**Terminology booklet for LJMU students with disabilities or health conditions and those who are neurodiverse**

This booklet provides definitions and explanations for:

* different types of work experience
* common recruitment and selection methods
* other terminology used during the recruitment process
* terminology used by Student Futures
* legal terminology
* support services

You can enable the navigation pane to help you jump to the sections that are of most interest to you. Click on ‘View’ in the MS Word ribbon above and tick the box next to ‘Navigation Pane’.

# **Different types of work experience**

Gaining work experience alongside your university degree is a great way to develop your confidence in the workplace and to build [skills](#_Skills) for your future career. For employers, providing work experience to students can be a good way of recruiting future staff for graduate positions, through seeing how well they perform in work and/or build relationships with colleagues. There are many different ways to gain work experience, including:

## **Placements**

These are often a requirement (i.e. for nursing) or option (e.g. business or engineering) as part of a degree programme. Optional placements usually take place for a year between the second and third year of your course during a year out from your studies. They are also often called industrial placements or sandwich placements. During your placement year, you are given your own tasks or projects to work on, which will allow you to apply knowledge and [skills](#_Skills) gained at university.

## **Internships**

These are shorter than placements, and can last from a few weeks to a few months. Many of these take place over the summer, so that students are able to work full-time during the break from university, but some can also be done on a part-time basis during term time, like LJMU’s [Discovery Internships](https://www.ljmu.ac.uk/studentfutures/ljmu-internships-work-based-learning). Summer internships are usually available for undergraduate students who have completed two years of their degree, but some employers may also accept applications from first years, recent graduates and postgraduate students.

## **Insight programmes**

These provide an insight into a profession and/or employer and can last between one day and two weeks. The focus is on learning what it is like to work in a certain job or for a certain organisation, so these programmes are usually aimed at first-year undergraduate students. You may visit the organisation’s office to meet staff or the programme may be delivered online. Insight programmes usually take place during the Christmas, spring or summer break and are advertised on the ‘early careers’ part of organisation’s websites.

## **Work shadowing**

Through observing one or more staff in an organisation for a day/several days, you build an understanding of what different job roles and careers involve. Work shadowing can also be very useful to build contacts. Employers do not tend to advertise work shadowing opportunities, so you need to be proactive and contact companies directly to organise this.

## **Part-time jobs**

Having a paid part-time job alongside university is not only a good way to help fund your studies but also allows you to develop your confidence in the workplace and [transferable skills](#_Skills) for your future career, even if the role is not linked to your degree or future career plans. The flexibility of jobs in sectors like retail and hospitality make these common choices for part-time jobs for students, but there are also opportunities on campus with [JMSU](https://www.jmsu.co.uk/about-us/work-for-us/vacancies) and [Unitemps](https://www.unitemps.com/branches/liverpool-john-moores-university/).

## **Volunteering**

Many people may not consider volunteering as it is unpaid, but it is not important to future employers whether your work experience was paid or not. You can look for volunteering opportunities linked to your career ambitions (e.g. as a reading helper in a school if you would like to be a primary school teacher in the future), but any voluntary experience looks great on your [CV](#_CV). It shows employers that you have been proactive to develop new [skills](#_Skills) and that you are enthusiastic about supporting a cause or community.

# **Common recruitment and selection methods**

## **CV**

A curriculum vitae (CV) is one of the documents you are usually asked for when applying for a job. It demonstrates your relevant knowledge, skills and experience for the vacancy. For a university student or recent graduate, a CV should be limited to two sides of A4. You may also be asked for a copy of your CV when applying for postgraduate study or research.

A CV typically includes the following sections: Contact Information, Personal Profile, Education, Skills, and Work Experience. Additional sections you can put on a CV include: Professional Certifications, Hobbies and Interests, Languages, Volunteering, Projects, Publications, Awards and Conferences.

As a disabled candidate, a CV can be an opportunity to showcase your individual strengths, e.g. resilience, problem-solving, creative thinking etc.

## **Cover Letter**

A cover letter is a one-page document that you submit as part of your job application alongside your CV. Its purpose is to introduce yourself to a prospective employer and briefly summarise your suitability for and interest in the vacancy.

