

# Career Conversations for Learners with Disabilities

A Student Resource Guide

**Advising & Career Services**  
[careers.humber.ca](https://careers.humber.ca)



*Photo provided by Disabled and Here ([affecttheverb.com/](http://affecttheverb.com/))  
Photographer: Chona Kasinger*

# Introduction

Congratulations on getting to this milestone! While finding a job and navigating your career can be difficult, we want you to know that we have your back! As you go through this document, you will learn about some of the ways you can navigate finding work, as well as some strategies to help you navigate your disability in the workplace.

Remember that your disability is simply another aspect to your life that has given you a unique set of skills and strengths. Find some time to identify and leverage your talents, whether it is with an advisor, a friend, or even yourself!

# Definitions and Terminology

## What is a Disability?

Every workplace will have a slightly different definition of disability. At Humber, our definition is based on the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), which states:

1. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device, and/or;
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, and/or;
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, and/or
4. a mental disorder, or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997; (“handicap”).

Disabilities can be visible or invisible, chronic or temporary, and can affect an individual’s ability to participate in society on an equitable basis.

## Key Principles of Accessible Policies

Humber will use reasonable efforts to ensure accessibility policies are consistent with the following four key principles:

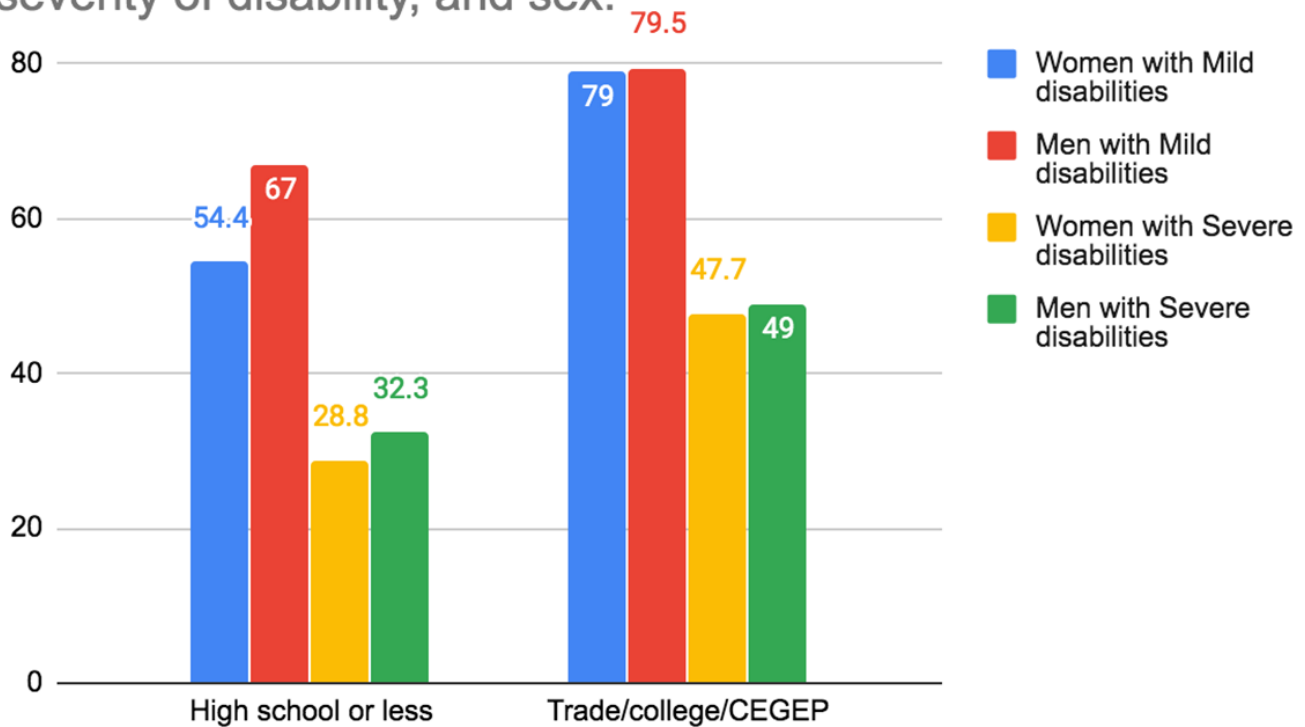
- **Dignity** - Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.
- **Independence** - Services for people with disabilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.
- **Equity/Equality of Outcome** - Service outcomes are the same for persons with disabilities as for persons without disabilities.
- **Integrate** - Services allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers.

# Statistics

## Education

According to [Statistics Canada](#), education can help a lot when it comes to finding a job!

Employment of Canadian Population aged 25-64, by education, severity of disability, and sex.



While things can seem daunting at times, know that you are not alone! At Humber, we are committed to your academic and career success.

For more support, please reach out to your [Career & Student Success Advisor](#) to help keep you on track with your goals.



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# Disclosure

Disclosing your disability to an employer can be a scary thing to do. Here are some tips, tricks, and considerations to help you through this process.

## Things To Consider Before You Disclose

1. Is there a need to disclose?  
Examples: Is there testing required as part of the interview? Will you need access to adaptive hardware or software for this position? Are there medical factors that they would need to be aware of?
2. Determine a time to disclose.  
Examples: Will you disclose on your resume/cover letter? During the phone interview? After the job offer? On the job? Each of these times have pros and cons. Consider discussing this with a family member, Career & Student Success Advisor or [Accessible Learning Consultant](#) to get guidance.
3. Determine what you will disclose.  
Examples: Do you need to explain the whole picture? Will you only focus on the medical diagnosis? Are you just discussing impact and accommodations?

