



Disability Policy and Procedure

For staff

We are committed to promoting an inclusive, safe and supportive environment in which all our staff are treated with respect and dignity, in line with our [University values](#).

The aim of this policy is to promote a positive and supportive working environment and a framework for collaborative dialogue between candidates, staff and their line managers in cases where one or more parties is disabled or has a long-term condition(s). Where appropriate, professional advice from HR&D and specialist services, such as Occupational Health, will be sought to ensure individuals are supported effectively.

This policy was written in consultation with the Business Disability Forum (BDF)¹ University disabled staff, Trade Unions, Health and Safety, IT and Facilities and HR&D.

The University is committed to removing barriers that current disabled staff and candidates, or those with a long-term condition(s), may face by making reasonable adjustments and providing support. Our objectives are to:

- promote a culture where disabled candidates and staff feel valued and supported,
- adapt the accessibility of our physical and virtual environment (where reasonable) - see [below](#) for further information on reasonable adjustments,
- ensure our selection and promotion criteria do not create unnecessary barriers,
- provide support to candidates and staff at all stages of their career with the University, including developing a disability or long term health condition(s) during employment. encourage supportive, two-way conversations between staff and line managers regarding disability, while maintaining confidentiality,
- work with staff to identify appropriate support needs,
- support managers in providing reasonable adjustments for staff.

By promoting the support available and encouraging job applications from disabled people or individuals with long-term condition(s), the University can:

- create a workforce that reflects our diverse student body and the community in which we operate,
- attract highly skilled applicants,
- bring additional skills and experience to the University,
- act on our commitment of being an inclusive employer.

¹ A not for profit membership organisation which exists to transform the life chances of disabled people, working through and with business to create a disability-smart world.

Definition

Under the Equality Act 2010, the definition of disability is wide and covers many different visible and non-visible conditions – for example, depression, chronic fatigue, heart condition, hearing loss/Deafness, diabetes, and neurodiverse conditions such as dyslexia and autism.

It is not possible in all cases to know whether someone meets the legal definition of disability, therefore our focus is on removing any barriers, where it is reasonable to do so, rather than determining if someone has a disability.

Roles and responsibilities

The University is responsible for embedding equality and diversity throughout the workplace and expects all members of staff to actively promote equality, value diversity and contribute to an inclusive culture.

Line managers should:

- ensure that disabled staff and those with long-term conditions are not at a disadvantage compared to non-disabled staff in the workplace,
- promote a climate of trust and respect, to encourage disabled candidates and staff to feel comfortable in sharing if they have a disability or long-term health condition(s),
- ensure that disabled staff and candidates are aware of available support,
- be aware that difficulties in the working environment can have an impact on an individual's wellbeing, so they may need to explore and identify further adjustments or seek additional support from the local HR team,
- support and implement appropriate adjustments, liaising with local HR teams/Facilities as needed to arrange any specialist equipment and to consider accessibility where required,
- liaise with local HR teams to organise Occupational Health referrals if further guidance is needed to establish adjustments required,
- keep confidential records of any adjustments agreed and review them annually.

Staff should:

- feel comfortable with sharing information with line managers on any disability, difficulties or health condition(s) that impact their work. The University encourages the sharing of this information to enable colleagues to be supported effectively, while maintaining confidentiality,
- inform their line manager of any problems they experience in the implementation of adjustments,
- participate in a referral to Occupational Health and associated reasonable adjustments process if required, to pursue any agreed actions and support recommendations,
- keep their line manager informed of any changes to their health that impacts on their ability to do their job, or requires a review of previously agreed adjustments.

University Health and Safety team will:

- offer advice on policies and procedures in relation to all safety and emergency procedures in all University buildings,

- provide advice in relation to the Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) process for disabled staff to evacuate safely in an emergency,
- provide evacuation chair training for fire marshals (and others on request) to assist a disabled person to exit from a building in the event of an emergency or fire (refresher training is provided every two years),
- provide advice on carrying out workstation/display screen equipment assessments, prior to carrying out an Occupational Health referral.

