

Applications and interviews: a guide for employers

Having a basic awareness of dyslexia can help you make an informed decision about a job applicant. Misconceptions about dyslexia can hide an individual's true potential. Some simple adjustments to the recruitment process can make a huge difference to dyslexic applicants.

Application Form

- Make sure questions are clear and unambiguous
- Consider font type, size and layout
- Consider alternative formats, for example electronic submissions

What you can ask

Under the Equality Act 2010, you can only ask questions about a disability if:

- you are using 'positive action' to recruit a disabled person
- you are finding out if someone needs help to take part in a selection test or interview
- there are necessary requirements of the job that can't be met with reasonable adjustments.

There is no requirement for a job applicant to tell prospective employers that they are disabled or that they have dyslexia.

Some employers have signed up to the "Positive about Disabled People" scheme which means that all candidates who consider themselves to be disabled under the Equality Act 2010 are invited to interview. Candidates still have to demonstrate on their application form that they meet the minimum criteria for the post.

Interview Process

The interview process can make the difficulties experienced by someone with dyslexia more pronounced. Because of this, an application may not be a true reflection of an individual's normal day to day ability. A few small changes can help to make the process better.

Before the interview:

- If you require the candidate to confirm they will attend, make sure this stands out and is not lost among other information.
- Make sure the invitation to the interview is clear and concise.
- Do not use overly long sentences or unnecessary terminology.
- Make sure the time and location of the interview are clear, including the postcode.
- It is good practice to tell candidates beforehand if there will be a task in the interview and to indicate the nature of the task.
- Make sure instructions about any presentations or tasks are clear and unambiguous.
- Ask candidates if they require any reasonable adjustments to be made. For more information about reasonable adjustments see our Employers Guide.

During the interview:

- Make sure any reasonable adjustments asked for are in place.
- Consider alternatives to multiple choice and psychometric tests which can be discriminatory for many dyslexic people, although not all.
- For written tests as part of the recruitment or promotion process, a reasonable adjustment might be extra time (25% more time is normal).
- Allow the candidate time to process and answer questions and make sure that questions are concise and to the point.
- Do not ask 'two-staged' questions and be prepared to repeat the question if needed.
- Allow the use of notes in the interview.
- Consider sending out in advance any reading the candidate will have to do.

The Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial and long term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

A 'substantial disadvantage' is a disadvantage which is more than minor or trivial. 'Long term' means that the effect of the impairment has lasted or is likely to last for at least twelve months. There are special rules covering recurring conditions.

Access to Work can help pay for disabled people to get support in the workplace. For more information go to: www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Dyslexia Scotland can provide training about dyslexia-friendly practice in the workplace.

For more information email info@dyslexiascotland.org.uk

Further information

- www.gov.uk/equality-act-2010-guidance
- www.gov.uk/recruitment-disabled-people/encouraging-applications
- Ideas for Dyslexia-Friendly Formats and Dyslexia: a Guide for Employees by Dyslexia Scotland www.dyslexiascotland.org.uk/our-leaflets
- Dyslexia Scotland Helpline 0344 800 8484 helpline@dyslexiascotland.org.uk



Dyslexia Scotland

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