For more tips on how to decide when to disclose, check out this [Disclosure Decision Worksheet by Virginia Commonwealth University](#), or this article by ALIS Albert on [“What to Say About Your Disability, and When to Say it”](#).

## Tips For When You're Ready To Disclose To An Employer



### Reflect

What are your strengths, skills, and achievements? Compare them to the job description and consider how you are uniquely suited for this role. Be positive about your achievements; your disability is not a weakness.



### Research

It is important to be specific about your needs and accommodations. Do your accommodations have a cost? What workplace accommodations do others in your position have, and could you do the same? Visualize how different adjustments in your workplace can play out.



### Rehearse

Go through your disclosure conversation with a trusted person or through visualization. Try to think about what questions or misconceptions someone might have about your disability in the workplace so you can be prepared to provide that information. What kind of concerns might they have, and how can they be addressed?

## Know Your Rights

Should you choose to disclose your disability, remember that you are protected by the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#) and the Ontario Human Rights Code. If you experience discrimination as a result of disclosure, contact the [Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario](#), and file a complaint. If you are having difficulty filing the complaint, contact the [Human Rights Legal Support Centre](#).

*“ While accessing Advising and Career Services at Humber’s Lakeshore Campus, my advisor was able to assist me with any questions I had and connected me to other people and resources on and off campus. The experience encouraged me to be successful within my courses and career journey. I really appreciated how invested my advisor was in my success! Even as classes and life became overwhelming, she was able to keep me on track.”*

Lachante M.  
Social Service Worker Diploma, Humber Class of 2020

# Workplace Accommodations

Unsure of what to ask for? If you have pursued academic accommodations at Humber in the past through the [Student Wellness and Accessibility Centre \(SWAC\)](#), these accommodations may be transferrable to the workplace or your work-integrated learning experience (e.g. placement/internship). Be sure to chat with your Accessible Learning Consultant (or contact SWAC to set up an appointment) to best prepare you to have this conversation, whether for a full time position, or an internship/placement. If you have more questions, check out the [Job Accommodations Network's A-Z of Disabilities and Accommodations Resource](#), and see what the possibilities are!

Here are some examples of workplace accommodations:

- Modifying equipment - Does your workplace monitor have screen contrast options? Zooming? Can the desk be elevated or shortened?
- Purchasing products - This can include screen readers, noise-cancelling headphones, adjustable chairs, or even felt stickers to place on walls to help guide those who are visually impaired.
- Modifying schedule - Can you arrive at a later or earlier time? Are you able to work from home some days?

However, remember that employers are only required to do what is reasonable and would not cause undue hardship in their organization. Work with them and see what kind of solutions will work for the both of you.

## Duty to Accommodate

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code (Code), an employer must accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities to make sure they have equal opportunities, equal access and can enjoy equal benefits, without unfairly excluding you. They must also provide accommodation in a way that is respectful of you, your comfort, and privacy.

The duty to accommodate persons with disabilities means accommodation must be provided in a way that most respects the dignity of the person, if doing so does not cause undue hardship. Human dignity encompasses individual self-respect, self-worth and inherent worth as a human being. It is concerned with physical and psychological integrity and empowerment. It is harmed when people are marginalized, stigmatized, ignored or devalued. Privacy, confidentiality, comfort, individuality and self-esteem are all important factors.



# Next Steps & Support Resources

This guide is intended to provide tools and information to help you navigate the job search process and your career journey. While things may seem daunting at times, know that you are not alone! There are many communities and resources you can connect with on and off campus to support your career success.

## Humber Resources

- Humber's Accessible Learning Services: <https://humber.ca/student-life/swac/accessible-learning>
- Humber's Health and Counselling services: <https://humber.ca/student-life/swac/health-counselling>
- Humber Advising & Career Services: <https://careers.humber.ca>
- IGNITE: <http://ignitestudentlife.com/>

## Off-Campus Employment Services

- Career Edge: <https://www.careeredge.ca/for-job-seekers/>
- DiscoverAbility: <https://discoverability.network/job-seeker/resources/>
- JVS: <https://www.jvstoronto.org/find-a-job/employment-source/>
- ODSP employment: [https://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/social/odsp/employment\\_support/index.aspx](https://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/social/odsp/employment_support/index.aspx)
- Specialisterne: <http://ca.specialisterne.com/>
- West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre: <https://www.wsncc.org/employment>

## Disability-Related Student Groups on Campus

- Autism Spectrum Disorder Social Group: <https://humber.ca/student-life/swac/accessible-learning/information-current-students/asd-social-group>
- Exercise is Medicine (Managing Chronic Illness): <http://ignitestudentlife.com/club/exercise-is-medicine-on-campus>
- Without Limits (General Disability Club): <https://withoutlimitsclub.wordpress.com>





## Additional Online Resources

- National Educational Association of Disabled Students (NEADS): <https://www.neads.ca/en/norc/eag/employment.php>
- Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC) List of Journal articles: <https://ceric.ca/wpdm-package/persons-with-disabilities-and-career-development/>
- ALIS Alberta- What to Say About your Disability, When to Say It: <https://alis.alberta.ca/look-for-work/additional-resources-for-specific-audiences/for-persons-with-disabilities/what-to-say-about-your-disability-and-when-to-say-it/>
- Canada's Top 100 Diversity Employers: <https://www.canadastop100.com/diversity/>
- Searchable Online Accommodations Resource: <https://askjan.org/soar.cfm>

# ADVISING & CAREER SERVICES

## **NORTH CAMPUS:**

Academic & Career Success Centre, Learning Resource Commons, First Floor  
416.675.6622 ext. 5030

## **LAKESHORE CAMPUS:**

Academic & Career Success Centre, Student Welcome and Resource Centre, First Floor, WEL 105,  
416.675.6622 ext. 5028



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