



Interview guidance for employers

a quick-reference resource

The interview process is a crucial opportunity for employers to recognise the diverse talents neurodivergent candidates bring to a company. However, traditional interviews unintentionally disadvantage neurodivergent candidates. By providing accommodations and creating an inclusive interview experience, employers can unlock the full potential of neurodivergent candidates, accessing a wider talent pool.

An employees rights

In the UK, the Equality Act 2010, place a duty of care on to the employer to provide reasonable accommodations to support candidates with a disability (inclusive of neurodivergent conditions) during the recruitment process and in the workplace. By creating an inclusive hiring process and work environment, employers not only comply with legal obligations but also harness the diverse talents and perspectives that neurodivergent individuals bring to the workplace.

Disclosure

It is crucial for employers to respect the confidentiality of candidates' neurodivergence and any accommodations they may require.

Upholding these principles not only ensures compliance with legal obligations but also fosters an inclusive workplace culture where all employees feel valued and respected.



Asking for accommodations

If a candidate requires accommodations to support them during the interview process or in their role, encourage them to communicate their needs openly.

When employees request accommodations, it is essential to be receptive and accommodating, ensuring they can perform at their best and have a fair opportunity.

Candidates should be provided with a named contact person specified in the job advertisement to request accommodations.

It is important for employers to handle requests for accommodations in a timely and respectful manner, taking into consideration the individual needs and preferences of the employee.

Potential accommodations

To ensure an inclusive and equitable interview process, it is important to consider potential accommodations that may support neurodivergent candidates. You can also engage with candidates to enquire about any accommodations they may benefit from based on their individual needs and preferences. Please note that not all candidates will require these accommodations but providing them can create a more accessible environment for all applicants.

Extra time for interviews

Written communication options

Alternative interview formats

Flexible schedule

Clear communication and prompts

Quiet or sensory-friendly interview space

Advance notice of interview questions

Having a camera off for a virtual interview

Interviews

What can you do?

Communication

- Effective communication during interviews is essential for creating a positive experience for neurodivergent candidates.
- Provide clear and concise questions. Be aware of the difference between open ended (detailed responses) and close ended questions (for yes/no responses).
- Keep questions succinct and avoid asking two questions in one. A good rule to follow is that the use of 'and' in a question usually denotes another question which can be asked separately.
- Allow extra time for the candidate to process questions and respond.
- Ask interview questions twice to allow more processing time. This is universally supportive to all candidates.
- Maintain a structured and predictable interview format to reduce anxiety.

Commitment

Throughout the interview process, it is crucial for employers to present themselves as an attractive option for potential employees. This involves demonstrating a commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Communicate your organisation's philosophy and practices regarding neurodiversity and your commitment to ongoing learning and awareness:

- Highlight any specific programs, initiatives or policies aimed at supporting neurodivergent individuals in the workplace
- Support for diverse needs
- Mentorship programs, or tailored training approaches
- Flexible work arrangements

Interviews

What can you do?

Flexibility

Traditional interview questions often place a high demand on working memory due to their unpredictability, which can disadvantage neurodivergent candidates.

The following alternative interview formats allow neurodivergent candidates the opportunity to showcase their strengths:

- **Online Interviews:** Conduct interviews via video to let candidates join from a familiar place, reducing stress from new surroundings.
- **Structured Interviews:** Send interview questions before the interview. This approach will provide the employer with a more reliable response to work-based questions rather than an assessment of working memory.
- **Scenario-Based:** Instead of simply checking for knowledge, ask candidates to do a practical task which relates to their role (e.g., a presentation, analysing a dataset).

Behaviours

When interviewing neurodivergent candidates, it is essential to move beyond relying solely on social cues (e.g., eye contact; enthusiasm). Instead, focus on evaluating candidates based on their skills, qualifications, and potential contributions to the role. Recognising and understanding neurodivergent behaviours fosters a fair and unbiased assessment process. By emphasising the importance of skill-based assessments, employers create a supportive environment where neurodivergent individuals can confidently showcase their talents in interviews.

Feedback

Providing considered feedback and consistent follow-up is particularly vital for neurodivergent candidates. Neurodivergent individuals may interpret social cues differently or have difficulty gauging their performance during interviews. Constructive feedback helps them understand their strengths and areas needing improvement, empowering them to better navigate future interviews.

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