Occupational Health will:

- provide impartial advice to staff and managers following an assessment of how the individual's disability or long-term condition(s) impacts upon them at work and the specific barriers they are facing,
- provide advice, guidance and support as appropriate to all parties involved (with consent) to include psychological and musculoskeletal wellbeing and general wellness,
- provide advice on appropriate adjustments, equipment or software required.

To enable line managers to support staff appropriately, it is important that staff liaise with their line manager in the first instance and explain any concerns they may have. The member of staff and/or their manager will need to notify the local HR team if a referral is required. The local HR team may require an informal meeting with the member of staff to discuss the referral requirements.

Further information on the services provided by Occupational Health can be found [here](#).

Human Resources and Development (HR&D) will:

- ensure the University implements disability support and reasonable adjustments effectively.

Senior/HR Business Partners will be able to:

- provide advice to staff, prospective staff and line managers, signposting to relevant support mechanisms and resources both internally and externally,
- provide advice on the referral process to Occupational Health and the reasonable adjustment process.

Further information on the role of HR&D can be found [here](#).

Facilities

The Facilities Manager and Health and Safety teams are able to carry out DSE assessments, recommend specific furniture via the University's supplier; e.g. height adjustable desks. Chairs can be measured to suit individuals or prescribed for specific medical conditions. Facilities can alter light levels; fittings to a particular lux and colour to assist staff with viewing screens or improve their environment dependant on their needs. For staff based at Shrivenham, please liaise with your Facilities team in the first instance who will need to consult with MOD for any lighting issues.

Refer to [Facilities](#) for further information on support and access adjustments.

Information Services

IS is responsible for all aspects of IT, audio-visual and printing provision across the University. They are the first port of call for all IT-related queries and will capture and prioritise the response to any request for information or reporting of issues related to accessibility, technology or equipment by any member of staff.

IS provide a range of materials to help staff use their services, such as training and one-to-one support. More information can be found on the IS [intranet page](#). Requests for support can also be made via: servicedesk@cranfield.ac.uk

Reasonable adjustments

Employers are required to make reasonable adjustments in order to remove barriers that staff may face because of their disability or long-term condition(s).

An assessment of an individual's needs should be made by their manager and the individual and, where appropriate, Occupational Health, and HR Business Partner. The assessment should consider:

- the impact of disability or long-term condition(s),
- the job functions the individual can perform,
- the aids or modifications required,
- the need for training,
- revised work schedules or other adjustments,
- time off for medical treatment or rehabilitation.

Staff should be involved in discussions about how their disability or long-term condition(s) impact upon them while at work and in considering any reasonable adjustments that might help.

Reasonable adjustments are always made on a case-by-case basis, and may be temporary in nature. Some examples include:

- adapting or departing from the standard way of working e.g. a change in working hours – please refer to the [Flexible Working policy](#) for further guidance,
- considering external funding options to include [Access to Work](#),
- providing more time to complete tasks,
- offering a different way to communicate,
- providing specialist equipment or additional support,
- making sure our buildings do not present physical obstacles,
- agreeing a phased return after sick leave,
- providing a designated car park space,
- reviewing support available if absence is related to a disability,
- modifying performance objectives,
- reallocating some of the duties to another person – for example, if a job occasionally involves taking files to another floor, this task could be transferred to someone who does not have an ambulatory impairment

Whether an adjustment is considered reasonable depends on the individual circumstances in each particular case.

The University will not make assumptions about whether a person requires any adjustments or about what those adjustments should be. The line manager and where appropriate, the local HR team will discuss the requirements with the individual and seek to reach mutual agreement, informed by medical advice where appropriate.

Factors to be considered in determining 'what is reasonable' include:

- how effective the adjustment would be in overcoming the barrier,
- how practicable it is to make the adjustment,
- the extent of any disruption to activities that making the adjustment could cause,
- impact on other staff,
- the sustainability of the proposed adjustment,
- the likely financial and other costs incurred as a result of making the adjustment.

How to request a reasonable adjustment

Staff should liaise with their line manager in the first instance. This is an opportunity to explain the situation clearly and suggest possible adjustments required. This will allow the line manager to understand how best to support the member of staff. Advice can be sought from the local HR team if a referral to Occupational Health is needed to seek more clarity on the disability and advise on adjustments/support required.

