The National Organization on Disability & The Burton Blatt Institute

Burton Blatt Institute

A Roadmap for Employers to Successfully Recruit College Students with Disabilities

About NOD

The National Organization on Disability (NOD) was founded in 1982 with the mission of expanding the participation and contribution of America's 60 million people with disabilities in all aspects of life. In recent years, NOD has concentrated on the mission of increasing employment opportunities for the 76 percent of working-age Americans with disabilities who are not employed. Celebrating 40 years, NOD is a leader in helping corporate America transform their human capital policies and practices to increase the hiring, engagement, development, and retention of individuals with disabilities.
Our work with clients is a critical part of achieving NOD's mission by helping create the conditions where people with disabilities can succeed and thrive in the corporate world. We use what we learn through this work to raise awareness and ultimately change public opinion about the value of this untapped talent pool. Our services include our ground-breaking research with the worlds' most recognizable universities, data-driven Employment Tracker™, an assessment and benchmarking tool, a variety of advisory services designed to deliver solutions to support our clients' disability inclusion needs. Our Leadership Council brings employers together to learn from NOD subject matter experts and each other.

By changing practices of employers, building leading practices and market-shaping thought leadership, and establishing enduring relationships with the corporate world, we expand employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities across the U.S. and create impact on a broad scale.

About this Report

The following pages describe the results and findings of more than four years of effort by the National Organization on Disability to understand the challenges employers experience in engaging with students with disabilities; the challenges students with disabilities experience in transitioning into their chosen field after graduation and the important role career and disability services play on campus. We offer suggestions and solutions to the challenges of such a transition; created a playbook as well as two short videos with checklists and hope you will find valuable insights into how you might integrate our work into yours.

Campus to Careers, a Four-Year Report

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A Roadmap for Employers to Successfully Recruit College Students with Disabilities

Employer members of the National Organization on Disability (NOD) have demonstrated a strong and sustained commitment to hiring well-qualified college students with disabilities. This dedication stems from a clear understanding of the economic value of these individuals, as well as the legal and moral imperatives to creating and maintaining workplaces that benefit from the full diversity of society.

Nevertheless, despite their best efforts, employers report significant difficulties identifying and recruiting students and recent graduates with disabilities. At the same time, community groups and disability advocates around the country report that college students with disabilities are less likely than students without disabilities to find good jobs in their field of interest.

This unfortunate "mismatch" between experiences on the supply and demand sides of the labor market was the impetus behind NOD's innovative "Campus to Careers" Demonstration Project. This project explored strategies for identifying, recruiting, and hiring college students with disabilities. Funded by the Coca-Cola Foundation in partnership with the University of Massachusetts Medical School's Work Without Limits Initiative (WWL), 10 colleges and universities, and six employers with a significant presence in the Boston area, undertook the Campus to Careers project in 2017. Based on the findings of the project and additional research, this report identifies strategies that employers can use effectively, to bridge the gap and create equal access to opportunity for students with disabilities.

Importantly, and perhaps obviously, students with disabilities are an important resource to organizations. In addition to the skills that all college graduates have, they bring intangible life experiences and attributes that are not immediately apparent on a typical college transcript.

These young individuals with disabilities often face many barriers in their lives, not only issues of accessibility (both physical and in communication), but also pernicious attitudes of stigma and low expectations. Often, seemingly simple activities of daily living require considerable effort, initiative, and creative solutions. The time and effort, and intellectual and psychic energy, to overcome these barriers is a considerable learning advantage. Having succeeded at college alone demonstrates many positive characteristics – drive, persistence, and problem-solving abilities – that employers desire and need.

At the same time, these often troubling attitudes facing students with disabilities may make them reticent to disclose their disability, particularly if it is hidden from view, such as with mental health conditions. Students are reasonably concerned that employers will have the same negative attitudes and lower expectations they have confronted in the past.

A highly skilled graduate student with an anxiety disorder said,

> **"Career services told me to go to a temp agency...they said that was the best I could do."**

Even the risk of disclosure in their minds may outweigh "help wanted" language that "all people with disabilities are encouraged to apply." The situation requires creative and committed employers to be even more proactive in their efforts to demonstrate to all potential hires that they have a serious commitment to diversity and inclusion. A student with a psychosocial disability explained,

> **"What I immediately look for these days is screen reader accessibility. That's usually an indication of the company's commitment to equal opportunity employment."**

Colleges and universities have the unique opportunity to act as a critical go-between for employers and students with disabilities in ways to facilitate hiring and careers. University and college career and disability services offer important guidance and improve information flow. Often these services work together but not always.

At times they have limited capacity. But this is how employers can be active agents of change by encouraging coordination between career and disability services as a way of connecting students with disabilities to potential employers. Community organizations, such as government vocational rehabilitations programs, job accommodation networks, and non-profit organizations that support people with disabilities, should also be participants in this process.

To be successful, therefore, employers must take

an active and inclusive approach to their entire college recruiting and hiring process. This includes training staff on disability awareness, making the process accessible for people with all types of disabilities, providing reasonable accommodations where necessary, and demonstrating a sustained commitment and partnership with universities and colleges.

This report sets out these and other practical recommendations for employers. They include:

- **Motivate universities to create innovative disability support services and career services collaborations**. Career services may not have adequate connections with students with disabilities, or even know they have disabilities. Disability support services have connections with the students but often focus exclusively on providing accommodations and support for students while they are in school rather than facilitating the transition to work. Employers are in a position to further motivate effective collaboration.

- **Connect with campus disability organizations.** Members of such organizations are already "out" as people with disabilities and will be eager to work on such issues.

- **Create a disability-positive online image**. This means not only talking about disability explicitly, but also demonstrating through accessible information and social media examples that people with disabilities are typical and valued members of your organization.

- **Use job portals such as Handshake and Symplicity effectively**. Through the online portals connected with colleges and universities, employers can highlight their interest in hiring students with disabilities on their company page and job postings and reach out to selected students in culturally and generationally effective messaging.

- **Provide training to company recruiters, human resource professionals, and hiring managers**. This training can break down prejudices, but also it can provide guidance on making the recruitment and hiring practices more accessible and relevant.

- **Reduce bias in interviews and develop alternative interviewing processes**. This can be a key objective of the training programs for staff, as often such bias is subtle or "unconscious."

- **Facilitate disclosure**. Employers work to better understand the challenges involved with disclosure and create a culture of inclusion and belonging.

- **Make your accommodations request process simple, open, and easy.** Asking for accommodations may be difficult for employees, but employers have an opportunity to facilitate the process in creative ways.

- **Create disability-inclusive internships and hire former interns.** Internships for people with disabilities cannot only help recruit students with disabilities, but also demonstrate to them during their experience your commitment to inclusion.

- **Recruit at schools with strong disability representation.** For example, Gallaudet College is comprised mostly of deaf students. Other universities, such as Syracuse University, have extensive disability studies programs and disability cultural centers, as well as research institutes such as the Burton Blatt Institute.

- **Stand out at career fairs and participate in disability career fairs.** Employers can attract job candidates by openly indicating the company's commitment to disability inclusion at the career fair table and ensuring recruiters are comfortable talking with potential employees who have a wide range of disabilities.

- **Audit your entire process from recruitment to interviewing, hiring, onboarding, and retention.** Barriers and bottlenecks can occur anywhere in the process, so the system must be looked at holistically, in real-time, and objectively.

Conclusion

With increasing numbers of students with disabilities graduating from college and serious labor demands facing employers, it is critical to effectively identify and recruit this important source of talent. Unfortunately, even those employers who try to tap this resource report challenges in trying to hire recent college graduates with disabilities. These challenges include a lack of proven and sustained approaches to reaching this group of talented individuals; needing to create accessible applications and better interview processes; and re-evaluating required work experience and other essential job requirements to accommodate this qualified group.

"I have been in interviews where the interviewer asked me, 'Okay, so if we hire you, because you are a person who is visually impaired, how are you going to do this job?' That kind of takes you back a little bit because it comes across as if they are using my disability as a qualifier."

The NOD Campus to Careers project has identified barriers to and leading-edge facilitators of successful campus-to-careers transitions from the perspectives of employers, colleges and universities, and students. The project's findings and recommendations point towards a promising way forward to helping more students with disabilities realize their job and career potential while assisting employers to achieve the full and often untapped benefits of welcoming them into their companies.

Case Study with Raytheon Technologies: Fishing in a Different Pond

How We at Raytheon Started Our Journey to Successfully Hire Recent College Graduates with Disabilities

by Jim O'Neill, Senior Manager Early in Career Talent Acquisition at Raytheon Technologies

If you are always fishing in the same pond, you'll get the same results. At Raytheon, we knew we needed to improve our college talent acquisition strategy by searching for candidates in overlooked and diverse talent pools. One of those talent pools was recent college graduates with disabilities, who are oftentimes unemployed or underemployed and not reaching their full potential.

Disability inclusion has been a growing part of Raytheon's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. But, as we have learned from recruiting other diverse talent pools, words mean nothing without dedication, resources, and extra effort to hire diverse populations. Recruiting recent college graduates with disabilities requires a deep commitment, effort, and staff resources.

Getting Started:
Before the NOD Campus to Careers project, I can't say that we had done a great job with disability recruiting. So, I think our first step was to frankly acknowledge that shortcoming and keep ourselves open to learning from the experts.

Training:
Many on our talent acquisition team were not comfortable with conversations about disability. Talking about accommodations, disability disclosure, and other disability issues can sometimes be challenging, and we knew that the discomfort was impacting our hiring success. To demystify disability in our hiring process, especially for our hiring managers, we had our team take part in a two-day training session to learn about disability etiquette and best practices for hiring people with disabilities. The training helped our team engage in more comfortable conversations.

Developing Collaborations with Colleges and Universities:
We first invited college career services offices and disability services offices from different campuses to visit and tour Raytheon's campus so their staff could see firsthand how our work environment and culture could support graduates with disabilities as employees. Next, we asked these offices to help connect us with campus disability organizations so we could connect directly to candidates. We sent members of our talent acquisition team, especially individuals from our disability employee resource group and alumni of each school, to campus career fairs so that candidates would feel more comfortable approaching us. These efforts required a lot of time, but we knew that, to attract candidates, we had to demonstrate to them that we are committed to diversity and disability hiring.

