FAQs for HR regarding the Disability Confident Scheme

The Positive about Disability ‘Two Ticks’ scheme became The Disability Confident scheme in November 2016. As a Disability Confident employer we commit to:

- all of the core actions to be a Disability Confident employer (see [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/achievements/disability-confident/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/achievements/disability-confident/))
- offering at least one activity to get the right people for our organisation;
- at least one activity to keep and develop our people and;
- undertake and successfully complete the Disability Confident self-assessment.

1. **What is the Disability Confident Scheme?**

The Disability Confident Scheme aims to help employers make the most of the opportunities provided by employing disabled people. It is voluntary and has been developed by employers and disabled people’s representatives. The Disability Confident scheme has three levels that have been designed to support organisations. The College is currently at Level 2- Disability Confident Employer.

For an internal or external applicant the College commit to:

- Interviewing all applicants with a disability who meet the essential criteria on a person specification and consider them on their abilities;
- Providing a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process;
- Being flexible when assessing people, so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job and;
- Making workplace adjustments (also known as reasonable adjustments) as required.

If appointed as a member of staff in the College we commit to:

- Ensure there is a mechanism in place to discuss, at any time, but at least once a year, with disabled employees what can be done to ensure that they develop and use their abilities;
- Make every effort when an employee becomes disabled to ensure that they stay in employment;
- Take action to ensure that all employees develop an appropriate level of disability awareness to make these commitments work and;
- Review the commitments each year and plan ways to improve the experience for disabled people by consulting key groups.

2. **What is classified as a disability?**

You can find more information about what is classified as a disability, please refer to the managers’ disability guidance (pg1):

[http://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/support-for-staff/disability/](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/equality/support-for-staff/disability/)

3. **Why has Imperial College decided to implement this?**

The Disability Confident Scheme is an example of the College demonstrating commitment to ensure disabled people are treated fairly and have access to the same opportunities as non-disabled people. The College is a diverse community and is committed to equality of opportunity and freedom from unlawful discrimination. By using the Disability Confident logo we make it clear that we welcome disabled applicants for all roles across the College. It will also show existing employees that we value their contribution and will treat them fairly if they become disabled.
4. **What advice do I need to give to departments and managers about Disability Confident?**

As part of our commitment to being a Disability Confident employer, the College will guarantee to interview all disabled applicants via the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, **provided they meet the essential criteria** for that job. To be considered under the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, applicants will need to declare that they have a disability by ticking the box in the Guaranteed Interview Section on the job application form. This box is available on all academic, support and research post application forms.

5. **Isn't this positive discrimination?**

Implementation of the Disability Confident scheme does not breach employment legislation. The Equality Act 2010 permits positive action, like the Disability Confident Scheme. In addition, disabled people can be treated more favourably. Disabled candidates who meet the essential criteria on the person specification are guaranteed an interview; they are not guaranteed a job offer. The disabled candidate must be considered on the merits of their application. An example would be where a candidate demonstrates they have partly met or fully met every shortlisting criteria. This would be deemed to meet the essential minimum criteria to shortlist a candidate who has ticked the Guaranteed Interview scheme box.

6. **Does this apply to overseas candidates?**

Yes, it applies to all applicants applying to College vacancies based in the UK.

7. **Does this override other legislation, such as immigration legislation?**

No, all other legislation still applies and this does not take precedent. For example, if you have a disabled applicant who requires a work permit for a position you must check immigration requirements as normal.

8. **What if an employee is already employed by the College?**

The guaranteed interview commitment also applies to internal vacancies advertised within the College, provided that the minimum criteria for the job are met.

9. **How should I advise departments that don’t believe an applicant has a disability?**

Make it clear that the legal definition of disability also covers “unseen” disabilities such as mental illness, dyslexia, diabetes, and certain degenerative diseases that may not have obvious symptoms, so care must be taken. Accept the candidate has a disability, further exploration is possible if they are offered the role. Encourage departments to trust an applicant and remind them that the applicant must meet all the essential criteria.

10. **What should I advise a department if a disabled candidate meets the essential criteria measurable from the application form?**

They must be invited for interview. This is regardless of whether the pool of shortlisted candidates is too large. When making the interview arrangements, remember to consult the disabled candidate’s application form to ensure that any adjustments or special arrangements that need to be made are done. The [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre](#) will be able to provide information on who to contact for further support.
11. What should I advise a department if a disabled candidate does not meet the essential criteria measurable from the application form?
If any candidate does not meet the essential criteria measurable from the application form, then they should not be shortlisted. The notes on the shortlisting record form should clearly identify which of the essential criteria on the person specification have not been met.

12. What do I need to advise a department if any additional interview arrangements need to be made?
If the department need to make accessible interview arrangements, consult the disabled candidate's application form and ensure there is enough information on the form to help guide the adjustments. If you need more information, speak directly to the candidate to find out what they need. Please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Centre or OH if you require further guidance. Access to Work can also help individuals if a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter or other communication support is required at the interview.

13. What questions can be asked about a candidate’s disability at interview?
At interview, do not discuss the candidate’s disability at all. If the job is offered to a candidate who has a disability, it would then be appropriate at this stage for the line-manager and HR to discuss any specific requirements they may need for the job, as well as encouraging them to get in touch with Access to Work prior to starting their role at the College.

14. What should I advise a department if the disabled candidate is not the best person for the role?
If they are not the best candidate for the job, they should not be offered the job. Do ensure that the department have based the decision on the basis of their performance at interview and not on the implications of employing them. As is standard practice, do ask departments to keep all notes and records.

Leyla Okhai
January 2017