Equality & Diversity Issues

There are many issues which you have to consider throughout your studies and career. Most of them apply whatever your gender, ethnicity, culture, age, physical ability, mental impairment, sexual orientation, region/belief, marital status or educational background. However, some of you may have specific issues which may affect your career planning.

Whatever the issue, there will be different ways of handling the situation. The Careers & Employability Service can help and support you.

General information sources

- The objective of the Diversity Group is to promote equal opportunities to people from every kind of minority background or lifestyle, including race, gender, disability, age, faith and sexual orientation.
- Equality UK focuses on promoting opportunities for everyone regardless of race, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender or transgender status.
- Equality & Human Rights Commission promotes and monitors human rights. It aims to protect, enforce and promote equality across the nine "protected" grounds - age, disability, gender, race, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.
- Visit TARGETjobs for Equality & Diversity in graduate recruitment.

Age issues

As a mature student or graduate, you have some strong selling points in your favour when you apply for a job.

- More experience of life.
- (Usually) more (positive) work experience.
- Greater confidence and maturity.
- (Generally) clearer aims.
- More likely to stay, once in the career you want.

When it comes to choosing what to do when you graduate, think about what is best for you rather than what is best for a ‘mature graduate’. There are, however, certain issues which often concern mature students particularly geographical mobility, income, flexible working patterns etc. which may have implications for the career options available to you. If you would like to discuss any issue related to your career plans, please make an appointment to talk to a careers adviser.

Other mature student resource websites include:

- Age Positive - links to specialist sources of help for mature jobseekers.
- Age UK - provides support to older people.
- The Employers Forum on Age (EFA) is an independent network of leading employers who recognise the need to attract and retain valuable employees whatever their age.
- TAEN (The Age and Employment Network) works to promote an effective labour market that serves the needs of people in mid and later life, employers and the economy.
- TARGETjobs Age: Diversity Matters offer a series of information pages covering this area which include information on disclosing your age when marketing yourself to employers, finding age positive employers and your rights around ageism.

Age discrimination legislation

Age discrimination means making a decision about people based on their age. This includes assuming somebody is too old or too young to do a job, or excluding people because of their age. Age as a selection criterion for recruitment, training, promotion or pay is illegal under the Equality Act 2010. This outlaws
practices such as age limits specified in recruitment advertising (unless there is a genuine occupational requirement) or age-related questions at interviews.

The following sites carry further information on this legislation:

- Age and Employment – factsheet from the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.
- Age Discrimination Law: how will the new law affect you? – A series of articles for people aged 50+.

### Disability & Mental Health Issues

It is important that you consider when and how to tell your prospective employer about your disability. You need to do it in as positive a way as possible. You will have many skills and positive experiences to sell to an employer and these need to be highlighted in your application and at interview.

The Equality Act 2010 includes legal rights for disabled people in work and when applying for work. The Disability Alliance’s briefing factsheet Understanding the Equality Act: information for disabled students gives an overview of how education providers and employers have to make reasonable adjustments and support you.

**The Access to Work Scheme**

Access to Work (AtW) is a government scheme designed to provide practical help to overcome barriers that disabled people may experience in the work place. AtW pays a grant, through Jobcentre Plus, towards any extra employment costs that result from a disability. This could include:

- Communication support at interviews.
- Special aids and equipment to help a disabled person function in the work place.
- Adaptations to premises or to existing equipment.
- Adaptations to premises and equipment and special aids to employment.
- Support workers - for example, a reader for a person with a sight disability.
- Help with the additional costs of travel to work.

If you are beginning your first job you can claim 100% of identified costs. The Disability Employment Advisers (see below) based at Jobcentre Plus can put you in contact with an Access to Work Adviser.

**Disability Employment Advisers**

Based in Jobcentre Plus or Job Centres, Disability Employment Advisers (DEAs) provide specialist support to people who are recently disabled, or those whose disability or health condition has deteriorated and who need employment advice. DEAs also have links with local employers. They can advise on subjects such as:

- Job seeking advice and support.
- Training advice and information.
- Employment assessment - helping you find out how your disability or health condition affects the type of work or training you want to do.
- Financial help for employers who recruit or want to retain disabled people.
- Equipment and ergonomics in the work place.
- Accessibility of premises.

Contact your Jobcentre Plus office to make an appointment with a DEA.

**Disability Rights UK** aim to be the largest national pan-disability organisation led by disabled people. They provide a number of useful factsheets relating to disability, a number of which are listed below:

- Adjustments for Disabled Students
- Careers & Work for Disabled People
- Permitted Work
- Applying for Disabled Students’ Allowances (DSAs)
• Postgraduate Education for Disabled Students
• Funding Higher Education for Disabled Students
• Making a Complaint
• Funding from Charitable Trusts

The Shaw Trust is a national charity which supports disabled and disadvantaged people to prepare for work, find jobs and live more independently. It has regional centres around the country offering advice to disabled people on job seeking.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission is an independent body, which works to promote equal opportunities for disabled people.