Establishing an Alternate Route to Hiring: The Campus to Careers demonstration provided us with opportunities to participate in Disability Career Fairs and offer mentoring days. During these events, we had passionate employees talking with candidates about their experiences and the resources we have to help support employees with disabilities. We provided specialized attention to those candidates who might not have succeeded using the traditional recruiting pathway of applying through our website.

Behind the scenes, as we talked with some strong candidates, I was very much involved in directing resumes to the right contact in the right business unit and monitoring the progress have brought value and new perspectives to the company.

We have discovered that identifying, recruiting, hiring, and fully including college graduates with disabilities is a long-term process, and we need committed partners inside and outside of our company to support us as we adopt best practices for this effort. Raytheon has not mastered its hiring practices yet, but we've come a long way and are always learning.

> **"Disability inclusion has been a growing part of Raytheon's diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy. But, as we have learned from recruiting other diverse talent pools, words mean nothing without dedication, resources, and extra effort to hire diverse populations. Recruiting recent college graduates with disabilities requires a deep commitment, effort, and staff resources."**

Campus to Careers Demonstration Project

Foreword by Peter Blanck and Carol Glazer

We are optimistic about the exciting possibilities for the coming generation of young college students and recent graduates with disabilities. More educated and skilled than previous generations, there is a talent pool available to be part of the future of work. This includes greater flexibility of remote work or hybrid situations and the evolution of work schedules beyond the traditional workday. Accommodating workers is set to become a universal guiding principle to recruit and retain talent rather than a disability legal principle.

In a tight labor market, across sectors of the economy, corporations are struggling to recruit talent and retain a productive workforce. For decades, the National Organization on Disability (NOD) has been working with and developing resources for corporations that have a growing understanding and commitment to hiring talented and well-qualified college students and graduates with disabilities. Recently, however, employers reported to NOD their difficulties in identifying and recruiting these students and recent graduates. Evidence suggests that college graduates with a disability are struggling to get jobs in their field of interest and it takes a significantly longer period of time than their nondisabled peers.

This mismatch between experiences on the supply and demand side became the impetus for NOD to develop and implement the "Campus to Careers" Demonstration Project. With appreciation to the many collaborators that made this project possible, including the Coca-Cola Foundation as the lead funder, UMASS Medical School's Work Without Limits Initiative, ten colleges and universities and a group of employers with a major presence in the Boston area, as well as hundreds of students with disabilities who benefitted from training activities, the project was a living laboratory to test and evaluate different strategies and relationships.

What we learned is that there are proven solutions to increase the recruitment and hiring of students and graduates with disabilities. With the collaboration of NOD and the multi-tiered research activities of the Burton Blatt Institute team of employment practice and policy subject matter experts, a set of effective practices were identified that can facilitate hiring and careers for college-educated workers with disabilities. These include changes in relationships, approaches, and supports that position colleges and universities to act as a critical bridge for employers and students. Employers can be the catalyst for change within their own organizations in what they expect from colleges and universities to more easily access this vastly untapped pipeline of talent.

This report and supplemental materials provide practical recommendations for employers to be successful in creation of a diverse and inclusive workforce that benefits from the talents, creativity, and skills of college and university students and graduates with disabilities.

We are here to help you customize these recommendations and support your adoption of best practices.

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Introduction

The National Organization on Disability (NOD) has a membership of employers who understand the economic value of hiring, as well as the legal and moral imperatives to hire, well-qualified college students with disabilities. However, the employers report to NOD difficulties in identifying and recruiting these students and recent graduates. At the same time, community groups and disability advocates report that college students with disabilities are less likely than students without disabilities to find good jobs in their field of interest. This mismatch between experiences on the supply and demand sides of the labor market suggests an opportunity to help both side.

To assist employers in their goal to increase their hiring of recent graduates with disabilities, this report brings together findings from the NOD Campus to Careers project and research conducted by the Burton Blatt Institute (BBI) at Syracuse University.

NOD Campus to Careers Project

With leadership support from the Coca-Cola Foundation, NOD developed Campus to Careers, an innovative demonstration project designed to address the disconnect between employers and students with disabilities. Campus to Careers builds stronger pipelines between campuses and employers and demonstrates valuable methods for improving school-to-work transition outcomes.

Capitalizing on its strong relationships with colleges and employers in Massachusetts and other programs working on disability issues, NOD partnered with offices of disability services and career services located on ten participating college campuses to improve how they serve students with disabilities as they transition from their campuses to careers. Simultaneously, NOD worked with employers to learn more about their campus recruitment and hiring practices and help them adjust those practices to effectively recruit and hire qualified candidates with disabilities.

The goals of the project were threefold:

1. To learn what practices are most effective in preparing students with disabilities to transition to employment (supply side improvements).
2. To understand which employer practices are most effective for establishing and maintaining a qualified pool of job candidates with disabilities who are transitioning from colleges (demand side improvements), and
3. To communicate these lessons to campuses and employers to influence widespread adoption (systems and services improvements). Implementation of this demonstration project included working with key stakeholders, including students, colleges and universities, and employers, and capitalizing on disability employment expertise from each of the communities served by the colleges. (List of stakeholders contained in Appendix 1.)

In addition to understanding barriers to and facilitators of successful campus to career transitions, the project provided targeted training and support to each of the stakeholder groups. (Refer to Exhibit 1: Theory of Change Model.) The NOD training and support intervention was organized as outlined below:

Students:
The program provided opportunities for online mentorship through partners for youth with disabilities; offered career readiness to nearly 450 students; and provided one-on-one virtual office hours with NOD staff to provide career guidance to interested students.

Campus disability and career services offices:
The program provided coaching on effective collaboration models and offered disability awareness training to career service staff.

Employers:
The program provided formal training to 150 campus-recruiting staff members, hiring managers, and supervisors about disability awareness and interviewing strategies to help provide a more welcoming environment for students with disabilities.

Services and Systems:

The program strengthened relationships between each of the stakeholder groups. (Refer to Figure 1: Theory of Change Model.) It facilitated the relationships between companies and disability and career services offices to build a "talent pipeline." The program also worked with employers, colleges, and students to provide interviewing opportunities to 444 students through career fairs, and it arranged employer networking and job shadowing opportunities to approximately 65 students.

BBI Research Component Methodology

With significant expertise in disability employment policy and practice, BBI used a multi-method approach to answer the question, "What can employers do to effectively recruit college students and recent graduates with disabilities?"

To develop the recommendations detailed in this report and establish a framework for better locating the NOD project within existing knowledge and practices, BBI reviewed existing studies addressing employer challenges and strategies for recruiting and hiring college students with disabilities. To supplement this review, research staff considered how strategies for recruiting and hiring other under-represented minorities may be applied to transitioning students with disabilities.

BBI also reviewed NOD project documents and interviewed project staff to identify key findings from the Campus to Careers project. Research staff conducted qualitative interviews with eight students to better understand their challenges and successes in preparing for post-college employment. They interviewed disability and career service staff from five colleges and universities, as well as other experts in the field, to better understand how these entities work together in establishing and maintaining a pipeline of students with disabilities as job candidates. BBI interviewed employers to explore their perspectives on the challenges and successes they experience in recruiting and hiring qualified college graduates with disabilities. BBI then implemented a virtual convening session to obtain

additional feedback from employers to validate and supplement the research data. These data resulted in the findings and recommendations that are detailed in this report.

The research team's framework for its analysis, Theory of Change, is presented in Figure 1. On the demand side of the labor market are employers, whose attempts to attract workers are influenced by their workplace culture and policies, as well as the capabilities of their human resources department. On the supply side are students with disabilities, who come not only with the knowledge and skills of all recent graduates, but also with support needs and family and societal expectations. Complicating employers' efforts is the fact that students are often, understandably, unwilling or uncertain about, disclosing their disability.

Colleges and universities have the potential to be a go-between for employers and students with disabilities and are in a unique position to facilitate hires. They have career and disability services that offer guidance and improve information flow, but these services often have limited capacity. External community organizations, such as government vocational rehabilitations programs, job accommodation networks, and non-profit organizations that support people with disabilities can also facilitate hires.

The following sections describe the situation of each of the stakeholders identified in the Theory of Change framework.

Figure 1: Theory of Change

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│  Employers              │          │  Students                    │
│                         │          │                              │
│  • Culture              │◄────────►│  • Knowledge and Skills      │
│  • Policies             │          │  • Support Needs             │
│  • HR Capabilities      │          │  • Family and Societal       │
│                         │          │    Expectations              │
│                         │          │  • Disability Disclosure     │
│                         │          │    Strategy and              │
│                         │          │    Decision-Making           │
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              │  Other Community Supports      │
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              │  • Vocational Rehabilitation   │
              │  • Job Accommodation Network   │
              │  • Non-profit providers and    │
              │    trainers                    │
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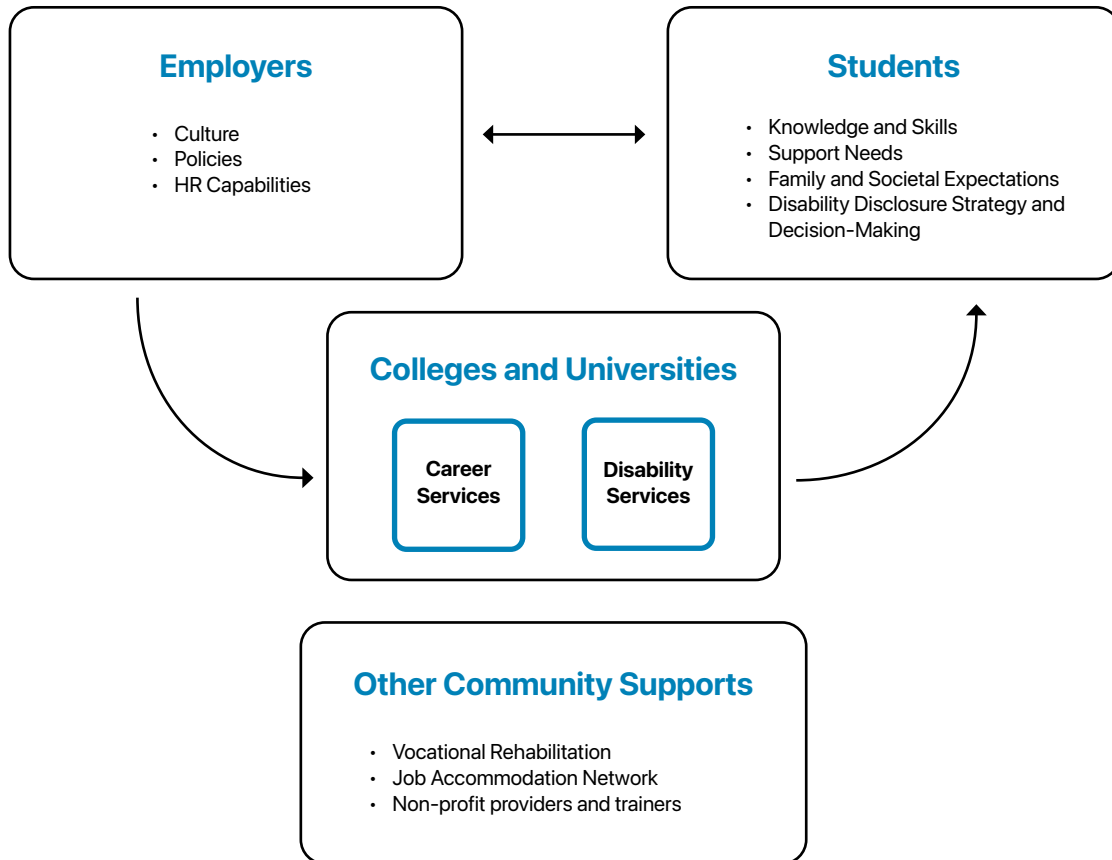
Students with Disabilities

