

Recruitment basics for hiring people with disability

This fact sheet guides manufacturing employers on building disability-inclusive workplace practices. It explains the process of hiring people with disability by providing a starting point with tips for employers on **external supports (outside of the MSQ Work in Manufacturing Job Portal)**, strategies for creating inclusive environments, and legal obligations.

1. Build your team's awareness of disability

Disability awareness training is a great way to help you, and your team, feel more confident in hiring people with disability and creating an inclusive workplace. Things to consider in manufacturing:

- Include training scenarios relevant to factory floors, production lines, and warehouse environments.
- Highlight how disability inclusion applies to manual labour, machinery use, and shift work.

Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) can connect you with an Inclusion Consultant to deliver disability awareness training. See the resource on [Inclusion Consultant and How we work with Employers](#) for more information and how to make a booking.

JobAccess also has [information about Disability Awareness Training](#).

2. Seek support

You're not alone—support is available to help you on your journey in disability recruitment.

- Reach out to a Disability Employment Services (DES) provider for advice and assistance in employing people with disability. A DES provider can help you post job vacancies, connect you with eligible candidates, and provide advice on interviewing people with disability, available financial support, and hiring people with disability. Visit the [Disability Employment Programs website](#).
- Visit the [JobAccess website](#) for resources and potential funding support through the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF).

3. Create supporting strategies and policies

Policies and strategies can help guide your organisation in inclusive workplace practices.

- Develop inclusive recruitment policies that consider physical access to production areas, safety protocols, and shift flexibility.
- Include feedback mechanisms, such as toolbox talks or production team meetings.
- Seek feedback on recruitment process from people with disability.
- Create an organisational inclusive recruitment policy to help guide the recruitment process. We have created a [Good Practice Policy Template for Inclusiveness](#) you can use to create your strategy.
- Once your inclusive recruitment policy is developed, refer to it every time you hire for a new role.
- Review your inclusive policy regularly—at least every two years.
- If your organisation doesn't have inclusive recruitment policies or strategies, bring key people within the organisation together, including those with disability, to discuss an inclusive recruitment strategy.

4. Job descriptions

Creating inclusive job descriptions is a great way to show your commitment to disability inclusion and to attract people with disabilities to your organisation.

- Focus on essential duties and functions when writing job descriptions. Avoid adding unnecessary physical demands, unless they are required to do the role.
- Include a diversity statement encouraging applications from people with diverse lived experience. For example: "At [company name], we are committed to diversity and inclusion. We strongly encourage people with disability, LGBTQIA+, culturally and linguistically diverse, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples and older people to apply for roles at [company name]."
- Consider including flexible work options (if practical to complete the job), for example: hybrid or work from home arrangements, varied hours, part time, or job share.
- Offer job descriptions in multiple formats, including Word and PDF.
- Use the Styles Gallery in Microsoft Word to format headings. This helps screen readers understand the structure of the document and helps people to easily navigate to the section they want to read. There are instructions online on [how to use the Style Gallery](#) and [how to customise your heading styles](#).
- Use a Sans Serif font (for example, Arial, Helvetica or Open Sans)—these fonts are easier to read for people who are dyslexic.
- Avoid all caps and italics—these can be more difficult to read.

4. Advertising jobs

Expanding your advertising to include job sites focused on people with disability can help attract more applicants with disability.

- Post on job boards focused on employment of people with disability. DES providers can assist with this.
- Before posting on job boards, contact the job board owner and ask if the platform is screen-reader friendly and accessible.

5. Interviews

Conducting inclusive interviews can help make people with disability feel like they belong in your organisation.

- Provide interview options that reflect manufacturing environments, such as on-site walk-throughs, task demonstrations, or shift shadowing.
- Ask candidates if they require any reasonable adjustments for the interview. For example, an Auslan interpreter, extended time, wheelchair accessible location.
- Offer multiple ways to conduct the interview and check with candidates' preference for interviewing. For example, online, face to face, or a sample work task.
- If you have a HR department, provide a point of contact in HR for disability support. If you don't have a HR department, you could seek advice from [JobAccess](#).
 - Ensure interviewers have completed disability awareness training and have good understanding of inclusive language. Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) can connect you with an Inclusion Consultant to deliver disability awareness training. See the resource [Inclusion Consultant and How we work with Employers](#) for more information and how to book an appointment.
 - People with Disability Australia (PWDA) also has a good [inclusive language guide](#).
- During the interview, explain the duties and ask interviewees if they require any workplace adjustments to complete the duties. It is illegal to ask an interviewee if they have a disability, what disability they have, or about their disability.

6. Onboarding

Set new employees with disability up for success by making them feel welcome and included during the onboarding stage.

- Include onboarding practices tailored to factory or warehouse settings, such as safety briefings with accessible formats, clear signage and visual aids, and buddy systems for shift-based roles.
- Ask the interviewee their preferred way to keep in touch during the onboarding stage (for example, phone call, text or email).
- Let the interviewee know who they can speak to about workplace adjustments.
- Ask the new employee if they need assistance to complete onboarding forms.

7. Workplace adjustments

Workplace adjustments (also known as reasonable adjustments) are changes made to the work environment, processes or tools that help an employee perform their duties.

Adjustments could be physical changes to the work area and workplace, equipment or services, assistive technologies, or changes to work methods and tasks.

- Examples of workplace adjustments include:
 - Within manufacturing this may include modified machinery controls (e.g., large-button interfaces, voice-activated systems), visual and auditory alerts for sensory impairments, and ergonomic tools and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
 - Flexible work arrangements. This can include adjusted start and finish time, work from home, part-time work, or job sharing.
 - Modified workstations and equipment to support employees with physical disability, low vision or strains. This can include ergonomic chairs and desks, screen readers, or magnification tools.
 - Physical access adjustments to ensure equal access for employees with mobility needs. This can include ramps, automatic doors, accessible bathrooms, or reserved parking.
 - Assistive technology to enhance communication and efficiency for employees with sensory or cognitive disabilities.
 - Supportive workplace policies and training to foster inclusive culture, for example disability awareness training and Employee Assistance Program.
- Work with the candidate to identify adjustments that will help them complete their duties.
- If your company has a HR team, provide employees with a point of contact for HR for disability support.
- Include disability awareness training in the onboarding process for staff.

8. During employment

Celebrate diversity and continue to be open to learning in your workplace.

- Celebrate disability initiatives to increase awareness. Diversity Council Australia (DCA) has a [calendar of key diversity and inclusion days](#). Pick 1-2 days a year to celebrate as a starting point and plan activities (such as a morning tea or conversation starter at a morning huddle) to build awareness. Many diversity and inclusion days have dedicated websites with resources to help you plan activities and start conversations.
- Offer mentorship or peer buddy support.
- Check in regularly about reasonable adjustments as they may change over time.
- Offer ongoing disability awareness training for team members.
- Keep up with current legislation and best practice in disability inclusion.

9. Get to know the law

Disability inclusion is not only the right thing to do and can help boost your organisation's growth, but it is also guided by legal frameworks. Getting to know the law can help you feel more confident in hiring people with disability.

- [Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#) (DDA) protects people from discrimination including in the workplace and helps employees understand their legal obligations.
- The DDA highlights that hiring someone with a disability may not constitute discrimination if they cannot perform the job because of their disability.
- The DDA also states that employers must consider how a person with disability could be provided with workplace adjustments which don't impose unjustifiable hardship on the employer, for example, financial hardship, technical issues or heritage reasons.