



1. Overview

This guide provides information on practical steps to create an accessible and inclusive induction:

- before the new employee starts
- on their first day
- during their first week
- during their first month and beyond.

2. Introduction

For employees with disability, accessible and inclusive induction programs across an organisation can set the tone for a long-lasting employment relationship built on mutual respect. This resource is designed to help employers create accessible and inclusive inductions and onboarding processes for all their employees, including those with a disability.

Good induction programs provide information on disability for all employees and create a point of contact for further discussions. Including all employees in a discussion about inclusion and accessibility helps to normalise conversations about disability and ensures support is readily provided to employees who may not yet be comfortable identifying as a person with disability.

A significant amount of disability in the community is invisible and/or episodic in nature. A workplace culture that normalises discussions about disability is more likely to be inclusive.



For information on the steps you can take to create an accessible and inclusive environment for employees so they feel comfortable identifying as a person with disability if they choose to do so, see the IncludeAbility guide on *Creating an accessible and inclusive workplace*.

For an insight into the considerations that a person with disability may take into account when deciding whether to share information about their disability, see the IncludeAbility guide on *Identifying as a person with disability in the workplace*.





Ambassador reflection

“Welcome the disclosure of disability. My daughter is 18 and just finishing school and applying for jobs. She is a young Deaf woman finding her place. She is worried about not being hired if she states she has a disability, as she has had workplace challenges before. Companies need to be upfront and state clearly that having a disability is not going to discourage them from hiring you.”

Tracey Corbin-Matchett
Chief Executive Officer
Bus Stop Films
IncludeAbility Ambassador

3. Before your new employee starts

Below are some practical steps that an employer can take before a new employee commences, to support an accessible and inclusive induction:

- If appropriate, invite your new employee to visit the workplace prior to their start date.

This will give you both extra insight into any required adjustments, and time to plan for any changes or arrange any adjustments.

- Confirm that they can access the workplace.

This may involve ensuring that accessible bathrooms, ramps and lifts are unobstructed, internal pathways are uncluttered, and necessary equipment or stock are accessible. For new employees who are not able to use a flat touch screen, which is common for lifts, arrange a pre-programmed security pass for the level their workstation is located on.

- Confirm whether they require any reasonable adjustments made to support them in their role. See page 3 for further information on reasonable adjustments.

If any adjustments require ordering new equipment or software this may take some time to order, so it is helpful to start the process as soon as possible and in advance of the employee's start date.

Specific adjustments an employer may wish to raise with a new employee include:

- » the suitability of their desk, equipment, and workstation in terms of comfort and functionality (for example, the height of the desk or checkout counter, appropriateness of the chair and space for any assistance animals)
- » the suitability of the location of their workstation in terms of physical access and proximity to other impacts, such as light glare and noise from meeting areas, the kitchen, print room, stock room, or shop floor
- » the need for any additional equipment such as a larger monitor, noise cancelling headphones, assistive technology or a portable flashing beacon for emergencies
- » the ability of an employee to work from home, another location, different hours, or more flexibly to minimise travel or otherwise support their work
- » the need for any communication support, such as booking an Auslan interpreter or live captioning for meetings, presentations, and other key activities
- » any other adjustments to ensure the induction process itself is accessible and inclusive.

- If a new employee has identified as having a disability, confirm with them whether they would like you to share that information with the team or organisation as a means of supporting accessibility or inclusion, or not. They may also wish to share this information themselves.

An employer should always respect an employee's privacy and be mindful of how information is shared within the organisation to facilitate adjustments. For example, confirm with your new employee first who you will be speaking to in the organisation about their requirements.

- Consider pairing the new employee with a peer contact or buddy.

Introducing a new employee to a peer contact or buddy can be helpful in all new jobs. It may be of particular assistance to a person with disability when starting a new role in relation to seeking:

- » any support required to navigate the workplace
 - » assistance during an emergency evacuation and implementation of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP).
- Circulate an introductory email or memo to all staff in advance of a new employee commencing (this should be done irrespective of whether or not an employee identifies as having a disability).

This facilitates a warmer welcome on the first day as staff will already be aware someone new is starting, and enables team members to set aside some 'meet and greet' time.



Reasonable adjustments

Reasonable adjustments – sometimes called workplace adjustments or reasonable accommodation – are changes to work processes, practices or environments, that are made to ensure employees with disability can perform their job, free from barriers.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) is an Australian law that provides that employers must make reasonable adjustments, unless making the adjustment would incur a significant detriment to the organisation, such as financial hardship.¹

Eligible employees may be able to obtain funding for adjustments through the Federal Government's Employment Assistance Fund (EAF). For further details on the EAF see <https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employment-assistance-fund-eaf>.