As part of a job application, it is important to pique the interest of the hiring manager who is doing the initial sift. This could be achieved by showing how your disability, health condition or neurodiversity has helped you develop key skills and strengths that relate well to the position you are applying for, or how seeing the world differently would benefit you in the workplace.

If you would like to, you can also provide information about any potential gaps on your CV in your cover letter, or highlight adjustments you might need in the recruitment process or workplace, but please note that you are not obliged to share this kind of information with prospective employer at the application stage.

You can find an example cover letter where the applicant shares information about a health condition on the [Prospects website](https://www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/cvs-and-cover-letters/cover-letters/example-of-how-to-disclose-a-disability-in-a-cover-letter).

## **Application Form**

Larger employers are likely to ask you to complete an application form, as this allows them to collect the same information from all applicants. This could be an online form, where you fill in boxes and select from drop-downs across different screens, or it could be a document you complete electronically and then email to the employer.

You may be asked to attach a copy of your [CV](#_CV) and answer specific questions, such as ‘Why are you interested in this role?’ or ‘Can you provide an example of a time when you have solved a difficult problem?’. Alternatively, you may be asked to write a personal statement outlining how you meet the requirements of the role.

Many application forms include an equal opportunities monitoring section, which includes questions about your ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and disabilities. Please note that this information is not shared with the selection panel but only used for monitoring purposes, so organisations can measure whether they attract a diverse group of applicants.

## **Psychometric Testing**

Psychometric tests can be used to measure an individual's aptitude and cognitive abilities or personality traits and preferred behaviours. They are designed to show your overall suitability for a particular role based on how you perform and can be used during the recruitment process to help find the best candidate for a role.

An example of a question from a situational judgment test used by KPMG is shown below:

It is best for disabled candidates to declare if they have additional needs within the recruitment process because adjustments can then be made to the test if needed. For example: extending the timeframe for the testing period, sharing questions with you in advance, or replacing the test with a different method of assessment.

## **Interviews**

Interviews are one of the most common methods to assess a candidate’s suitability for a particular job. They can be face-to-face at the employer’s office or remote by telephone or video call, such as on Microsoft Teams, and are often conducted as a panel interview, with two or three interviewers to ensure a fair and unbiased process. The interviewers will ask you a series of questions to discuss your interest in the job and organisation and to find out more about your skills, experiences and knowledge for the role. You will also have an opportunity to ask your own questions, e.g. what it is like to work at the company, or the training and progression they offer.

If you find it difficult to answer questions without much time to think about your responses, it is best to contact the recruitment team and discuss any adjustments for the interview. For example, they may be able to send you the questions in advance so you know what to expect, or extend your interview slot to give you more time to process information.

An interview can be a good opportunity to share information about your disability, health condition or neurodiversity with an employer if you wish, but please note that you are not obliged to do this.

## **Assessment Centre**

Assessment Centres are usually the final stage of an employer's recruitment process and are used to determine if a candidate has the required [competencies](#_Competencies) for the role by observing them throughout different exercises. Assessment centres have been proven to be a much more reliable method than interviews for assessing candidates. They can vary considerably in duration, format and content. Candidates engage in a range of activities which will be assessed by a team of trained observers, including senior managers in the organisation.

Below is a table of the exercises that you can expect at an assessment centre:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ice Breakers** | These are a "getting to know you" type of exercise. |
| **Group Exercises** | These vary in style and format and are designed to observe how individuals function as a group and how they respond and react to each other. |
| **Interviews** | These could be similar to the first interview but be prepared to answer questions in more depth. You might be interviewed by more senior members of staff or your future line manager. |
| **Psychometrics** | Tests designed to assess your numerical, verbal, diagrammatic, logical reasoning and situational judgement. Employers will administer those appropriate to the role. |
| **In/E-Tray** | Candidates are given a selection of letters, emails and reports in either paper or electronic format and a scenario. Most of these type of exercises require you to analyse, prioritise and make decisions.  |
| **Presentations** | Candidates can be asked to prepare a presentation in advance of the assessment centre or to present conclusions from one of the exercises. |
| **Role Play** | Exercises designed to observe how you react in a situation related to the role. Candidates are given a scenario. Role play is commonly a one-to-one exercise. |
| **Case Studies** | These are designed to observe how candidates solve a business problem. |

If you feel that your disability or neurodiversity may impact on your performance in certain activities as part of an assessment centre, it is best to discuss this with the recruitment team before the assessment centre, so they can make adjustments accordingly.

