought from the Disabilities Contact Officer, Civic CES Ph: 274 4900.
- Supervision may be provided by organisations such as **Workplaces** who place people in work experience. They will also do work place assessments.

An employee who commences with the work experience program is eligible to go on to Job Start afterwards thereby giving extra weeks of subsidised employment. However, this can only occur if there is progression of duties and training is still needed.

Job Net. A program for school leavers with an intellectual disability. There are also transition programs between school, work or further education.

Steps for the employing area wishing to use an existing program

- Ring CES, Ph: 274 4900 for the Civic, Belconnen or Yass Area, or the Employer Serving Unit at Woden Ph: 283 6400 for the south side.
- Inform the CES that you wish to lodge a job vacancy under the Job Start Scheme and specify that you would like a person with a disability OR you can have a particular person in mind and nominate this person.
- Staff member from CES will come to employer to do a "sign up".
- Limited funds are available to modify the workplace.
- If the employee receives the Disability Support pension there is post-placement support for these programs. A supervisor will come to the workplace and assist with an orientation program. Adequate notice is needed for staff from the Work Resources Centre who provide this service for CES.

Disabled apprentice wage scheme.

This scheme provides a wage subsidy plus money to modify the work place. It also includes funding to assist with tutorials at the Institute of Technology.

Traineeships.

Employers are paid a sum of money to employ someone on a Traineeship with an additional amount of money paid if the person has a disability. Under this scheme there is also an adjusted curriculum in the TAFE part of the traineeship.

ADVICE FOR STAFF OR POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES WITH A DISABILITY

Applying for a Job

- Obtain experience in writing job applications and attending interviews. Careers advisers can help in this area or attend SDTU job finding interview skills workshop.
- Obtain information about the physical difficulties which the work may involve so that you can suggest solutions at interview if asked.
- Obtain as much work experience as possible, even voluntary work. Ask for references from these experiences.
- Choose whether or not to mention your disability in the job application. Some wait until the interview. Either way it makes sense to explain any restrictions to the employer, explaining how they can be overcome and how they can be coped with in the proposed job.
- The Commonwealth Employment Service particularly welcomes approaches from people with disabilities seeking employment.
- Do not wait for jobs to be advertised. Initiative shown in approaching employers is highly regarded as an indicator of a motivated person who will make a good employee.
- It is advisable to check the terms of employment in relation to the employers workers compensation insurance cover and superannuation. These are complex areas and conditions vary. (see p33 regarding ANU)
- Contact the Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled (ACROD) for material on schemes and services available to make job seeking easier and careers which are possible for people with disabilities.(Address: 33 Thesiger Street, Deakin. Ph: 282 4333)

- Contact the Commonwealth Employment Service and ask about the Training Assistance Program or contact Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (06) 274 5199.
- Remember legislation at state and federal level now makes it unlawful to discriminate against people with disabilities in offering employment.

If you are unemployed and registered with the CES as having a disability and high risk you may attend the Disability Access Support Unit which works with Skill Share projects to provide training in line with your disability. eg. instruction on adaptive computer equipment. Contact DASU (06) 295 5925.

At the interview

- Follow normal practice in handling interviews. Information on this can be obtained by discussions with careers advisers or by attending the SDTU job finding and interview skills workshop.
- If you use a wheelchair, telephone in advance and ask for an accessible room for interview.
- Arrive early to give yourself time to negotiate unforeseen hazards and to relax before interview.
- If you have a vision impairment ask panel to introduce themselves and indicate seating if this has not been done by the panel.
- If you have a hearing impairment and need a sign interpreter, telephone in advance and indicate that they will be accompanying you.
- Do not be afraid to ask for clarification of the requirements of the job - ask questions.

- If your disability does not interfere with your ability to perform the job there is no need to mention it.
- If, however, you will need adaptations or modifications so that you can perform at the same level as a non disabled applicant you should discuss this. Perhaps indicating sources of government financial support for provision of equipment or ramps etc. if you are registered with the CES. (Contact the Training Program at the CES office)
- Talk to the employer about your ability to do the job and that you can work as well as a non disabled employee. Be positive and enthusiastic. Tell them about others with disabilities who have done similar jobs, discuss the good safety record shown in British and US surveys of disabled workers.
- An employer may be reluctant to embarrass either himself or an applicant by asking about mobility, adaptations or equipment. You should raise these issues in a positive confident manner.
- Cultivate a relaxed easy manner as it helps put people at ease with those with disabilities and therefore indicates you will be easy to work with.

