



## Reasonable Adjustments

### Managers Guidance

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## 1. Familiarise yourself with the Policy

This guidance must be read in conjunction with the [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#). Please refer to the Policy before reviewing this guidance.

## 2. Examples of reasonable adjustments

Some common examples of reasonable adjustments that could be agreed are listed below.

Each reasonable adjustment should be assessed on an individual basis, and what is reasonable in one situation may not be reasonable in another. For example, it may not be possible for an employee to work on a hybrid basis if their role requires them to work on-campus. See [section 3.1](#) for more guidance on considering whether an adjustment is reasonable in the circumstances.

### 1. Alterations in Working Hours and Location:

- Adjusting working hours to accommodate an employee's needs, such as flexible start or finish times
- Allowing part-time or reduced hours on a temporary basis, or on a permanent basis in accordance with [Flexible Working Policy](#)
- Changing the working location – for example, agreeing to a hybrid working arrangement in accordance with [Hybrid Workplace Policy](#)

### 2. Extra Time to process information:

- Providing reasonable additional time for tasks or training sessions
- Providing clear written information or instructions and giving reasonable extra time to process information or perform tasks
- Offering training on assistive technologies or tools

### 3. Alternative Ways of Doing Things:

- Adapting communication methods to meet an employee's needs (e.g., providing documents in advance of meetings)
- Adapting responsibilities to better suit an employee's abilities
- Re-allocating duties to employees within the same team
- Assist an employee to find an alternative role that better suits their needs via the University's [Redeployment Register](#)\*.

\*Note: please discuss with your local HR Partner before adding an employee to the Redeployment Register as a reasonable adjustment. This is because this will usually occur part way through another process (e.g., capability or absence management).

#### 4. **Equipment, Services, or Support Mechanisms:**

- Providing assistive devices, such as screen readers, ergonomic chairs, or specialised keyboards
- Providing a screen reader or a British Sign Language interpreter
- Providing a support worker or arranging help from a colleague where necessary and appropriate

#### 5. **Adjustments to Premises:**

- Contacting the [Estates Helpdesk](#) to make changes to the workplace environment, such as installing/repairing/replacing ramps, handrails, accessible restrooms, LED lights etc.
- Arranging meetings in accessible working environments, considering both physical and sensory aspects (e.g., wheelchair accessible, dimmable lights, spaces accessible via lift)
- Supporting employees in applying for a parking permit, where appropriate. Transport and Parking Team | Disabled Users [Disabled Users | Transport and Parking](#)

### 2.1. Screenings and assessments

The University does not require evidence of a diagnosis to implement reasonable adjustments, which can be requested without a medical assessment. Screenings and diagnostic assessments (e.g., to identify neurodivergent conditions) are not considered reasonable adjustments and, generally, the University wouldn't cover this cost.

However, the University would consider covering the cost of a screening or a diagnostic assessment in cases where understanding the necessary adjustments is proving difficult or if current adjustments are not working.

## 3. Implementing reasonable adjustments

The University of Edinburgh has a legal duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

### 3.1 What is considered reasonable

According to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#), an adjustment is considered reasonable when the following conditions are met:

- a. **Effectiveness** – Will the adjustment help overcome the barrier?
- b. **Practicality** – How practical is it to provide the adjustment?
- c. **Affordability** – What are the resource implications of making an adjustment?  
Note: It will not usually be reasonable to refuse a requested adjustment on the grounds of cost alone. You must consider the affordability of the adjustment by taking into account the resources of the University, rather than your individual team or department. Therefore, it will often be more appropriate to consider the effectiveness and/or the practicality of the requested adjustment, rather than focusing on affordability alone.
- d. **Health and Safety** – Would the adjustment cause any disruption or risks to people or activities?

These questions will help you assess whether an adjustment is reasonable or not.

### 3.2 Process to implement reasonable adjustments

Employees cannot be compelled to share information relating to their disability, but you can encourage conversations about reasonable adjustments throughout the employee lifecycle.