For more information on reasonable adjustments, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers>

Access and the environment

The University recognises that physical access to facilities and buildings is key to honouring our commitment to supporting disabled staff.

The University will ensure:

- equality, diversity and inclusion training is mandatory for all staff to enhance disability awareness across the University,
- disabled staff/applicants have the appropriate adjustments in place to enable them to access their work/interview environment and carry out their job role/interview e.g. specialist equipment, furniture, communication devices etc,
- meetings are held in accessible locations and do not disadvantage those with physical disabilities,
- [flexible working](#) requests can be provided as a reasonable adjustment - [homeworking](#) can be considered as a reasonable adjustment,
- flexibility regarding start/finish times to accommodate travel to and from work arrangements e.g. consideration of public transport timetables,
- the promotion of policies and procedures that support disabled staff and review these regularly,

- Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPs) are in place for those who require them,
- staff/visitors with a blue badge permit are given priority with regard to parking and access to buildings. If staff do not have a blue badge, but have a short-term medical condition(s) that impacts their mobility, please liaise with the local HR team who will be able to assist.

Reporting access issues

If you need to report an access issue on campus – for example an obstruction to an entrance, failure of automatic doors or damage to pathways, you can do so by reporting it to the Facilities Management Team: FacilitiesManagementTeam@cranfield.ac.uk.

In an emergency, such as being unable to gain access to a building, please contact the Facilities help desk on 01234 754100 or Ext: 4100.

For staff based at Shrivenham, you will need to raise a topdesk request with Serco who can be contacted on: 01793 788444 or sercoservicedesk@da.mod.uk

Processes and procedures

Recruitment

The University actively encourages applications from disabled people and those with a long-term health condition(s) and will always make reasonable adjustments to our recruitment and selection procedures when requested by job applicants. Diversity and inclusion training is mandatory for all staff. Those involved in recruitment and selection are encouraged to undertake specific recruitment and selection training which covers disability and the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

The University is currently a Level 1 [Disability Confident](#) Employer. This scheme demonstrates our commitment to ensuring disabled people are treated fairly and have access to the same opportunities as non-disabled people (as outlined in our [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#)).

Under the scheme, the University is committed to offering an interview to disabled candidates via the guaranteed interview scheme providing they meet the essential criteria for the role. To be considered under this scheme, candidates need to inform the University about a disability or long-term condition(s) in their application. The nature of the disability or long-term condition(s) will be held in strictest confidence and not disclosed to the hiring manager. However, the information may be used to make appropriate adjustments to the interview process, if needed.

All offers of employment (excluding temporary and casual workers), are subject to the completion of a health declaration form prior to the commencement of employment. Depending on the responses given and/or the duties of the role offered, individuals may be referred to the Universities Occupational Health service for further discussions and/or assessment prior to the commencement of their employment. In addition, some roles may require individuals to attend relevant health surveillance appointments with Occupational Health and/or internal Health and Safety team throughout their employment in the role to maintain the University's duty of care under health and safety regulations.

Further information on employing disabled people and people with health conditions can be found [here](#).

Performance review and development opportunities

The [P&DR process](#) is for all staff to support their development and performance.

The University will endeavour to provide appropriate learning and support to all staff to enable them to undertake their role and responsibilities confidently and effectively. Opportunities for promotion and career development are available to all staff and reviewed regularly to ensure they are inclusive and do not create barriers for any particular groups of staff.

HR&D can offer support to disabled staff and line managers to provide access to information, specialist advice, guidance and to tailor or adjust the support needed in their work.

Monitoring and evaluation

Under the Equality Act 2010, the University is obliged to request information regarding the recruitment, retention and development of staff across the range of protected characteristics. Any information relating to the equality and diversity of staff and applicants will be stored in accordance with Data Protection legislation and in accordance with our [Staff](#) and [Job Applicant](#) Privacy Notice. Please see our [GDPR](#) intranet pages for further information.

