



Ollscoil Chathair
Bhaile Átha Cliath
Dublin City University

IONAD SÁRMHAITHEASA DCU UM ÉAGSÚLACHT AGUS CUIMSIÚ
DCU CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION



Hiring Managers' Toolkit for Neurodiversity

In partnership with





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About the Founder



Sandra Healy

Sandra Healy is the Founding Director of the DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion. Before moving to DCU, Sandra held a number of leadership positions spanning 20 years in the telecoms industry. Over the past thirteen years Sandra has championed and driven Diversity and Inclusion practice in Irish Industry and contributes to the work of the Ibec Diversity Forum, CWIT and 30% Club Ireland. In 2020 Sandra was appointed to the Expert Group for the Citizen's Assembly on Gender Equality in Ireland, led by Dr Catherine Day.

Diversity and inclusion is a core focus for many organisations and the DCU Centre of Excellence was established to assist them on this journey by providing access to the very latest developments in academic research, insights and tools to drive change across the organisation. The Centre is a central hub for research, advice and knowledge exchange on diversity and inclusion and we welcome industry partnerships such as this project with Indeed.

Sandry Healy,
DCU Centre of Excellence Director



Ionad Sármhaitheasa DCU
um Éagsúlacht agus Cuimsiú
DCU Centre of Excellence
for Diversity and Inclusion



DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion

The DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion was established in June 2018. The Centre is a central hub for research, advice and knowledge exchange on diversity and inclusion. The Centre creates a bridge between DCU's talent, industry bodies and specialist groups, helping organisations build cultures of inclusion by providing access to the very latest in academic research, insights and tool on diversity and inclusion. It supports organisation in all aspects of their diversity and inclusion journeys.

A core element of the Centre is a membership community of academic expertise, informed practitioners, thought leaders and networks that research and produce best practices in workplace diversity and inclusion.

Our Purpose, Vision, Mission and Values



Values

We live our values of integrity, trust, open collaboration and ambition.



Mission

We forge alliances and collaborate with industry partners on research and practice in diversity and inclusion.



Vision

To be a recognised hub with a world-class reputation for research, advice and knowledge exchange on diversity and inclusion.



www.dcu.ie/hr/coe_diversity_inclusion.shtml

About Research Sponsor

Indeed's mission is to help people get jobs. As the #1 job site worldwide, Indeed strives to put jobseekers first, giving them free access to search for jobs, post CVs, and research companies.* Every day, we connect millions of people to new opportunities.

We are committed to creating a workplace and global community where inclusion is not only valued, but prioritised. We recognise that diverse viewpoints bring diverse capabilities, strengthening our decision-making and fueling our growth.

Our dedicated Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging team works across the business to ensure diversity and inclusion is embedded in all of our processes and procedures. The team provides coaching, guidance and support to all employees to cultivate an inclusive environment, working in partnership with our internal Inclusion Resource Groups (IRGs), external organisations, and training and development institutions.

As a founding partner of the DCU Centre of Excellence for Diversity and Inclusion, Indeed is delighted to collaborate with the Centre on research regarding self identification in the workplace more broadly, to help companies become more inclusive. Our aim is that this research will support our own endeavours, as well as the endeavours of our clients and members of the Centre of Excellence, to better accommodate different needs within the workplace. This project represents the core of who we are as a company - an inclusive employer with a mission to help people of all backgrounds get jobs - we are grateful to Sandra and the team for all their hard work in bringing this project to fruition.

Learn more about our diversity and inclusion efforts at:
www.indeed.com/inclusion

Terminology

Accessibility is about giving equal access to everyone. It refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people with disabilities. The concept of accessible design ensures both “direct access” (i.e. unassisted) and “indirect access” meaning compatibility with a person’s assistive technology (for example, computer screen readers).

Communication means all ways of communicating, so that all people can communicate. For example, spoken language, sign language, text, Braille, touch, large print, written, audio, plain language, human reader and other ways that people with disabilities communicate.

Diversity means all things: the skills, backgrounds, cultures, experiences and abilities that shape your identity. This includes having a disability, or being neurodiverse.