# **Other terminology used during the recruitment process**

## **Competencies**

Competencies are the knowledge and behaviours that allow you to be successful in a particular job or work setting.

For candidates who have a disability or health condition, it is essential to show how your competencies will allow you to apply yourself in your desired job, and how alternative perspectives are needed for the organisation to grow and excel.

## **Skills**

Some employers use competencies and skills interchangeably. A skill is your ability to do a task or activity well. Most jobs will require a combination of ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ skills. Hard skills are specific, often technical, abilities related to a particular job. They are usually easy to measure and often have been acquired by completing a course or formal qualification. Depending on the job, this could be coding skills, technical drawing, conducting laboratory tests, carrying out CPR etc. Soft skills enable you to work and interact effectively with others and are developed through experience. They are often also called ‘transferable’ skills and include communication, teamwork, problem-solving, public speaking, planning, and adaptability.

## **Job Description**

A job description (JD) provides an overview of a specific position's duties and responsibilities. It is essential to study the JD for your desired job role carefully to prepare for your application and [interview](#_Interviews) and to understand the tasks you would be expected to undertake within the role.

## **Person Specification**

A person specification is a list describing the various skills, qualifications, experience, knowledge and any other attributes both required and desired for the job role. This is often split into different sections: ‘essential criteria’, which list the required, ‘must-have’ attributes for the role, and ‘desirable criteria’, which list the desired, ‘nice-to-have’ attributes for the role. The ‘assessed by’ section states how these attributes are assessed, e.g. by [interview](#_Interviews), application, certificates, test etc.

Some employers offer a guaranteed interview scheme for disabled candidates who meet a certain percentage of the essential criteria on the person specification. This will either be stated on the job advert or the human resources/careers pages of the organisation’s website.

## **STAR technique for interviews**

STAR is a common technique used in interviews to respond to questions which ask to give an example of a time when the candidate has demonstrated a particular skill or ability, e.g. ‘Tell us about a time when you effectively prioritised a busy workload’. It helps you to organise your response into four key elements:

**Situation**- When and where was this? Provide the background for your example.

**Task**- What was your task or aim? Make this as specific as possible.

**Action**- What actions did you take? What skills did you use?

**Result**- What was the result or outcome? Was your task successfully achieved?

## **References**

When applying for jobs, employers usually ask you to provide two references who they could contact to find out more about you. They should be people who know you in a professional capacity rather than family or friends, for example a current/former employer, your personal tutor or another academic member of staff, someone from an organisation you volunteered for or a community group you were involved with. Employers will usually contact your referees after they have offered you a job.

## **Contract**

This is a document, signed by you and your employer, which sets out the terms and conditions of your employment, such as your responsibilities, working hours, pay, holidays, notice period etc. Contracts can be permanent (i.e. no fixed end date), fixed-term (i.e. with a set end date), or temporary (for a short pre-defined period, like working at a particular event).

## **Right to work check**

A right to work check is a process required by the law that is carried out by employers to verify the potential employee’s right to work in the country. This includes checking certain documentation, such as their passport, birth certificate, or National Insurance number card. This may also include a visa if you are not a UK citizen.

## **DBS check**

A DBS (Disclosing and Barring Services) check is a process potential employees are required to go through by law for a job (or even a voluntary role) that involves working with children or vulnerable people. This is to ensure that you do not have a criminal record, and so are therefore safe to work with children and vulnerable people.

The potential employee/volunteer will need to complete a DBS application form provided by the employer/organisation. A DBS is only valid for a certain amount of time, after which the employee must renew their DBS through another check (unless they are on the DBS automatic renewal system). Please note that some employers may deduct the cost of the DBS check from your first month’s salary.

## **HR (Human Resources) Officer**HR (Human Resources) officers develop, advice and implement policies relating to the effective use of staff in an organisation. They are involved in a range of activities, e.g. managing the recruitment and selection of new staff, training and development, employee relations, and equality and diversity.

# **Terminology used by Student Futures**

## **Careers meeting**

This is a one-to-one meeting with a careers and employability adviser from the Student Futures team. They usually last 30 minutes, but you are able to request both shorter and longer meetings, either in-person in one of the [Career Zones](#_Career_Zones) on campus or online on Microsoft Teams. You can chat to the adviser about options with your degree, job-hunting, application and interview advice, as well as if/when/how to tell employers about your disability, health condition or neurodiversity.

