

Requesting workplace adjustments

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As a person with disability, you can request that adjustments are made to ensure you are able to participate in the workplace on an equal basis with others.

Asking for adjustments

Before meeting with your manager or HR team you should:

- reflect on what you require
- check your agency's workplace adjustments policy
- seek advice from your disability employment network or support staff.

Where different ways of working are required, such as changing work hours or locations, ideally these should be organised in line with existing flexible working policies.

If you identify as a person with disability to your manager, you can also share your information with your agency by updating your disability information in your employee information systems.

Any information you share with your agency must be kept confidential and won't be shared unless you give your permission. This is in line with the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)*.

Types of adjustments available

Below are examples of adjustments available to ask for, however if you have a disability speak to your manager or HR team about your specific needs to ensure they are met.

Workplace adjustments can range from changes to equipment, workplace practices and environment and may change over time as people's needs change.

<https://www.psc.nsw.gov.au/culture-and-inclusion/flexible-working/accessing-flexible-working/types-of-flexible-working>

Workplace practice

- Flexible working arrangements e.g. flexible start and finish times, working from home, working part-time, working in different locations. (other examples of flexible work can be found on the **Office of the Public Service Commissioner website**. Refer to your agency flexible working policy for more information.
- Changing how information is communicated in the workplace, including:
 - accessible meetings (transcripts, captioning, accessible rooms) and providing Auslan interpretation, Easy Read documents or emailing or using MS Teams rather than phone calls, or vice versa
 - structured communication -clearly defining communication expectations and using written communication methods (e.g., email, messaging apps) for instructions and task assignments.
- Providing a support worker or Auslan-English interpreter or captioning service.
- Ensuring workplace documents and web content are accessible for the particular disability if this is not already the case.
- Providing information in requested formats or providing additional time for an employee to process information or at preferred times.
- Modifying the job requirements e.g., co-workers exchanging tasks, adjusting a non-essential job task by customising a role to fit the employee's skills and support needs while still meeting the needs of employer.
- Adapting performance and development programs to meet individual needs.

Workplace environment

Changes to your physical environment including:

- An occupational therapist assessment, ergonomic desk and chair assessment.
- Braille signage in communal work locations e.g. meeting rooms, photocopier area, kitchen.
- Providing a workspace with adjustable lighting, noise-cancelling headphones, or a quiet area to accommodate sensory sensitivities.
- Permanent and portable hearing loops.
- An accessible parking space close to the work location for an employee who uses a wheelchair or has mobility issues or chronic pain.
- Adaptive switches that enable people to use technology.
- Modifications to an inaccessible building to enable access to a building or bathroom facilities.

Assistive technology

- Screen readers and screen enlargement applications.
- Voice recognition and transcription programs.
- Automated closed captioning.
- Keyboard and mouse alternatives and adaptations and assistive listening devices.

Recruitment practices

- Discussing the individual's specific needs directly (if appropriate).
- Providing a different way to assess the required capabilities to perform the role e.g., a scenario-based written assessment instead of a psychometric assessment.
- Adapting the assessment format, such as allowing the candidate to respond to interview questions in writing.
- Providing the interview questions to candidates in advance and/or providing more time for assessment tasks.
- Supporting candidates to use their own laptop or assistive technology.
- Checking the interview, time, assessments and room meets individual needs – good lighting, reduced noise, interview seating arrangements.
- Providing options for an Auslan-English interpreter and/or their preferred sound amplification devices such as hearing loops.

Legal responsibilities

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, workplaces must provide workplace adjustments if requested. This Act provides an exception if the cost or difficulties of providing access will place an unjustifiable hardship on a person or organisation. You can find out more about unjustifiable hardship by reading the Australian Human Rights Commission's online guide.

Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW), organisations need to ensure that their workplace is healthy and safe. This includes managing risks and potential risks to the health, safety and wellbeing of all employees.

Work Health and Safety legislation does not override disability anti-discrimination legislative responsibilities. Workplaces need to be able to manage both legal responsibilities. For example, if you are unable to participate safely in the workplace after all reasonable adjustments are taken it may be considered that you cannot meet the inherent requirements of the role.