Exclusion is not having a seat at the table and not having a voice that is heard. It is a culture where we do not actively recognise, value and engage all in an equitable and authentic way - and where an individual or group feels isolated or not empowered because of who they are. Exclusion can be intentional. This happens when individuals or groups are disadvantaged or actively discriminated against because of who they are - particularly those from underrepresented and marginalised groups. However, it can also be unconscious and unintentional, such as when a person feels isolated or undervalued because of your actions or behaviours, but you did not intend to exclude them.

Inclusion is having a seat at the table and a voice that is heard. It is a culture where we recognise, value and engage all in an equitable and authentic way.

Neurodiversity is the concept that neurological differences are to be recognised and respected as any other human variation is, such as gender, race or sexual orientation. These differences can include those labelled with dyspraxia, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyscalculia, autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), Tourette syndrome, and others. In some cases, neurodiverse people identify as having a disability and

in some cases they do not. Categorising neurological differences as a disability depends on the level of the impairment and the barriers faced for each individual person. Importantly, it is also how a person chooses to self-identify. Therefore, not all neurodiverse people will be classified or will classify themselves as having a disability.

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis.

Reasonable accommodation means necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Self-disclosure is the act of personally communicating a disability or disadvantage to another person, it is a voluntary decision and should be encouraged through positive engagement.

Sensory is something many, but not all, neurodiverse people have issues with. This is caused by a difficulty in processing everyday sensory information, which causes senses such as touch, taste, sight and many others to be over or under sensitive, or both, at different times.

Spectrum when someone identifies as being 'on the spectrum' they are usually referring to the autism spectrum. Many people with autism use this as a self-disclosure tool, to let others know of their neurodiversity.

Stimming is a form of self stimulation consisting of repetitive actions or movements of a type that may be displayed by people with neurodiversity. Common forms of stimming are nail biting and tapping.

Person-first language puts the person before the disability, using phrases like "person with a disability" or "person with autism" instead of "disabled person" or "autistic person."

The preceding terms are recommended by Indeed and the Centre of Excellence, and are based on definitions and terminology from multiple sources.

Executive Summary

The term neurodiversity refers to the infinite range of differences in individual human brain function and behavioural traits. Neurodiversity is the concept that neurological differences are to be recognised and respected as any other human variation is, such as gender, race or sexual orientation. Thomas Armstrong said that 'humans have tended to use significantly more positive language when discussing cultural diversity or biodiversity than when discussing neurodiversity'.

Employers are increasingly recognising neurodiversity as an asset and not a deficiency. Organisations that create inclusive working environments where neurodiverse individuals can thrive, may in turn reap rewards such as higher levels of team creativity and innovation. This toolkit is intended to provide the starting point for greater awareness and action around neuro-inclusive hiring practices by ensuring the hiring process is not a barrier to success.





A key challenge faced by organisations and people with neurodiversity is the recruitment and hiring process. Many of the issues are situational and can be avoided. Hiring managers may develop processes for neurotypical people rather than designing a process where all candidates have equitable access. Some neurodiverse candidates have described the hiring process environment as ‘disabling’.

The information and recommendations set out in this document hope to encourage organisations to adopt more inclusive hiring practises by ensuring all candidates have the opportunity to demonstrate their potential throughout the hiring journey. Adopting the practices in this toolkit will assist organisations in creating a hiring eco-system that is focused on unlocking hidden talents, not hidden disabilities.

Inclusive employers recognise that all individuals have their own strengths, challenges and preferences. Creating an inclusive hiring process is a starting point in building a workplace that reflects the neurological make-up of our broader society.

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Neurodiversity

How do we decide whether any individual mind is the standard?

