

Dyslexia is a disability that affects around 10% of the population with around 4% affected severely. There are a number of issues to take into consideration when applying for jobs and understanding of these issues along with knowledge of the help and support available can help make both job applications and day to day performance of a role much easier for those who have dyslexia. The following information should be taken into account when applying for jobs:

The Equality Act 2010

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was introduced in 1995 to protect people with disabilities from discrimination and has been updated a number of times since its introduction. All diversity legislation was merged under the Equality Act 2010 and disability legislation now falls under this umbrella. The law defines a disability as being any health condition that has “a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [your] ability to carry out normal day to day activities”. This covers a vast number of health conditions including Dyslexia and makes it unlawful for an employer to discriminate against any person with a disability. An employer must not treat a disabled person less favourably than a non disabled person for any reason relating to their disability. When a person applies for, or performs a job, the employer must make any “reasonable adjustments” required by that person in order for them to perform to the best of their ability and compete on a level playing field, and also ensure they do not experience less favourable treatment than other employees. While it is unlikely you will need to consult The Equality Act 2010 during your job hunt or while at work, full details are available at: www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_act_2010.aspx

What are ‘Reasonable Adjustments’?

If the physical features of the work premises or the working/recruitment arrangements are the prohibiting factor to a disabled person gaining or staying in employment, then the employer must make reasonable adjustments to remove these barriers and ensure a disabled candidate is not put at a substantial disadvantage by recruitment procedures or that a disabled employee is not disadvantaged by employment arrangements or by any physical feature of the workplace. Reasonable adjustments must be implemented from first advertisement of a position, throughout the recruitment process and during working life up to and including departure or dismissal procedures. Examples of reasonable adjustments for people with Dyslexia include:

- Providing specialist or required training
- Providing modified equipment and access to computer software for proofreading and planning of work
- Making instructions and manuals more accessible (e.g. different colour or size backgrounds or fonts, or coloured transparency sheets, larger font, audio tapes, etc)
- Allocating some of a disabled employee’s work to someone else e.g. minute taking, proofreading
- Extra time for written assessments/work and planning of work
- Extra time for considering information and reporting
- Provision of written materials in advance
- It is reasonable to expect an employer to provide any tests in an appropriate format provided this has been requested in advance of the event and not just on the day itself

This information is available in alternative formats; please enquire at the Information Desk

It is not, however, reasonable to expect the employer to 'mind read' so if someone with dyslexia does not disclose and is then rejected due to spelling mistakes in the application or written test, they cannot then claim discrimination.

Many reasonable adjustments can be implemented without much expenditure, for example giving verbal rather than written instructions (or vice versa) or allowing extra time for written work. If additional costs are to be incurred, you can apply for funding through the government's Access to Work scheme. Whilst the only adjustments they will pay for at interview stage are those involving communication support, they will pay for most adjustments that are required once a person is in paid employment.

If you feel you have been discriminated against, you can seek advice from the Disability Law Service: www.dls.org.uk Viki Chinn is the dedicated disability careers adviser within LSE Careers, please contact LSE Careers to book with her specifically: 020 7955 7135 or careers@lse.ac.uk

Choosing an employer

Most reputable employers recognise the value of diversity in the workplace and actively recruit diverse workforces. They are aware this is the most effective way of securing a broad skill set within their employee base that will reflect the diversity found amongst their clients or target markets. Whilst most employers recruit positively there are ways to help identify some employers who are particularly keen to attract applications from disabled candidates. Things to look out for include:

- Equal opportunities policy statement on company websites
- Profiles of disabled employees on website or company literature
- Evidence of commitment to equal opportunities on recruitment material (including offer of adjustment to materials at application stage and requests for information about adjustments needed to enable optimum performance during the recruitment process or in the workplace)
- Achievement of the 'Two Ticks' Award (symbolised by two ticks and the words "positive about disabled people"). Only employers who have proved ongoing commitment to disability initiatives and support of employees/applicants with disabilities are able to achieve this award. These employers also guarantee interviews will be offered to any disabled applicants that meet the minimum criteria for the role.

It is important, however, to note that just because an employer does not appear to demonstrate the criteria above it does not mean they will not be disability friendly. It is also important to select employers on the basis of what roles they offer, not just because they appear explicitly disability friendly.

Disclosure

People with disabilities often face the difficult decision as to whether or not they should disclose and many are unsure whether they are actually required to. It is important to note you are under no legal obligation to do so and whether or not you disclose is entirely your decision. The exception to this is where there may be health and safety implications, for example with a condition such as epilepsy. Should you require reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment process or during your day to day work it may be worth considering disclosure, however, Viki Chinn at LSE Careers can discuss the options and help you to come to an informed decision as to whether you should disclose and, if so, at what stage. Before you talk to an adviser, research the job as much as you can. Think about how your dyslexia may affect you in that role and what adjustments might help overcome any difficulties.