The NOD project was implemented to understand and address factors that challenge or facilitate successful school-to-work transitions for college students with disabilities, and, in particular, to see how employers support these efforts. Students with disabilities are less likely to graduate from high school, less likely to attend college and, even when they start college, less likely to complete their education. They face a variety of barriers along the way, from low expectations from parents and educators to stigma, social rejection by peers, and the need to balance the demands of their disability with educational and social demands. Students with disabilities who do graduate from a college or university have therefore signaled their drive, creativity, and ability to overcome barriers.

A recent master's degree graduate with a congenital disease affecting mobility said,

> "I want to work for a someone who isn't trying to check a diversity box. I don't want to be the token, disabled employee. I want a company that is excited to hire a disabled person and might even prefer a disabled person, because they know that typically, people in the disability community are very competent problem solvers. They're very resilient. They look at life in a different way than a lot of others."

College graduates express frustration with employers who "think they need to babysit me." These graduates have creatively learned to self-accommodate their disability and have identified external resources to help them. A blind interviewee who recently received a graduate degree in social work explained:

> **"If they hire me, then the Commission for the Blind will provide a mobility trainer that will train me how to get around in the workplace and other locations on my own. I went through this process to learn to navigate the college campus."**

Research based on multiple surveys indicates that, on average, recent college graduates with disabilities have employment outcomes similar to those without disabilities. Seventy-eight percent of recent college graduates with disabilities are employed, compared with 80 percent of those without disabilities. Still, many recent graduates with disabilities spend years unsuccessfully searching for a job despite their academic preparation for careers.

Students with disabilities are similar to their non-disabled counterparts when it comes to their educational characteristics. The differences in their majors and job experiences are not substantial. They are slightly more concentrated in arts and sciences and less in STEM and healthcare majors, and they have slightly less internship experience (3% less). These differences place them in only slightly different positions when starting their job search during and after graduation.

[1] Newman, L., Wagner, M., Knokey, A. M., Marder, C., Nagle, K., Shaver, D., & Wei, X. (2011). The Post-High School Outcomes of Young Adults with Disabilities up to 8 Years after High School: A Report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2). NCSER 2011-3005. National Center for Special Education Research.

[2] Knight, W., Wessel, R. D., & Markle, L. (2018). Persistence to graduation for students with disabilities: Implications for performance-based outcomes. Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice, 19(4), 362-380.

[3] Kessler Foundation (2021). Report of Main Findings from the 2020 Kessler Foundation National Employment and Disability Survey: Recent College Graduates. East Hanover, NJ (2021) and Cominole, M., Thomsen, E., Henderson, M., Velez, E. D., & Cooney, J. (2021). Baccalaureate and Beyond (B&B: 08/18): First Look at the 2018 Employment and Educational Experiences of 2007-08 College Graduates. First Look. NCES 2021-241. National Center for Education Statistics.

Table 1: College Majors by Disability Status

Undergraduate Majors	Without Disability	With Disability	Difference
Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM)	17%	15%	-2%
Health Care Fields	16%	14%	-2%
General Studies & Other	14%	17%	3%
Business	13%	12%	-2%
Social Sciences	12%	10%	-2%
Manufacturing, Construction, Repair, Transportation, Military Technology, or Protective Services	7%	8%	0%
Humanities	7%	8%	1%
Education	5%	5%	0%
Undeclared	8%	12%	4%

Source: Baccalaureate and beyond longitudinal study. National Center for Education Statistics website. https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/b&b/datainfo.asp. Accessed June 2021.

Almost two-thirds of college students with disabilities have "hidden" disabilities such as mental health disabilities, learning or reading disabilities, or ADHD. Only 10% have more "visible" disabilities such as mobility impairments or blindness. As a result, employers often do not know the disability status of applicants or employees unless the individual self-discloses their disability.

Compounding the challenges that students with disabilities encounter as they transition from college to careers are the generally held misconceptions and stigma associated with disabilities. People with disabilities are not a homogeneous population, and the diversity of disabilities they experience help shape their college and employment success.

[4] These data differ from data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics showing that 28% of college graduates with disabilities are employed compared to 73% of college graduates without disabilities. The BLS measures the employment rate across all age-groups and thus includes college graduates who leave the labor market later in life with the onset or worsening of a disability. Here, we are concerned with the college-to-work transition. But some of the knowledge and skills gained by focusing on that population can have spillover effects to other employees who have or who will acquire disabilities.

[5] For example: Most college grads with autism can't find jobs. This group is fixing that. https://www.marketwatch.com/story/most-college-grads-with-autism-cant-find-jobs-this-group-is-fixing-that-2017-04-10-5881421; or An innovative approach toward helping autistic young adults in their transition from college to a career. https://www.semel.ucla.edu/autism/college-career.

A person's disability can be related to vision, hearing, mobility, cognition and/or psychosocial issues; disabilities can occur either singly or in combination; and disabilities can range from mild to severe and be constant or episodic. The lived experience of disability varies by age of onset, gender, race, and ethnic group, and it affects living, social, economic, educational and employment outcomes. Thus, a person's disability often is one of multiple or "intersectional" personal identities. However, employers show more concerns about hiring people with some types of disabilities (e.g., mental health challenges) than more visible disabilities (e.g., physical disabilities).

From the student perspective, the transition to becoming an employee may raise challenges beyond those encountered in academia. Students with disabilities may possess the requisite knowledge and skills to meet employer demands, but they often do not know enough about employer hiring needs. While they may have support needs that were previously met through academic accommodations, they now may be unsure how their needs can be met in the workplace. Yet another complicating factor, as mentioned, is that students may be uncomfortable about self-disclosing their disability or be unwilling to do so.

Overall, the talent pool of graduates with disabilities comes with often-unrecognized life experiences and credentials that employers need to be aware of when considering them for jobs. Completing higher education demonstrates relevant skills that employers are looking for in their workforces. These skills include having a work ethic, being motivated and a team player, having the ability to complete tasks, and having the ability to adapt to environmental values and norms, all irrespective of the presence or absence of a disability. And employers should also realize that, to thrive and succeed in college, students with disabilities have needed to develop self-awareness, resilience, self-advocacy, and, ultimately, survival skills—in addition to overcoming any of their disability-related challenges. These intrinsic strengths of living with a disability are valuable in helping graduates with disabilities succeed in the workplace.

Employers

Businesses benefit from employing members of the unique talent pool of graduates with disabilities. However, BBI's researchers found that the pipeline from recent graduates with disabilities to employers does not flow as well as it should. A number of reasons for this phenomenon became apparent in BBI's interviews with campus staff and from the information that NOD obtained from employers associated with their project.

The talent pool of college students with disabilities provides an often untapped and yet excellent wealth of experiences, knowledge, and skills. To benefit from this talent, however, businesses must effectively invest the time and effort to overcome barriers to recruiting and hiring college students with disabilities. Despite their willingness to do so, employers were often frustrated by the process of working with campus offices to identify qualified job candidates.

Employers also have internal capacity challenges that can make the recruitment and hiring processes more difficult.

6 Blanck, P. (2020). Disability Law and Policy. Foundation Press.

7 Blanck, P., Hyseni, F., & Altunkol Wise, F. (2021). Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession: Discrimination and Bias Reported by Lawyers with Disabilities and Lawyers Who Identify as LGBTQ+. American Journal of Law & Medicine, 47, 9-61.

8 Baker, P. M., Linden, M. A., LaForce, S. S., Rutledge, J., & Goughnour, K. P. (2018). Barriers to employment participation of individuals with disabilities: Addressing the impact of employer (mis) perception and policy. American Behavioral Scientist, 62(5), 657-675.

Their attempts to attract workers with disabilities are hampered by workplace cultures that may need improved awareness about people with disabilities, problematic hiring policies, and limited abilities of their human resource departments to network with campuses and help secure qualified students with disabilities.

College Career Services and Disability Support Services

Colleges and universities have two separate departments that serve as potential partners with employers interested in hiring qualified graduates with disabilities: career services offices and offices of disability services. Each office has information about students with disabilities that employers may need to know. Collaboration among campus offices is a critical element in supporting students with disabilities during their search for employment. However, collaboration between these offices can be hard to achieve, making it difficult for graduating students with disabilities to make informed job choices and for employers to evaluate students' job candidacies.