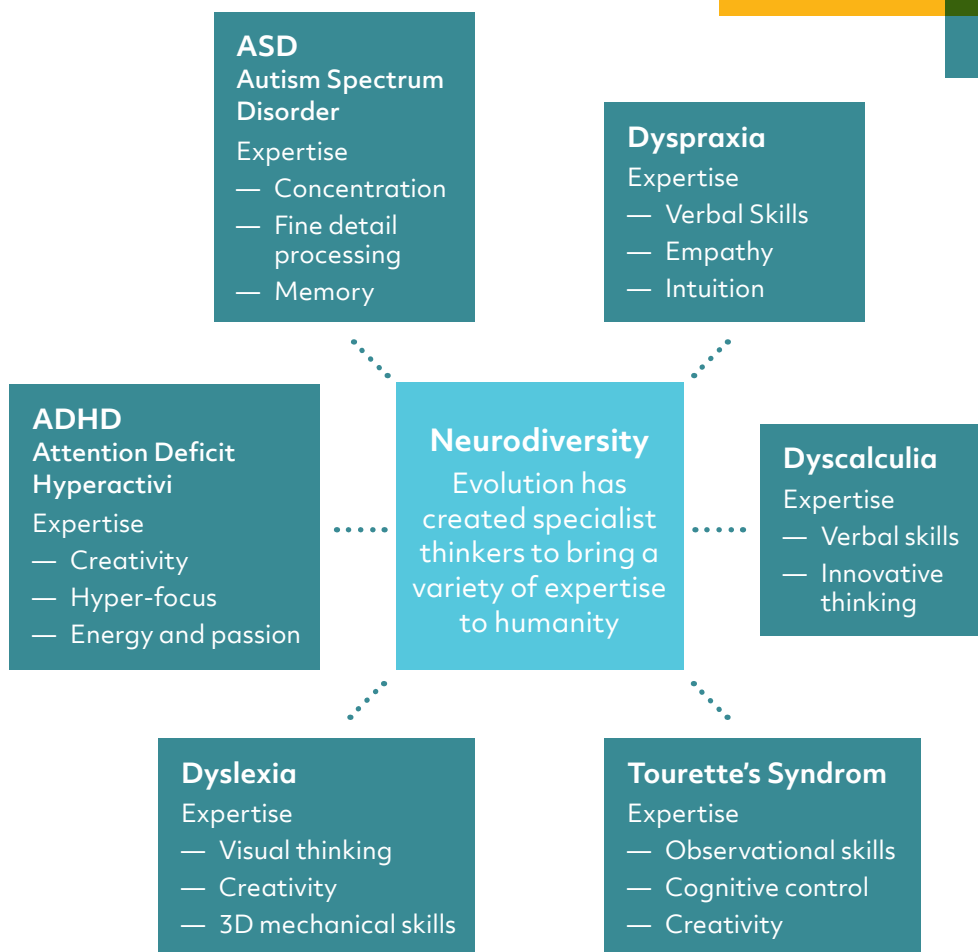
There is no 'standard' for the human brain. Nowhere in the world does a brain exist that represents the standard to which all other human brains can be compared. Substantial uncertainty exists regarding neurologically based human behaviour and when it crosses the critical threshold from normal human variation to pathology. Given that this is the case, a 'diversity' perspective to intellectual ability, that takes into account variation, is the only logical approach. To this end, a new term has arisen within the autism rights community: neurodiversity.

Neurodiversity

Neurodiversity is the concept that neurological differences are to be recognised and respected as any other human variation is, such as gender, race or sexual orientation. These differences can include those labelled with dyspraxia, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), dyscalculia, autism spectrum disorder (ASD), Tourette's syndrome, and others.

Nowhere in the world does a brain exist that represents the standard to which all other human brains can be compared.

For many people, neurodiversity is viewed as a concept and social movement that advocates for viewing autism as a variation in human wiring, rather than a disease. People diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), often appear to have strengths related to working with systems (e.g., computer languages, mathematical systems, machines). In experiments, they also perform better than others when identifying tiny details in complex patterns.



There are many valuable traits that have been identified in people with differing abilities. Visual-spatial skills, or the ability to tell where objects are in space, are needed for movement, depth and distance perception. We use these skills to read maps, follow dance moves and to make sense of letters and numbers as children. People with dyslexia have been found to possess global visual-spatial abilities, they can process blurred images and understand dispersed visual information more quickly and efficiently than participants without dyslexia. Such visual-spatial features may be advantageous in jobs requiring three-dimensional thinking such as astrophysics, molecular biology, genetics, engineering, and computer graphics.

