

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can I go to for advice and help?

Human Resources Directorate

Human Resources staff can advise on a range of practical issues and on referral to the Occupational Health Service.

To discuss a disability and the process for arranging reasonable adjustments, including and referrals to Access to Work, you should contact Simone Murch, Senior Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Officer in the Human Resources Directorate, via s.j.murch@gre.ac.uk on extension 9746.

Occupational Health

A manager can seek advice in relation to the nature and extent of a health-related issue or disability to enable them to assess the situation, consider the appropriate response and reach a decision on making reasonable adjustments. Relying on medical advice from the individual's doctor may not be sufficient and the university's Occupational Health service can provide support to both the role holder and their manager.

Safety Unit

A member of the safety unit can assist with risk assessments and specific workstation assessments. For more information on the Safety Unit visit the [web page](#).

Counselling Service

A [confidential counselling service](#) is available to all employees.

Trade Unions

Trade union representatives can also provide support and advice to staff. For more information see [here](#).

Can the university ensure an accessible working environment for all staff?

The university is committed to making buildings and sites accessible where this is reasonably possible, although it is recognised that there may be difficulties with some established University buildings and external environs. All new buildings meet statutory access requirements. An Access Guide is maintained indicating routes to buildings, lift access and other facilities for those with mobility difficulties.

Where practicable, the University will make adjustments to the immediate working environment of a disabled person, for example the provision of special furniture, equipment or signage.

Staff with a disability may need special provision to enable them to make proper use of information technology. In addition IT can sometimes provide a way of overcoming disadvantages in other aspects of the work environment. The University provides the relevant IT support on an individual basis to employees with a disability. Information and assistance is available via the Occupational Health Service or the Human Resources Office.

The designated line manager is responsible for arranging a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), if required, in consultation with Campus Facilities Management and advice will be sourced from the Safety Unit if necessary.

What training, induction and support is available to disabled staff?

Training events and information sessions on diversity awareness and on recruitment and selection are run regularly via the Learning and Talent Development Team. They accessed via the following web link <http://www.gre.ac.uk/offices/hr/staffdev>.

The University has a programme of induction training for all new staff. Induction is provided within the local work area on an individual basis and also centrally as part of a wider introduction to the University.

The designated line manager will be responsible for discussing with disabled employees any individual needs they may have, such as additional induction requirements, particular equipment or car parking, and for ensuring that support is provided on an on-going basis, with regular assessment of whether needs are being met. Advice and support is available from the Human Resources Directorate as necessary.

Staff with a disability will not be disadvantaged in their opportunities for training and development. Where appropriate, specialist training will be made available in order to allow them to develop their skills and career opportunities.

In cases where advice is needed on a medical condition or on the safety implications of recruiting a disabled employee, the Human Resources Directorate will liaise with the Occupational Health Service or other specialist agencies for guidance.

Throughout the University, senior managers are expected to encourage the involvement and participation of disabled employees to ensure that, wherever possible, employment practices and procedures recognise and meet their needs.

How do we ensure fair recruitment for disabled staff and prospective applicants?

The University's staff recruitment procedures are designed to guard against the possibility of deliberate or inadvertent discrimination against candidates on the basis of disability.

Further particulars are required for each post which is advertised by the University. These comprise a job description and person specification. The job description

should describe the job by identifying the duties clearly and accurately. The person specification should outline the essential and desirable selection criteria relating to the jobholder — the qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge, personal qualities and special attributes necessary for satisfactory performance of the job. The essential criteria should be the minimum criteria needed to carry out the job, whereas desirable are attributes or skills which could be useful or could be acquired after appointment.

Only those selection criteria which are necessary to the job should be specified and care must be taken not to use criteria which may unjustifiably place a disabled applicant at a disadvantage in the selection process.

Vacancies are advertised in a wide range of media, including national and local newspapers and websites. Information can be made available in a variety of formats, such as Braille, large text, or other formats upon request.

