



Disability Recruitment Guide

RMIT Diversity and Inclusion

Contents

| | |
|---|----------|
| Purpose | 3 |
| Disability Terminology | 4 |
| Person Centred Language | 4 |
| Person focused | 4 |
| Respecting people with disabilities through recruiting | 4 |
| Respect and understanding | 4 |
| Discuss RMIT's commitment to inclusion | 5 |
| RMIT's values | 5 |
| Never assume disability | 5 |
| Disability assumptions | 5 |
| Disability Diverse Applicants and Adjustments | 6 |
| Barriers, negative attitudes and misconceptions | 6 |
| Recruitment adjustments and examples of adjustments | 6 |
| Workplace adjustments | 6 |
| Communicating sensitively | 7 |
| Biases | 7 |
| Resources, advocates and getting involved | 8 |
| Learning and development | 8 |
| Disability resources | 8 |
| Support and advocacy | 8 |
| Diversity and inclusion team | 8 |
| Your Role as a Hiring Manager | 9 |

Purpose

Recruitment is usually a potential or new employee's first contact with RMIT. During the recruitment process, Human Resources and the University work collaboratively to create an environment and culture where potential, new and existing employees feel included and welcome to bring their whole selves to work. Prospective employees that come from a disability background may require adjustments for this to successfully occur.

A disability can include any of the following; long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments. These, when in interaction with various physical, mental or social barriers may hinder and reduce their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others (The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). A disability may be visible or invisible and assumptions should never be made. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities shifted the view of people with disabilities from the medical model, people need to be fixed or cured, to the social model where;

‘A ‘disability’ is the result of the interaction between people living with impairments and an environment filled with physical, attitudinal, communication and social barriers. It therefore carries the implication that the physical, attitudinal, communication and social environment must change to enable people living with impairments to participate in society on an equal basis with others

(People with Disability Australia, 2018).

RMIT is proud to be a Disability Confident Recruiter (DCR). RMIT has committed to increase the support for people with a disability, so they have a fair and inclusive experience when applying for a position with us. Further information on being a DCR can be found on the Australian Network on Disability website at www.and.org.au/pages/disability-confident-recruiter.html

“ Our results demonstrate our ongoing focus and commitment to inclusion as one of our core values at the University. In 2018, we will continue to deliver on our Diversity and Inclusion initiatives to make RMIT an even greater place to work and learn for everyone. ”

—Dionne Higgins | COO and RMIT's Disability Champion

Disability Terminology

For people identifying as having a disability, the language surrounding this can have a great effect on their experience. It is better to not mention the disability unless it is mentioned by them or it is explicitly required due to the position. Do not ask how a disability was acquired, or how the disability may impact the ability to perform aspects of the position. Through incorrect terminology or unnecessary focus on the disability or mobility aid, a negative impact on the individuals experience can occur.

Person centred language

By using person centred language it shows that RMIT sees the person is more than their disability.

Examples:

- John is an accountant rather than John is wheelchair bound.
- Marie is an information technology specialist rather than Marie is mentally ill or suffers from anxiety.

Position focused

Focus on what must be accomplished, rather than how the disability will affect the position. Only the integral elements of the position that

are to be carried out, to achieve the required results or outcomes of the job required, should be considered when recruiting a person with a disability.

During the recruitment phase questions such as:

- Are there any adjustments that may be required to complete the essential requirements of the position?
- How will you perform the essential requirements of the position are appropriate?

More information on inclusive language can be found at: www.rmit.edu.au/content/dam/rmit/rmit-images/staff-site/my-employment/documents/diversity-and-inclusion/inclusive-language-guide-accessible-version.pdf

Respecting people with disabilities through recruiting

People who have a disability may or may not identify as having a disability. This is the individual's choice.

Respect and understanding

It is best practice to allow the individual to be comfortable in the recruitment process and workplace to disclose any disability they feel open to sharing. Ensuring that the applicant is treated in a fair manner, accommodated with adjustments

and is not seen to be an inconvenience throughout the process, can give the applicant a great experience. Understand that no two individual's disability or experiences are the same. Focus on the skills of the applicant relevant to the position on offer.

Discuss RMIT's Commitment to Inclusion

As one of the first points of contact at the University, the recruitment process serves an important role in making potential and new employees feel welcome. Take time to talk about culture, respect and inclusion at RMIT.

RMIT's values

It is important as a leader for that you are mindful of the environment a new employee is entering, and make sure to address the expectations of their team. It is important to create a psychologically safe environment for everyone.

Regardless of someone's identity, everyone associated with the University needs to be aware of RMIT's values and what this involves. Our code of conduct requires all employees to practice respectful behaviour toward all individuals. RMIT's values can be found here; rmit.edu.au/staff/our-rmit/values

Never Assume Disability

Always avoid making assumptions about a person's disability.