Researchers have observed that subjects with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) can sometimes display greater levels of novelty-seeking and creativity than others.



What does this mean for the workplace?

The idea that neurodiverse candidates have specific strengths has been recognised by industry, and many companies have been aggressively recruiting people with ASD for occupations that involve systemising tasks such as programming and engineering roles, design and data analysis.

Employers are increasingly viewing autism as an asset and not a deficiency. However, neurodiverse individuals may still be hesitant to disclose to an current or potential employer for fear of being treated differently. DCU is currently leading on a project to identify the barriers to self-identifying in the workplace.

Research shows that people perform better when they can be themselves at work, therefore it is important that organisations create inclusive working environments where people feel comfortable to disclose. Individuals have reported that they are more likely to disclose if they see their employer making concerted efforts to recruit and hire a diverse workforce and in turn react positively to other employees' disclosures ¹.

For the purpose of this toolkit we have focused on the following neurodiversity; autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, dyspraxia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Why is Inclusive Hiring Important?

The concept of neurodiversity is the acceptance that all humans are different, with unique minds, needs and abilities.

This approach moves beyond labels such as autism, dyslexia or ADHD and recognises that difference in ability are natural in the human genome and can contain unique gifts and contributions. Human brain functioning has a wide spectrum of functions and any differences should be acknowledged as just another way of being or doing things.

Inclusive hiring is beneficial for all parties involved; it allows employers to attract and retain the widest range of candidates, and employees to feel valued for their skills and talents. This approach contributes to an overall culture of acceptance where employees feel valued as individuals. A workplace which effectively accommodates neurodiverse employees and demonstrates an appreciation for their differing abilities will reap the rewards of higher productivity, more creativity and longer tenure of younger employees ².

The concept of neurodiversity is the acceptance that all humans are different, with unique minds, needs and abilities.





Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autism, or Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is currently defined as a 'developmental disorder that affects how one relates to and communicates with other people'. Several definitions for autism exist but there is general agreement that the following characteristics are consistent amongst those on this spectrum: challenges with communication, socialising, repetitive behaviours and a heightened sensory perception ³.

The ASD brain has to work harder to process the senses, making colours, sounds, smells and feelings seem brighter, louder and stronger than they would. Nevertheless, people with ASD, including Asperger's Syndrome, are very quick to process all of this information.

Research shows that brains of people with ASD operate differently ⁴. Most notably, they rely less on their verbal centres. For example, when non-autistic people look at an image, their brains are activated in regions that process both visual information and language. However, when a person with autism looks at the same image there is more activity in their visual information region than their language region compared to a non-autistic person. This redistribution of brain function may be associated with superior performance in many tasks.

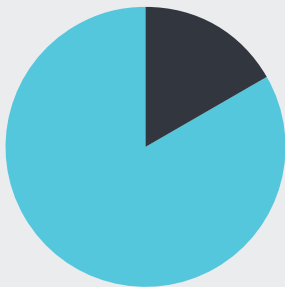




How is Asperger's Syndrome different from Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Asperger's Syndrome is a type of autism spectrum disorder and this term is used to describe a particular profile of people on this spectrum. People with Asperger's face similar challenges as people with autism. However, people with Asperger's generally don't have as many difficulties with speech. That said, people with this condition can still find it difficult to communicate with others and can often have a very literal understanding and use of language. Another common characteristic can be high levels of anxiety; this related to challenges in tolerance for disorder in the environment.

**Distribution of
Asperger's Syndrome vs
ASD**



■ Asperger's Syndrome
■ Other forms of ASD





Key Facts

- 1 Globally there is no register of the number of people with ASD, therefore it is difficult to estimate prevalence ⁵
- 2 Studies estimate that the rate of autism in Ireland at 1.5% of the overall population ⁶
- 3 It is thought that the numbers of people with ASD are currently stable and that any reported increases are due to changes in diagnostic criteria, increased awareness and recognition that autism can be associated with other conditions ⁵
- 4 There are equal numbers of males and females on the spectrum. However, females are more likely to go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed
- 5 The ratio of male: female diagnosis is as close as 3:1 ^{7 8}
- 6 80% of adults with autism in Ireland are currently unemployed ⁹. In the UK, only 16% of adults with ASD are in full time employment with a further 16% in part time employment ¹⁰
- 7 5.4% of all third level students in the academic year 2016/17 were identified as being on the spectrum ¹¹
- 8 The global ratio of people diagnosed with ASD versus Asperger's is 5:1 ¹²

