

Disclosing your disability to a potential employer

Many students with a disability worry about whether they should disclose their disability or health condition to a potential employer. You are under no obligation to disclose your disability, unless it may cause harm to you / others – so in most cases the decision whether to disclose is a personal one. Reasons why some people choose not to disclose include:

- Do not want to disclose their health condition or disability, as they may be concerned about being rejected automatically.
- May feel that their health condition or disability does not actually affect their ability to do the job that they have applied for.
- Feel that employer will not view them objectively.

Below are some suggested reasons for disclosure:

- Many employers are committed to employing people who have a disability. Look up their "equal opportunities" policy.
- You may be asked to complete a medical form and if so, you must do so truthfully.
- There may be a health and safety implication, or the need for work-place adaptations.

How to disclose: It is important to think about all the skills that you can offer an employer. Living with your health condition or disability may in fact have given you many transferable skills that an employer is looking for.

There are several occasions where it may be appropriate to disclose your disability:

Covering Letter: You could mention your disability in the letter accompanying your CV. It could be done in a positive manner and could highlight relevant achievements.

Application Form: There may be a section on the form that asks about any serious health conditions or disabilities. You may also want to mention your disability when giving an answer to a question – Eg: Give an example of a time where you have overcome an obstacle.....(it could be a significant achievement to get your degree whilst managing your disability / health difficulty.)

Pre-Interview: If you are invited for an interview and need practical support, you could get in contact with the employer in advance.

Interview: It may be that you will not be able to conceal your disability at an interview. Be relaxed and always present yourself in a positive manner.

Acceptance: You may wish to inform your employer when you have been offered the position, but have not yet commenced in the role.