Below is a step-by-step guide that you can use where an employee shares with you that they have a disability. Please note that employees don't need to provide any medical evidence of their disability.

1. **Arrange a private meeting with the employee** to understand their needs and discuss what reasonable adjustments could be implemented. Please go to [Section 4](#) for guidance on how to sensitively conduct a meeting with an employee who has shared a disability with you.
2. **After the first conversation, make sure you record the main points discussed, including support requirements and any adjustments that have been identified.** This can be done directly on the Individual Adjustments Plan that you will then complete once adjustments have been determined and agreed.

**3. Identify if further sources of support or assessments are needed, in discussion with the employee.**

- If you feel confident in implementing the suggested/requested reasonable adjustments and don't require further support or advice, move straight to step 4.
- If you require further support or advice, these are some actions you should consider:
  - If you need advice and guidance on reasonable adjustments or Access to Work, you can make a referral to the [Staff Disability Advice Service](#).
  - If you need advice and guidance around digital accessibility or assistive software and hardware, you can contact the [Disability Information Team](#).
  - If you have any concerns about your employee's health or further support is required for your employee to stay in work, organise an [Occupational Health Referral](#).
  - If the employee has a mobility impairment or sensory disability, prepare a [Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan](#) in case of emergency evacuation from the building.

**4. Once all considerations have been made, document the agreed reasonable adjustments in the [Individual Adjustments Plan](#).** Identified adjustments should be implemented in a timely manner, and any delays should be communicated and explained to the employee.

Some adjustments such as changes to building and ordering specialist equipment, may take longer to implement and it may be appropriate to consider interim plans until these are in place.

An agreed review date should be included on the plan and the document should then be shared with the employee and securely and confidentially stored.

- If no further advice is needed, move straight to step 5.
- If you find it difficult to implement the requested adjustments, you should contact your local HR Partner for further advice.

**5. Once reasonable adjustments have been implemented, you will be responsible for reviewing the [Individual Adjustments Plan](#) as agreed with the employee, and regularly check with them that the reasonable adjustments in place are effective and appropriate at all times.**

## 4. How to hold a meeting with an employee to discuss reasonable adjustments

This is a list of top tips you may wish to take into consideration when arranging a meeting with an employee who shared a disability with you, and some questions that might help in keeping an open and safe conversation. Avoid making assumptions and ask open questions to promote trust and understanding.

### Top Tip 1 – Listen, ask open questions and check for understanding

Employees who are disabled, or develop a disability, may find it difficult to share their condition or ask for support, so it's important that you create a safe space and listen first:

- ✓ **Make sure you arrange a meeting as early as possible.**
- ✓ **Establish when and where is the best place for a conversation.** Is this in person? On Teams? In a quiet space within the office? Off-site? Make sure that the chosen environment feels comfortable and maintains confidentiality.
- ✓ **Actively listen to the employee.** During the meeting, make sure you actively listen and avoid interruptions to enable a safe environment for the employee to share their challenges.
- ✓ **Ask open questions.** It is important that you ask open questions to enable the employee to express exactly what their challenges and requirements are, and how they are feeling about it. Asking closed questions can be detrimental to having honest conversations and lead to quick and short answers. Examples of open questions can be found in [section 4.1](#).
- ✓ **Facilitate an effective conversation.** Giving yourself structure and asking open questions about areas of strength, requirements and adjustments is also going to enable you to have a more effective communication around next steps. You may use an Individual Adjustments Plan to assist you with this; however, make sure you stay present and let the employee know you will only be taking notes of the main points discussed but that you will be listening.
- ✓ **Summarise main points discussed to check for understanding.** Briefly summarise what was discussed and the next steps you will take, reassuring the employee that all the information shared will be kept confidential and only shared with the people involved in the process of implementing the identified adjustments.
- ✓ **Signpost available disability services.** Make employees aware of the [Disabled Staff Network](#) which is a peer support space for disabled employees and provide a list of other resources available at university as listed in [section 6](#).

