

Disability Guidelines for UK clients

Introduction

These guidelines offer general advice to users of Saville Assessment tests, and address some of the important considerations when administering psychometric tests to candidates with disabilities. Employers in many territories have legal obligations not just to treat people with disabilities fairly but, where appropriate, to make reasonable accommodations or role adjustments to enable a disabled person to carry it out effectively. These guidelines are particularly focused on the needs of UK clients, although many of the general principles may apply in other jurisdictions.

For employers in all territories, it is good practice to make reasonable accommodations where appropriate within the workplace.

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) in the UK describes “disability” as “a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”. The term “disability”, according to the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) in the United States means “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities”.

A key piece of legislation that relates to neurodiversity in the workplace in the UK is the Equality Act 2010. This Act consolidated and expanded previous employment equalities legislation (including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). Whilst not all neurodivergent workers will consider themselves to be disabled, neurodivergent workers are likely to be found to be disabled within the meaning of the Equality Act. Neurodivergent conditions such as ADHD, autism, dyspraxia, dyslexia and dyscalculia have all been recognized as ‘disabilities’ by past Tribunal judgments (in the UK). When referring to disability within these guidelines, we are also including those with neurodiverse needs.

Assessing Candidates

Reasonable accommodations to an assessment and selection procedure may be required when assessing a disabled applicant for a job. For example, candidates who have a disability may find that the test administration, instructions, medium of delivery, content or other aspect of the test or testing procedure disadvantages them relative to a non-disabled candidate in giving a realistic estimate of their aptitudes or behaviors required for the role. Alternatively, some disabilities will have no appreciable impact on candidates’ ability to take a particular test or accurately estimate their level of ability under standard conditions and require no accommodation to be made. Where there is any doubt, it is the responsibility of the organization to consult a relevant expert. There may be rare occasions where an appropriate accommodation is not possible. In this event, the organization should attempt to assess the work-relevant attribute in another way.

Some examples of common disabilities you may encounter when assessing candidates

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will include, but are not limited to, people with visual impairments, blind people, partially sighted people, people with hearing impairments, deaf people or partially deaf people, people with mental health conditions and people with autism, ADHD or a physical disability.

Next is a summary of some of the things to consider in the process of testing candidates.

▪ Before testing takes place:

Ask the candidates at an early stage if they are likely to have special requirements which will require an accommodation or adjustment to the selection process as this will allow sufficient time to make any appropriate adjustments.

Plan to send all candidates a preparation guide or practice test for the assessment, wherever possible, in the format that the test will be delivered in. Saville Assessment has a dedicated practice site that can be accessed in advance. Relevant practice tests for aptitude tests and preparation guides for behavioral assessments can also be accessed from the candidate dashboard once assessment invitations have been sent. This provides candidates with disabilities the opportunity to decide for themselves whether their disability is likely to affect their performance on the test in any way. It is important to allow sufficient time for candidates to review this in advance of the testing session so that any adjustments required can be made.

For candidates that request an accommodation or highlight an aspect of the test or testing procedure that they may find difficult, it is best practice to request evidence of the condition or disability from the candidate by way of a diagnosis or report from an appropriate professional.

When necessary, seek advice and support regarding how best to accommodate a candidate's disability in the testing procedure. The best source of advice on possible accommodations is often the disabled candidates themselves. However, a candidate may not always realize exactly if and what accommodations may be possible or optimal for them. At this point, it may be clear what the accommodation should be. This may be from the fact that the candidate is clear on how to accommodate for their disability in the test and/or process, or where you are doing high-volume selection there is a relative high prevalence of a disability and you have a policy guiding the accommodation that should be made. For example, mild or moderate dyslexia allows for 25% additional time. However, each disability should be considered on its own individual basis and where it is not clear whether a reasonable accommodation can be made, professional advice should be sought before advising the candidate of the accommodation. The reason for the accommodation being made, and the exact accommodation should be agreed with the candidate and documented.

If you are carrying out supervised testing, check the venue where this will take place. As with all assessment of individuals with a disability, it is important to ensure that the venue is appropriate and has, for example, wheelchair access, or allowances have been made for visually impaired candidates to be directed to the testing session appropriately etc. Have contingency plans in case you need extra staff to assist a disabled candidate or need an extra room, so that anyone who needs an adjustment to standard testing conditions may be tested separately. Look at identifying an alternative venue to use in case it is needed.

