

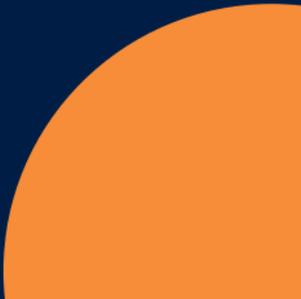
Accessibility Quick Reference Guide





Accessibility at RMIT

As a University and community, RMIT is committed to providing an equitable experience for all staff, students and visitors with disability by removing barriers and creating opportunities to enhance inclusion and ensure full and effective participation.



What is disability?

Disability includes any physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments that may change the way you work and interact. One in five people in Australia, almost 4 million people, have a disability and this proportion is increasing with an ageing population. We may all be touched by disability at some point in our lives.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) states that disability is any impairment, abnormality or loss of function of any part of the body or mind, including:

- **Physical**—muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy
- **Intellectual**—typically classified by an IQ of 70 or lower
- **Mental illness**—bipolar, depression, schizophrenia
- **Sensory**—vision or hearing impairment
- **Neurological**—epilepsy, cerebral palsy, brain injury, Tourette's
- **Learning disability**—dyslexia, ADHA
- **Physical disfigurement**—someone with a physical disfigurement may be treated differently or excluded because of how they look
- **Immunological**—can include cancer and HIV

The United Nations Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities adopts a social model of disability and defines disability as:

“Persons with disabilities include those who have long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.



What does disability look like in Australia?

- Over 4 million people in Australia have some form of disability. That's one in five people.
 - 18.6 per cent of females and 18.0 per cent of males in Australia have disability.
 - There are 2.1 million Australians of working age with disability. Of these, just over 1 million are employed and another 114,900 are looking for work.
 - The likelihood of living with disability increases with age. Two in five people with disability are 65 years or older.
 - 35.9% of Australia's 8.9 million households include a person with disability.
 - 639,300 people with disability used mobility aids. Only 4.4% of people with a disability in Australia use a wheelchair.
 - 45% of Australians aged 16–85 years experience a mental health condition during their lifetime.
 - 34% of people with disability are managers and professionals.
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Why accessibility and inclusion matters

RMIT values the richness of diversity among staff and recognises the contribution already being made by those working with disability.

Strengthening our accessible and inclusive environment will enable RMIT to:

- tap into a wider talent pool
- encourage greater retention levels
- uphold the rights of people with disability
- demonstrate fairness and equal opportunity.

How can we help?

At RMIT, we're focused on the person and not the disability. We want to remove any physical, technological, attitudinal and social barriers so that we can build an inclusive culture and flexible and accessible workplace environment that considers and welcomes every individual's needs.

RMIT has a team dedicated to removing barriers and personalising work for individuals with disability. The Accessibility at Work team consists of subject matter experts across ITS, Property Services and HR including Health, Safety & Wellbeing. They coordinate cross

functional activities to focus on ensuring that work adjustment requests from staff with disability are prioritised.

For more information, support and advice contact the Accessibility at Work team at hr.assist@rmit.edu.au



Opportunities and support

Here are just some of the ways in which we can help staff who choose to identify with a disability. If you would like to suggest other meaningful ways in which we can help please contact the Diversity & Inclusion team at **diversity.inclusion@rmit.edu.au** or **hr.assist@rmit.edu.au**

- Workplace adjustments that remove physical and technological barriers
 - Passport that carries workplace adjustment requirements into future teams
 - Confidential access to the Accessibility Work Team
 - Professional development and social networking opportunities
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Workplace adjustments

A workplace adjustment is a change to a work process, practice, procedure or environment that enables staff with disability to perform their job in the most effective way. RMIT recognises the importance of making reasonable work adjustments relating to illness, injury, disability and balancing work, life and family needs.

Many staff with disability may not need any workplace adjustments, while others may need only minor changes or adjustments to their work hours or the performance requirements of the job.

The RMIT Workplace Adjustment Passport form is a tool that documents any completed

adjustment to eliminate or minimise barriers at work for employees with a disability. It allows for seamless continuity and review of such arrangements at RMIT. All information is confidential and provided on a voluntary basis.

Types of workplace adjustments

- Accessible premises
 - Assistive technology
 - Adjustments to communication styles
 - Workstation accommodation
 - Flexible working hours
 - Psychological support
 - Supervision
 - Ergonomic equipment
 - Auslan/captioning
 - Job design
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What can you do to support an inclusive experience?