## Top Tip 2 – Learn

This could be your first time supporting a disabled employee, or it may be the first time supporting someone with a disability you don't know much about. There is no such a thing as a 'disability expert' and we all have knowledge gaps, so the important thing is that we maintain an open approach to learning what we don't know:

- ✓ **Read the [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#).** Please make sure you read the policy in full to familiarise with definitions and procedure. The more you know, the more confident you will feel in offering support
- ✓ **Be led by the employee and the language that they use to refer to their disability and challenges.** There could be terms and concepts you may be less familiar with and not sure how to use. If you have doubts on whether certain terms might be inappropriate or not, you may wish to refer to the [Scottish Government's Inclusive Language Guidance](#)
- ✓ **What support is on offer?** You may need support to understand or have conversations around disability and reasonable adjustments. Please contact the services below (as appropriate) if you have any questions on following the [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#) or this guidance:
  - If your employee is looking for peer support, please contact and join the [Disabled Staff Network](#)
  - If you are looking for advice on implementing reasonable adjustments or Access to Work, please contact the [Staff Disability Advice Service](#)
  - If you have any accessibility queries or require advice on assistive software and hardware, please contact the [Disability Information Team](#)
  - For any other queries regarding the university's Reasonable Adjustments Policy, Guidance and Individual Adjustments Plan, please contact the [HR EDI Team](#)

## Top Tip 3 – Take action

As a manager, there are several steps to take into consideration to ensure your colleague receives support in a timely manner:

- ✓ **Complete an Individual Adjustments Plan.** After your conversation with the employee, you may need to take further advice from your local HR Partner and/or the Staff Disability Advice Service before deciding which adjustments to implement. Following this, please complete an Individual Adjustments Plan and share it with the employee.
- ✓ **Have regular conversations around reasonable adjustments and to make sure these are effective at all times.** Conversations around reasonable adjustments should be held at least once a year, although you may want to have more frequent conversations (e.g., for degenerative and fluctuating conditions, for recently

acquired disabilities etc.). Make sure that reasonable adjustments updates are reflected in the Individual Adjustments Plan.

#### 4.1. Conversation plan

Having conversations around disability and reasonable adjustments may feel uncomfortable, or even daunting. At times, employees will share disabilities or personal circumstances you have never heard about and, therefore, you have no context of. As a consequence, you may become afraid to say the wrong thing and could make assumptions.

As a manager it's ok not to have all the answers, but it's crucial to gain a better understanding of the challenges the employee is facing, and what you can do to support them to perform their job to the best of their ability.

You should remember that the employee usually has a better understanding of the challenges they are facing given by their lived experience, and it's important to explore together what works best for them, with consideration given to what is reasonable for the University too.

Asking the employee open and enabling questions is always the best approach. Open questions can also help with building relationships based on mutual trust and respect, and creating a safe space – encouraging conversations focusing on an employee's strengths rather than their weaknesses.

**Here is a list of example questions that a manager could ask to understand an employee's reasonable adjustment needs:**

Questions	Notes
<p><b><u>Start from the positives:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is working well for you at the moment?</li> <li>• Are there any tasks you find particularly energising?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Make sure you start by asking open and positive questions to create a safe space and support with destigmatising the conversation around disability – focusing on strengths as opposed to weaknesses.</i></p>
<p><b><u>Understand the areas of support:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What tasks do you find challenging because of your disability*?</li> <li>• Are there any factors in the workplace environment that could be improved (e.g., physical and sensory environment)?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Make sure this is done in an open way – everyone's experience of disability is unique and employees might not know what they need yet.</i></p> <p><i>*Make sure you refer to disability only if the employee has shared being disabled. If you only suspect that an employee might be disabled, only ask about challenges they are facing.</i></p>



