

Disability equality at work

Supporting each
other to reach
our goals

Disability equality at work

The University of Salford recognises the importance of Our People in enabling us to achieve our Vision and Mission.

This booklet, Disability Equality at Work, is an important part of our commitment to disability equality as laid out in the Listen! equality strategy. It has been developed with involvement of Salford University Disabled Staff network (SUDS). This booklet is one of the steps we have taken in ensuring that current and future employees are aware of our commitment to disabled staff, by giving clear guidance to staff and managers about support available.

There have been many positive changes that have taken place in this University with the support of the SUDS network, including our commitment to achieving the award of the Two Ticks Symbol - Positive About Disabled People; which recognises the University's achievements and commits the University to:

- Interviewing all applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy and consider them on their abilities
- Ensuring there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to make sure they develop and use their abilities
- Making every effort when employees become disabled to make sure they stay in employment
- Ensuring that all employees develop the appropriate level of disability awareness needed to make these commitments work
- Each year, review the five commitments and what has been achieved, plan ways to improve on them and let employees and Jobcentre Plus know about progress and future plans.

In 2010 we commissioned an independent review by GEM on the experiences of our disabled staff and are working to achieve the recommendations of the report in order to ensure we meet the needs identified.

I do hope that any member of staff or job applicant will feel confident in declaring their disability to the university and that in doing so will know that they will be valued and enabled to play their part in full at the University of Salford.



Professor Martin Hall
Vice-Chancellor

What staff say

“Disability need not stop us from achieving our potential”

“Now... I have support and enjoy coming to work... and have managed to turn a crisis into a life changing experience. You can do this too”

“I started work for the University over six years ago... I have recently changed job roles and I continue to receive excellent help and support through my line manager and Access To Work”

“SUDS members are always willing to help and welcome new members, they are part of the solution”.



Disability awareness for all staff

Our greatest
strength
is our people

This brochure answers the following frequently asked questions

Q - "What is the University's position on disability?"

Q - "Who is defined as disabled?"

Q - "I am disabled – What next?"

Q - "What can the University do to assist me?"

Q - "Do I have to tell anyone that I am disabled?"

Q - "What is the role of HR?"

Q - "What is Access to Work?"

Q - "Who in the University might be able to help me?"

Welcome to disability equality at work

If you are new to the university, finding your way around a new workplace, knowing who is who and what is where can be both exciting and daunting. To help you settle in, Human Resources Division has joined up with SUDS (Salford University Disabled Staff network) to produce this booklet aimed at ensuring that if you are disabled, and you need support, you will know where to go.

If you have worked at the University of Salford for a while, and have developed a disability or the effects of a disability have increased, this booklet is also for you.

What is the University's position on disability?

The University's equality and diversity strategy – Listen! - coordinates and directs the promotion of diversity and the elimination of unfair discrimination by setting out a programme that recognises, respects and enacts the opportunities brought to the University by the diversity of students and staff.

The University of Salford supports the social model of disability. This model says that what really disables a person are not only the impairments they have, but the physical, organisational and attitudinal barriers which society creates by failing to take into account the requirements and aspirations of that person.

You may not need any practical adjustments at the moment, but if you do, the University is committed to working to provide you with these.

In addition to making adjustments for individuals, the University is also making adjustments to policies, procedures, practices and premises to ensure that they are fit to meet the needs of the diverse community of staff and students.

For more information please see:

www.equality.salford.ac.uk

So, who is defined as disabled?

There are many kinds of disabilities, some more widely understood and visible than others. Many working at the University may have a disability without realising that it is covered by the Equality Act 2010 (which replaces the Disability Discrimination Act 1995).

Under the Equality Act:

A person is likely to be considered disabled if they have a mental or physical impairment that has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, which would include things like using a telephone, reading a book or using public transport.

This effect must be:

- Substantial - in other words, not minor or trivial. The person is still considered disabled if the effects of their impairment are alleviated or removed by ongoing treatments or aids;

- Long-term - this is usually taken to mean that it has lasted, or is likely to last for more than 12 months.

This definition is quite broad, and includes people with cancer, cystic fibrosis, depression, dyslexia, HIV+ or severe facial disfigurement. Cancer and HIV+ are covered from the point of diagnosis rather than when they start to have a physical impact. For more about reasonable adjustments, see: www.hr.salford.ac.uk/policies-procedures/?letter=R

If you would like an informal discussion with someone who can offer guidance and answer any questions about the definition, why not contact HR Services on **Ext 52121**.

I am disabled - what next?

Speak to your Manager

Ideally, you should talk to your manager if you have a disability-related issue or question. Managers have a key responsibility for your general well-being and ensuring you have access to the full range of opportunities that go with your job. If you feel comfortable about it, you should discuss with your manager any impact your disability has on your work, and what adjustments you might need to do your job now and in the future.

