



How to request adjustments for job applications and at work

Tips for tertiary students with neurodivergent conditions

Firstly, what is a *reasonable* adjustment?

A “reasonable adjustment” is a change or modification to a practice, procedure, process or environment that enables people with disability to participate in a recruitment process, workplace or learning environment. You may have also heard of reasonable adjustments referred to as “reasonable accommodations”, which usually means the same thing.

Assessment of whether an adjustment is “reasonable” relates to affordability, practicality, overcoming disadvantage, and health and safety.

What does this actually mean? Let’s look at an example of a noisy open plan office environment. Reasonable adjustments for someone with a neurodivergent condition may include wearing headphones, having a private office space or working from home arrangements, so that you can perform to your full potential at work (and not feel completely overwhelmed!).

How do I know if I need an adjustment?

If your neurodivergent condition makes it challenging for you to navigate work, learning or everyday life, and you would benefit from adjustments, you can indicate this on application or employment forms. You will find that most employers are more than happy to make adjustments once you make them aware of your needs – and you won’t know unless you ask!

You may need to share your needs if your condition affects your ability to perform any of the essential job criteria. This gives the employer the chance to investigate whether they can reasonably modify this part of the job.

How do I know what I need?

1. **Understand what's involved.** Read the job description closely. Contact the recruitment team to ask what the application process will involve: for example, is it a panel interview, group interview or one-to-one interview? Is there flexibility on interview times? Do you need to do any tests or assessments beforehand? Once you are awarded a job, ask for a tour of the work environment and equipment to make sure your needs will be met.
2. **Understand your needs and what works well for you.** This can help you to find the right assistance or support. If you're unsure about which types of jobs might work for you, talk to a career practitioner or complete the profile builder tool on [Image Autism](#). If you have an access plan for university, use this to list adjustments that might also help you with job applications and at work.

Sharing your condition is a personal decision and only you know what is best for you.

How do I request reasonable adjustments?

- Request your adjustment on the application or employment form.
- Write to the employer's recruitment team with adjustment requests or communication preferences.

Following these steps can help you to decide what to say:

1. **Introduce yourself and the role you have been invited to interview for.** Dear X, I am pleased to have been invited to interview for [write the role here] on DD/MM/YYYY.
2. **State your condition (focus on the details that are relevant).** As indicated on the application form, I am living with [your needs or neurodivergent condition]. To help me show you my full potential, I write to ask for consideration of reasonable adjustments, as I am entitled to do under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.
3. **Implications for the recruitment process.** Reasonable adjustments will help me to [manage my condition and communicate more effectively].
4. **As a consequence, this is what I require.** I would like to [add what you need: for example, bring a support person, ensure that the interview is conducted in a quiet space, ensure that the interview venue is accessible for someone in a wheelchair]. I would also like to request [the interview questions in writing and ahead of time].
5. **Closing statement.** I would be happy to discuss these requests in more detail should you have any questions. You can contact me on ...

Being open and honest can be daunting, but it can help you gain better support and understanding throughout the recruitment process and in the workplace.

Know your rights

It is unlawful for employers to use information about your neurodivergent condition to discriminate. You only need to share information that is relevant to the inherent requirements of the role (the essential criteria of the job description). Employers are legally obligated to consider adjustments and provide a response.

Refer to the [Australian Human Rights Commission Know Your Rights](#) page for more information.

If you feel discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, you can do the following:

- Discuss your concerns with a support person or your career practitioner.
- Make a complaint or appeal the recruitment process with the employer.
- Contact the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#), which can investigate and resolve complaints of discrimination and breaches of human rights. This is a free, impartial service.
- Contact the [Fair Work](#) Ombudsman for advice, particularly if your concern relates to employment conditions such as pay, working hours or award conditions.

The resources below can help you build your confidence and further explore adjustment requests.

Further support

- Check out your university careers centre website or book an appointment. The careers centre will be able to help you explore your options, build your experience and navigate the job application process.
- [The Image Project](#) provides tools to help students with autism navigate the transition from university to employment. This includes information and advice on choosing a career, applying for work, arranging adjustments and settling into work.
- The [MyPlus Students' Club](#) offers careers advice for students with disability. Resources include information on sharing your disability with an employer, applying for jobs with a disability, requesting adjustments and standing out for the right reasons.
- The [Neurodiversity Hub](#) provides programs and materials to support students with neurodivergent conditions in developing liwork ready.