<p><b><u>Move onto the practical steps:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What can we do to help you thrive?</li> <li>• What tasks could be done differently?</li> <li>• Probe: where specific tasks cannot be done differently or they are a core part of the job, what alternative solutions could we consider? <i>(This question is to understand whether the employee is open to reallocation of tasks, or redeployment where possible)</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>It's important that some "next steps" and timeframes are agreed. Who is doing what, and when?</i></p> <p><i>The conversation should be led by the colleague – but it's important that you are clear on what can and cannot be changed (given that specific tasks are core part of a given role, and that some changes may cause disruption to other and just not be reasonable – look at <a href="#">Section 3.1</a> – What is considered Reasonable)</i></p>
<p><b><u>Other useful questions to ask:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If an employee has sensory sensitivities: how can we prevent sensory overload?</li> <li>• Do you have any specific ways you like to be communicated with?</li> <li>• Do you have any preferred ways of working? (e.g., having a schedule, preferring to work with detailed breakdown structures, being informed of any changes prior to a meeting, avoid meetings at specific times etc.)</li> <li>• Are there any routines that are important to you? What can I do to help with this?</li> </ul>	<p><i>Although these questions have been thought in reference to neurodivergence, they can more generally introduce the conversation about flexible ways of working for everyone else.</i></p>

## 5. Complete an Individual Adjustments Plan

The University's [Individual Adjustments Plan](#) is a record of any adjustments agreed upon to support an employee to perform their job to the best of their abilities.

### **It is your responsibility as a manager to:**

- Complete an Individual Adjustment Plan, following the conversation with the employee and based on agreed adjustments.
- Retain a copy of the Individual Adjustments Plan as you are accountable for ensuring it is implemented, regularly reviewed, and safely and confidentially stored.

- Share a copy of the Individual Adjustments Plan with the employee for their own records, and agree if adjustments need to be communicated to colleagues and who will do this.
- Treat the information contained in the Individual Adjustments Plan in the strictest confidence, sharing the information only when given consent to do so, or with colleagues who are involved in the process of implementing or advising on any of the adjustments.
- Maintain an ongoing conversation if circumstances change, discussing the effectiveness of any adjustments and, if necessary, revising the plan.

**It is the employee’s responsibility to:**

- Inform you of any changes to their circumstances, and advise any new line manager and any relevant colleagues of their Individual Adjustments Plan.
- Be honest and transparent about any challenges they are facing at work.

Please note, if an employee changes roles or line manager, they will be responsible for sharing this document with the new line manager and should rediscuss the plan with them.

## 6. Assistive technology and loan service available at the University of Edinburgh

### **Assistive Software | The University of Edinburgh:**

There are some helpful options available to all staff members at the University:

- [Texthelp | Read & Write Text-to-Speech | Version Gold 12](#) – this application includes screen filters in different colours such as blue or yellow (referred on the application as screen masking), text to speech, text and picture dictionaries, vocabulary lists, reviews for grammar spelling, and audio makers – converting text into audio files and providing talk and type features.
- [MindGenius](#) – this application is based around the concept of mind-mapping, which allows the user to capture large amounts of disparate information and gives them the ability to view content from different viewpoints.
- [Sensus Access](#) – that can be used to convert documents into alternative formats such as audio, e-books or digital Braille. Make sure not to use this application for sensitive data or confidential documents.

Both Texthelp and MindGenius are available on the **Software Centre** (type software centre in the box on the bottom left-hand side of the screen and it will come up on staff laptops), search for ‘**MindGenius 2019**’ and ‘**Read & Write Gold 12**’, while Sensus Access is available by clicking the link provided above.

More instructions on accessing the Software Centre, can be accessed on this webpage: [Installing Applications | The University of Edinburgh](#). There's a chance an administrator will need to install certain applications for you, so you will have to submit a request via the Software Centre. If you incur in any issues with your request, you can also contact the this is the case [IS helpdesk](#) can sort this easily remotely.

#### **Assistive Technology Loan Service | The University of Edinburgh:**

Staff can try different ergonomic equipment through this service. you can view the different options via the 'Equipment Catalogue' on the drop down menu present in the home page, then complete the [loan request form](#) to arrange a loan of the item/s you would like to try.