- Remember that disability is unique, and the impact is different for every person, so don't assume that what's worked in the past for someone will be equally effective or preferential for another colleague.
 - Use person-first language that emphasises the individual, not their disability or impairment.
 - Only refer to a person's disability when necessary and appropriate and refrain from asking how a person acquired their disability.
 - Use common expressions. It's ok to say 'see you later' or 'did you take a look at that document?' to a person who is blind or has low vision.
 - Be considerate of the extra time it might take someone to respond or perform an activity.
 - If you feel like you've embarrassed someone then acknowledge it and apologise, but don't dwell on it or keep apologising.
 - If you are in a situation where you are unsure how to respond, ask the person how you can be helpful. This is the best way to create an open, transparent environment and build trust. It's ok if you don't know what to do – just don't be afraid to ask.
 - When issuing invitations to meetings or events extend the commonly asked question about diet to include access, e.g. 'do you have any dietary or accessibility requirements?'
 - When planning and hosting meetings consider the accessibility of the venue, wayfinding and signage, and accessibility features of your material including use of inclusive language.
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Inclusive communication

The key to inclusive communication is emphasising the individual through people-first language, instead of focusing on the disability or impairment. It's important to use phrasing that doesn't let the person's disability overshadow their individual identity and capabilities.

Inclusive communication	Wording we <u>don't</u> recommend
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Person/people with disability/disabilitiesPeople living with disabilityPeople with lived experience of disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Disabled person/peopleDifferently abledPhysically challengedSomeone who can't (hear, speak, walk)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">People/person without disability/non-disabled person	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Able-bodiedNormal
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Person who uses a wheelchairWheelchair user	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Wheelchair-boundBound/confined to a wheelchair
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Person with low visionPerson who is blind	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The blindA blind personPerson without sightVision impaired
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Person who is deafAuslan userHard of hearing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The deafA deaf personMute
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Intellectual disabilityLearning disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Slow learner
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mental health issuesPerson with mental illnessPerson with lived experience of mental illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mental health problemsMentalMentally-ill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Accessible toiletAdapted toilet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Disabled toilet
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Accessible parking space	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Disabled parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none">HasExperiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Suffers from

Behaviour and body language

- Always ensure that you speak directly to the person, and not to anybody else who may be accompanying or assisting them (e.g. interpreters).
- When meeting with or speaking to somebody who uses a wheelchair, it's a good idea to choose a location where you can sit down too, so that you can put yourself at the same level as the person.
- Always ask the person before giving assistance.
- Never handle or touch a person's assistive device without permission.

Digital accessibility

- If you are creating content for the RMIT website, familiarise yourself with the Web Accessibility Policy. This covers the University's standards for ensuring that web content can be accessed using assistive technology (such as screen readers), and that visual content can be perceived and understood by all visitors (via captions on images, subtitles and transcripts for videos, etc).
- Simple things like ensuring text is a reasonable size and that there is a high level of contrast between text and background can make a big difference to a person with low vision.
- Check overall accessibility of Word documents by selecting 'Tools' and then 'Check Accessibility'.

Further information

For additional information and resources, please head to: rmit.edu.au/staff/our-rmit/diversity-and-inclusion/accessibility

Here you will find further information with links that cover details of:

- The Workplace Adjustment Policy Process
- The Accessibility at Work Team for Staff
- Equitable Learning Services for Students
- Campus Mobility Maps
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Shared stories from staff experiences
- The Australian Network on Disability
- Government Services

How to connect with us

If you or someone you support is living with disability and you require a workplace adjustment, please speak to your manager. If you'd like confidential guidance and support to have this conversation, please contact hr.assist@rmit.edu.au

Alternatively, you can contact the Accessibility at Work team in the first instance. With subject matter experts across ITS,

Property Services and HR including Health, Safety & Wellbeing, they can progress workplace adjustments and liaise with the local area to support in a variety of circumstances – illness, injury, disability and/or balancing work/life/family needs. Contact the team by emailing hr.assist@rmit.edu.au

Acknowledgment

This guide was created by RMIT's Diversity and Inclusion team in Human Resources. RMIT thanks Australian Network on Disability (AND) for the support, collaboration and resources provided to create this guide to advance the inclusion of staff with disability.