

Practice improvement checklist 2: Better support to students and graduates with disability entering graduate employment

Students and graduates with disability often report that when they receive support from employment services (such as Disability Employment Services or JobActive) their specific needs as a qualified person seeking graduate employment are not recognised. Similarly, students and graduates with disability report that when they receive assistance from the career services at their TAFE or university, their disability-related needs are often not recognised or well addressed.

This practice improvement checklist provides suggested strategies to assist employment and career service providers in providing better support to finishing students and graduates with disability.

- Find out which graduate employers offer specific disability graduate programs and promote to students and graduates with disability where appropriate.
- Get involved in Australia's Network on Disability's 'Stepping Into...' recruitment program and promote to students. Find more information at www.and.org.au

Practices for career services

- Develop closer links with disability services within your university or TAFE to help generate strategies for attracting students with disability to career services.
- Get a better understanding of how and when to refer students or graduates with disability to specialist employment services.
- Develop stronger links with local specialist employment services (see practice improvement checklist #1 on building better links between employment and career services).
- Confidently and positively promote students and graduates from diverse backgrounds, including disability, to prospective graduate employers already engaged with the university or TAFE.

- Provide training, information and resources to staff on basic disability awareness, understanding the barriers to positive employment outcomes for graduates with disability; and the particular needs of students and graduates with disability.

When working with individuals with disability on career planning, incorporate the following additional disability-specific considerations (see [Education to Employment website](#) for more information on each of the following issues):

- Promote an earlier start to preparations for leaving university or TAFE and entering graduate employment (to allow for any extra preparations needed to address disability related needs).
- Consider whether, when and how the student or graduate wishes to disclose their disability to prospective graduate employers and help them develop strategies to do so constructively.
- Consider whether the student or graduate will need workplace adjustments to meet the inherent requirements of the field, recruitment programs and/or requirements of registration or licensing bodies. If so, identify what type of adjustments and strategies will be required and help students learn to negotiate with employers.
- Check whether the student or graduate has any work history for the resume, and if not, consider possible strategies to address this.
- Verify whether any disability specific graduate recruitment programs exist in the student or graduates chosen field. If so check the timelines and processes involved and encourage graduates to apply.

Practices for specialist employment services

- Get a better understanding of the role of career services within TAFE and universities and how participants can make use of these services.
- Develop stronger links with local TAFE and university career service providers (see practice improvement checklist #1 on building better links between employment and career services).
- Provide training, information and resources to staff on the specific expectations and needs of graduates with disability; the needs of graduate employers; the usual processes for graduate recruitment; and where to find information about graduate recruitment campaigns and activities.
- When assisting clients to develop work-readiness skills incorporate the specific skills and attributes sought after by graduate employers. These include a work history; communication, interpersonal and team-work skills; and commitment to stay with a graduate employer for the long-term.
- Support clients in identifying strategies to highlight existing, or gain, work experience.

- Ensure client meets timeframes for graduate recruitment programs and other recruitment activities.
- Teach client strategies and skills in directly contacting potential graduate employers to seek graduate employment opportunities.
- Support clients to develop skills in effectively negotiating workplace adjustments.