

# **Disabled students' progression from university to employment**

**LEAD conference: 'Can We Make Things Better? YES WE CAN!!'**

**11 June 2015**

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# Some data

## Six months after graduation...

**6% of non-disabled graduates unemployed**

**14% of graduates with a physical impairment  
unemployed**

**58% of non-disabled graduates are in full-  
time employment**

**30% of graduates with a social  
communication/autistic spectrum disorder  
are in full-time employment**

## **Difference between HEIs**

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# Why the gap?



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# Key issues around career services



**52% of disabled students had received information about accessing their careers service.**

**15% of disabled students who had disclosed to the careers service had discussed their individual requirements in accessing their careers service.**

**12% of disabled students who had accessed IAG responded that it contained information specific to students who shared their impairment.**

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# Key issues around career services

**High numbers of disabled students had received IAG on:**  
**employment/career choice,**  
**writing a CV and volunteering opportunities.**

**Few had received IAG on:**  
**reasonable adjustments in the workplace**

**Access to Work**  
**disclosing as disabled**

**Two Ticks scheme**

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# Recommendations



1. Improve outreach and communications
2. Ensure information, advice and guidance accessible
3. Involve disabled students/disability services in accessibility audits
4. Adopt ongoing evaluation mechanisms
5. Collect and analyse destination of leavers information

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# Recommendations Continued



6. Provide IAG on disclosure, reasonable adjustments, Access to Work and national disability support
7. Join up services and national and local organisations
8. Include information specific to particular impairments within IAG
9. Use disabled role models and disabled mentors
10. Use contact and leverage with employers

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# Discussion

= What is your organisation doing to...

1. Get information to disabled students
2. Ensure staff are knowledgeable around disability and employment
3. Influence employers
4. Provide work opportunities

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# Examples – events (Loughborough University)



- = Targeted events raising awareness of employment issues for disabled students
  - Included workshops on disclosure, recruitment processes, employment sectors
  - Booklet produced
  
- = Accessible event
  - Access hour for students visiting the mental health team
  - Preparatory workshop a week before
  - Opportunity on day to discuss with mental health team

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# Examples – providing a range of IAG (LSE)



- = Individualised appointments
- = Dedicated careers consultant
  - Longer meetings, responsive to when student available, entitled to more
- = Email and Skype
- = Events with inclusive employers
- = IAG on website
- = Video – ‘Dispelling the myth’

# Examples – auditing services (University of Sheffield)



- = Careers service annual audit of support available
- = Conjunction with disability services
- = Looks at:
  - Information provided
  - 1-1 student and graduates
  - Physical access
  - Employer facing events

*“relatively inexpensive, simple and time-efficient way to keep disability on the agenda”*

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# Examples – gathering feedback (University of Kent)



= Careers service asks opinion on services regularly

= General feedback twice a year

- What support would like
- What methods of communication prefer
- How service improve

= Focus groups

= Social media

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# Examples – peer mentoring (Manchester Metropolitan University)



- = Develop skills valued by employers
- = Support students with transition to university
- = Training of new mentors
- = Employability service guest speaker

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# Examples – accessible information (Open University)



- = Accessible careers website - AAA rated
  - vacancies, support on applications and accessing services
- = Change page display to enlarge text, resize browser window without horizontal scrolling
- = Alternative text for graphics
- = Online forum for disabled students
  - Responded to request for information on confidentiality

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# Examples – improving outreach (University of Oxford)



- = Information and networking sessions with disability contacts (academic or administrative staff)
- = Information and networking sessions with student contacts
- = Disability e-newsletter highlighting key events and how to access 1-1 appointments
- = Social media

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# Examples – providing internships (University of Bradford)



- = 35 graduate internship opportunities
- = Within university and with external employers
- = Employability placement advisor
  - Application process, sharing information on reasonable adjustments
- = On-site visit

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# Resources

- = [ECU guidance publication for higher education institutions to support disabled students into employment](#)
- = [My Plus Consulting:](#)

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