Once s/he is aware of the issues, s/he can seek advice on how best to assist you, or refer you to other services and individuals who can provide further advice and assistance if necessary.

Whilst we would always encourage you to speak with your manager in the first instance, you can also contact HR Services (ext 52121) for general advice or information or alternatively you may wish to speak to the HR Advisor who specialises in Equality & Diversity matters on more specific points.

What can the University do to assist me?

If you have talked to your manager or HR Services about your disability, you should discuss with them any reasonable adjustments you might require. They should help you identify what you need and put this in place where possible. Managers may do this with the support of HR Services.

If you require changes to your physical work environment, your manager will be responsible for identifying an appropriate workplace for you, and will work with other services to arrange any necessary works or adjustments. Such works or reasonable adjustments may be financed by Estates or by the HR Services.

One of the most common forms of adjustment is the provision of assistive equipment (for example, specially-designed software or ergonomic adjustable office furniture). Other support may include a support worker (such as a sign language interpreter) or adaptation of materials into Braille.

The University has a responsibility to make reasonable adjustments. You have a right to be involved in any discussion about the necessary adjustments, and if anything is not deemed reasonable, your manager or HR Adviser will give you a clear explanation why, and offer alternatives where possible.

Do I have to tell anyone that I am disabled?

It is up to you whether or not you tell the University that you are disabled. However, the University is working hard to create an environment in which staff feel happy to declare a disability, so that reasonable adjustments can be made. It will be very difficult, and in some cases impossible, for the University to make adjustments if you do not tell your manager or HR. In addition, your disclosure of a disability can help the University to improve the way it works with disabled staff, raise awareness about disability issues in general and help it to assess the impact of policies and practices on disabled staff.

Confidentiality will be central to all these discussions. You may have told the University that you were disabled when you accepted your job here by ticking the relevant box on your 'monitoring form'. However, you provide this information for monitoring purposes and on its own it will not prompt a discussion about adjustments you might need.

What is the role of HR?

HR provide advice, guidance and support to managers and employees in respect of University policies and procedures, including those relating to Equality and Diversity.

Whilst we always encourage employees to speak with their manager in the first instance, HR can also be contacted in confidence should you wish further information or advice on any sensitive disability issue. Often HR will need to work with your manager in the event that we need to make adjustments in the workplace, however this will not be done with your prior consultation and permission.

You can book an initial guidance session with the HR Adviser (E&D). During this session the HR Adviser (E&D) can:

- Discuss general disability issues, giving you some information about the types of adjustment that could be available to you; and
- Tell you how to pursue appropriate support, including information on other services or individuals who might be relevant to the process, such as Access to Work.

Everything discussed with the HR Adviser will be treated as confidential data in line with the University's Code of Practice on Data Protection.

What Is Access To Work?

This is a government scheme managed through the Department of Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus. It provides practical, individually-tailored advice and support to disabled people who are in, or seeking, paid work. It is the most important source of external funding for disability assessment and support.

If the support you need has a significant cost associated with it (currently over £1000) you should apply to Access To Work. The application to Access To Work needs to be made by you, as a disabled member of staff, within six weeks of starting your employment.

Access To Work is also available to employees who develop a disability while in work.

No one can apply on your behalf. However, if you need any assistance with this you could talk to HR. You can apply to Access To Work without talking to anyone in the University (see the Contact Information page).

If you apply to Access To Work within six weeks of starting work in the University, the Access To Work are likely to cover all the costs of your adjustments.

Who else in the University might be able to help me?

Although it is the responsibility of everyone in the University to support disabled people, the following have specific roles in the process,

or may be able to provide you with particular forms of advice or support.

Salford University Disabled Staff Network

The network on the one hand provides mutual support and on the other is involved with all aspects of raising disability awareness, providing expert opinion and valuable information to the University on accessibility and equality related issues 'SUDS' motto is "part of the solution".

Members say:

"Disability need not stop us from achieving our potential. If we are determined, seek out the right information and support and keep going nearly anything is possible and we can achieve our dreams. I applied for some part time tutoring here at Salford, something I had always wanted to do, and was successful. I found I was really good at teaching and applied for a full time lecturing post which I got. Now I have support from Access to Work and enjoy coming to work every day and have managed to turn a crisis into a life changing positive experience. You can do this too. Don't give up and good luck."

"I started work for the university about six years ago. Due to the nature of my impairment I find it difficult to read paper documents without a magnifier or reader and I also struggle to see a computer screen if it doesn't have special software on it to help with contrast.