Settling into the job

If there has been a need to modify the environment, check that this has been done before you commence. If this has not occurred speak with your supervisor and obtain a definite time when this will happen. If necessary enlist the help of the Disability Adviser.

Ask that your supervisor tells your colleagues what assistance, if any, you will require with certain tasks.

- Give your colleagues time to adjust to your disabilities. Many people are shy or embarrassed and unsure how to approach people with

disabilities. The Disability Adviser is available to talk at staff meetings on individual disabilities and you may like to request this. Ph: 249 5036.

- If you need further assistance in any matter please contact the Disability Adviser.
- Participate in relevant staff training and development courses put on by the SDT Unit in H Block so that you can upgrade your skills. Discuss this with you supervisor.
- Remember that Trade Union Training is an entitlement under your award and various unions put on seminars for members with disabilities from time to time (eg. the Public Service Union).

Special parking places are provided on campus and a map of these, including a wheelchair route, is available from the Disability Adviser.

INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

Intellectual disabilities

People with intellectual disabilities have experienced damage to the central nervous system. This damage affects the way in which they learn academic material but does not necessarily affect their ability to learn and develop functional life, work and social skills.

Three percent of the population are considered to have an intellectual disability.

Intellectual disability can result from:

- congenital factors (existing at birth);
- hereditary factors (passed on from parents); or
- acquired through trauma, (forceps delivery, accident while in womb), disease or genetic factors occurring before, during or after the birth.

People who have intellectual disabilities have proven their ability to hold down jobs. They can appear unsure of themselves in new situations but do adapt with time and assistance. Although they may not understand complicated language and sometimes experience difficulty in fluent verbal expression, but this does not necessarily affect their ability to communicate.

How to recruit a person who has an intellectual disability

People who have an intellectual disability will mostly apply and negotiate for a position with help from a support person, a parent or an employed worker of an organisation providing this specific service (an advocate), eg. Commonwealth Employment Service or Disability Organisation.

At the interview

The advocate's role is to offer support to the applicant and, where necessary, help the interviewees present their case.

When communicating with a person who has an intellectual disability:

- treat the person as you would treat other people;
- talk directly with the applicant and not the person accompanying them;
- speak clearly using uncomplicated language and statements;
- be prepared to repeat what you have said using different words;
- do not talk down or patronise but show respect, as you would to others;
- use appropriate titles for the situation, Dr, Mr, Ms, Miss;
- ask questions which require simple answers, preferably yes/no responses: Have you ever used a photocopier? Can you answer the telephone? It is a good idea to indicate the particular telephone or photocopier the applicant will use.
- be flexible, this is consistent with the principle of reasonable adjustment.

Settling into the job

People who have intellectual disabilities learn in small steps through repetition. This means that their responsibilities may need to be reduced into smaller steps and learnt in stages using repetition.

Often this learning adjustment phase will be conducted by the support worker who can act in a supernumerary capacity.

INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

The support worker will reduce their level of supervision as the individual adjusts to their responsibilities.

- Acknowledge the person's presence with a smile and a word. Talk directly to him/her, not the person he/she is with.
- Speak clearly using uncomplicated language and statements.
- Keep sentences simple and take time to explain your meaning if necessary. Be prepared to repeat what you have said or written using different words.
- Be prepared to wait for a response to your remarks. Silence does not mean you are being ignored - it may indicate difficulty in understanding what you have said, or slow speech.
- Don't take advantage of him/her. An eager-to-please attitude and friendliness can lead intellectually disabled people into being asked to do jobs that others would not be asked to do.
- Comment, where appropriate, on smart appearance or a job well done, as you would to your other acquaintances.
- Discuss age appropriate topics such as sport, television, theatre or pop music, current news rather than child-like things. Don't talk down to or patronise but show respect, as you would to others.
- Use your friendship skills, such as consideration, a smile, interest in what she or he has to say, appreciation, and so on.
- Don't be over protective. Taking a risk can sometimes mean the acquisition of a new skill or the development of confidence.
- People with a disability may need help with unexpected things, eg. handling money, deciding which bus to catch or where to catch it,

waiting their turn or standing in queues and so on. Your own patient instructions, voice or behaviour will be their best opportunity to learn a new social skill.