## **Career Zones**

We have two Career Zones on campus, one in the Student Life Building, and one at Byrom Street in the James Parsons Building. If you want to find out more about Student Futures and how we can best support you, you can call in Monday to Friday (9am to 5pm) and chat to one of our information officers. Our in-person [Careers meetings](#_Careers_meeting) take place in the Career Zones, and we also run regular drop-ins and employer visits in these spaces.

## **Careers Zone 24/7**

This is our e-learning platform, which offers lots of resources around careers and employability. You can find advice articles, videos and tools on [CV](#_CV) writing, practising for [interviews](#_Interviews) and [psychometric tests](#_Psychometric_Testing), job-hunting, setting up your own business, career research, and starting a new job. It also includes resources on how to advocate for yourself at work, job-hunting tips for autistic candidates, and advice on finding inclusive employers.

## **Webinar**

A webinar is an online session or careers event, usually held on Microsoft Teams, which aims to help attendees develop practical skills for job-hunting, applications and [interviews](#_Interviews). Other sessions give attendees an opportunity to find out more about working in particular roles or sectors by hearing from guest speakers and industry professionals. You can ask questions and interact with others in the chat.

## **Start-up hub**

The start-up hub supports LJMU students and recent graduates who are interested in setting up their own business or working as a freelancer. They provide expert one-to-one advice and signposting to funding, practical workshops and networking opportunities.

# **Legal terminology**

## **Disclosure**

This is the formal, legal term for sharing information about your disability, health condition or neurodiversity with a prospective or actual employer.

## **Reasonable Adjustments**

**Reasonable adjustments are changes that organisations, educational institutions and anyone providing public services or functions have to make for you if your disability puts you at a disadvantage compared with others who are not disabled. This includes adjustments in the workplace and during the recruitment process.**

## **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 is a bill passed in the UK to ensure that people with disabilities or health conditions are treated fairly at work, in education or broader society. It has nine protected characteristics:

* [age](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#age)
* [disability](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#disability)
* [gender reassignment](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#reassignment)
* [marriage and civil partnership](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#marriage)
* [pregnancy and maternity](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#pregmat)
* [race](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#race)
* [religion or belief](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#rob)
* [sex](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#sex)
* [sexual orientation](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/protected-characteristics#lgb)

**Under the Equality Act 2010, you are considered disabled if you have a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities.**

# **Support Services**

## **Access to Work**

Access to Work is a publicly-funded employment support programme that aims to help more disabled people start/stay in work or move into self-employment. It can provide practical and financial support if you have a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition.

Check the Access to Work [website](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work) for detailed information about available support and eligibility.

An Access to Work grant can help pay for:

* aid and equipment in your workplace
* adapting equipment to make it easier for you to use
* money towards any extra travel costs to and from work if you can’t use available public transport, or if you need help to adapt your vehicle
* an interpreter or other support at a job interview if you have difficulty communicating
* other practical help at work, such as a job coach or a note taker or lip speaker

If you have a mental health condition, you will be offered assistance to develop a support plan. This may include steps to support you going into, remaining in or returning to work and suggestions for adjustments in the workplace.

Examples of assistance to develop a support plan:

* flexible working patterns to accommodate changes in mood and impact of medication
* providing a mentor to give you additional support at work
* giving you additional time to complete certain tasks
* providing you with additional training
* regular meetings between you and your manager to talk about your concerns
* a phased return to work, such as reduced hours or fewer days

Access to Work partners will also work with your employer to advise them how best they can support you in the workplace.

## **Disability Confident employer scheme**

**Disability Confident is a government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions. It has replaced the previous Two Ticks ‘Positive About Disabled People’ scheme. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people's representatives.

Members commit to actions such as making their recruitment process inclusive and accessible, offering an interview to disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for a job, and providing adjustments to the recruitment process or in the workplace.**

## **DEA (Disability Employment Advisor)**

A Disability Employment Advisor helps people with disabilities who face various challenges and barriers in the recruitment process to find work that is most suited and adapted to their needs. You can see a DEA at your local Jobcentre, who will give you support and advice on finding and going into employment based on your needs, strengths and weaknesses.