Job Seeking Resources and Opportunities for Students with Disabilities

OU Careers and Employability Services

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Introduction

If you’re looking for work, OU Careers and Employability Services team are here to help, but we are not the only people who can provide advice and support. This guide will list and signpost you to various vacancy sources as well as contact details for organisations who provide support.

OU Careers and Employability Services website

The Careers and Employability team can support you in many ways, as our website has sections covering applying for jobs and job seeking.

You can also download the Career Planning and Job Seeking Workbook which takes you in series of progressive steps through the process of career review and choice.

We run webinars and forums covering job seeking and other careers issues of interest to students with disabilities and health issues.

Careers and Employability Services

Contact us in the way which is right for you.

https://www.facebook.com/OpenUniCareers
https://twitter.com/OpenUniCareers
https://www.linkedin.com/groups/3871260
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Job vacancy sites for applicants with disabilities

These links will take you to websites which advertise live vacancies targeted at students with disabilities. Many of these organisations offer advice and support for job seeking as well.

- **Disability Jobsite** provides a variety of resources and networks to smooth the pathway to employment. They regularly tweet about live vacancies.

- **Disabled Workers’ Charity** is an independent charity advertising live vacancies aimed at people with disabilities.

- **Employability** works with disabled university students and graduates to ease the transition from education into employment. They offer free support, advice and guidance throughout the entire recruitment process and beyond.

- **Equal Approach** is a specialist diversity recruitment provider with a strong focus on attracting candidates from a diverse background. Equal Approach make a donation to those diverse organisations that assist them with promoting vacancies which result in a successful placement.

- **Auticon** are the first enterprise that exclusively employs autistic adults as IT Consultants.

- **Evenbreak** is a social enterprise which has live vacancies and support.

- **My Plus Students’ Club** Free registration gives you access to full information. Select the ‘Organisations’ tab to view employers with a positive approach to disability and who may have vacancies.

- **Marks & Spencer** has a job site which has live vacancies for people with disabilities.

- **Papworth Trust: Work Programme** can you help you prepare for work, find work, or get training and work experience and keep a job. You’ll find support for job seekers, employees and employers.

- **Remploy** has live vacancies and offer support in finding work and keeping it, you can view vacancies here.

- **The Shaw Trust** works with the Work Programme in offering support in job seeking.

- **Specialisterne** is a recruitment agency specialising in people with autism.
Internships, skills development programmes and work experience

If you are changing career direction, or if you haven’t worked for a while, it is often helpful to gain experience and links in this section suggests ways of doing this.

- **Disability Rights UK** offer a leadership programme over 4 non-consecutive days, which includes mentoring by senior executives and coaching from professional coaches.

- **Frontrunner** Frontrunner programmes specifically for disabled students in partnership with universities across the UK. Students take part in challenging discussions with senior leaders and visit organizations across different sectors to tackle real-life challenges. They gain a deep insight into the world of work, broaden their networks and unlock the skills they need to succeed in their careers. The programme runs for three days, for up to 50 students.

- **Change 100** internees receive mentoring and guidance throughout a paid three-month work placement.

- **Elevation Networks** has activities include networking events, mentoring, internships, skills development and volunteer opportunities for students and graduates including those affected by disability.

- **Employability** run internships and graduate recruitment programmes on behalf of many blue-chip and public sector organisations.

- **Access to Work scheme for work experience** provides financial support for the extra costs that you may incur, such as support workers, specialist equipment, and travel to work. It also covers work experience placements.

- **Guardian Careers: Tips on finding work experience with a disability** is a how-to guide covering how to looking for the right type of employer and discovering what support is available and tips on securing work placements if you have a disability.

- An excellent way to prepare for employment is voluntary work and [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk) is an excellent place to look for opportunities. You will also find more volunteering organisations on our [volunteering opportunities page](#).
Where to find advice and support when looking for work

Support and advice is available from all the organisations listed in this section.

- Have a look at the [employment skills guide](#) for people with newly acquired disabilities or health conditions on DisabilityRights UK.

- [Gov.uk](#) explains the support available to people with disabilities who looking for work, covering DEAs and Government schemes.

- [The Shaw Trust](#) provide training and support in finding employment.

- [United Response](#) -provides support into paid work or volunteering and run supported employment services and social enterprises. They also run learning and skills development projects.

- [Scope’s Employment Service](#) supports disabled people to gain and sustain meaningful work in large companies, the public sector and with local employers.

- [Disability Rights UK](#) have an overview about the job seeking process and alternative ways of working. It also has a summary of support organisations.

- [Disability Rights UK](#) have a [downloadable booklet](#) on career planning for people with disabilities, including case studies.