There are a variety of assistive hardware available for staff who would like to trial assistive equipment for suitability before purchase. These are some options:

- [Orcam Read device](#) available for loan – this can read printed documents and information on screen out aloud.
- Ergonomic Keyboards and Mice (such as the [Colour-coded Logic Keyboard](#))
- A loan laptop with [Dragon Naturally Speaking](#), speech-to-text software.

## 7. Access to Work – how it functions and who is eligible

[Access to Work](#) is a government funded scheme that may assist with costs or recommend alternative adjustments. Please visit the website and get in touch with our [Staff Disability Advice Service](#) to have more information on how to apply for funding.

Access to Work can help employees to get or stay in work if they have a disability. If funding is approved by an Access to Work Advisor, The University of Edinburgh will be expected to cover the first £1000 of any specialist aids and equipment requested items and 20% of anything above £1000. Access to Work will not fund requested items that are considered standard office equipment or reasonable adjustments.

The support an employee can get will depend on their needs and on [eligibility](#). Through Access to Work, employees can apply for:

#### **A grant to help pay for practical support with your work, helping with things like:**

- Specialist equipment and assistive software
- Support workers, like a BSL interpreter, a job coach or a travel buddy
- Costs of travelling to work, if you cannot use public transport (e.g., taxi fares)
- Adaptations to your vehicle so you can get to work
- Physical changes to your workplace

The workplace includes employees' homes if they work from there, some or all of the time. It does not matter how much they earn. If they get an Access to Work grant, it will not affect any other benefits they get and you will not have to pay it back.

The university may need to pay some costs up front and claim them back later. [Apply for an Access to Work grant here.](#)

#### **Employees can get support to manage their mental health at work, which might include:**

- A tailored plan to help them get or stay in work
- One-to-one sessions with a mental health professional

Apply directly to either [Able Futures](#) or [Maximus](#).

#### **Money to pay for communication support at job interviews**

- Employees who are deaf or hard of hearing and need a BSL interpreter or lip speaker
- They have a physical or mental health condition, they are neurodivergent (e.g., Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Dyscalculia, ADHD) Tourette syndrome etc.) and need communication support

Apply for communication support at a job interview [here](#).

## 8. Resources and services

### **Internal**

- ✓ **HR Helpline** – for any questions about the policy please contact the HR Helpline Team at [HRHelpline@ed.ac.uk](mailto:HRHelpline@ed.ac.uk)
- ✓ **Staff Disability Advice Service (SDAS)** – for any questions about reasonable adjustments implementation and Access to Work queries please contact [StaffDisability@ed.ac.uk](mailto:StaffDisability@ed.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0131 651 4252
- ✓ **Occupational Health Service (OHS)**  
Email: [occupational.health@ed.ac.uk](mailto:occupational.health@ed.ac.uk)
- ✓ **Disabled Staff Network** – this is a peer support network for disabled staff. If you wish to join, please contact the service here [DSN@ed.ac.uk](mailto:DSN@ed.ac.uk)
- ✓ **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) (confidential, self-referral for staff)**  
Website: [The University of Edinburgh - Employee Assistance Programme](#)  
Tel: 0808 196 1441

## **External**

- ✓ [Acas](#)  
Acas gives employees and employers free, impartial advice on workplace rights, rules and best practice. Here you can find a guide relating to reasonable adjustments.
- ✓ [Disability Information Scotland](#)  
Since 1999 Disability Information Scotland have been providing disabled people in Scotland and those who support them with impartial, accurate and helpful information on the topics and services that matter to them.
- ✓ [AbilityNet](#)  
AbilityNet is a UK charity providing free online resources and a network of over 450 community-based volunteers help individuals with any disability, of any age, to use all kinds of digital technology.
- ✓ [CASS Counselling](#)  
CASS is a UK counselling and neurodiversity coaching service that was designed to support neurodiverse people with e.g., Autism and ADHD traits and to assist their families, friends, teachers and other supporters who are quite often some of the most essential lines of guidance and assistance.