Advice for Hiring Managers



Do Not Separate the Person from the Autism

Many autism self-advocates maintain that being autistic cannot be separated from who they are. This issue often comes up in debates about the use or rejection of person-first language, e.g., 'a person with autism' rather than 'an autistic person'. Like gender, race, or sexual orientation, neurobiology is only one part of a person's identity and not the sole defining factor ¹³.

Too often, employers do not realise the potential of a person with ASD and assign them repetitive or menial tasks. However, most are willing and capable of making sophisticated contributions to the workplace, given the right environment. Sometimes the hardest part is finding the right job, but many organisations are now working to address this problem.

Data and facts are paramount to people with autism, because of this they tend not to get bogged down by career politics that can side track even the best employees. It is important to note that people with autism will not thrive in all roles. Considering their social differences, they may struggle in people-oriented fields, such as sales or customer services. Ideally individuals with autism would have access to mentors or mediators to support them when navigating workplace situations that trigger anxiety in them; typically, anything unscheduled or hostile, such as changes to an existing plan, computer problems or negative criticism.

Too often, employers do not realise the potential of a person with ASD and assign them repetitive or menial tasks.





Strengths of neurodiverse candidates can include:

- Information processing
- Detail conscious
- Finding patterns and inconsistencies
- Creating patterns and order
- Tenacious and honest

These differences can result in the following challenges in the workplace:

- Over focusing on certain aspects of the role
- Getting stuck in detail
- Difficulty following instructions that are open to interpretation
- Difficulty communicating verbally, particularly in groups
- Over stimulation and the need for quiet, calm spaces
- Managing the day to day stresses of the workplace ¹⁴





What to expect as a manager

Communication and planning	Those on the autism spectrum tend to communicate differently. They do not naturally or automatically understand sarcasm, figures of speech and body language. However, this can be learned. Social events may also prove quite challenging for these people.
Behaviour and movement	<p>One characteristic of autism is stimming (pronounced by saying the letter 'S' and the word 'timing'). This is a form of sensory regulation.</p> <p>Most people engage in some form of stimming such as biting nails, tapping or sudden movements.</p> <p>Some methods of stimming appear inappropriate or odd.</p> <p>Drawing attention to stimming can cause distress to the individual.</p> <p>It is important to be understanding of this behaviour.</p>
Challenges	<p>Some autistic individuals are hypersensitive to sensory information, e.g. being touched on the shoulder might feel like a punch.</p> <p>Some may be unable to wear restrictive clothing such as a shirt and tie or suit.</p> <p>Others are hyposensitive to sensory information, e.g. some sounds like consistent low buzzing or hissing may prove overwhelming for someone who is hypersensitive, while it may not bother others.</p>
Socialising	Attention should be paid to the location of after work activities and social gatherings. Locations such as bars or pubs may be overwhelming for a person with ASD, as they are loud, busy and often an assault on the senses. People with ASD may chose not to attend these functions.

*Individuals may vary in how their challenges present.



Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty which makes it harder for some people to learn, read, write and spell ¹⁵. Those with dyslexia often have difficulty matching letters to sounds, distinguishing right from left, sequencing, remembering things, and following instructions. This has no effect on intelligence.