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The Recruitment Process

Throughout the recruitment process there are a number of things to consider in order to ensure you give yourself the best chance of performing to the best of your ability. At the initial application stage when you are writing your CV, cover letter, or application form you should consider asking your university disability office whether any assistive technologies or other means of support are available to you to aid you throughout your application.

Assistive technologies available may include voice-to-text technology such as Dragon Naturally Speaking which will allow you to dictate your ideas to a computer or if the application material is available online you can use a software package such as Jaws which will convert text to speech. If it is not available online ask a friend or family member to read it aloud to you and ensure you are fully understanding what the employer is asking for. You should also ask someone to proof read your CV or covering letter to check spelling and grammar in addition to a computer spell checker. Also ask them to check a Word copy draft of any application form you are completing before you submit it whether you are doing so online or in hand written format.

If you have disclosed your dyslexia the employer is likely to be interested in how your dyslexia will affect you in the workplace and your ability to perform the requirements of your role. It is important to anticipate potential interview questions and consider how you would both describe these effects and your coping strategies. Having completed a degree course you should have examples of how you have already demonstrated these strategies but also consider difference in a work environment and what you can do in those circumstances. An employer will be entitled to ask questions about how your dyslexia may affect the role you are being interviewed for but they cannot ask any personal questions or questions about your dyslexia that do not strictly relate to your performance of the role.

If the employer does not raise these questions and you wish to discuss them you could ask if they would like you to briefly explain. They may feel a little uncomfortable asking you about your dyslexia so this not only takes some of the pressure off them but also will prevent them from making inaccurate assumptions about your ability or capability of performing the role. It will also allow you to state any adjustments you require or differences in the way you may work so it is worth providing the employer with a one page handout detailing a concise list. When discussing these issues with the employer present them in a positive, rather than negative, light. Be informative and objective offering solutions to any perceived difficulties. Remember you are being interviewed because on paper you meet their criteria and have demonstrated the skills and abilities they require. It is important for both you and the employer to focus on your ability rather than your disability. Give examples of how you have used your coping strategies to help you achieve things in the past and even point out and demonstrate how you have developed strong, diverse skills, such as innovative and lateral thinking, creativity and problem solving skills, as a result of your dyslexia. If you are struggling to formulate answers or identify skills visit the careers service and discuss with your dedicated adviser.

Some recruitment processes will involve certain selection tools to assess your ability to do the job. These may include psychometric or aptitude tests, a group exercise or case study. If the employer does not tell you in advance that these will be part of the process you should contact them and ask in order to ensure you are not placed at a disadvantage on the day. Whilst the employer is required to make reasonable adjustments to aid you throughout the process it is not reasonable to tell them on the day so you should advise them in advance if you need adjustments made. Adjustments available may include extra time to complete the tests or alternative format material. In some cases you may be exempt from these tests as it will be considered a reasonable adjustment that they test the abilities they are measuring by alternative means.

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Useful reference points

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) for information and advice on disability legislation: offering solutions to any perceived difficulties. Remember you are being interviewed because on paper you meet their criteria and have demonstrated the skills and abilities they require. It is important for both you and the employer to focus on your ability rather than your disability. Give examples of how you have used your coping strategies to help you achieve things in the past and even point out and demonstrate how you have developed strong, diverse skills, such as innovative and lateral thinking, creativity and problem solving skills, as a result of your dyslexia. If you are struggling to formulate answers or identify skills visit the careers service and discuss with your dedicated adviser.

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Resources and people at LSE	Useful links
<p>LSE Careers LSE Careers can help you with any aspect of your career. Viki Chinn, a careers adviser, specialises in matters relating to disability and careers and you can request to meet with her specifically by contacting the Information team directly. If you would like to discuss bookings, or for any initial careers-related enquiries; the Information Team are happy to help.</p>	<p>Equality Act 2010 Full details of the Equality Act 2010 on the Government Equality Office website.</p>
<p>If for any reason this is difficult, please call us on 0207 955 7135 or email careers@lse.ac.uk.</p>	<p>Equality Act 2010: What do I need to know? A quick start guide to the ban on questions about health and disability during recruitment.</p>
<p>LSE Disability and Well being office The team at the LSE Disability and Well-being Office are the main point of contact for non careers related issues concerning disability. You can contact them on 020 7955 7767 and refer to their website for information and advice: lse.ac.uk/disabilityOffice. They can help on a wide range of issues including access to dyslexia tutors, the issue of 'reasonable adjustments' and Individual Student Support Agreements (ISSA).</p>	<p>Equality and Diversity - LSE LSE's website on equality and diversity; includes information on the Equality Act 2010 and LSE's Equality & Diversity blog</p> <p>employ-ability.org.uk Opportunities for disabled and dyslexic students & graduates</p>