Employers may be in contact with career services offices to connect with graduating job candidates who may be interested in working for them. Career services offices make information available to students about employer hiring needs, job fairs, resume and interview guidance, and other aspects of making a successful school to work transition. Potentially supplementing these resources, offices of disability services have important information about the types of accommodations that a student with a disability has used in becoming successful in college, including extended time on tests, note takers, audio-recorded texts, consultation with professors, and other services, that are relevant for employment success.

Important college to careers information is not routinely shared between these offices, which requires students with disabilities to navigate between them. As a result, students often do not find the advice and support they need. This lack of coordination complicates employers' efforts to reach job candidates with disabilities.

BBI found that limited information flow between the career and disability services offices is a challenge for students with disabilities. Staff are not trained and lack the skills needed to help job seekers best address their pressing issues concerning disability disclosure, accommodations, and identifying disability-friendly companies. As a result, students report lacking confidence in the advice they receive and turning to sources they believe have more expertise.

> **"I didn't work with career services because the services through [my blind vocational rehabilitation provider] were better. They were actually more relatable because they deal with people with visual disability, and they understand what options are available. I felt a lot more comfortable with them knowing that's what they do on a day-to-day basis."**

In addition, due to laws that protect students from disclosure, career services offices do not have access to personal information about a student's disability status unless the student opts to disclose it. This disclosure tends to occur only after multiple meetings with a job counselor. However, in many colleges and universities, relatively few students seek out personalized help. A student on the autism spectrum said,

> **"They might give me some advice. But they didn't know what to do about learning disabilities. They didn't have that expertise."**

Although most colleges and universities have a single, "centralized" career services office, a growing number (about 30% in 2022), have decentralized their services. At these colleges and universities, each academic unit or department has its own career services department. This approach provides employers the ability to focus efforts and resources on specific types of students in academic programs within a single college. However, the decentralized model is challenging for the many students who are looking for careers that are not directly related to their major. It is also an issue for employers who are searching for a breadth of candidates to bring more generalized knowledge to their company. A highly skilled graduate student with an anxiety disorder described this demeaning experience,

> **"Career services told me to go to a temp agency...they said that was the best I could do."**

BBI found a general receptivity among career services offices staff to learning more about students with disabilities on their campuses and to better serve them in their career explorations. These staff said that they would like to work more closely with disability services offices, even if they were unclear about how to make that happen. The NOD Campus to Careers project found that career services offices were enthusiastic about receiving training and responded positively to training on both disability awareness and accommodations to empower students to feel confident in all interview situations. Their responses suggest that renewed efforts to heighten staff disability awareness can lead to improved services for students with disabilities and result in closer connections to employers for these students.

Determining the role for disability services offices in student efforts to obtain employment,

however, can be complicated. While it is common for college students with disabilities to engage with their disability services office early in their campus careers to identify resources and request accommodations, many students reduce their engagement with disability services as they progress towards graduation, leaving the offices less well-informed than they originally were. The knowledge that disability support services has about the students they work with is valuable in matching them to employer's needs. However, helping students make connections with employers or jobs is beyond many such offices' mandate and staff capacities.

BBI found that some disability services offices offer resources on career readiness and career exploration. They maintain contact with students through emails, newsletters, outreach, and social or sporting events. They provide training to students on developing confidence, self-advocacy, effectively disclosing a disability to an employer, and identifying disability-friendly employers. They also advertise internships or employment opportunities specified for students with disabilities or offer opportunities for employers to meet with students with disabilities through disability career fairs.

The Campus to Careers project identified successful strategies for collaboration between these offices. At Northeastern University, students have opportunities to alternate semesters of academic study with periods of full-time work. Career services' role in that effort helps students identify work opportunities. The role of disability support services in that effort is to provide advice on job accommodations and other disability-related support to students and employers. As another example of a successful collaboration strategy at this university, disability support services staff use their expertise about disabilities to provide training sessions to career services staff on disability sensitivity, awareness, etiquette, and disability disclosure. They meet regularly with career services staff to provide additional advice and support.

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[9] https://www.naceweb.org/career-development/organizational-structure/career-services-offices-office-structure-and-organizational-division/.

The need to improve collaboration between disability and career services offices is critical for developing and sustaining a pipeline of qualified job candidates with disabilities who have graduated from colleges and universities. However, since effecting such collaborations is not usually the responsibility of employers, BBI examined the NOD project to explore what else employers can do to improve the hiring of graduates with disabilities. The list of promising practices below is derived from the conversations that employers involved in the Campus to Careers project had with NOD and from interviews that BBI conducted with employers. Raytheon Corporation is an employer using particularly effective campus-to-careers recruitment practices; it is highlighted separately in Appendix 2.

Recommendations

The NOD Campus to Careers project worked with employers to identify barriers to and facilitators of, career transition by students with disabilities. BBI also conducted meetings with employers to better understand their challenges and to identify the diversity and inclusion strategies that work best and can be adopted by other employers. We found that most employers were interested in hiring students with disabilities and/or providing opportunities for internships to help them make better job and career choices. Employers also described the challenges they faced. Among them were navigating the college disability and career services processes to establish a potential hiring pool and understanding how they could help students overcome their disabilities in the workplace through accommodations. Employers can consider the following recommendations, based on NOD project experiences and BBI's evaluation, when recruiting college students with disabilities for internships and when hiring them into their businesses.

Motivate Universities to Create Disability Support Services and Career Services Collaborations

Universities value their employer partners. This gives employers, especially large employers, leverage to prompt career services and disability support services offices to develop a collaborative system that helps employers reach their disability recruiting targets and supports students with disabilities as they search for employment.

Career services offices often work with employers to identify hiring opportunities for students nearing graduation as well as students who want to experience post-graduation work life through internships. But many career services offices may not work with employers that are actively recruiting students with disabilities into their open positions. Employers are more likely to have relationships with career services than with disability support services. If employers make it clear to career services that they want to proactively identify, recruit, and hire graduates with disabilities, universities will respond and urge their disability support services and career services offices to work more closely to address employers' interests.

Employers should make their hiring concerns and interest in hosting internships for job exploration known to their AJC (American Job Center) and at Chamber of Commerce meetings. Representatives of disability services and career services offices can be invited to present at meetings to highlight how they are preparing students with disabilities for jobs and careers.

Below are key development areas for employers seeking to develop stronger campus collaborations, along with suggested questions that may be asked along the way:

Work with Career Services: Strengthen recruitment partnerships that open the pipeline of qualified employment and internship candidates by asking the following:

- How does the career services office support the specific career goals and search challenges for students with disabilities?

- In what ways does the career services office work with the disability services office to identify the accommodation and support needs of students with disabilities so employers will be better informed on ways to support them in the workplace?

- Does career services have connections with disability and other diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) groups on campus that could help connect us to potential candidates?

- In what ways would you recommend that employers make their interest in hiring or hosting internships for students with disabilities known on campus?

- Does the college provide career fairs for students with disabilities and/or can we discuss how to invite students with disabilities to career fairs that we attend, including those hosted by AJCs?

Work with Disability Services: Employers tend to work more closely with career services offices than with disability services offices, so the questions above are usually most appropriate for the former type of office. But it is important for employers to develop relationships with the disability services staff and let them know of interest in hiring students with disabilities. Establishing this kind of relationship serves two purposes. First, it helps your company build a disability-inclusive reputation. It also helps your company identify potential job candidates by directing job-seeking candidates to your hiring announcements.

Advertise: Companies can advertise recruitment events and job and internship opportunities to students who receive services through disability services offices by posting ads in disability support services newsletters or listservs.

Job Fairs: Disability support services may host or participate in job fairs that help employers connect with students with disabilities. If these types of fairs do not currently exist, a company can request that a separate meeting space be made available to meet with students with disabilities in small settings.

Connect with Campus Disability Organizations

Increasingly, employer diversity hiring managers are reaching out to college clubs to recruit racially and gender-diverse talent. Companies can contact disability services offices to identify clubs on campus that they want to reach to share their internship or employment opportunities.

This strategy can be applied to disability recruitment. Many colleges and universities have clubs where students with disabilities can meet other students with similar life experiences. Some of these groups focus on specific disabilities such as Deaf culture organizations. Autism networking and support groups and mental health clubs may also exist on college campuses. Some of these organizations are part of a national network, while others are specific to a particular campus.

Although BBI found fewer than a dozen currently, some colleges and universities have developed disability cultural centers (DCCs) on campus. With a mission parallel to cultural centers for students who identify with racial or ethnic minorities or are marginalized because of sexual orientation, DCCs provide a space for students with disabilities to share challenges, develop pride in disability identity, and share disability culture with the rest of the campus community.

Connecting to informal student disability organizations can provide benefits when employers want to learn more about specific types of disabilities and what their supervisors may need to understand about the types of job accommodations that young people with certain disabilities might consider effective.

Promote a Disability-Friendly Employer Image

Making it known that your company supports recruiting, hiring, and retaining students with disabilities is an essential first step in developing the college-to-workplace pipeline of qualified job candidates with disabilities. Begin by building visible, proactive leadership for hiring people with disabilities and establishing a workplace culture supporting diversity and inclusion.

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[10] https://www.edsurge.com/news/2016-11-15-to-find-diverse-talent-some-companies-look-to-college-clubs.

You can then send the message to campus career and disability services offices, and to students looking ahead to their careers after graduation, that their talent and contributions are valued. Consider these elements when seeking to attract qualified job applicants with disabilities:

- Presenting at the local Chamber of Commerce or other employer association meetings about your success in hiring college graduates with disabilities can bolster recruitment methods, either through word-of-mouth or through more formal means.

- Establishing partnerships with AJCs encourages their employment counselors to recommend your company as a disability-friendly place to job candidates with disabilities.

- Placing disability-friendly language within your company's job postings and having representation at career fairs by an employee with a disability can let candidates know that job applications by qualified people with disabilities are welcome at your business.

- Contacting your VR (vocational rehabilitation) agency offices and participating in their business outreach efforts lets VR counselors know that your business has disability-friendly policies and that your staff is prepared to offer internships and jobs with accommodations as needed. Some college students may already be working with their vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency to obtain support for their education.

Create a Disability-Positive Online Image

Many job seekers with disabilities research companies online before their interview and are sensitive to how the company presents its commitment to disability inclusion. They look for images of people with disabilities on the company's website and for disability inclusion as part of the company's mission or company culture statements. They also explore online company reviews before

applying for jobs.