Physical disabilities

Physical difficulties vary from person to person and depend upon the type and location of damage.

Physical disabilities can be caused by:

- congenital factors (existing at birth);
- heredity;

or acquired through:

- trauma
- infections
- degeneration
- or disease

Sometimes, people with physical disabilities have involuntary movement of the muscles. Most people with physical disabilities are capable of fulfilling all types of positions.

Spinal cord injuries

Spinal cord injuries are caused by damage to the spinal cord, preventing transmission of incoming and outgoing messages below the level of injury. The higher the position of injury, the less movement the person is likely to have. This type of injury usually results in paraplegia or quadriplegia.

Paraplegia is paralysis to the lower part of the body. This means that people have use of the upper parts of their body and can do many things for themselves. They can function as well as most people in the workplace.

INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

A main requirement for people with paraplegia is wheelchair access to, and within, their work environment.

Quadriplegia is paralysis from the neck down and sometimes result in limited hand and arm movement. This means people may have limited use of their body and limbs, but with the use of equipment and appropriate wheelchair access can do many jobs.

People with paraplegia and quadriplegia usually have no difficulties in communication. They may have been employed prior to their accident and need to use the principle of reasonable adjustment to rehabilitate themselves back to their pre-injury work status.

Most people affected by quadriplegia will use an electric wheelchair.

Some employers may have concerns about toileting and how this aspect of a person's life may effect their ability to fulfil a position. The majority of people affected by paralysis learn self management techniques and cope well in their daily life.

Some people with quadriplegia will employ their own attendant to assist with personal care.

Tips for working with people who have physical disabilities

- maintain eye contact;
- speak directly to the person rather than their companion;
- speak clearly and in a natural manner;
- do not assume they have additional disabilities ie. do not shout;
- use titles appropriate to the situation eg. Dr, Mr, Ms, Miss.
- be flexible - adopt procedures to the person not the person to the procedures. This is consistent with the principle of reasonable adjustment;

- do not assume they cannot comprehend because of any outward physical appearance;
- where possible seat yourself at the level of the person when communicating;
- respect their personal space which includes their wheelchair;
- do not use the term 'wheelchair bound'. A chair is an enabling device not a restriction.

Specific tips for wheelchairs

- Pushing a wheelchair

Most people in wheelchairs are able to push themselves or have electric wheelchairs. However, if assistance is needed always ask the person what they require. When pushing a wheelchair, talk to the person and do not move too quickly.

- Lifting and assisting in wheelchair transfer

The situation may arise when someone with a physical disability asks for help to transfer from their wheelchair to some other seating arrangement. Many people will be able to transfer themselves or need minimal help, but if the person has severe quadriplegia or cerebral palsy, they may require total lifting.

- Safe lifting

If total lifting is required, ask the person how they wish to be lifted.

When lifting, keep your feet apart and bend your knees, keeping your back as straight as possible. This means that you lift with your legs not your back.

Place the wheelchair as close as possible to where the person is to be transferred. Ensure that wheelchair brakes are firmly on.

INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

One person stands behind the wheelchair

Ask the wheelchair passenger to bend forward with hands on lap and ensure the person is centred in their wheelchair

Place arms under the person's arm pits and around their chest grasping their hands

The second person kneels beside the person placing their arms under the person's thighs being careful not to dislodge any catheter and urine bag

The second person also kneels to ensure they lift with their legs and not their back.

Sensory disabilities

Blindness and vision impairment

For legal purposes, blindness is considered to be the inability to identify anything less than 6/60 or a restriction of this visual field to 10 degree of arc. This means that what a person can see at 60 metres a person with a vision impairment can only see at 6 metres.

Most people with a vision impairment have some vision. However, what one person can see is usually very different from what another person can see and may range from blurred vision, reduced depth and distance perception, sensitivity to glare, tunnel vision to poor night vision.

There are very few people who are totally blind.

This means that many people with a sight disability may appear to be totally blind on first meeting but later display limited sight. This can be confusing and difficult to appreciate initially for an interview panel or co-workers.

