



Sharing disability information in the workforce – a guide for students and jobseekers

This guide provides basic information about deciding when is the best time for you to share disability-related information with a prospective employer.

Sharing information in the workplace can be a tricky topic. It is important to gauge how confident the organisation is with managing disability, and consider this when deciding if and when is best to share disability-related information. It's important to understand that all organisations, and the individuals within those organisations, are at different stages of their journey to disability confidence and awareness.

Your rights

The Disability Discrimination Act (or DDA) provides legal protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability. The DDA prohibits discrimination against people with disability throughout all stages of the employment process, from advertising and recruitment to training as well as terminations. Under the DDA, employers are obligated to make adjustments to accommodate an individual's disability, unless that adjustment would result in unjustifiable hardship.

It is important to know that you have no obligation to share details about your disability or any disability-specific information with a prospective employer. If you require an adjustment for any stages of the recruitment process (i.e. if you have accessibility requirements for the interview or require time adjustments in online testing) you may choose to request these from the hiring manager after your application has been progressed to this particular stage of recruitment. If you are successful in being offered the role, but believe a workplace adjustment would benefit you in the job, you could make these requests after the job offer or during your early onboarding processes within the organisation.

Workplace adjustments

A workplace adjustment can be defined as, "A change to a work process, procedure, piece of equipment or the work environment that enables an employee with disability to perform their job in a way that minimises the impact of their disability".

Workplace adjustments allow a person to:

- Perform the inherent or essential requirements of their job safely in the workplace
- Have equal opportunity in recruitment processes, promotion and ongoing development





- Experience equitable terms and conditions of employment
- Maximise productivity

Examples of workplace adjustments that create an inclusive environment include:

- Flexible work hours, allowing employees to work part time, shorter days or from home when required
- Providing additional mentoring, training and support
- Providing ergonomic office equipment

Sharing information at different stages of recruitment

In your letter of application or resume

It is generally not recommended practice to share disability information at this point, unless:

- It is relevant to the industry or position
- You need adjustments to be made in the selection process
- You know the organisation is demonstrably supportive and encouraging of employing people with disability

If you do choose to share information at this point, consider including details about:

- Past achievements
- Personal attributes
- In relation to specific selection criteria, such as problem solving or people skills

If you are seeking adjustments as part of the selection process:

- Be as specific and constructive as possible about suggested adjustments
- Offer your assistance in coordinating these adjustments
- Identify in general terms the types of workplace adjustments you would seek if you got the job

On being offered an interview

You could decide to share disability information at this stage because:

- Your disability is visible to others and you want to prepare the interview panel
- You need adjustments to be made in the interview process
- You don't want to worry about the issue during your interview

If you do share information at this point:

- Plan ahead what to say





- Promote your disability as a positive attribute
- Be as specific and constructive as possible about suggested adjustments for the interview
- Offer your assistance in coordinating these adjustments
- Identify in general terms the types of workplace adjustments you would seek if you got the job

During an interview

You could decide to share disability information at this stage because you'd like to:

- Address any misconceptions about your apparent disability and ability to the job
- Promote the knowledge, strengths, skills and personal attributes you have gained from living with disability
- Identify any workplace adjustments you would seek if you got the job
- Check out the employer's likely attitude towards your disability

If you do share information at this point:

- Plan ahead what to say and rehearse before the interview
- Be prepared for any negative reactions and make a constructive response
- Promote your disability as a positive quality
- Do describe in general terms only the adjustments, if any, you would seek if you got the job
- Demonstrate your willingness to assist and negotiate with implementing these workplace adjustments

In the job

You could decide to share disability-related information at this stage because:

- You'd like to seek workplace adjustments
- You'd like to inform the employer of any disability-related issues that could arise during your employment
- You may discover that you need adjustments that you were not aware of before starting the job
- After getting to know the workplace you are more confident that you can safely share your disability
- You may be struggling to perform the job and need some assistance

If you do decide to share information at this point:

- Plan ahead what to say
- Be prepared for any negative reactions
- Ask about how your personal information will be protected





AUSTRALIAN
NETWORK
ON DISABILITY

- Offer any information you know of about managing disability in the workplace or specifically about your type of disability in the workplace
- Be prepared to describe in general terms the adjustments (if any) you need
- Demonstrate a willingness to assist and negotiate with implementing any workplace adjustments

