Disability

Disability profile of the University
1 in 25 staff at Warwick (319 staff, 4.6% of employees) declared a disability in 2018/19. Do you know how to disclose a disability? The Disability Framework can help you.

Disability discrimination in law
The Equality Act 2010 defines this discrimination as direct and indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation on the grounds of disability. Disability is one of the nine protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act.

Disability discrimination applies to people with visible and invisible disabilities. Treating a disabled person with a particular disability more favourably may be lawful if it is an occupational requirement (where having a particular disability is essential for the job) or where an organisation is taking positive action to encourage or develop people with a particular disability.

Definitions:
- Direct discrimination: When someone is treated less favourably because of a protected characteristic.
  - By association: because of a protected characteristic a family member, friend or colleague has.
  - By perception: because of a protected characteristic they are thought to have.
- Indirect discrimination: When a practice, policy, or rule is applied to everyone but has a worse effect on some.
- Harassment: Unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic.
- Victimisation: When someone is treated less favourably due to an allegation they made, supported, or gave evidence to.

Examples of disability discrimination:
- Allocating jobs, opportunities, and tasks to colleagues without a visible disability whilst overlooking those with a visible disability.
- Penalising someone who is off sick with a disability related illness.
- Inappropriate jokes/’banter’ on the grounds of disability.
- Refusing to provide equipment or software that will better enable the employee to work to their potential (also known as reasonable adjustments).
- Derogatory remarks made in connection with performance.
- Verbal or written abuse including non-communication and deliberate and/or inappropriate exclusion from social events or day to day activities.
Is your workplace/environment and working ethics inclusive?

- Speak up when ‘office banter’ becomes inappropriate.
- Hold meetings in accessible rooms and buildings.
- Be understanding of any reasonable adjustments colleagues may have.
- Practicing confidentiality.
- Don’t exclude or isolate disabled staff.
- When organising events consider accessibility and ask delegates about any accessibility needs prior to the event.

What are your responsibilities?

- Consider disclosing any disability and discuss adjustments with your manager.
- Challenge disability discrimination.
- Lead by example.
- Know where your nearest accessible facilities are and who your first aiders are.
- Display ED&I posters and resources.
- Complete online training (Diversity in the Workplace and Unconscious Bias).
- Find out who is the EDI and Wellbeing Champion for your department.

What resources are available for me, and for signposting?

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion webpages.
- ED&I video clips.
- Guidance on supporting staff and disability checklist for line managers.
- Disability Staff Network.
- Your HR Advisor.
- Disability Framework.

Anything else I should know about?

**Dignity at Warwick**
Staff can report bullying and harassment via an anonymous form or request to meet with a Dignity Contact to discuss options available. Familiarise yourself with the Dignity at Warwick Policy.

**Invisible disabilities**
Many disabilities aren’t visible, such as mental health, cancer, or chronic illnesses that affect individuals and cause pain every day. These staff often receive comments such as “but you look fine” or “you can’t use that facility”. It is not acceptable to make such comments or assumptions about a person. If you need to know about a person’s disability, discuss with them how you can best support them to improve their wellbeing at work.

**Disability Standard**
The University has signed up to the Disability Standard, a benchmarking assessment run in the UK by Business Disability Forum (BDF). The Standard covers ten business areas: commitment, know-how, adjustments, recruitment, retention, products and services, suppliers and partners, communication, premises, and ICT. BDF also provide support including a helpline and guidance materials.

Everyone deserves respect – learn more about Respect at Warwick at warwick.ac.uk/equalops/learnmore/respectatwarwick