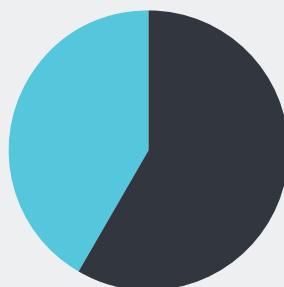


Key Facts

1. Research suggests that approximately 10% of the Irish population is dyslexic ¹⁶.



2. Males are 1.4 times more likely to have dyslexia than females ¹⁷.



■ Males ■ Females



What to expect as a manager

Communication and planning	Planning and organising, setting out timetables, distinguishing between the important and the urgent, remembering appointments, passing on telephone messages from memory and meeting deadlines can be exceptionally challenging for many people with dyslexia.
Behaviour and movement	People with dyslexia rarely display repetitive behaviours or difficulty with movement of the extremities.
Sensory	Challenges with number skills, such as counting, comparing two sets of numbers, or carrying out sums in their head.
	Poor handwriting.
	Physical coordination and sequencing challenges.
	Challenges in recalling sequences of events.
Socialising	People with dyslexia usually have no issues in social situations.

*Individuals may vary in how their challenges present.





Dyspraxia

Dyspraxia is recognised by the World Health Organisation as a condition affecting physical co-ordination that causes a person to perform less well than expected in daily activities for their age, and appear to move clumsily. The term dyspraxia is used in many different ways by different people, which can cause confusion. Some use it interchangeably with developmental coordination disorder (DCD) to mean the same thing. Others use it to refer to something quite different. Unlike DCD, there is no internationally agreed formal definition of the term 'dyspraxia.'



Key Facts

1. The research regarding the prevalence of dyspraxia is inconclusive. However, research in the UK has found that it affects 5% of the population ¹⁸.



2. There is no recent research on the gender ratio of dyspraxia however boys are more likely to be diagnosed ¹⁸.





What to expect as a manager

Communication and planning

Require additional effort for areas like organisation, memory, sequencing, concentration and time management. Challenges tracking text when reading or looking quickly at information.

There may also be difficulties with focus and coordination of the eyes.

May talk slowly and ponderously, repeat him or herself or have difficulty with pronunciation.

Behaviour and movement

Challenges with movements such as walking and balance, and fine motor skills such as writing and using a sticky tape dispenser.

Sensory

Heightened sensitivity to sound, light, touch or certain fabrics. Individuals may find it difficult to cope in a noisy environment or to work in brightly lit areas.

Socialising

Attention should be paid to the location of after work activities and social gatherings. Locations such as bars or pubs may be overwhelming for a person with heightened sensitivity to sound and light. People with dyspraxia may chose not to attend these functions.

*Individuals may vary in how their challenges present.



Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is a group of behavioural symptoms that include inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness. Attention deficit disorder (ADD) displays similar attention related symptoms however hyperactivity is not experienced by individuals with this diagnosis.

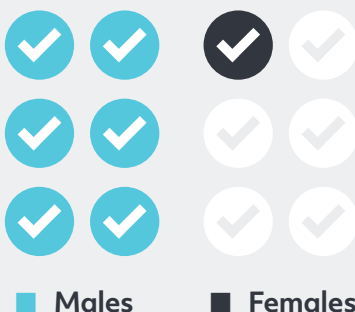


Key Facts

1. There is no specific data on the prevalence of ADHD, but it is estimated that it affects 5% of the children and 4% of adults in Europe ²¹.



2. There is no Irish data for the gender ratio of ADHD, but in the UK males are six times more likely than females to be diagnosed ²².





What to expect as a manager

Communication and planning	Can be easily distracted and flit from task to task.
	May display challenges with attention to verbal instruction.
	Have difficulty with short term memory.
	Lack attention to detail.
	Tend to be accident prone due to lack of forethought.
Behaviour and movement	Display challenges with social timing and may be less motivated.
	May appear restless and fidgety.
	Can sometimes find it hard to stop talking.
	Sometimes interrupt others.
Sensory	Challenges in dealing with stress.
	Individuals with ADHD may experience sensory overload with issues such as touch.
Socialising	Due to this risk of sensory overload, after work and social activities may pose a risk specifically if in a noisy bar. People with ADHD may chose not to attend these functions.

*Individuals may vary in how their challenges present.