Disability Assumptions

No matter how obvious it may seem to you, never assume that someone belongs to the disability community because of the way they look, talk or present themselves. Additionally, if someone does identify as a member of the disability community but does not look it, do not act

surprised or react in a way that could make them feel uncomfortable or unwelcome.

Using terms like ability instead of disability are simple changes that are more inclusive to the disability community.

Disability Diverse Applicants and Adjustments

A person defines themselves by their actions, a disability does not define the person.

Barriers, negative attitudes and misconceptions

Applicants with a disability have a higher likelihood of facing negative attitudes and misconceptions.

These can be:

- Implicit and explicit barriers.
- Conscious and unconscious biases.
- Perceived discrimination.

It is through these barriers that it may compromise the applicants experience with RMIT through the recruitment process. It is expected that hiring managers will have an open mind and will treat people with respect. By tapping into the disabled community, RMIT is given access to a diverse field of candidates.

Recruitment adjustments and examples of adjustments

Due to the diverse nature of disabilities, accessibility for some applicants may be required. By giving the applicant the ability to inform us of, and implement, any adjustments, it gives them the ability to apply for the position available and RMIT the information to support the applicant in the correct manner. For both those that do and those that do not identify as having a disability, an adjustment may be required through the recruitment phase.

This may include, but not limited to:

- How the person prefers to be contacted.
- How the application process is presented.

- Making sure the building is accessible to the applicant.
- Alternative method of communication (Auslan).
- Screen reading technology, non PDF documents.
- Stimulus reducing spaces.
- Ergonomic equipment.
- Alternative method of interview.
- Extra time to perform testing tasks.

Additionally, for some applicants, especially those from neurodiversity backgrounds, avoiding eye contact or having closed body language when engaging in conversation or responding to a question may occur. This does not mean they are not interested, listening or engaged in the interview.

Ensuring that these interactions are positive through accessibility, inter-personal cue recognition or adjustment requirements being in place, will show the candidate that they are supported through the recruitment process.

Workplace adjustments

Additionally, an adjustment may only be required once the applicant starts employment and not all disability identifying individuals will require any type of adjustment, or willing to disclose the need until after the recruitment phase.

Workplace adjustments may include:

- Screen reading technology (Web pages, Word documents, not PDF)

- Ergonomic chair with arms
- Height adjustable desk.
- Seating in lower light, quieter space or not under air-conditioning ducts.
- Flexible working hours.

RMIT's workplace adjustment policy can be found here; www.rmit.edu.au/staff/our-rmit/policies/talent-culture/work-adjustment-process

Communicating Sensitive

Respect the applicant always.

Biases

Whether an applicant has revealed a disability to you during the recruitment process or not, if unsuccessful, applicants may feel, this is due to their disability due to conscious or unconscious bias. This could also include the disclosure of any

adjustment or accessibility requirements that was revealed. It's important that you consider how you will discuss their unsuccessful application with them in a way that is sensitive and effective.

Resources, advocates and getting involved

RMIT is fully committed to maintaining a respectful, inclusive culture where the diversity of our community is celebrated. There are several resources in place to help employees engage with our disabled community.

Learning and development

RMIT's professional development services offer diversity trainings available to all employees, including:

- Accessibility for Web Design,
- UX Foundations: Accessibility,
- WordPress: Accessibility

For many more, see Learning and development and HR central for details.

Disability resources

All RMIT employees are encouraged to view our Diversity and Inclusion page for more details and resources regarding inclusion at RMIT.

The accessibility page includes information on joining disability advocating networks and other resources available.

Relevant resources linked on the Accessibility page include, but are not limited to:

- Accessibility Action Plan
- RMIT accessibility managers guide

- Inclusive Language Guide
- Australian Network on Disability (AND)
- Accessibility Maps

Support and advocacy

The Diversity and Inclusion at RMIT Yammer networks offers information for a variety of diversity and inclusion practices, events and training. Through this group, links to the diversity and inclusion team, internal and external support and advocacy for staff and students can be offered.

Diversity and inclusion team

If you, a colleague, or a potential, new or existing employee have questions regarding the disability community, diversity and inclusion, inclusive practices, adjustments or accessibility, the Diversity and Inclusion team are available for questions through HR Assist (hr.assist@rmit.edu.au or 9925 0600) or diversity.Inclusion@rmit.edu.au.

Disability Diverse Applicants and Adjustments

- Ensure respectful and correct language is used.
- Respect for the applicant and their disability.
- Recommit RMIT's commitment to inclusion.
- Do not assume about an applicant's ability based on their disability.
- Not everyone with a specific "type" of disability will need the same adjustment.
- Communicate sensitively when informing the applicant about if they were successful or unsuccessful for the role.
- Inform of support networks and learning platforms available to all staff.
- Be a champion for inclusion in the workplace.

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