Consequently, it is critical to highlight the company's commitment to disability inclusion on your website and in social media postings. Include photos, success stories of current employees, and interns with disabilities in all marketing materials. A student with a psychosocial disability explained,

"What I immediately look for these days is screen reader accessibility. That's usually an indication of the company's commitment to equal opportunity employment."

And a marketing and finance major with bipolar disorder told us,

"A lot of times applications have a throwaway line about how they respect the Civil Rights Act about disability. But some companies, even big fortune 500 companies, are more up front with their disability recruiting."

Responses like these suggest that, in addition to demonstrating a commitment to disability inclusion on company websites and written materials, companies wanting to improve a company's online disability reputation should monitor job search and employer rating sites to learn and respond to all feedback regarding disability inclusion at their businesses.[11]

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[11] Such as Glass Door, Handshake, LinkedIn, and Symplicity.

Companies that actively respond to disability inclusion reviews can make candidates feel that job candidates with disabilities are welcome and supported. Working with your HR and company marketing staff to decide how best to project your company's disability-friendly profile on social media is a good place to begin projecting a disability-friendly online image.

Use Job Portals Such as Handshake and Symplicity Effectively

Increasingly, students are searching for jobs using on-line tools. Two large portals, Handshake and Symplicity, each partner with over 1,000 colleges and universities to provide a range of services for employers, students, and universities. The portals allow employers to streamline their on-campus recruiting and find talent at schools where they may not otherwise recruit.

Employers can develop a company page, post jobs, recruit students, proactively message students, and host and attend virtual career fairs.

Students create and post profiles on the sites with information about their education, academic major, employment interests, clubs, and activities They can conduct their entire job search process through these types of online portals by looking at profiles of companies that are actively recruiting on their campuses and registering for their career fairs. The online strategy can be strengthened by connecting with their peers for advice, booking time with advisors online, and applying directly to positions on campus. The portals provide access to employers who have open positions but are not actively recruiting on campus.

Neither platform currently has a method for identifying students with disabilities. However, each offers potentially important advantages for employers trying to connect to students with disabilities who are searching for internships and/or jobs:

- Employers can proactively reach out to candidates with disabilities by sending a one-to-one message based on keywords in the student's profile related to disability.

These keywords may vary depending on the groups (see Connect with Campus Disability Organizations, above).

- Employers can use disability-inclusive language and photos on the company page posted to these online sites to identify the company as disability-friendly.

- Handshake allows career services to assign searchable tags to jobs and businesses. Employers can ask career services offices to tag their business as disability-inclusive using these tags.

- Companies can host virtual events with content geared toward students with disabilities that highlights the company's culture of inclusion. The job platforms provide the opportunity for employers to create virtual events to single campuses at a time.

Job descriptions that employers post online are critical ingredients for attracting employment candidates. By carefully crafting the description to ensure that it includes only the requirements needed for the job and uses disability-inclusive language, the employer can convey openness to hiring qualified applicants with disabilities.

Several students that BBI met with remarked on the way employers present themselves in job listings. A graduate student with progressive vision and hearing loss explained,

> **"You can read the requirements listed in the job description and get a sense of whether the company is reaching out to everyone across the board. Sometimes you get a sense that these people are very rigid and inflexible. It's important that the companies display a certain level of tolerance. There's a lot of psychology involved."**

And a graduate student with a physical developmental disability said,

"A lot of employers list requirements like you need to be able to lift 50 pounds even for an office job. I was a receptionist for several years in college and I never needed to lift anything like that. I would encourage employers to just go through their listings, and make sure that what they're asking for, they really need because it might deter disabled applicants, if they feel like they don't meet those criteria."

Provide Training to Company Recruiters, Human Resource Professionals, and Hiring Managers

Despite substantial progress since the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) thirty years ago, research has demonstrated that many recruiters and other professionals have an unconscious bias toward people with disabilities.[12] Some of this bias is based on stereotypes about what people with certain types of disabilities can and cannot do.

Compounding the bias, hiring staff and co-workers may be uncomfortable when interacting with someone with a disability and as result may shy away from interacting at all to avoid an interaction they think will be uncomfortable. Typically, company staff express concerns like these:

- What do I do? How do I act? What if I say the wrong thing?
- How do I know if the person with a disability will be able to keep up with the pace of the office?

- What am I allowed to ask during an interview? Can I ask people with disabilities how they do their jobs?

These are not uncommon concerns. In recognition of this phenomenon, the NOD Campus to Career project engaged employers in discussions about their experiences with job candidates or current employees with disabilities and addressed their concerns through training and facilitated dialogue sessions. NOD provided two half-day trainings that helped demystify the process of hiring and working with people with disabilities. The trainings included disability awareness and etiquette, disability sensitivity, and tips for recruiting and interviewing candidates with disabilities that employers found informative and useful. One employer attending the sessions noted, "The trainings taught us how to have comfortable conversations with candidates."

Employers can benefit from working with their VR agencies, campus disability services offices, and other community disability services organizations to host guest presenters on disability sensitivity in the workplace at regularly scheduled staff meetings.

Facilitate Self-Disclosure

College students and recent graduates may be hesitant to self-disclose their disability to an employer, especially during the recruitment and interview process. Their caution limits the employer's ability to identify potential candidates with disabilities, develop appropriate supports, express a culture of inclusion, and meet compliance goals.

Disability disclosure is a complex and sensitive subject in the disability community.

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[12] Blanck, P. (2021). On the Importance of the Americans with Disabilities Act at Thirty, Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 1-23. DOI 10.1177/10442073211036900.

Individuals may choose not to disclose because they fear stigma and discrimination, have negative past experiences following disclosure, or worry that they will be viewed as not self-sufficient or unable to perform on par with other employees. It is incumbent upon the business to create an environment that embraces diversity and acceptance and facilitates disclosure.

An office of disability services director explained that,

"There is fear on the part of our students. They have had negative experiences and may think 'if my professor who I'm paying to be in their class is a jerk to me, I'm certainly not going to say anything to an employer.' Or 'Why would I go into a position actively identifying myself as a person with a disability when I feel like that automatically makes me more vulnerable?'"

Students can also be unsure about when to disclose:

"If you disclose before the interview, you might not get an interview, but if you wait, then the interviewers are reactive about it. Is it worse to be rejected right off the bat or to go into the interview and have people be shocked?"

Many job applications include an option to self-disclose disability. Federal law requires that this disclosure remain separate from the job application to protect the confidentiality of the student. However, from the student's perspective, they may be confused about the purpose of disclosing on the application and may not realize that the hiring manager does not see the information.

"It's pretty standard practice on applications now to disclose 'Yes, I have a disability, no I don't have a disability, or I don't wish to answer either one of those two options.' I'm fine with disclosing after I have been working at the company for a while, but I don't understand why it is important to disclose on an application. Why is it any of their business?"

Being hesitant or unwilling to disclose a disability to the employer is not unique to young people with disabilities. In fact, creating workplace cultures that support disability disclosure among new and existing employees of all ages is a priority for many leading companies. These companies recognize that self-disclosure can help the company to implement job accommodations, and to facilitate networking opportunities among employees with disabilities to increase workplace peer-to-peer support.

Strategies to increase self-disclosure among job applicants who are college students or recent graduates include the following:

- While employers are precluded from asking a job applicant or prospective intern about their disability, they may ask job candidates how they perform required tasks. If an applicant discloses their disability, they may offer examples of the types of accommodations that have assisted them in the past to perform job tasks.

- Companies that invest time into training staff on disability-related topics can help demystify the disability conversation and make candidates more comfortable about disclosing their disabilities.

- Disability employee resource groups (ERGs) can demonstrate a company's disability inclusion while providing a network of support.

- Assigning new employees to an experienced mentor who can provide support and professional development can help employees feel more comfortable.

Make Your Accommodations Request Process Simple, Open, and Easy

The ADA requires companies with over 15 employees to make disability-related accommodations, and many students and recent graduates with disabilities are aware of this requirement. However, asking for an accommodation may be difficult for an applicant or new employee.

"Even though we know that we are entitled to certain accommodations, asking for them is psychologically one of the most difficult things that a person with a disability can do. As people with disabilities, we all strive to achieve or regain a level of independence. And asking for an accommodation kind of undercuts your feeling of independence, where you feel as if you are dependent on somebody to accommodate you."

Creating an atmosphere of acceptance or proactively facilitating the accommodation process indicates the employer's commitment to full inclusion.

Create Disability-Inclusive Internships and Hire Former Interns

Offering an internship can be a valuable mechanism to evaluate up-and-coming talent while providing students with valuable work experience and a way to build the intern's knowledge and understanding of the company. According to a survey of employer members of NACE (National Association of Colleges and Employers) (2019b), 56% of interns are converted to full-time employees, with former interns demonstrating higher retention rates than new hires who did not intern at the organization.[14]

Internships may be particularly important for college students with disabilities. They provide students with valuable work experience, as well as an opportunity to apply their knowledge to real world situations, expand their networking connections, gain self-advocacy skills, get their foot in the door, and demonstrate their skills. Internships help students understand the 'hidden requirements' of job success, such as working effectively with supervisors and co-workers, understanding the company culture, and being aware of workplace cues that help them become regarded as valuable employees.

Some universities, often through academic departments, help connect students to internships. The school's disability services offices are often available to provide supports for the student or to be available to the employer to answer any questions or address disability-related issues that may arise. A student interviewed by BBI offered the following perspective:

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13 Disability Inclusive Employment Policy Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers, https://bbi.syr.edu/projects/disability-inclusive-employment-policy-rehabilitation-research-and-training-centers/.

> **"The Internship program office worked with the office of disability services and the company to make sure that I had the right accommodations. They checked in every month to make sure my internship was on track. That was very helpful. "**

Not all internships offer students the same benefits or provide employers the opportunity to see the intern's potential. Research on college internship projects validates the importance of support and mentoring from supervisors. When creating an inclusive apprenticeship, it is important to remember that economic factors may affect a student's willingness to accept an unpaid internship. Students with disabilities often have disproportionately lower incomes than their peers without disabilities and may face extra costs in managing their disability. Students with disabilities who are from ethnic and racial minorities who have economic challenges may want a paid internship. Students with these types of economic needs may be among the least able financially to take an unpaid internship.