Inclusive Hiring Practices



1: Developing the job description

- On your website and in your job descriptions, be sure to talk about ways you're making your hiring process and culture more inclusive
- Clearly state that your organisation welcomes neurodiverse individuals
- Allow the opportunity for applicants to highlight any support or accommodations they may need at an interview
- Explain that you want everyone to have the same equity of access, and that disclosure is a means to support them throughout the process, but it is not required
- The job advert should be concise and written in plain English. It should also be clearly presented, with simple design
- Refrain from generic job descriptions that resemble wish lists. (Does an excellent programmer really need to have 'great people skills?')
- Only include qualities that are essential for the job - 'excellent communication skills' and 'good team player' are often included as default skills
- Consider the level of IT skills you actually need for the job (does a sales representative need advanced IT skills)
- Provide clear guidance on what information the applicant needs to provide on the application form

Top Tips

Avoid requesting handwritten applications or cover letters.

Consider whether online applications are always the best format or are you ruling out potential individuals for the job?



Sample Job description provided by Indeed

Account Manager

Your role

As an Account Manager, you will be responsible for growing and managing a large client portfolio, helping us find new customers, and maintaining strong relationships with existing clients. Account Managers are key members of our sales team; they are highly skilled business development professionals, product experts and client advocates.

Responsibilities:

- Carry out market research to identify new clients, understand competitors and analyse industry trends
- Meet regularly with clients to review accounts, assess need, and identify cross and upsell opportunities
- Conduct product demonstrations, identify issues and escalate these to the customer service and product teams where relevant
- Analyse data and prepare regular reports for both clients and senior leaders
- Support senior leaders in implementing the sales strategy, ensuring targets and KPIs are consistently met

About you

You are client-focused, results-oriented and a strong communicator. You are passionate about our software and its ability to help simplify the accounting process for our clients. You will work collaboratively as part of a team to meet all targets and KPIs, and ensure our clients receive an unparalleled service.

Requirements:

- A proven track record of success in a sales environment
- Strong written and verbal communication skills
- Ability to build and maintain relationships with software users and key decision makers
- Ability to learn quickly, and develop in-depth product knowledge
- Ability to analyse data and use metrics to make decisions
- A client-first approach with a 'can do' attitude

About us

ABC Ltd is the world's leading provider of cloud based accounting software. We make accounting simple; enabling our clients to track expenses, send invoices, analyse metrics and manage inventory all at the click of a button. Our award winning software provides everything needed to manage finances on the go, so our clients can spend less time on admin, and more time taking their business to the next level.

Our sales team is made up of individuals from a variety of backgrounds who are passionate about helping our clients get the most from our software. Our salespeople drive revenue and grow our business, all while keeping the client at the centre of what they do.

Application process

To apply, please click on this link and follow our application process or email your CV and a one page cover letter outlining why you feel you are suited to this position to recruitment@abcltd.ie. Applications can also be posted to our head office marked for the attention of the Sales Director.

ABC Ltd is committed to the principle of equal opportunities for all. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, colour, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, family or marital status, genetics, disability, age, neurodiversity, or veteran status.

We offer a variety of flexible working options that enable our staff to find and maintain the right work-life balance.

Applicants requiring an accommodation are invited to disclose this in their application to ensure that the right support can be put in place for interview. Disclosure is voluntary and should only be done where the applicant feels comfortable to do so.



2. Application Process

- Ensure that candidates know how long the application process takes. Check how long on average the application process usually takes and sign post this for all candidates. If there is a delay in the process, inform candidates
- If using online application software, ensure that the application does not time out halfway through and that the candidate can complete it in more than one session
- Check that web-based application forms are stable and boxes do not move or lose their format when being completed
- Offer telephone completion of applications as an alternative
- Check if the job description and application process, particularly if using an online based system, can be read out on a text to speech reader
- If the recruitment process requires forms to be completed, ask the individual if they are happy to complete the forms on their own. Consider providing support if this is a challenge

Top Tips

Multiple choice and psychometric tests can be challenging for many people, including people with neurodiversity. Consider a different style of assessment, for example, multiple-staged questions that are asked in steps.

For written assessments as part of the recruitment process, a reasonable adjustment may be extra time. 25% extra time is normally allowed in academic settings.



