

SEED Guidance on Staff Disability and Reasonable Adjustments

The information is particularly of relevance to disabled staff or staff with long term health conditions who feel unsure about having a conversation with their line manager about their reasonable adjustments/DASS plan, or line managers of disabled staff or staff with long term health conditions.

The University Disability Advisory and Support Service (DASS) provides advice and access to a range of support structures, not only to our students, but also to our staff and to those who support disabled staff: <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/disabled-staff-support/>

They adopt a legal definition of disability meaning that even if you do not identify as disabled/having a disability then you are eligible for support. Specifically, a 'disability' is any condition which has a significant, adverse and long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. 'Disability' might include things like autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, mental health difficulties, difficulties with mobility or unseen disabilities like chronic fatigue, epilepsy etc. The university aims to remove physical and societal barriers that reduce inclusivity.

Information on the types of support offered can be found here:

<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/disabled-staff-support/available-support/>

For specific information on the Access to Work scheme, which is a government scheme administered by the Department of Work and Pensions. It can provide funding for equipment, travel and support worker costs, please see <https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/disabled-staff-support/how-to-get-support/access-to-work/>

Importantly if you have a long-term health condition or are disabled there is no requirement to register with DASS, and you are still entitled to **reasonable adjustments**, but we encourage staff to access the support available.

If you do access support and work with DASS to create a support plan – this should be shared with your line manager, and a conversation should then follow about what the adjustments required are. Ahead of any conversation it might be helpful for both the staff member and the line manager to consider the following questions:

- What barriers exist at the moment for the colleague?
- What adjustments might be possible given the particular job? This will depend on the particular experience of the individual, and also might vary depending on time, and how the disability impacts them might vary. It could be helpful to think about how you might respond at different times.
- What might help the employee manage their health and work?

Adjustments might be to the way meetings are run, how information is shared, how breaks are structured, or how work is allocated, for example. For academics, consideration should also be given to who needs the information to be shared with them e.g. does a Programme Director need to know in addition to a line manager, and who will share the information?

If any disabled SEED staff member feels unsure about having a conversation with their line manager about their reasonable adjustments/DASS plan, they are encouraged to speak to a colleague they trust, a member of the SEED EDI team, or the Disabled Staff Network (<https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/equality-diversity-inclusion/staff-networks/disabled-staff-network/>).

For colleagues with a hidden disability please do make use of the sunflower lanyard scheme, and if you see someone wearing this lanyard, please remember what this means, and be aware that your colleagues might need or want more support, time or adjustments to practices. Please do ask colleagues if they would like any accommodations or adjustments.

If you are a line manager, please do look out for information on our next training session focused on supporting disabled staff. In the meantime, please familiarise yourself with the information found in the University's core training on Disability Equity and in this email. If you have any questions please reach out to DASS (dass@manchester.ac.uk) or the SEED EDI team (edi.seed@manchester.ac.uk).