People with a vision impairment can fill most jobs but may need assistance and technical devices such as a talking computer and a tape recorder for messages. This is consistent with the principle of reasonable adjustment. Two in every thousand people have a vision impairment. They might need mobility aids, use a cane, dog or sonic glasses but travel independently to their place of employment.

Recruitment of a person with a vision impairment

Not all people with a vision impairment will need assistance in applying for a job, or in the process of recruitment. Some will not divulge their impairment in their application. As a result, an interview panel may unexpectedly find themselves interviewing someone who is blind or has a sight impairment.

At the interview

The chair person of the selection committee should offer assistance to the applicant by explaining the seating, any obstacles and offer an arm to guide them. Your offer is important although it might be politely refused.

Address the person by name and title to alert them of your attention and say who you are.

Speak quietly and directly as people with a sight disability usually have sensitive hearing.

Talk with the applicant about any equipment or other requirements they will need to do the job.

Settling into the job

People with a vision impairment usually learn best by having things explained slowly and repeated. This gives the person time to review their notes recorded on a cassette recorder or Braille notetaker.

They will need to be orientated to their new environment to ensure independent mobility. These people will also need to be informed of any changes to their environment. When in their presence or when greeting them, say who you are.

INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

If called upon to guide a fellow worker who is blind:

- let the person take your arm above the elbow;
- describe where you are going;
- position and number of steps, doorways, corners and ground including entries and exists;
- talk about what you see - don't be afraid to use the word "see"; and
- tell the person when you are leaving their presence.

Deafness and hearing impairment

One in ten people have hearing difficulties. Deafness is sometimes referred to as the "hidden disability" as it is not always obvious.

People who are deaf can be either profoundly deaf or have a hearing impairment.

Deafness and hearing impairment can be caused by:

- congenital factors (people who have been deaf from birth may also have speech difficulties);
- hereditary;
- infection;
- trauma; or
- industrial deafness from continuous loud noise over a period, this includes loud music which tends to affect young people in particular.

People who have hearing difficulties can fulfil most positions in the University. Sometimes they will require technical devices such as hearing aids, sign language, interpreters and telephone typewriters (TTY's).

People who have severe hearing loss may find working in certain areas difficult. Consider carefully areas in which people with severe hearing loss are expected to work. They will know what situation suits them best. This is consistent with the principle of reasonable adjustment.

Flashing lights can be substituted for alarms and can be added to telephones to indicate ringing tones.

At the interview

- Provide a sign interpreter if requested by the applicant. (Contact the Disability Adviser, Ph: 249 5036);
- During the interview position and seat the panel members so that the interviewee can clearly see their mouths and facial expressions to get the benefit of lip reading;
- Reduce background noise and avoid window glare or any disturbances that could affect the person's ability to concentrate;
- Provide good lighting;
- Face the person directly and establish eye contact, speak clearly, slowly and don't cover your mouth or shout;
- Do not exaggerate mouth action when speaking as this distorts lip reading;
- If what you say is not understood rephrase your statement more clearly;
- Clarify important points and ask the person to confirm their understanding; and
- If necessary use written communication and/or gestures.

INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC DISABILITIES

Some people who are deaf have restricted language skills and may require a signing or oral interpreter. The role of the interpreter is to translate oral communication into sign language for the interviewee, or orally express their responses to the panel, especially if they have speech difficulties. For some it may be better to offer the interview questions in writing.

Settling into the job

People with severe hearing problems will rely heavily on visual contact. When they get tired their ability to concentrate is reduced and learning becomes more difficult.

Explain the required tasks of the position at the person's rate of comprehension and use repetition if indicated.

Adhere to the same guide-lines of communication as described in recruitment interview.

UNIVERSITY SUPPORT SERVICES TO ASSIST WITH DISABILITY MATTERS

Whether you are a person with a disability, a supervisor, a colleague or a friend of a person with a disability the people listed below are available to provide support, assistance or advice to you.