3. Pre-interview

Inform the candidate

- Give all candidates guidelines on what to wear to the interview
- Provide clear information about what will be expected at the interview
- Let the candidate know if they have to prepare anything in advance. Give clear guidelines on what is expected
- Indicate how much time the interview will take and advise how long each section will take
- Provide a list of documents required on the day of the interview
- Send clear instructions on how to get to the interview. Provide a postcode, map, transport options and encourage a pre-interview visit to the site

Hiring team - preparing for the interview

- Make competency based questions available in advance of the interview
- Consider how competencies tested at interview reflect the reality of the job
- Will on the job training be provided? How job ready does the individual need to be?
- If there is a computer-based exercise, the candidate may prefer to use their own laptop i.e. to use assistive technology
- Make sure any large amount of reading, for example a scenario or case study, is sent in advance or is available in an electronic version so a screen reader can be used
- Consider how 'sociable' someone needs to be for the particular job and do not judge this if this is not an essential skill
- Allow candidates to use / take notes in the interview if they wish to do this
- Consider breaks during the interview

Top Tips	Focus heavily on skills-based assessments.
	Evaluate direct skills such as teamwork and the ability to follow instructions as they complete the assessment tasks.
	As much as possible, make the interview process interactive and practical.

Environmental do's and don'ts

Do

Provide an interview environment that minimises sensory stimuli e.g. windows where there is activity outside, glass rooms.

Check the room where the interview is to be held, ensure there are no flickering lights or low level buzzing noise.

Ensure your phone is turned off to avoid distracting the candidate.

Don't

Wear anything with a strong smell to the interview.

Hold the interview in an environment where there are strong colours i.e. avoid red carpets.

Hold the interview in a room with loud background noise.



Social story

A social story is a walkthrough guide of a particular social situation which might cause a neurodiverse candidate to be anxious or uncomfortable. The document is designed to provide an understanding of the process and to put them at ease. The social story should use positive language and pictures are essential. This can be sent to applicant well in advance of the interview, to allow time for preparation.



Going to a job interview

A social story



Prepare beforehand

I will prepare before the interview by reading my CV and learning about what the company does and what its values are



First step: arrive early

I will arrive 15 minutes early to ensure I am prepared and show I am dedicated





Greeting

I will greet the receptionist, interviewers and anyone I meet with a smile and a firm handshake which shows confidence



Share appropriate information

I will avoid oversharing information and will stick to information related to the question



Ask questions

I will have questions prepared beforehand about what the company does, their vision for the future or the role



Thank the interviewers

I will thank the interviewers for their time and shake their hand before I leave



Interview over

I will leave once I have thanked the interviewers and not linger

4. Interview

Starting the interview

- Introduce yourselves by name and perhaps have name cards on the table. Have business cards ready to give to the candidate so that they have follow up information
- Ask the candidate would they prefer to sit or walk around during the interview

Top Tips

Advise the candidate that if they need extra time to process a question or need it rephrased then simply to ask.

Ask one question at a time, rather than multi-part questions.

Be aware that eye contact may be fleeting or prolonged, depending on the individual.

Avoid open-ended questions.

Give concise feedback.

Be very literal when describing things.





Resources

For more information please see the resources listed below:

ADHD Ireland: their mission is to make life better for people affected by ADHD.	adhdireland.ie
AsIAm: a national Autism charity and advocacy organisation.	asiam.ie
Aspire Ireland: offering support and information to people who have Asperger's Syndrome and their families in Ireland since 1995.	aspireireland.ie
Dyslexia Ireland: works with and for people affected by dyslexia, by providing information, offering appropriate support services, engaging in advocacy and raising awareness of dyslexia.	dyslexia.ie
Dyspraxia Ireland: charity that raises awareness of Dyspraxia/DCD in Ireland and create a better understanding of the difficulties people with Dyspraxia/DCD and their families face.	dyspraxia.ie
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission: Ireland's national human rights and Equality institution.	ihrec.ie
Irish Society for Autism: an established dedicated organisation for people with Autism in Ireland.	autism.ie
Specialisterne: Specialisterne is a specialist consultancy that recruits and supports talented people with ASD and Aspergers's Syndrome, and similar challenges. Our experience helps employers recruit and retain talented people and grow diverse, effective teams.	specialisterne.ie

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