To assist the University in creating and maintaining a supportive environment which promotes equality of opportunity alongside dignity and respect, the University aims to create an environment where members of our community feel confident and supported to share personal information referring to any of the protected characteristics. Instances of discrimination based on the grounds of protected characteristics will be considered under Ordinance 29 – The Resolution of Grievances. Complaints regarding staff harassment or bullying should also be raised via this Ordinance, in accordance with the [Dignity at Work Policy](#).

Sickness monitoring

The University acknowledges that sickness absence may result from a disability or long-term condition(s). The University records disability related absences separately from other categories to enable managers to make [adjustments](#) (where reasonable) in relation to the sickness absence of the disabled member of staff.

Staff have the opportunity to report their absence on Agresso as disability-related sickness absence.

Although it may be difficult to implement reasonable adjustments if a member of staff does not reveal that they are disabled, it may still be possible to implement them discretely and confidentially, for example time off to attend appointments in relation to their disability.

Time off for a disability-related medical appointment

The University acknowledges that staff with on-going condition(s) may require on-going treatment and time off from work to attend medical appointments. This may include physiotherapy, counselling, dialysis etc. These appointments will be accommodated wherever possible in agreement with line management and will not normally be counted as sickness.

Advice on sharing information about a disability

The University endeavours to provide an environment where staff feel confident and comfortable sharing information about a disability or long-term condition(s). The University treats all staff with respect, compassion and empathy. The University (via HR&D and Occupational Health) commits to making adjustments to the working environment, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Notifying the University about a disability or long-term condition(s) is an individual decision, and there is no obligation to do so. However, there are many reasons why sharing this information is a positive action that will empower, protect and assist our disabled staff and those with long-term condition(s), while maintaining confidentiality, where possible.

Benefits of sharing information about a disability or long-term condition(s)

- The University can provide effective and tailored support if a member of staff shares this information.
- Reasonable adjustments can be put in place to remove barriers and enable staff to perform their role to the best of their ability.
- Staff may be able to access additional funding to support with equipment, e.g. via the [Access to Work](#) scheme.
- It allows the University to ensure we are representative of the communities we operate in.

Staff may have concerns about discrimination, or may feel uncomfortable discussing their disability or health condition(s) for other reasons. If this is the case, the local HR team or Diversity and Inclusion team can be contacted to discuss these concerns with you.

What to expect if a member of staff discloses a disability

To disclose a disability/health condition(s) or the need for reasonable adjustments, staff are encouraged to discuss this with their line manager in the first instance to highlight any barriers or difficulties they are facing at work.

Staff are also encouraged to share their disability or long term health condition(s) on their Agresso staff record for monitoring purposes. This will enable the University to have a more accurate view of our staff profile and provide appropriate support. Any information shared will be in confidence.

Staff who are enrolled for University courses should also consider disclosing their disability or long-term condition to their Learning Support Officers as detailed in the [Student Disability Policy](#), to ensure appropriated adjustments are in place.

If staff do not feel comfortable notifying their line manager in the first instance, please seek advice from the local HR team or Diversity and Inclusion team: diversity@cranfield.ac.uk. However, in order that line managers can provide the necessary support and understand the nature of the requirements, it is normal for them to be included in any discussions on whether any reasonable adjustments are required (with the member of staff's consent).

Additional support may need to be put in place if staff become disabled or if a disability changes during the course of employment. Support needs will also need to be considered if staff have an ongoing condition(s) but the nature of employment changes (for example, if staff are relocated or if duties change).

What if I suspect I have a disability that has not been formally diagnosed? E.g. Dyslexia

In the first instance, staff are advised to discuss any concerns they may have in relation to an undiagnosed condition(s) particularly if it is impacting on their ability to perform in their role with their line manager who may need to seek advice from the local HR team. The University will ensure the relevant support and adjustments (where reasonable) are considered and implemented.

A dyslexia/specific learning difficulty assessment may be required (with the individual's consent) to facilitate the implementation of appropriate adjustments. This may be funded by the member of staff's department. Other conditions may require a GP appointment or referral. Please seek advice from your local HR team or the Diversity and Inclusion team, should further guidance be required.

Mental health

People with long-term mental health conditions, such as 'pronounced depression' and 'bipolar' are disabled people within the [definition](#) contained in the Equality Act.