- [Target Careers](#) has an overview of issues and support available.

- [Disabled people’s user led organisations (DPULO’s): list and contacts](#) offers a range of support including employment.

- [Association of Disabled Professionals](#) provides advice and support to individuals in employment or running their own business.

- [Westminster University Diversity Guide](#) is for students with disabilities.

- [Youreable](#) is an online community of and for disabled people including a discussion forum on work, jobs and training.

- [British Association for Supported Employment (BASE)](#) has information and advice to jobseekers with disabilities and to employers. The website includes information on national supported schemes such as Access to Work as well as local schemes and supported employment offices in regional locations.
Telling employers about your disability

Whether to tell an employer and if so, how to do this positively, are issues which concern many OU students. What is right for you may not be the same as what is right for someone else, so to help you reach a confident conclusion about what to do, here are links to resources which cover important points to consider, offer advice and give you the information you need.

- **OU Careers webinar featuring Great with Disability and Leonard Cheshire** includes tips from experts on sharing information and preparing Openness Statement. An Openness Statement tells an employer about:
  - Your disability / situation
  - The implications.
  - Your requirements.

- You’ll also find further information on how to disclose a disability or health issue in our [article on Disability](#).

- Listen to our [podcast](#) on telling an employer about your disability.

- [My Plus Student Club](#) offers advice on sharing information about your disability with an employer. Registration is needed.

- [Prospects Careers](#) has an example on how to share information about a disability.

- [Target Careers](#) provides advice on telling employers and other related employment issues for all disabilities / health issues, including mental health.
Developing your employability skills

When looking for work, it is helpful to be able to recognise and understand what your skills are. You will be expected to be able to provide examples and these can come from all aspects of your life, not necessarily from paid employment. You may have developed valuable skills in other situations, such as:

- an OU student
- developing strategies to manage your disability/health issues
- voluntary work
- caring for others
- interests / activities outside the workplace.

The following resources will help you identify your skills, find out which skills are needed for jobs you may be considering, as well as advice on preparing for employment.

An excellent way to prepare for employment is voluntary work and www.do-it.org.uk is a good site.

Identifying Your Skills

- Our Career Planning & Job Seeking Workbook lists transferable skills on page 24, which you develop in one setting but can transfer to another. This is a useful check list if you are struggling to identify your skills. No-one has them all and you may find whole sections where you have few skills, this applies to most people.

- You can also try our online activity to see how you can identify and build your employability skills, including the skills you’re building as an OU student.

- Use My Ability helps students with disabilities to develop their employability skills. You can search for information by employability skill, impairment, subject or a combination of impairment and employability skill.

- The Shaw Trust provide advice on how to prepare for employment.

- Remember that you can find out which skills are needed for various careers by looking at job profiles at Prospects and TargetJobs.
Careers support for students with specific disabilities

This is not a comprehensive list of disabilities and if you cannot find your particular disability listed here, contact the careers team to discuss your individual situation.

ADD/ADHD

- **Employ-ability** has extensive experience of working with students and graduates with a wide range of disabilities including ADHD and support candidates experiencing difficulty both during recruitment and in the work place. They also manage internships and graduate schemes for a range of graduate recruiters.

- **ADD at Work: Job Success with Adult ADD** provides advice for getting organised and focused at work and maximizing your effectiveness (ADDitude).

- **Succeeding in the Workplace** is an information-packed guide to succeeding at work despite adult ADD/ADHD from the National Resource Centre on ADHD.

Asperger’s Syndrome & Autistic Spectrum

- **Auticon** specialises in IT consultancy jobs for people with autism.

- **Specialisterne** is a recruitment agency specialising in people with autism.

- **The National Autistic Society** has advice for finding work and staying in work.

- **Network Autism** is a networking site for professionals with autism.

- Guardian Careers have two articles. **Job seeking with Asperger Syndrome** part 1 and **Job seeking with Asperger Syndrome - part 2** which describe the job-seeking experiences of a graduate with Asperger’s Syndrome.

- There is an interesting article on **The Conversation** on why employing people with autism makes good business senses – Microsoft and Vodafone proactively seeking to employ these skills.

Chronic Pain

- **Arthritis Care** has advice on managing arthritis at work

- **Action for M.E.** provides advice on how to manage work.

Colour Vision Deficiency

- **Colour Blind Awareness** is a good place to go for advice for people with colour vision deficiency (CVD) and employers on the effects of this condition in the workplace.
• The Institution of Engineering and Technology has a downloadable fact file answering some of the common questions asked by people who think they may have some form of colour vision defect, as well as those asked by employers in this sector.

**Epilepsy**

• Epilepsy Action is an introduction of epilepsy and working in the UK.