- Equal Employment Opportunity Coordinator, H-Block, Old Administration Area, Ph: 249 3868
- Disability Adviser, H-Block, Old Administration Area, Ph: 249 5036
- Personal Adviser to Staff, Chancelry, 2B Superannuation Building, Ph: 249 3616
- University Health Service, Sports Union Building, Ph: 249 3598
- Counselling Service, Sports Union Building, Ph: 249 2442
- Occupational Health & Safety Office, G-Block, Old Administration Area, Ph: 249 2193
- Buildings & Grounds Division, Yencken Building - Building Operations Officer for access problems Ph: 249 4049
- Industrial Office, Chancelry, 2B Superannuation Building, Ph: 249 4738
- Campus HIV/AIDS Educator, H Block, Old Administration Area, Ph: 249 3604

The Disability Advisory Group is a sub-committee of the EEO Committee and meets bimonthly. Observers are welcome. Contact the Disability Adviser for time and venue of meetings. This Committee covers issues relating to both staff and students.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE HELPFUL

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If you are disabled due to an accepted workplace injury the following will apply:

You will no doubt have filled in a notice of injury/exposure report form as well as a Workers' Compensation claim form. If you are more than several days away from the workplace, your treating medical practitioner will be approached (with your permission) to outline what medical constraints apply in returning you to your workplace. If, however, your treating medical practitioner is unable to give these constraints then you will be assessed by a Specialist Occupational Physician.

You are entitled to and are obliged to willingly participate in a rehabilitation program and to have your return to work monitored by a qualified person to ensure a safe and durable outcome (Sec. 36/37 SRC Act 1988).

The Australian National University is obliged under section 40 of the SRC Act to "take all reasonable steps to provide the employee with suitable employment or to assist the employee to find such employment".

As regards point 1, you are entitled to reasonable assistance with aids and appliances as recommended by your rehabilitation provider. Cases are treated on an individual basis for any assistance.

Superannuation for employees with disabilities

Superannuation Scheme for Australian Universities (SSAU)

The rules regarding eligibility for membership to SSAU relate to employment conditions, not state of health. A person will not be prevented from joining SSAU for reasons of ill-health.

When an employee joins the SSAU, the person must be medically examined by one of several doctors nominated by the University.

If there appears to be any conditions of concern identified at that examination, the report from the doctor is forwarded to the scheme administrators for consideration by their medical consultants.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE HELPFUL

If it is considered that the condition is likely to cause a member to retire or die during their working career, the scheme may impose restrictions on the level of disablement and death benefits available to that member. These restrictions have no affect on the member's resignation and retirement benefits.

The degree of the restrictions imposed reduces as the person's period of membership increases, to where (in most cases) the restriction lapses once the person has been a member for 15 years. During the early years of membership, the restrictions are very severe.

TESS

TESS is an award superannuation scheme to which the ANU contributes on behalf of employees. Membership of this scheme is unaffected by the employee's state of health.

TESS offers a plan whereby a member can elect for further death and disablement cover. The premiums are deducted from the ANU's contributions. If a new member applies for this additional cover, at the time of joining TESS, there is no requirement for a medical examination or statement of health. If a member applies for this cover some time after joining, evidence of the member's state of health will be required. If the member's health is considered to be of a standard which is likely to increase the risk of death or disablement, the member may be precluded from obtaining this cover.

Social Security benefits

The Disability Support Pension

This pension replaces the old Invalid Pension. If you cannot work full time because of a serious long term health problem or disability you can apply for the Disability Support Pension. For further information call Social Security Teleservice on 132468 (for languages other than English call 131202) or call in at any Social Security Office.

OTHER EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION WHICH MAY BE HELPFUL

Sickness Allowance

This is a benefit for those **temporarily** unable to work who suffer a loss of income as a result of illness or injury. It is generally paid for up to 12 months but may be extended to 2 years in special circumstances. A medical certificate is required. Contact Social Security as above for further information.

Mobility Allowance

Paid to people 16 or over in gainful employment or undertaking vocational training who cannot use public transport without substantial assistance because of a disability.

Child Disability Allowance

Payable for a dependant child with a disability under 16-24 who is not on the Disability Support Pension.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES IN THE ACT

The following agencies may be contacted by either people with disabilities seeking work or employers who would like to employ a staff member with a disability.

Job Match

For people with intellectual disabilities who currently work at Koomarri. Assistance is given to integrate them into community employment. Gladstone Street, Fyshwick 2609 Ph: 280 6143.

Advance Personnel

This organisation provides Competitive Employment Training and Placement Services (CETP), Stephen House, 30-32 Thesiger Court, Deakin West 2600 Ph: 285 2466.

Job Net

Provides a bridge between school and work for people with intellectual disabilities (age 15-24). Unit B Ground Floor, Scott House, 219 London Circuit, Canberra City ACT 2601 Ph: 247 2564.

