

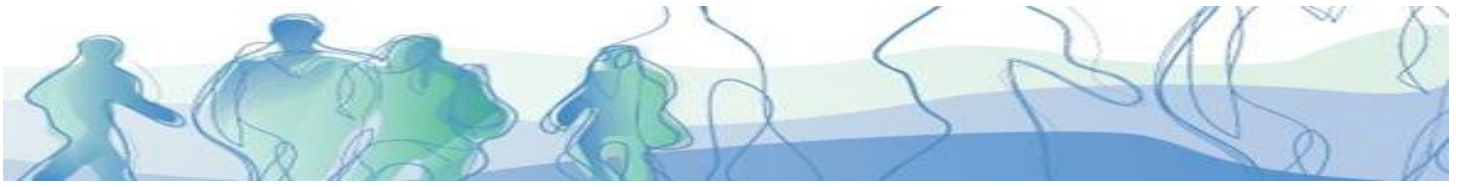
INTERVIEWING PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT TYPES OF DISABILITY

You have just found out that one of the candidates you have asked in for an interview has a disability. What now?

The following sets out some tips for interviewing people with particular forms of disability and should provide some assistance to you as a member of the selection panel. Keep in mind that the information may not be appropriate or enough in all cases.

When in doubt, it is always good practice to ***ask the person with disability***, respectfully and courteously, whether there are particular things that the panel can do that will make the interview more effective for them and your panel members.

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PEOPLE WITH MOBILITY DISABILITIES

- Take into account any access issues communicated by the applicant before the interview.
- Check whether the applicant has a disability that affects their ability to write. If timed and written assessments are used, allow additional time.
- Ensure crutches, canes or wheelchairs can be kept within reach of the applicant. If a person uses crutches, a walker or some other assistive equipment, offer them assistance with coats, bags or other belongings. This is a common courtesy for all applicants.
- Be aware that some wheelchair users may prefer to transfer themselves into an office chair for the duration of the interview.
- When speaking to a person in a wheelchair or on crutches for more than a few moments, sit down so you are at that person's eye level.
- Never lean on a person's wheelchair as the chair is their space.
- If the person uses a support animal, ensure the animal is allowed into the building and has access to water.
- Offer to shake hands even if they have limited hand use or wear an artificial limb. A left hand shake is acceptable.



PEOPLE WITH A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT

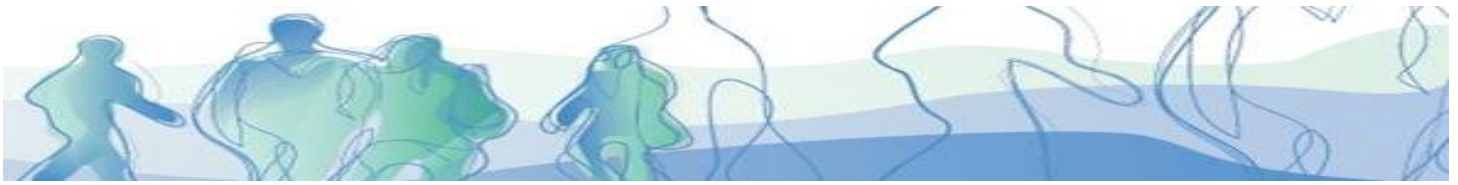
Prior to the interview:

- Ask the individual whether and how you can assist them:
 - only guide a person with a vision impairment after they have accepted your offer
 - the individual will advise you what is most comfortable for them
 - in general, a person with a vision impairment will prefer to hold your arm (just above the elbow) rather than have you hold and guide them.

When interviewing a person with a visual impairment:

- Always identify yourself and introduce anyone else who may be present
- Face the applicant:
 - While they may not be able to see you (this depends on the type of visual impairment), they may be perceptive to the direction of the sound
 - By facing the applicant you are demonstrating that you are interested and focussed
 - By looking away (which changes the direction of your voice) you may give the impression of lack of interest
- Extend a verbal welcome if the applicant does not extend their hand to shake hands
- When offering seating, place the applicant's hand on the back or arm of the chair and provide a verbal cue
- Indicate in advance when you will be moving from one place to another, and let the applicant know when the conversation is coming to an end
- If interviewing in a group situation, provide vocal cues by announcing the name of the person you are talking to
- Speak in a clear and normal voice
- Try to verbalise your feelings and thoughts to improve communication
- Indicate to the applicant if you pause to take some notes: they may not always hear you writing
- Explain the 'concept' as opposed to the 'representation' if there are diagrams that need to be discussed. For example, at an interview you may like to discuss an organisational hierarchy by talking about the people that they will be working to in a hierarchy, and how they relate to each other, rather than trying to describe the boxes on the paper chart.

After the interview, it is appropriate to ascertain that the applicant can leave the building comfortably. You may offer to escort them to the foyer, or to a taxi rank.