When you invite candidates to a testing session, it is preferable to have a named contact person within your organization whom the candidates can get in touch with to discuss any special requirements regarding the testing process.

Make sure that everyone involved in the testing process is aware of the needs of candidates who have a disability and what accommodations have been agreed.

The checklist below covers some typical areas where candidates with disabilities may need support or adjustments.

▪ **Instructions (e.g. for a Supervised Computer Test)**

Standardized instructions can be read out to all candidates before commencing. If a candidate has a hearing impairment you should check whether alternative ways of communicating these instructions are required. Providing a written copy of any briefing or instructions that will be read out can be one possible helpful accommodation. Another accommodation which may be appropriate for candidates who lip read is to ensure that they are seated with a clear view of the administrator. Once the instructions have been communicated to the candidates, it is good practice to check they have been fully understood and invite all candidates to tell you if anything is unclear.

▪ **Reading the screen (e.g. for an Online or Supervised Computer Test)**

Candidates who experience problems reading need particular attention. For example, if the candidate is visually impaired and completing the test on a computer, increasing the font size may make the test more legible; screen reader versions of tests may also be appropriate where they are available. When, for example, a candidate needs a large font, can only see two or three words or less in their field of vision at a time and/or has difficulty perceiving words, a time adjustment may also be warranted.

Severely visually-impaired candidates may use specialist computer equipment and/or software. Where a version of a test is being used with specialist hardware or software, it is important to check compatibility prior to testing.

Visually-impaired candidates may benefit from a large desk space which will accommodate larger materials and allow them to place their papers and equipment where they can easily find things.

▪ **Navigating computer (e.g. for an Online, Supervised Computer Test)**

A disability that affects motor skills can impact on candidates' ability to respond to the questions on an online test. They may, for example, not be able to click the mouse when completing the test on a computer. Ask if the candidate has a preferred way of dealing with this. It may be that the impact of the motor disability may be to slow the navigation and marking of the response. Where this is the case, a time adjustment may be one appropriate accommodation.

Some candidates with more severe motor disabilities may wish to have someone operate the computer for them. Others may prefer technological solutions. Where a calculator is used, discuss the candidate's preferred option.

Whatever you have agreed on, check that the solution is likely to work for the candidate. If in any doubt, it can be appropriate to ask the candidate to complete the practice

questions and ensure the accommodation is effective before the testing session.

▪ **Marking responses (e.g. for an Online or Supervised Computer Test)**

Some candidates may have difficulties submitting responses. Discuss with candidates whether they anticipate any difficulties in this area and agree an appropriate solution. This might be to have someone else submit a candidate's answers.

▪ **Timing (e.g. for an Online or Supervised Computer Test)**

Different time adjustments are likely to be appropriate for different severities of disability. For example, candidates with mild or moderate dyslexia may be given a time adjustment of 25%, while a severe restriction of the visual field which only allows part of a word to be seen at one time could require a time adjustment of an additional 100% or more.

A testing session may take longer for candidates with disabilities. Candidates may need more time to familiarize themselves with test materials. Communicating with a hearing-impaired candidate can take longer. Some candidates may require one or more breaks. With time-adjusted testing, a disabled candidate is typically advised if adjustments to test time are being made.

Candidates who are dyslexic may take longer to read questions and answers, as may candidates with visual impairments. Candidates who have difficulties concentrating due to disability may also need extra time.

You can adjust the time limits of any Saville Assessment online aptitude assessment when you set up a new candidate on our Oasys platform or make a Bureau administration request. The Saville Assessment behavioral styles questionnaires do not require any time adjustments to be made to them since they are not timed.

▪ **Seeking advice**

Making adjustments to a test for a disability is something that needs careful investigation. The implementation of adjustments should not be compromised for the convenience of the test administrator. It is important to accommodate a candidate's special requirements while maintaining the effectiveness of the test in assessing the candidate accurately.

Before you make any changes to a testing session to accommodate the needs of candidates with disabilities, it is always a good idea to seek advice. Saville Assessment and other organizations can provide advice on common adjustments to the testing process for people with disabilities, although the decision on making the adjustment rests with the test user or employer. Disability and neurodiversity represent a very wide variety of needs; assessment users therefore need to treat each case/request individually and take time to understand/discuss specific requirements.