Recruit at Schools with Strong Disability Representation

According to the NACE, the two most common sources for employers to recruit racially and ethnically diverse candidates are Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs). This type of strategy can be applied to disability hiring.

Employers generally focus on a relatively small number of universities based on location, academic programs, and record of past hiring from among their graduates. Employers should consider expanding their focus to include colleges with strong disability representation.

Several colleges are known for their strong commitment to enrolling students with disabilities. Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, part of the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, New York, are designed for deaf students. Landmark College in Putney Vermont is designed exclusively for students who learn differently, including students with a learning disability (such as dyslexia), ADHD, autism, or executive function challenges. Several colleges, such as Berkeley, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Ball State, Edinboro University, and others are well known for providing specialized campus life programs and services addressing the needs of students with physical disabilities, such as attendant services, wheelchair basketball teams, specialized dorm rooms, and strong disability support services. Several online resources rank U.S. colleges and universities based on the supports they provide to students with disabilities.

The top ranked schools have strong support for disability inclusion and would make good recruiting partners.[17] However, if a particularly disability-friendly college is known to you, reviewing their website disability-inclusive practices descriptions may provide examples of successful strategies you can share with colleges and universities you work with to help them establish job recruitment pipelines.

Stand Out at Career Fairs and Participate in Disability Career Fairs

Career fairs offer benefits for both students and employers.

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[14] National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2019b). "Internship & Survey Report: Executive Summary." https://www.naceweb.org/uploadedfiles/files/2019/publication/executive-summary/2019-nace-internship-and-co-op-survey-executive-summary.pdf

[15] McHugh, P. P. (2017). The impact of compensation, supervision and work design on internship efficacy: implications for educators, employers and prospective interns. Journal of Education and Work, 30(4), 367-382.

The fairs provide students with opportunities to explore career options and meet with a variety of prospective employers about possible job matches. They provide employers the opportunity to increase visibility, to illustrate the benefits of employment in their companies, and to provide information to students about entry-level jobs, co-op opportunities, internships, and career ladders. Some companies use career fairs to kick off their recruiting season. Many who do so conduct short one-on-one interviews and collect resumes for future openings.

At the beginning of the COVID pandemic, colleges and employers shifted from in-person to virtual career fairs. Virtual fairs use chat technology and teleconferencing to simulate the interactions between job seekers, recruiters, and hiring managers at in-person events. Generally, employers have the option to set up group or one-on-one virtual sessions. In the group sessions, the employer can present information about the company and field questions.

Individualized sessions offer an opportunity to talk directly with individual students about their job goals. Applicants can ask questions about companies and specific employee roles, upload resumes, and participate in screening interviews. As COVID restrictions become less pervasive, many colleges are moving back to in-person career fairs while continuing to offer the virtual fairs, on-demand resources, and other online programming they expanded during the pandemic.

General Career Fairs: Because in-person career fairs bring together many companies, employers are competing to attract the best talent. Job seekers with disabilities may not reveal their disability during a job fair but could be more attracted to companies that are "disability-friendly." The following strategies can be used indicate the company's commitment to disability diversity at an in-person career fair.

- Place a disability placard on the table or have the recruiters wear an emblem indicating that their company values disability inclusion (and have an accessible electronic version of this information available).

- Include the NOD "Leading Disability Employer" Seal on booth signage and printed materials.

- Ensure that recruiters are aware of the company's disability hiring initiatives and are comfortable talking with potential candidates with a wide range of disabilities.

- Highlight the company's employee resource groups and list disability resource groups near the top of the list.

- Ask members of the disability employee resource group, college alumni working at the company, and previous interns to represent the company at the career fair. The presence of an individual with a disability representing the company sends a strong signal about the company's commitment to diversity.

- Provide students with information on site rather than sending them to the web site to get more information about the company.

Disability-Focused Career Fairs: Some disability support services offices create disability career fairs that offer employers the opportunity to meet only with students with disabilities. Often these events are scheduled the day before or after the general Career Fair so recruiters do not need to make extra trips to the campus. These disability-focused fairs tend to include only a few employers, and disability support services primarily advertise the fairs to students who are registered with their office.

16 https://www.collegemagazine.com/top-10-campuses-for-students-with-physical-disabilities/.

17 Best Disability Friendly Colleges and Universities for 2022. (2022). CollegeConsensus.com. https://www.collegeconsensus.com/rankings/best-disability-friendly-colleges/ or https://www.greatvaluecolleges.net/top-colleges-for-disabled-students/ https://collegeconsensus.com/rankings/best-colleges-for-students-with-learning-disabilities/.

Even if the disability services office at the colleges or universities that you work with does not offer these specialized fairs, your company may request that you have an opportunity to meet with their students with disabilities individually or in groups to present your business' job and career opportunities.

Some students with disabilities report that they were uncomfortable disclosing a disability during a general career fair because they were unsure of how the employer will react and did not want their fellow students to hear them disclose. These students preferred to attend a career fair specifically for students with disabilities where the employer knew in advance that everyone attending the fair had a disability. With such a disability-inclusive environment, they could have a more relaxed conversation with the recruiter in a less hectic environment without having to decide whether to disclose their disability.

However, some students may resist the idea of a disability career fair because they are unsure if their disability "qualifies" them for participation. Other reasons may include that they do not want to disclose their disability to a company before the recruitment and hiring process begins, or because they prefer attending a general fair and discussing job opportunities in a non-specialized setting that is attended by other job candidates without disabilities. Offering information at general career fairs about company support for job accommodations and disability inclusion may help students who do not wish to disclose their disability at this stage to still obtain important information.

Reduce Bias in the Interview Process and Develop Alternative Interviewing Processes

Recognizing conscious or unconscious bias: The job interview is a critical part of the hiring process. If conducted well, it gives employers the opportunity to identify the individual with the best mix of knowledge, skills, and abilities for the position available. However, whether from discomfort about engaging with job applicants who have disabilities, assumptions about limitations on the person's ability to complete job tasks based on their disability, or not knowing what questions are allowed during an interview, conscious and unconscious bias often surfaces during interviews. Students offered their perspectives on the hiring process:

> **You shouldn't be more concerned about my qualifications for this job than you would any other applicant who is able-bodied. I understand you want to make sure that I'm capable. But there comes a point when I can tell that your concern is not with my credentials or my resume, or my references. It's more a matter of trying to 'suss' out just how disabled I am, which doesn't come from a place that I feel is appropriate.**

> **The interviewers don't always feel comfortable, or they're not always sure what they are allowed to ask you about your disability. That concerns me; then the interviewer fills in the gaps. Like most people, they don't know very much about disabilities or the disability rights movement. If I don't have space to advocate, they just decide for themselves what I'm capable of.**

When the interviewer asked if there is anything I might need, I said, 'I might need a step stool to reach things on high shelves because of my short stature.' And the interviewer made a big deal of how falling is a big hazard for the patients: 'What if the step stool falls over?' I didn't get hired. It felt like discrimination, but I couldn't prove it.

I have been in interviews where the interviewer asked me, okay, so if we hire you, because you are a person who is visually impaired, how are you going to do this job? That kind of takes you back a little bit because it comes across as if they are using my disability as a qualifier. I can do a job unless it requires me to drive a train, fly a plane, or fire a gun

Eliminate conscious and unconscious bias: Employers can use the following approaches to address these biases:

- Provide training to human resource staff and hiring managers to explore their implicit (and explicit) biases and allay their fears about interviewing and working with employees with disabilities.

- Ensure that expectations from the interview align with the requirements of the job and are skills-based. Avoid judging a candidate by whether they will "fit in" with the company culture. For

example, people with autism spectrum disorder often have trouble with "people skills" that may be apparent during the interview. But if these skills are not required for the job, the individual may still be a viable candidate.

- Assess how skills-based hiring and non-skills-based traits, such as personality, affect whether candidates are hired. This analysis can help many candidates with strong skills, but challenged social abilities, to make it further along the application process, especially those who are not confident with disclosing their disability to hiring managers.

Make necessary accommodations: Depending on the type of disability, some people may need accommodations to have a fair opportunity to present their strengths. If the accommodations are not in place, this puts the job candidate at a disadvantage.

If the employer has not set up accommodations, the burden falls on the person. They have to look at the street view in Google Maps to see if there is accessible parking and then decide, 'Do I need to bring a companion or caregiver to navigate it because this space is not accessible?' These are not things I should need to be worried about. When you're going through an interview, you get a little nervous, right? And the extra layer of accessibility is just honestly like an undue burden on that applicant. These are things that people without disabilities don't think about.

Making accommodations can include the following strategies:

- Ensure that the space where you conduct interviews is physically accessible and away from noise and other distractions.

- Provide a sign language interpreter if necessary (and all electronic information accessible).

- Send the candidate information about the schedule, who will attend, and what you'll be talking about so applicants know what to expect. One student explained, "This helps people with auditory processing problems. If I'm spending so much energy trying to listen to the question, I might not be able to give the best response."

- Be responsive to the needs of the candidate during the interview; this may include taking a break.

Maintain disability representation on job hiring panels: This serves two purposes. First, it presents a strong message to the job candidate about the company's commitment to diversity. As one student said "I immediately felt much more comfortable when I saw I was being interviewed by disabled people. I love to see in the job market that there are disabled people in leadership roles."

Allow alternative interviewing pathways for students who may not 'shine' in short interviews: Some job candidates are uncomfortable sitting across the desk from an interviewer. For some job candidates with disabilities, this may make it difficult for the candidate to show their strengths.

There are things that my disability affects in the interview. For instance, like direct eye contact, they expect that the whole time. Right? And my gaze wanders, and it takes active focus for me to keep on them. Right? The cadence with which I speak sometimes deviates from the normal. I have gaps in what I'd like to say. And you're expected to answer questions as quickly as possible.

To offset these challenges employers can:

- Invite the applicant on a tour (or virtually) of the workplace either before or after the interview and obtain more information about the job candidate through less formal discussions.