The University is committed to making mental health and neurodiversity an inclusive subject that everyone can talk about without fear or stigma, and recognise that looking after our minds is essential for our overall wellbeing in today's environment.

Staff who declare to their managers and/or colleagues that they have a mental health condition should be reassured that the University will take all reasonable steps to ensure that they have a supportive working environment and that confidentiality will be respected.

For information about where and how to seek support and advice on mental health, please see the University's [Wellbeing](#) intranet pages, make [reasonable adjustments](#) (where reasonable) as well as the University's confidential [Employee Assistant Programme](#) available 24/7.

Support available to staff

Human Resources and Development / Diversity and Inclusion

HR&D colleagues are available to offer general advice and guidance to managers and individuals to co-ordinate the consideration and organisation of disability support where needed. You can find out about the resources available on the [HR&D pages](#), including the [Dignity at Work Policy](#) and further [diversity and inclusion resources](#).

Internal resources available via HR&D include:

- [Your Wellbeing](#)
 - Ensuring the wellbeing of our staff is extremely important and a key area of work being taken forward by the University. Here you can find a variety of wellbeing sessions to book onto as well as internal and external resources to look through.
- [Working Life Hub](#)
 - A career development resource called the Working Life Hub is available to help you think about where your career could take you, how to plan the next steps and get the most out of your current role.
- [Flexible Working](#)

- Flexible working can help you to have a good work-life balance which, in turn, can have a positive impact on your wellbeing. Flexible working requests are available to all staff as a statutory right and can also be provided as a reasonable adjustment to support disabled staff.

Disabled Staff Forum

The University is working towards bringing together a disabled staff forum to discuss and raise issues about the management of disability within the University, helping to inform decisions about specific disability-related issues. The forum will exist for all staff with long-term condition(s) or disability that affects everyday life or the work undertaken. If you would like to join, please email: diversity@cranfield.ac.uk

Employee Assistance Programme

The University's Employee Assistance Programme (PAM Assist) offers a free, confidential 24-hour helpline which provides access to information, advice and support, and onward referral to telephone or face-to-face counselling where appropriate.

Further information on the service can be found here [Employee Assistance Programme](#) and the contact details are as follows:

- 24-hour, free telephone helpline: 0800 882 4102
- Or visit online: www.pamassist.co.uk
- User name: CranfieldEAP
- Password: CranfieldEAP1

Access to Work (AtW)

[AtW](#) is a publicly funded employment support programme that aims to help disabled people start or stay in work. It can provide practical and financial support for people who have a disability or long term physical or mental health condition. Support can be provided where someone needs help or adaptations beyond what the University can financially or practically provide.

The type of support or funding available (depending on circumstances) may include:

- an initial work-based assessment,
- special aids, equipment and software,
- adaptations to equipment,
- training in the use of any specialist equipment or software,
- travel to work and travel in work,
- a wide variety of support workers.

Eligibility

To get help from Access to Work you must:

- have a disability or health condition (physical or mental) that makes it hard for you to do parts of your job or get to and from work,
- be 16 or over,
- live in England, Scotland or Wales.

You will be offered support based on your needs. This may include a grant to help cover the costs of practical support in the workplace, or getting to and from work.

Access to work grant/costs

Funding levels will depend on how long staff have been employed and what support they need:

- Job applicants and new recruits in the job for less than six weeks: up to 100% of the approved costs will be paid.
- Those accessing the Access to Work Mental Health Support Service: up to 100% of approved costs will be paid.
- In the job for six weeks or more: costs will usually be shared by Access to Work and Cranfield.

Cost band	Funding source
Up to £1,000	100% Cranfield University
Between £1,000 and £10,000	20% Cranfield University + 80% AtW scheme
Over £10,000	Normally met by AtW scheme

Individuals are responsible for applying for support or funding from Access to Work. However, please contact your local HR team in the first instance or a member of the Diversity and Inclusion team for support on this process as you will need to have explored reasonable adjustments with the University prior to making your application.

Access to Work helpline:

- Telephone: 0800 121 7479
- Textphone: 0800 121 7579
- Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 121 7479
- Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

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