Work Link

Assists people with a psychiatric disability to obtain work. Unit 2 First Floor, 25 Lonsdale Street, Braddon 2601 Ph: 247 3611.

SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES IN THE ACT

The Marketing Team

Suite G05, Construction House, 217 Northbourne Avenue, Turner, ACT 2601. Ph 248 9699 Fax 248 6516.

Trans ed

Links students in their last semester of school with work experience and information on employment and training programs. Unit 3 Ground Floor, Scott House, 219 London Circuit, Canberra City ACT 2601, Ph 247 2564.

Unitronics

Electronic assembly at the University of Canberra within the Faculty of Education, University of Canberra, Belconnen 2616, Ph 201 2903.

Job Solve

(ACT Chamber of Commerce and Industry Limited Job Solve Program)

Cnr Wollongong & Kembla Streets, Fyshwick 2609, Ph 280 6032

Provides support to people with disabilities to ensure they maintain their employment.

Work Places

Provides job placement training and long term work placement support. Unit 17 George Turner House, 11 McKay Gardens, Turner 2601, Ph 257 7088.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS

CONTACT, a community information handbook, is available free from the Citizens Advice Bureau, Griffin Centre, Civic.

Hearing Impaired

Deafness Council (ACT) c/- SHOUT Office, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place, Pearce ACT Ph: (06) 290 1282 voice TTY (06) 290 1329 Fax (06) 286 4475

Canberra Hearing Centre, CFM Building, cnr Moore and Rudd St, Civic, ACT Ph: (06) 257 6530, (06) 247 8125 (TTY)

Check the yellow pages of the phone book for hearing aid suppliers

Technical Aid to the Disabled Ph: (06) 285 4040

Private Audiologist Ph: (06) 285 1098

Association for Better Hearing Ph: (06) 282 1300 after hours

Deafness Resources Aust. Ltd. Ph: (02) 893 8139 Voice 028 938 036 (TTY)

"Hear" Service Vic. Adult Deaf Society Ph: (03) 657 8199

Oz Deaf Youth Group Social Club Ph: (06) 252 6762

ACT Deaf Sports and Recreation Contact Shout Office Ph: (06) 290 1282

TTY (06) 290 1329

Vision impaired

Canberra Blind Society, Griffin Centre, Bunda Street, Civic Ph: (06) 247 4580 (06) 247 2927

Guide Dog Association of NSW and ACT Ph: (06) 285 2988 (for mobility instruction if you are new to campus)

COMMUNITY SUPPORT GROUPS

Royal Blind Society of NSW Ph: (06) 295 3333. Ph: Sydney 008 424 359

Technical Aid to the Disabled Ph: (06) 285 4040

Royal Vic. Institute for the Blind Ph: (03) 529 3544

National Federation of Blind Citizens of Australia Ph: (06) 250 6991

Physically disabled

Multiple Sclerosis Society Ph: (06) 285 2999

Muscular Dystrophy Association Ph: (06) 293 2033

For copies of the book Canberra Access, a Guide for People with Disabilities and for the Elderly, contact ACROD, Ph: (06) 282 4333

ME Society, SHOUT Office, Pearce Community Centre, Collett Place, Pearce ACT Ph: (06) 290 1984

ACT Society for the Physically Handicapped Ph: (06) 282 4411

Arthritis Foundation Ph (06) 257 4842

Technical Aid to the Disabled Ph: (06) 285 4040

Others

Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service, Ph: (06) 274 5199

Independent Living Centre Ph: (06) 205 1900

This is a comprehensive source of information on equipment and resources for people with disabilities.

Mobile Rehabilitation Unit Ph: (06) 244 2500

Rehabilitation Service Woden Valley Hospital Ph: (06) 244 2198

Disabled Peoples International Ph: (06) 239 1631

Australian Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled Ph: (06) 282 4333

People Living with HIV/AIDS Ph: (06) 257 4985

If you have any comments on any of this information booklet we would be pleased if you could advise us. Your contribution will aid future staff of the Australian National University.

Please send to: Disability Adviser, H Block, Old Administration Area, Australian National University, Canberra 0200.

Very useful reading

Reasonable Adjustment: enabling a manager to focus on ability. AGPS, Canberra, 1990.