- Offer a multi-day interview experience for students, especially those on the autism spectrum who may not be able to succeed in the traditional interview process.

When asked what they would like the interviewer to say, a recent graduate who is blind responded:

I'd like them to say we've never worked with someone with a visual disability. What can we do to make your stay here with us productive and successful for you? That's it. That's all they have to say.

Audit Your Entire Process from Recruitment through Interviewing, Hiring, Onboarding, and Retention

As many technology companies seeking to hire more women and people from minority groups have learned, adapting recruitment practices and creating a culture supporting diversity and inclusion are key aspects of successfully recruiting and retaining marginalized populations. While many companies may be unaware of the impact that their recruitment processes have on attracting candidates with disabilities, many college graduates with disabilities can perceive recruitment processes as being non-inclusive, unwelcoming, and difficult. Companies can address this problem by auditing their current job recruitment processes to make improvements in their disability inclusion focus. NOD has considerable experience working with employers on developing more disability-inclusive recruitment strategies and can work with you on making the improvements needed to attract job applicants with disabilities to your company.

The application and hiring process involves multiple steps. Employers may be explicitly or implicitly discouraging or overlooking qualified candidates with disabilities at each stage in the process. A disability focused recruitment process audit can include asking questions like these:

Strategizing Recruitment: Does the company address disability in its diversity hiring strategy? Do campus recruiters have disability hiring targets that you work with them to meet?

Sourcing Candidates: Does wording in advertisements inadvertently discourage disability applicants? Are the stated requirements for the job justifiable? Do they avoid appearing exclusionary for someone with a disability? Do postings indicate that there is flexibility in customizing a job according to an applicant's strengths and an employer's need?

Using Online Applications: Is the application process accessible to all regardless of disability? Are there suitable alternative formats for the application form, or is online application the only alternative?

Reviewing Applicants: If algorithm hiring is being used, do algorithms screen out applicants with disabilities?[18] (Note: Algorithms are proprietary, so it is difficult to know if they include inherent bias, such as gaps in employment.) Candidates with disabilities may not have had the same opportunities in terms of work experience or training as other candidates.

Using Additional Types of Pre-Interview Screening: If you are using a psychometric test, is it appropriate (not a medical test) and accessible to all? Does the recruitment manager have, or can the manager offer, a process for requesting accommodations for this step (or any next steps) of the process?

Conducting In-Person (or virtual) Interviews: Is the interview venue accessible? Does the interviewer understand that the job seeker with a disability may present differently because they may lack confidence from having been rejected for other jobs or from having been discouraged by societal attitudes about disability? Does the interviewer understand what kind of supports could be offered during the interview?

Doing Reference Checks: Does the hiring manager recognize that applicants with disabilities may have experienced prejudice or discrimination at their previous job that resulted in a layoff or quitting employment? Or that they may have concerns about including previous employers as references? If so, what alternatives might you offer to validate their credentials?

[18] Harpur, P., Hyseni, F., & Blanck, P. (2022). Workplace COVID-19 Health Surveillance and Algorithmic Disability Discrimination, Journal of Cancer Survivorship, __, __-__, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11764-021-01144-1.

Determining the Offer: An applicant's previous salary may not be a good indication of current value. Does the offer recognize that prejudice by a former employer may mean that the candidate has not been offered positions that matched abilities? Objectively assessing present skills against the job requirements at the regular salary level helps to address the issue.

Onboarding After Offer Acceptance: Is the manager confident about employing and managing employees with disabilities? Does the manager have resources if a challenge arises?

The NOD Campus to Careers project has identified barriers to and facilitators of successful campus-to-careers transitions from the perspectives of employers, colleges and universities, and students. The project's results point the way forward to helping more students with disabilities realize their full job and career potential while assisting employers to achieve the full benefits of hiring them into their companies.

Conclusion

Employers need qualified workers to remain competitive in an increasingly challenging economy. Creating successful recruitment initiatives helps businesses take advantage of the workforce contributions that qualified college students with disabilities can make to their companies. Understanding how to improve their own hiring processes to make them disability-inclusive is an important goal for companies. Equally vital is understanding how to work with college career and disability services offices to create a pipeline of qualified job applicants.

College students with disabilities form a unique talent pool. They can be effectively recruited by companies that make commitments to creating strong disability inclusive marketing; ensuring inviting and accessible application experiences; and training disability-informed hiring and management staff. Each employer is unique, so strategies may be influenced by size, capacity, and line of business, among other factors. Each company must decide what strategies are feasible and affordable given its own time, staff, and budgetary constraints. Research demonstrates that an ongoing commitment to employer diversity and inclusion includes regular internal strategy and practice audits and a strong commitment to building the partnerships necessary to recruit college students with disabilities.

Appendix A

NOD Campus to Careers Participating Colleges/ Universities, Employers, and Other Disability Resources

Colleges and Universities:

- Boston University
- Brandeis University
- College of the Holy Cross
- Northeastern University
- Westfield State University
- University of Massachusetts-Amherst
- University of Massachusetts-Boston
- University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth
- University of Massachusetts-Lowell
- Worcester State University

Employers – NOD secured the commitment of six employers with a significant presence in the Boston area including:

- Boston Children's Hospital
- Deloitte
- JPMorgan Chase
- PwC
- Partners Healthcare
  / Spaulding Rehabilitation Network
- Raytheon Technologies

Existing disability employment expertise: The Campus to Careers project capitalized on existing disability employment expertise:

- UMass Medical School's Work Without Limits initiative, a consortium of Massachusetts-based employers and other stakeholders committed to including people with disabilities in the workforce.

- Career Opportunities for Students with Disabilities (COSD), an organization that has worked for over 17 years to connect such college students and graduates with employers.

- Partners for Youth with Disabilities (PYD), a Boston-based nonprofit organization that enabled Campus to Careers students to access PYD's e-mentoring platform entitled Campus Career Connect (C3). C3 connects students with disabilities to adult mentors and focuses on career readiness.

- Job Accommodation Network (JAN), based at West Virginia University, which provided information on accommodations to Campus to Careers employers, universities, and students with disabilities via webinars.

Playbook:
Build Your Campus Disability
Hiring Strategy

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION ON
DISABILITY

Introduction

Recruiting college talent is becoming more competitive every year, and your company needs a good strategy to compete for skilled and diverse talent. College students with disabilities are a unique and skilled talent pool that allows your business to take its college recruitment strategy to the next level, yet you might encounter challenges and opportunities that can impact your recruitment success. A great recruitment strategy requires a dedicated commitment and can take some time to develop the return on investment by acquiring incredible talent with disabilities.

To build a successful strategy to recruit graduating students with disabilities, you might have the following questions:

1. What steps should I focus on to build my strategy to recruit graduates with disabilities?

2. Who can help me build my strategy?

3. What in my current recruitment processes should I fix?

We created this playbook to help you answer these questions and guide your journey to building a successful strategy to recruit college students, graduates, and alumni with disabilities. This playbook is broken down into seven main recommendations with concrete checklists to help you start building your strategy.

Steps to Build Your Strategy

1	**Optimize Your Campus Job Portal Experience**
2	**Create Amazing Disability-Inclusive Job Posts**
3	**Build Your Company's Disability Positive Brand**
4	**Strengthen the Job Interview & Onboarding Process**
5	**Utilize Campus Opportunities to Find Candidates**
6	**Leverage Campus Support**

You can start many of these recommendations today, but others will take longer to start and complete. No matter what you choose to focus on, we highly recommend that your business start building strong relationships with your target colleges' career services, disability services offices, and campus disability organizations as these will provide you with additional connections and strategies to recruit students.

1. Optimize Your Campus Job Portal Experience

Why?

Campus job portals are one of the main ways to find candidates and market your company to students. Students with disabilities evaluate your company in your company profile and job postings with a unique disability lens, so optimizing your campus job portal usage on platforms like **Handshake** and **Symplicity** can help you find and convince more students with disabilities to apply to your positions.

Whom to Ask for Help?

Campus Career Services Offices

How?

- Include your dedication to diversity statement on your company profile page.

- Place images of people with disabilities working at your company on your profile page.

- Use disability-inclusive tag opportunities for describing your company so that candidates can find your companies using these search tags.

- Search for candidates with disabilities with disability keywords and campus disability groups.

- Host virtual events on the platform with content geared toward students with disabilities that highlight inclusion.

- Ask the Campus Career Services Office about how to best use the job portal to present your company's commitment to disability inclusion.

2. Create Amazing Disability–Inclusive Job Posts

Why?

Students with disabilities want to see a commitment to diversity and disability in many ways from visual images to job descriptions. If job posts are not written with a disability lens in mind, many students with disabilities might be deterred from applying to your job postings.

Whom to Ask for Help?

Internal DEIB/HR or online resources and consultants/nonprofits

How?

- Review your job posts to ensure that only essential job functions are included in the descriptions (Example: if the job doesn't require lifting, don't put "must be able to lift 50 lbs.")

- Write disability-inclusive job descriptions and titles.

- Include disability-inclusive imagery in the job posting images.

- If possible, include job features that are attractive to many people with disabilities such as flexible work schedules.

3. Build Your Company's Disability Positive Brand

Why?

Candidates with disabilities need to know that you are open and inclusive to the disability community. Building your disability inclusion brand must include direct and indirect methods of informing candidates of your dedication. This should include direct methods such as publishing diversity statements on your company website and indirect ones like using images of people with disabilities.

Whom to Ask for Help?

Marketing, PR, and web services
Internal DEIB/HR or online resources and consultants/nonprofits

How?

- Place your commitment to disability inclusion in your company's mission and culture statements.

- Create a disability inclusion page on your company website.

- Include images of employees with disabilities throughout your company's website and online presence. (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)

- Include recognition your company has recieved for disability inclusion

- Use social media posts to highlight your disability inclusion as younger generations will use social media like Instagram to evaluate your company.

- Monitor and respond to disability-related feedback on your company's profile page on employer review sites like Glassdoor.

- If possible, build a company employee resource group (ERG) to support your employees and show candidates your dedication to supporting people with disabilities.

- Contact your vocational rehabilitation offices and participate in their business outreach efforts.

4. Strengthen the Job Interview & Onboarding Process

Why?