At my interview I disclosed my disability and was very pleased with the reaction and the support I received over the first few weeks of my starting my new job. The whole process was very well handled both by the university and by Access To Work and I am very grateful that I came to work for such a forward thinking and supportive organization. I have recently changed job roles and I continue to receive excellent help and support through my line manager and Access To Work."

"SUDS is a network of disabled staff members. However, for me it is also a network of friends, colleagues and like-minded individuals who I would not ordinarily have met in my day to day work. We work together to hold events and publicise ourselves, for example, International Day of Disabled People (IDDP) each year. It is a positive move forward to work together and achieve change, and I believe 'I am part of solution'."

For how to contact the network and more information go to:

www.salford.ac.uk/equality/staffnetwork/suds

Car parking for disabled employees

Disabled employees who are Blue Badge holders and require a vehicle to come to work are exempted from any fee and will be issued with a University permit.

To apply please contact: **0161 295 4444**
or **e: Estates-SupportTeam@salford.ac.uk**

Members of staff with a temporary mobility problem may apply for a temporary disabled permit.

Applications for temporary disabled permits will be referred to Staff Wellbeing for assessment and are subject to current car parking charges. For queries relating to a temporary staff permit on medical grounds, please contact the HSW helpline **0161 295 5425** or **helpdesk-hsw@salford.ac.uk**

Health, safety and wellbeing service

The primary responsibility of this Service is to promote the health, safety and wellbeing of the University's employees.

As part of this it can provide services that are of value to some disabled employees, including:

Confidential advice and guidance to employees and managers

- Work-place assessments, including on temporary or permanent adjustments
- Other services such as, stop smoking; blood pressure; health checks; physiotherapy and counselling.

The Service can provide valuable information to help in any discussions with your line manager, HR or ATW about adjustments.

You may be referred to the Occupational Health Unit by your Manager, normally via the HR Service or you can also book an appointment directly.
(see Contact Information page)

Staff counselling

The University provides all employees with access to a fully trained and experienced counsellor free of charge, through the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service. The counsellor can help with a wide range of personal, emotional, or psychological issues, and is not restricted to helping only work-related issues.

All medical advice and treatment will be treated in confidence and no information will be disclosed without your consent.

Employee assistance programme

University employees can access the Employee Assistance free 24/7 telephone helpline on **0800 716 017** This provides:

- Telephone counselling;
- Legal and Financial Advice;
- Medical and Life Stage advice;
- Managerial Support.

Other University services

The University is working towards making all of its services and premises as accessible as possible, to as wide a range of disabled people as possible. However you may still want information about particular arrangements.

If so, staff in services such as the Library or the Sport Centre would be happy to discuss your requirements.

Disability support for students

The University provides support for disabled students through the Student Life Disability Service in University House.

t: 0161 295 9000

e: disability@salford.ac.uk

- Visit: the Student Life Advice Desk in University House, Allerton Building, Adelphi or Media City
- For more information go to **www.salford.ac.uk/students**

Other external organisations

If you are a trade union member, you can contact a union representative at any stage to discuss disability-related issues regarding your employment at the University. The four recognised unions at the University are: UCU; Unite; GMB and Unison.

If necessary, external organisations with specialist knowledge, such as the RNIB, RNID or other local disability groups, can also be consulted for advice.

You may also be able to get advice from a Disability Employment Adviser working through Jobcentre Plus.

They can provide specialist support to people whose disability or health condition has deteriorated and who need employment service.

Please see **www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk** for information on your local Jobcentre Plus office or visit **[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employment support/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG_173083](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/Employment%20support/WorkSchemesAndProgrammes/DG_173083)**

You may also visit the Equality and Human Rights Commission website **www.equalityhumanrights.com**

Contact information

Human Resources:

HR Services t: 0161 295 2121 or e: hrservices@salford.ac.uk

HR (Equality and Diversity) Adviser

t: 0161 295 3592 or e: m.mahmoud-zadeh@salford.ac.uk

Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service including Counselling Service

Helpdesk t: 0161 295 5425 or e: helpdesk-hsw@salford.ac.uk

Employee Assistance Programme Telephone helpline

Telephone Counselling 24/7 on 0800 716 017

Salford University Disabled Staff Network

www.salford.ac.uk/equality/staffnetwork/suds

Access to Work Helpline

t: 0141 950 5327 or textphone 0845 602 5850

To find out more about the University's equality and diversity strategy and policies go to Listen!

www.equality.salford.ac.uk/listen

This booklet is available in alternative formats

(for example Braille and large print) please contact: HR Adviser (E&D)

t: 0161 295 3592 or e: m.mahmoud-zadeh@salford.ac.uk

This booklet is also available on the University of Salford website www.hr.salford.ac.uk

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