As you prepare for a new employee to commence, it is helpful to revisit the following list of questions employers can and cannot ask, adapted from the JobAccess *Interviewing People with Disability* guide.²

Employers can	Employers cannot
Ask questions about how the employee's disability relates to doing the job and working safely	Ask the employee personal questions about their lifestyle or how they manage their disability
Ask how the employee thinks the workplace could be changed or improved to help them do the job	Ask the employee general questions about their health or disability
Ask about how work hours or rosters could be changed to help the employee perform better in the role	Ask the employee how many times per year the employee goes to the doctor or what the doctor says to the employee in those appointments
Ask questions about keeping the workplace safe for the employee and everyone else	Treat the employee differently or less favourably because they have a disability
Ask the employee whether they take any medications which might make it unsafe for them to perform any tasks involved in the job	Ask the employee whether they take lots of medication for their disability or illness
Ask if there is any information or awareness training the employee would like provided to their colleagues about their disability	Tell others about the employee's disability without asking the employee first

4. First day

Below are some practical steps that an employer can take on a new employee's first day, to support an accessible and inclusive induction:

- Ensure reception or key floor staff are aware that a new team member is starting.

Let the reception or floor team know when the new employee will be arriving, who should be called when they arrive and confirm that an access pass has been set up if needed.

- Introduce them to their team members and other people who sit or work near them.
- Assist them set up their workstation.

This may include assisting them:

- » adjust their physical workstation (for example, the height of the desk, chair and computer screen, the settings on a point of sale machine, organising or setting up additional tools or equipment)

- » log onto the IT system and navigate to the team files, intranet and other useful resources
- » locate storage areas that are accessible
- » arrange any training with human resources or IT.

- Ask them if any workstation associated reasonable adjustments are set up and providing the support required.
- Ensure they can navigate all areas of the physical workplace environment, both external and internal.

This may include:

- » ensuring they have access to suitable parking
- » ensuring that their access pass to the building, to lifts and any other areas is working
- » identifying any automatic opening doors

- » identifying key workplace areas such as accessible bathrooms, kitchen facilities, shared office equipment (for example, printers), emergency exits and meeting rooms
 - » ensuring they are able to access areas such as stock rooms or loading bays, or cool rooms which may have locks or heavy doors
 - » ensuring they are able to navigate and access external organisations they may need to interact with as part of their duties, such as banks, waste facilities, or local suppliers.
- Speak to them about whether they need a PEEP.
 - Discuss workplace expectations with them.

This may include:

- » the length of the working day
 - » any set start and finish times
 - » any core hours when employees are expected to be in the office or online
 - » when and for how long employees are permitted to take breaks
 - » how to record working hours, if required.
- Provide a workplace induction guide to the employee which they can revisit should they need to.

5. First week

Below are some practical steps that an employer can take during an employee's first week, to support an accessible and inclusive induction:

- Introduce them to staff outside their team, and external personnel they may interact with such as security guards and delivery drivers.
- Confirm they have calendar invitations for all relevant team and project meetings, or any upcoming events.
- Ensure they can access any shared facilities in the building, such as end of journey facilities.
- Ensure they are familiar with the emergency evacuation process.

It can be helpful to do a 'walk through' of the process with them.

- Ensure they know where to find the organisation's policies and have completed any human resources processes.
- Explain the process for taking leave.

When explaining the leave process, it is also important to ensure that any system for requesting leave is accessible. If the system is not accessible, put in place alternative arrangements for team members. This may include asking a member of the human resources team to input requests for them.

- Confirm that any reasonable adjustments are working well.

If any of the reasonable adjustments that have been put in place for the employee are not working well, work with them to arrive at a solution and take action to resolve the issue quickly.

6. First month and beyond

Below are some practical steps that an employer can take during an employee's first month and beyond, to support them in the workplace:

- Arrange regular check-ins or catch-ups with the new employee.

Many managers have weekly or fortnightly one-on-one catch-ups with their team members to speak about work content, approve leave, build rapport, monitor workload and address any emerging issues.

- Confirm that any reasonable adjustments are continuing to work well.

It is helpful to regularly provide a space for employees to raise any additional or modified adjustments they may need.

It is important that if an issue arises with an employee undertaking a task that you ask the employee whether there is a reason for the difficulty. For example, there may be an unforeseen information technology issue which is affecting an employee's ability to do their job smoothly, but which can be fixed relatively easily.

- Ask them for their experience of disability awareness and confidence at the organisation.

It is helpful to get the perspective of new starters about the culture of an organisation. This is an opportunity to engage with a person with lived experience about whether the organisation would benefit from further training or other resources in relation to disability awareness and confidence. However, employers should also be conscious not to rely on people with disability who they employ to be the experts on all things disability-related within their organisation.

- Discuss professional development, training and performance expectations.

Managers support their team members with professional development. A new employee with disability may need to have a more detailed discussion that takes into account any additional supports to progress. For example, moving into a management position may be challenging if the people management system is not accessible.

Endnotes

- 1 *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) ss 5, 11.
- 2 Australian Government Job Access, Interviewing people with disability (Web Page, 17 August 2018) <<https://www.jobaccess.gov.au/employers/interviewing-people-with-disability>>.

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This guide is part of a suite of resources developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission as part of IncludeAbility to assist:

- employers provide meaningful job opportunities to people with disability
- people with disability navigate barriers to employment.

Further resources are available at www.IncludeAbility.gov.au.