TARGETjobs Disability and mental health: diversity matters offer information and advice on disclosing disability and mental health issues to employers.

Gender issues

This section is aimed at women and those with gender issues who feel that their age may be impacting on their career planning or job hunting.

• Business in the Community is a membership organisation for employers who are committed to creating an inclusive workplace for men and women.
• Graduate-women.com is a networking, employment issues & jobs site for female graduates.
• Where Women Work is a company careers comparison website. The site contains no agency jobs. All are direct with organisations so you have maximum choice and control.
• The TARGETjobs Diversity Transsexual and Transgender issues page offers advice and information for anybody who feels their gender issues may impact on career choice. The site also offers information on finding a gender-positive employer.

LGBT issues

LGBT workers are legally protected from discrimination and harassment at work through the Equality Act 2010. The decision whether or not to raise and tackle issues relating to your sexual orientation and gender identity remains a matter of individual choice. If you feel this is impacting on your career planning, you can talk to a careers adviser in confidence. You can also find support through the University counselling service.

There are a number of ways you can identify positive LGBT employers:

• Do your research. Does the company have: an equal opportunities policy that refers to sexuality or transgender issues; a diversity officer in post; a LGBT employee’s network; a range of partner benefits; anti-harassment policies?
• The Stonewall recruitment guide is an excellent source of information providing a list of the top 100 employers along with a search tool to allow you to search by location and job title.
• Proud Employers is the UK’s gay-friendly job search site. It contains hundreds of jobs from LGB-friendly employers across the UK. Target members of the Gay Business Association
• The Beaumount Society is the largest and longest established transgendered support group in the UK.
• TARGETjobs Diversity: Sexual Orientation offers information on disclosing your sexual orientation when marketing yourself to employers, finding LGBT-positive employers and your rights around sexual orientation issues.
Ex-offenders issues

This section provides information for students or graduates who have had a conviction and may be concerned about disclosing it to an employer when making job applications.

Firstly check if you need to disclose this information. This will depend on:

- Whether or not the conviction is spent (most convictions are spent in five years).
- Whether or not the job you are applying for is exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

NACRO has a simple guide to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (PDF) which explains which jobs are exempt. The Apex Trust can advise on how and when to declare a conviction and how to work out if your conviction is spent.

If you do have to disclose a conviction you need to do it in as positive a way as possible. You will have many skills and positive experiences to sell to an employer and these need to be highlighted in your application and at interview. We can offer you support in doing this when making applications. Please make an appointment to talk to a careers adviser.

TARGETjobs Diversity Ex-offenders provides information finding open-minded employers for ex-offenders, how to market yourself and disclose your criminal record and information on your rights as an ex-offender.

Race Issues

This section provides information for students or graduates who may have to consider issues regarding race in their career planning or job hunting. The Equality Act 2010 makes it illegal to discriminate against a person on racial grounds.

Many organisations have set up work placements and internships aimed at under-represented groups in their profession:

- SEO London – initiative to increase the number of ethnic minority graduates into investment banking
- The Windsor Fellowship - offers a two year traineeship for ethnic minority graduates
- Civil Service Fast Stream: The Summer Diversity Internship Programme - programmes to promote applications from ethnic minority students.

There are a number of ways in which you can identify employers who are keen to recruit graduate talent from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds:

- Ethnic Jobsite and the Asian Jobsite, all of which offer vacancies, advice on job hunting, applications and much more.
- Target members of Business in the Community (BITC).
- TARGETjobs Diversity: Race offer information and advice on disclosing your race when marketing yourself to employers, finding race positive employers and information on your rights around racism.

Religion & belief issues

This section is aimed at those with issues directly related to religion and belief who feel that it may be impacting on their career planning or job hunting. Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful for someone to discriminate against you because of your religion or belief (or because you have no religion or belief). There are, however, some limited exceptions when discrimination may be lawful. You can find out more about these by visiting the Equality & Human Rights Commission.
- **Equality UK** focuses on promoting opportunities for everyone regardless of race, age, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender or transgender status.

- **The Diversity Group** - widely regarded as one of the most proactive promoters of diversity and equality in Britain, The Diversity Groups’ primary objective is to promote equal opportunities to people from every kind of minority background or lifestyle, including race, gender, disability, age, faith, transgender and sexual orientation.

- **TARGETjobs Diversity: Religion & Belief** offers information and advice on disclosing your religion, finding positive employers and your rights around religion.