Consideration must be given to interview arrangements to ensure that a person with a disability is not at a substantial disadvantage compared to other applicants. Candidates invited to attend interview are asked to declare any adjustments that they may need. Adjustments may include ensuring that the interview room is accessible for those with mobility difficulties or providing a sign-language interpreter. All candidates should be assessed on their abilities, experience, and suitability for the post according to objective criteria concerning the qualities needed to undertake the duties of the post as outlined in the further particulars. During the interview process recruiters should assess how closely applicants with a disability can meet the requirements of the post and should act positively and flexibly to a need for reasonable adjustments. However, it should be recognised that there may be situations where no reasonable adjustment can be made to allow the employment of an otherwise suitable applicant.

The University requires all staff involved in the recruitment and selection of staff to be trained in good practice and the current operation of the University's procedures.

What is the Access to Work Scheme?

Access to Work is a government scheme run by Jobcentre Plus which brings together a range of services available to people with disabilities and their employers. It offers practical advice and help that can be tailored to suit the needs of an individual in a particular job. Access to Work does not replace the normal responsibilities of the employer to implement Health and Safety regulations or replace the responsibilities required by the Equality Act.

As well as giving advice and information to disabled people and employers, Access to Work can make a contribution towards costs that result from the need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled employees.

For further information on Access to Work, please visit their [website](#).

What are reasonable adjustments?

Reasonable adjustments are changes to the duties of the post or employment arrangements to allow a disabled person to undertake, or continue to undertake a job. Reasonable adjustments might include measures such as: altering working hours; allowing absences during working hours for rehabilitation, assessment or treatment; giving additional training; modifying physical features of the workplace such as fixtures and fittings, furniture and access to equipment; making special arrangements for parking and access to buildings.

The University will make reasonable adjustments to the workplace and to employment arrangements to ensure that a person with a disability is not at any substantial disadvantage when compared to a non-disabled person. In all cases the person concerned must be consulted on the reasonable accommodation of his or her needs. Decisions on whether an adjustment is reasonable must take into account all relevant factors, including the cost of the measures, both financial and in terms of disruption caused to others, the ease of making the change, and the extent to which the alteration will improve the situation for the employee or applicant with a disability. The employee is expected to co-operate with any arrangements subsequently agreed. The following link provides access to campus plans which detail where all of the disabled car parking spaces are, with the exception of Greenwich which involves secure entry www.gre.ac.uk/travel

Why is it important you tell us you are disabled and how the information will be used?

The University will maintain a central record of staff declaring a disability so that a picture of the patterns of employment of staff with a disability can be built up. This will help us ensure that we can avoid discrimination for potential and current employees. All information is collected for monitoring purposes kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Individuals may choose not to disclose information about their disability as part of the application process, or once in post to their line manager or Human Resources. In such situations an individual may raise the issue initially with a third party, such as a colleague, member of Occupational Health or a Trade Union representative. Non-disclosure of a disability to relevant parties may make it difficult for the university to provide appropriate reasonable adjustments. It is important to encourage individuals to discuss their condition with Human Resources, to enable reasonable adjustments to be made. Consent of the individual must be obtained before any information is passed on.

Disclosing a disability also assists us in monitoring our staff profile and reviewing the impact of our policies on the diverse needs of our staff. If you are not sure whether you have completed an equality monitoring form or would like to update your details, please contact Simone Murch in the Human Resources Directorate via s.j.murch@gre.ac.uk or extension 9746.

What is our commitment to you?

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate or harass against anybody on the grounds of, or arising from, a disability. The Equality Act places a positive duty for employers to promote disability equality.

Employers are required to make reasonable adjustments to physical features of premises and arrangements for employing disabled people.

Protection also applies where direct discrimination and harassment happens because a person is associated with a disabled person, or is wrongly perceived to be disabled.

What does the University of Greenwich and the law mean by disabled?

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long term (i.e. has lasted or is expected to last for at least 12 months) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. Normal day to day activities are things that involve: mobility; manual dexterity; physical co-ordination; ability to lift, carry or move everyday objects; speech, hearing or eyesight; memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand; perception of the risk of physical danger.

People who have had a disability in the past that meet this definition are also protected by the Act. Progressive conditions, such as HIV, cancer or multiple sclerosis, are also considered to be a disability.

Some conditions are specifically excluded from being covered by the disability definition, such as people who wear glasses or contact lenses.