• Epilepsy Society has advice on finding and keeping employment.

**Facial Disfigurement**

• Changing Faces is a guide for job seekers with facial disfigurements.

**Hearing Impairment**

• Action on Hearing Loss has advice on how to disclose and other work issues.

• Deaf Unity has support for hearing impaired graduates.

• DeafPlus offers an employment and training service in London and other specific locations.

• BID Services is a charity working with deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and physically and sensory disabled people across the UK. They also provide employment support in West Midlands and initial employment support elsewhere.

**H.I.V.**

• The National Aids Trust has advice for job applicants and employees living with HIV.

**M.E. / Chronic Fatigue Syndrome**

• Action for ME provide advice on job seeking and employment.

**Mental Health**

Under the 2010 Equality Act it is illegal for employers to ask job applicants about their mental health history prior to interview or to discriminate against candidates with mental health issues that do not affect their ability to do the job in question. There are certain exceptions to the Act, such as the armed forces and the national intelligence and security services. Here are some organisations that can support your career goals

• MIND supports individuals and works with employers to develop good practice in employing people with mental health difficulties. Their site includes advice on how to stay healthy at work and when looking for work.

• Rethink Mental Health provide advice and information on mental health issues, including work.
• The [Mindful Employer](#) is for employers who have signed the Charter for Employers positive about mental health.

• The [Time to Change](#) Campaign helps to empower people with mental health problems to feel confident talking about the issue without facing discrimination. The website also includes a section on support in the workplace.

• The Guardian newspaper wrote a useful article about [Working with Bipolar](#). The article covers issues related to BD in the workplace.

• [Centre for Mental Health](#) is a national charity which support people who use mental health services into employment via the Individual Placement and Support Scheme (IPS).

### Restricted Growth

• The [Restricted Growth Association](#) endeavours to provide support and information to people who have genetic growth conditions that result in dwarfism, including careers advice.

### Speech Impairment

• [The British Stammering Association](#) provide support and information relating to the workplace.

• [Stammering Law](#) looks at stammering and UK disability discrimination law, also includes a section on employment.

### Tourette’s

• [Tourettes Action](#) provide guidance on employment for people with Tourettes Syndrome, Their factsheet contains help and guidance on looking for work.

### Visual Impairment

• [Action for Blind People](#) provide ink to employment help line and workshops.

• [RNIB](#) have advice and information on finding and staying in work plus gaining work experience. They also have information for for professionals supporting job seekers.

• [Blind in Business](#) provide advice, information, training and events for students.
Additional support in Ireland, Scotland and Wales

Republic of Ireland

- **AHEAD** is the main resource for Republic of Ireland. It’s an one-stop shop of support, programmes for undergraduates/grads plus initiatives and internships with employers. Watch their video on how AHEAD helps students and graduates succeed.

Northern Ireland

- The **Dept of Employment and Learning N.I.** have guidance on how to find and remain in work NI, plus information on how to contact local and national support.
- **Disability in Action** provides support to people with disabilities and their employers in workplaces across Northern Ireland.

Scotland

- **Scottish Association for Mental Health** provide support and guidance including employment.
- **RNIB Scotland** supports blind and partially sighted people in finding work, and helps those already in work to retain their jobs.
- **Action on Hearing Loss** have a list of places where you can find helo support and activities in Scotland.
- **Number 6 – Edinburgh** offer appointments to support adults with high-functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome in finding and maintaining employment.
- **Capability Scotland** offers practical support and advice whether you are a disabled person looking for or interested in work but not sure how to get started. They also offer assistance if you are currently employed and concerned about the future.
- **Internships for People with Disabilities in Scotland** give valuable paid work experience to help disabled people develop their careers. 20 internships will be offered by third sector employers in partnership between Inclusion Scotland and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations. The other 10 will be hosted by public sector employers and supported by Inclusion Scotland.
- **Dyslexia Scotland** offer advice on job seeking and employment and also offer an employment service
- **Scottish Autism** offers support and an advice line
- **Epilepsy Scotland** offer advice and support for all job seeking and employment issues, look under ‘E’ for employment to find the information.
Wales

- [Disability Wales](#) provide advice and information on many issues including employment.
- [Scope](#) have a good section on employment advice services in Wales.
Self Employment

These resources offer advice and resources for students considering self-employment, which is one way to work from home.

- Government site: Access to Work covers many employment issues including starting a business.
- Leonard Cheshire Disability run an annual competition with a cash prize for disabled entrepreneurs.
- Scope have excellent advice and information if you’re looking to go into self-employment. The Shaw Trust offers specialist support if you're considering self-employment.
- Association of Disabled Professionals has advice, information and support.