When interviewers and hiring managers are uncomfortable with disability topics during interviews, candidates can feel stressed and perform poorly during interviews. To avoid this, your company should attempt to reduce disability bias and allow for alternative interview pathways that might be more suited for some candidates with disabilities.

Whom to Ask for Help?

DEIB, HR, Learning & Development team, ERG executive sponsor
Disability consultants/non-profits

How?

- Provide disability awareness and confidence training to recruiters and hiring managers so that they feel comfortable with these topics and candidates with disabilities.

- Include people with disabilities on the job hiring and interview panels to reduce bias and let candidates know about your commitment to diversity.

- Hold interviews for students in convenient and disability-accessible locations.

- Allow for alternative interviewing pathways like multi-day interviewing or video call interviews.

- Make the accommodation request process easy, public, and simple for candidates throughout the entire employment life cycle.

- Contact your vocational rehabilitation offices and participate in their business outreach efforts

- Increase candidates' self-identification through the following:
  - During interviews, ask job candidates how they might perform required tasks, but don't ask them about their disability.
  - Train hiring managers about disability disclosure and the ways that candidates can disclose.
  - Assign new employees to an experienced mentor who can provide support and guidance to help employees feel more comfortable disclosing their disability.

5. Utilize Campus Opportunities to Find Candidates

Why?

Achieving a good return on your strategy requires you to place your campus resources and time where you can find the most and best-qualified candidates. Candidates with disabilities want to see that your commitment to disability inclusion is clear and apparent so that they don't need to guess about your inclusion efforts. Also, creating long-term pathways like internships can also provide candidates a way to prove their skills while providing you a pipeline of candidates for future positions.

Whom to Ask for Help?

Campus Career Services Offices & Disability Support Services Offices

How?

- If possible, recruit at colleges with high disability representation and strong disability support systems.

- Attend disability-specific career fairs on campus.

- Include images of employees with disabilities throughout your company's website and online presence. (LinkedIn, Facebook, etc.)

- Attend general career fairs on campus and show your disability inclusion by placing signage and other indications that explicitly show your commitment to disability inclusion.

- Include your employees with disabilities (visible and non-visible) to represent your company at career fairs and campus events.

- Create disability-inclusive college internships and hire former interns to create strong connections to the campus.

6A. Leverage Campus Support from Career Services

Why?

This office will most likely be your main contact point to help you market your job postings and recruiting candidates at the college. They can also help you connect to the Disability Support Services office to find disability-specific recruitment opportunities.

Whom to Ask for Help?

Campus Career Services Office

How?

- Inform the office of your company's disability recruitment goals.

- Establish a good relationship by meeting in person with the office staff, not just at career fairs.

- Ask to be connected with Academic Departments to let them know your recruitment goals

- Ask good questions (below) to identify how they can connect you to students with disabilities:

- How does the Career Services Office support students with disabilities?

- Do Career and Disability and Support Services work together to support students with disabilities?

- Does your office have connections with disability groups, student organizations or career-specific clubs? Could you make introductions to these groups for us?

- How should we make our interest in hiring students with disabilities known on campus?

- Does the college provide career fairs specifically for students with disabilities?

- Who provides advice to students about asking for accommodations and other disability-related topics?

- How can I best use Handshake and Simplicity to market myself as a disability-friendly employer?

6B. Leverage Campus Support from Disability Support Services

Why?

The Disability Support Services Office can help connect you to candidates and other opportunities. They can also help you work with the Career Services Office to optimize your strategy.

Whom to Ask for Help?

Disability Support Services Office

How?

- Let the office staff know your disability recruitment goals.

- Establish a good relationship by meeting with the office staff face to face.

- Ask good questions (below) about how they can help your disability recruitment goals.

  - Does your office currently work directly with students and employers to make job matches?

  - Who within the department should I work with to identify opportunities to connect with students and recent graduates with disabilities?

  - Does the department have a newsletter or list that I could use to announce job openings and publicize the company's commitment to disability inclusion?

  - Does Disability and Accessibility services host job fairs for students with disabilities?

  - Is there a campus group or club for students with disabilities? (if yes, ask for an introduction)

Should You Review Your Hiring Processes?

This checklist is designed to be used in conjunction with the video "add link here" and highlight steps to auditing your process for hiring college students and recent graduates with disabilities.

Step 1: Designing the Strategy

- Does your company specifically address disability in its diversity hiring strategy and post the commitment to diversity on a dedicated Diversity & Inclusion webpage? Does the webpage include quotes from employees with disabilities that comment on their positive experiences with recruitment, hiring, accommodations and career advancement?

- Do campus recruiters have disability hiring targets that you keep data on and work with them to meet?

- Does your company have a disability employee relations group (ERG) and are they involved in the development of recruitment and hiring strategies?

- Does your company work with your target colleges' disability services offices and career services offices to identify and attract college graduates with disabilities?

- Does your company check online company review websites and respond to disability-specific feedback?

Step 2: Job Postings

- Do your job posts have a hiring inclusion statement that demonstrates to applicants that you are actively encouraging people with disabilities to join an inclusive and diverse workforce?

- Are the stated education and skills requirements for the job reasonable and justifiable for job performance?

- Do job postings indicate that there is flexibility in customizing a job according to an applicant's strengths and your company's needs?

- Does your company work with the career services office and the disability services office to make your college job board profile and job postings disability-friendly and materials posted accessible to all?

Step 3: Job Applications & Screening

- Is there a dedicated webpage for students with disabilities to submit their application?

- Is the application process accessible to all regardless of disability (enlarged text, screen reader compatible, easily readable font and color scheme)?

- Are there suitable alternative formats for the application form, or is online application the only option?

- If screening algorithms are used, are they inadvertently screening out applicants with disabilities?

- If you are using psychometric or personality tests, are they appropriate and accessible to all? Screening out specific disabilities?

Step 4: Interviews

- Is the interview venue accessible and ADA compliant?

- Do interview appointment setters ask candidates if they would like transportation to the interview, a more convenient interview location, or other accommodations to support disability candidates?

- Have interviewers (recruiters, Talent Aquisition, managers) had disability sensitivity, etiquette, and disclosure training to help them be comfortable and confident discussing disability-specific topics during interviews?

- Do hiring managers recognize that applicants with disabilities may have experienced prejudice or discrimination at their previous job that resulted in a layoff or quitting employment?

- As they may have concerns about including previous employers as references, what alternatives do you offer to validate their credentials?

Step 5: Job Offers & Onboarding

- As previous jobs held by candidates with disabilities might not have had fair compensation due to prejudice, do job offers reflect fair value for positions and not just previous compensation matches?

- Is the manager confident about employing and managing employees with disabilities?

- Does the manager have resources if they encounter a challenge with an employee with a disability?

- Is the manager familiar with the accommodation process and know who to contact within the company to assist the candidate with getting the accommodations needed to perform their job and have a successful career?

- Is there a mentorship program or buddy system set up to help the new hires navigate through their first few weeks/months?

- Is there a codified outline shared with the new hire for assistance/accommodations procedures?

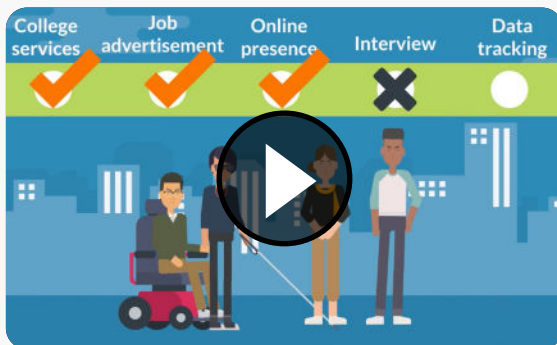# The National Organization on Disability & The Burton Blatt Institute

Hiring Process **Videos**

Should You Review Your Hiring Process?

Should You Review Your Hiring Process?

with audio descriptions

Be an Agent of Change

This checklist is designed to be used in conjunction with the video "add link here" and highlight steps to Best Practices for Recruiting Students from Campus Career Services and Disability Services Offices.

Step 1: Share Your Disability Recruitment Goals with Both College Offices

- Share with the Career Services and Disability Services offices that you are committed to recruiting candidates with disabilities from their campus networks.

- Share your goals with both offices and ask them how to optimize your disability recruitment strategy.

- Share recruitment materials that provide comments on positive work experiences from employees with varying types of disabilities and different types of jobs.

Step 2: Make Connections Between the College Offices to Recruit Candidates

- Ask the Career Services Office how they support the specific career goals and job search challenges for students with disabilities?

- Ask the Career Services Office how they work with the Disability Services Office to support students.

- Ask the Career Services Office to connect you with disability and other DEI groups on campus.

- Ask both offices if career fairs specifically for students with disabilities are available and/or how to make students with disabilities comfortable to approach your company at career fairs.

- Ask both offices for contact information for academic departments relevant to the type of available positions.

- Ask the Career Services and Disability Services to share strategies and best practices from other companies used to attract students for internships and early career recruitment.

Step 3: Build a Disability-Inclusive Reputation with the Offices and Campus Overall

- Have the Career Services and Disability Services offices help you optimize your college job board profile and job postings to be disability-inclusive and attractive to candidates.

- Post your internship and job openings on the Disability Services Office's email lists and other opportunities.

- Ask both offices how to best get the word out to disability candidates about your opportunities.

- If you host open houses at your company, have Career Services and Disability Services promote your event with their students, highlighting you as a disability friendly employer.

- Ask Disability Services to provide a location for you to introduce your company to small groups of interested students. Consider having an employee with a disability share their experiences from recruitment to hiring and onboarding and positive views on inclusive workplace culture.

How These Practices Benefit Your Recruitment

1. They increase the awareness of both the college and the students of your disability inclusiveness, which will lead to more candidates in your job pipelines.

2. They help the Career Services and Disability Services offices better support your disability recruitment goals by finding ways to collaborate.

3. They reduce the guessing about "what strategy will work" by leveraging the strong networks and existing connections that these offices have with college students with disabilities.

The National Organization on Disability & The Burton Blatt Institute

Agent of Change **Videos**

Be An Agent of Change

Be An Agent of Change
with audio descriptions

National Organization on **DISABILITY**

Burton Blatt Institute