

Leeds Metropolitan University

Disability Employment Policy: employing, supporting and working with disabled staff

1. This document sets out Leeds Metropolitan University's policy and practice in relation to support for disabled staff both prior to and during employment and including staff who become disabled while in service.
2. The policy espouses the principles enshrined in the University's Vision and Character statement that we intend to be:

a healthy, ethical, environmentally-friendly and sustainable community which values well-being, diversity, taking risks as pace-setters, the efficient and imaginative use of our resources, good governance and professionalism.

Introduction

3. Leeds Metropolitan University is committed to providing an inclusive and supportive environment where our diverse population of students and staff can learn and thrive, using their talents to the full, free from discrimination and harassment. We strive to promote equality of opportunity in all our policies, practices and procedures and will vigorously challenge unacceptable behaviour or conduct.
4. Our Equality Scheme¹ and action plan sets out our intentions in respect of this commitment and in meeting our obligations under the Disability Equality Duty. We aim to ensure that there is no discrimination on the grounds of disability and will take all reasonable steps to provide a supportive working environment that ensures equality of access to employment and promotion in the University is based on skills, qualifications and suitability for work.

Aims of the policy

5. This policy introduces new practices and procedures that will enhance and support existing procedures within the University for the benefit of disabled staff, their managers and work colleagues, and those who are in a position of providing support. This includes a Code of Good Practice and a Toolkit for Managers to accompany the policy.

¹ The Equality Scheme can be found at www.leedsmet.ac.uk/diversity

Recruitment and Selection

Policies and Procedures

6. The University's recruitment policy and procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure compliance with all disability equality legislation.
7. The recruitment procedure will enable disabled applicants to provide information on their needs and will take account, so far as is reasonably practicable, of any special arrangements that may be necessary.
8. A copy or summary of the University's Disability Employment Policy will be sent to all applicants for all posts. This aims to encourage applications from disabled candidates who have a disability to apply and to declare their disability without fear that doing so will have a detrimental effect on their recruitment or employment.
9. Applicants will be made aware of the new definition of disability which now incorporates long term physical and mental health conditions. In this context, many applicants may be declaring a disability for the first time and applicants will be made aware of how this declaration will be used to provide appropriate support and adjustments to working practice where required.
10. The University subscribes to the 'Positive About Disabled People' Scheme and will guarantee an interview to disabled applicants who meet the minimum recruitment and selection criteria as defined in the Employee Specification.
11. The discussion of access requirements will be separate from consideration of the applicant's suitability for the post applied in question. All candidates will be considered for interview and appointment based solely on their ability to meet recruitment and selection criteria.

Reasonable adjustment

12. Following appointment, an occupational health assessment will be carried out to determine any reasonable adjustments that need to be made to the work environment (see appendix 1). The adjustments will be agreed between the member of staff, the appointing manager, Occupational Health and Disability Support and will be recorded. A review will take place after three months and annually thereafter and will also be recorded.

Access to Work funding

13. The member of staff will be supported by the Disabled Staff Support Officer to make an application for Access to Work funding where appropriate (see appendix 1).

Personal Evacuation Plan

14. A personal evacuation plan will be provided for the member of staff and disseminated as appropriate (see appendix 1).

Staff who become disabled in service

First step

15. A member of staff who becomes disabled while in service should consult their line manager who in turn will contact Human Resources. Alternatively the member of staff, if they prefer, may make direct contact with Human Resources, Occupational Health or the Disabled Staff Liaison Officer.

Transition for staff who become disabled in service

16. Staff who become disabled in service will be offered time and support for rehabilitation and resettlement during the period in which reasonable adjustments are being determined and implemented.

Reasonable adjustment

17. An occupational health assessment will be carried out to determine any reasonable adjustments that need to be made to the work environment (see appendix 1). The adjustments will be agreed between the member of staff, the line manager, Occupational Health and Disability Support and will be recorded. A review will take place after three months and annually thereafter and will also be recorded.

18. Sympathetic consideration will be given to requests from newly disabled staff for reduced or part-time hours/duties, whether on a temporary or permanent basis. The University will consider the superannuation implications of moving to part-time working in conjunction with the employee.

19. The University will undertake, so far as is reasonably practicable, to enable staff who become disabled to remain in their own post before other alternatives are considered. Where redeployment is considered appropriate, the newly disabled employee will be given appropriate staff development and training.

Access to Work funding

20. The member of staff will be supported by the Disabled Staff Liaison Officer to make an application for Access to Work funding where appropriate (see appendix 1).

Personal Evacuation Plan

21. A personal evacuation plan will be provided for the member of staff and disseminated as appropriate (see appendix 1).

Supporting policies

The work environment

22. The University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the estate, working environment and employment practices are accessible to disabled staff and provide equality of opportunity for employment and progression in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2006 (see appendix 1).

Involvement of disabled staff in decision-making

23. The University will provide a mechanism whereby disabled staff or their representatives are involved, where reasonably practicable and appropriate, in decisions on the development and changes to the working environment and employment practices that may adversely affect them. Where appropriate, advice will be sought from the external community and voluntary and statutory agencies. This process will be facilitated by the University's Disability Action Group (see appendix 1).

Resources

24. The University will establish an inventory of resources to support disabled staff and a resource base administered by the Disabled Staff Liaison Officer. This will include a list of internal volunteer experts who may advise the member of staff, his or her line manager, HR and Occupational Health on appropriate adjustments and support strategies.

25. The purchase of standard furniture and equipment such as desks will routinely consider the needs of users with disabilities.

Absence monitoring

26. The University will distinguish between staff absences that directly relate to the disability and those that do not.

Policy monitoring and review

27. Implementing a policy on disability for staff is a continuing process that requires regular review. The process involves developing detailed codes of practice; establishing standard procedures; identifying

positive action measures; and highlighting good practice within the University as well as the wider community.

28. An equality impact assessment of this policy and its associated procedures has been undertaken.

Complaints

29. In accordance with the 'Positive About Disabled People' Scheme (paragraph 10) and the procedure on reasonable adjustment to working practices (paragraph 12) an annual review will take place with the disabled staff member. Informal liaison may take place between the member of staff and the Disabled Staff Liaison Officer to ensure procedures are being followed.

30. If, however, a member of staff has a complaint that cannot be resolved locally or informally, he or she should follow the University's Grievance Procedures.