PEOPLE WHO ARE DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING

- People who are deaf or hard of hearing may need extra time in an interview where there is a lot of oral communication taking place.

When interviewing a person who is Deaf or hearing-impaired:

- If you need to attract the applicant's attention, touch them lightly on the shoulder or wave your hand
- If the applicant can lip-read, look directly at them when you speak and keep your hands away from your face
- Be aware that it is often difficult to lip read what is being said by people with beards
- Speak clearly and at a natural pace and do not exaggerate your lip movements or raise your voice
- Speak expressively, as the person may rely heavily on your facial expressions, gestures, and eye contact to fully understand what you are saying:
 - do not raise your voice, as it distorts sounds received through hearing devices
- Keep hands and food away from your mouth when speaking. Only speak louder if requested.
- Be prepared to use visual aids to assist with understanding
- not all people who are deaf or hard of hearing know or use sign language. Check prior to the interview if an interpreter will be required.
- If an interpreter is present:
 - speak to the applicant, not the interpreter, and maintain eye contact with the applicant
 - it is usual for the interpreter to sit beside the interviewer and across from the applicant
 - speak at a moderate pace and avoid more than one person speaking at a time.
 - interpreters facilitate communication and cannot provide any additional information about the applicant or their disability. Any questions about the applicant's particular needs or ability to do the job should be asked of the applicant.
- Be aware of the impact of background noise for those with partial hearing.



PEOPLE WITH SPEECH IMPEDIMENTS

When interviewing a person with a speech impediment:

- Speak as you usually would. Avoid speaking slowly or too simply unless you know that their vocabulary is limited
- Minimise stress—stress can exacerbate a speech impairment
- Give the applicant your complete attention when talking to them
- ask short questions that require short answers or a nod of the head
- Listen attentively and keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting
- Allow the applicant to give answers in writing
- allow plenty of time for the interviewee to speak and resist the temptation to speak for the person if they are having difficulty expressing what they want to say
- If an applicant's speech is difficult to understand, don't pretend that you can understand it:
 - let the applicant know that you didn't understand them
 - if you still cannot understand, ask them to rephrase what they are saying
 - if you still have difficulty understanding, find out whether they use any communication aids
- Don't raise your voice—most people with a speech impairment can hear and understand.



PEOPLE WITH AN INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

- People with intellectual disability may often wish to bring a support person, often a person from an employment support agency, to interviews with them. Respect the applicant's right to have another person present for support at the interview, but talk directly with the applicant and not to the person accompanying them
- Speak the applicant's language:
 - try to develop an understanding of their level of language and work hard to communicate at that level
- Check that the applicant has understood what you are saying
- Be prepared to rephrase what you are saying
- Be patient and wait for the person to finish what they are saying.
- Always endeavour to use plain English in speaking and writing:
 - avoid jargon
 - explain the use of commonly used acronyms or abbreviations
- Use examples to explain complex ideas
- Ask questions which require simple answers
- Don't be patronising
- Don't make assumptions about the applicant's capabilities, but instead, provide an opportunity for them to learn new tasks and skills
- Be prepared to discuss other things like sport, weather, or business as you might with any other applicant.

Some selection procedures, such as aptitude testing, can disadvantage people with an intellectual disability. Therefore, it is important to be sure that any testing is consistent with the inherent requirements of a position. As far as possible, it may be advisable to assess the applicant by observing demonstrated competencies rather than through written or oral assessments.



PEOPLE WITH A PSYCHIATRIC DISABILITY (MENTAL ILLNESS)

People with a mental illness can feel more anxious and nervous at interviews than other applicants. It is important to:

- Cultivate a relaxed manner and setting
- If using formal assessments, set a time suitable for the candidate:
 - some people with a mental illness perform better in the morning or at times related to their taking of medication
- Let the candidate know in advance that 'time out' is available or that, if necessary, the assessment can be suspended until another time
- Provide ongoing feedback to minimise stress during assessment
- Ask if there is anything you can do to settle nerves or assist them to feel calm
- Provide prompts if the applicant seems unable to answer the question
- Ask one question at a time.



PEOPLE WITH A LEARNING DISABILITY

When interviewing a person with a learning disability:

- Remember that they do not have an intellectual disability
- Be prepared—find out what their disability is and ask them what adjustments they require during an interview. This might include, for example:
 - putting questions in writing
 - providing them with the questions shortly before the interview to allow the person extra time to prepare
 - providing written material in a larger font or in double space
 - making line guides available or allowing the person to use their own
 - putting written questions orally
 - asking questions one at a time
 - providing scratch paper to work out problems
 - allowing them to bring a friend
 - extending the time of the interview to allow the interviewee to collect their thoughts
 - accepting pauses to allow the interviewee to process the question
 - allowing the person to answer in writing
 - using telephone interviews to allow, for example, people with language disorders to collect their thoughts in a low pressure environment.