



Self-Advocacy Toolkit

CAREER RESOURCES
FOR LEARNERS WITH
DISABILITIES
Humber Advising &
Career Services

HOW TO WRITE A CHALLENGE / SOLUTION STATEMENT

Articulating your challenges is just as important as sharing your strengths. It helps you understand what you need to thrive and reinforces that **asking for support is a strength**, not a weakness. Your disability is part of your story, and naming your challenges is a powerful step toward self-awareness and advocacy. You do not need to “overcome” anything—simply be honest about what helps you succeed.

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Use the formula, examples, and template below to communicate your challenges and the solutions that support your success.

Step 1. Follow this FORMULA.

Each part helps you explain the challenge clearly and ask for what you need:

- **I experience difficulty with [Task/Function]**
Name the task where the barrier appears.
- **due to [Disability-Related Factor],**
Briefly identify the related factor (e.g., sensory sensitivity, attention, memory, stamina).
- **which can affect my ability to [Impact on Activity or Environment],**
Explain how the barrier affects the task or environment.
- **but I can be successful when [Accommodation / Strategy / Solution] is provided.**
Name the support, tool, or condition that helps you succeed.

Plain language definitions:

- **Task/Function:** what you’re trying to do (e.g., switch tasks, listen, write).
- **Disability Related Factor:** what makes the task more difficult.
- **Impact:** what happens when the barrier is present (e.g., missing details).
- **Accommodation / Strategy / Solution:** the support that helps you do your best.

Tip: For clarity and practice, highlight the stems in every statement:

I experience difficulty with / due to / which can affect my ability to / but I can be successful when

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Step 2. Review this EXAMPLE of the Formula.

- I experience difficulty with maintaining focus during extended lectures
- due to challenges with sustaining attention over long periods,
- which can affect my ability to absorb and retain key information,
- but I can be successful when I'm able to use guided notes and take short movement breaks.

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Step 3. Use this TEMPLATE to create your challenge / solution statement.

- I experience difficulty with _____
- due to _____,
- which can affect my ability to _____,
- but I can be successful when _____.

Step 4. Review the examples provided for ideas.

Four examples have been provided in each of the following categories:

- Current Students
- Summer Jobs
- WIL Placements
- First Jobs

These examples include a **wide variety of occupations and skills** so you can find wording that matches your experiences and goals.

Step 5. Write 3 Challenge / Solution Statements

1.

2.

3.

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EXAMPLES

Each example follows the same pattern:

I experience difficulty with → due to → which can affect my ability to → but I can be successful when

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CURRENT STUDENTS

Time Management

I experience difficulty with managing multiple deadlines
due to challenges with organizing tasks and prioritizing effectively,
which can affect my ability to submit assignments on time,
but I can be successful when I use a digital planner and set reminders.

Lecture Engagement

I experience difficulty with staying engaged during long lectures
due to difficulty maintaining attention over extended periods,
which can affect my ability to retain key concepts,
but I can be successful when I use guided notes and take short movement breaks.

Group Work

I experience difficulty with participating in group projects
due to challenges with social communication and collaboration,
which can affect my ability to contribute effectively,
but I can be successful when roles are clearly defined, and communication is structured.

Test-Taking

I experience difficulty with completing exams under time constraints
due to slower processing speed,
which can affect my ability to demonstrate what I've learned,
but I can be successful when I have extended time and a quiet testing space.

SUMMER JOBS

Retail

I experience difficulty with managing fast-paced customer interactions
due to challenges with processing multiple requests quickly,
which can affect my ability to provide efficient service,
but I can be successful when I use checklists and take brief resets between rush periods.

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Hospitality (Hotels/Restaurants)

I experience difficulty with remembering detailed guest requests due to short-term memory challenges in busy environments, which can affect my ability to meet expectations consistently, but I can be successful when I write requests down immediately and use visual cues.

Office/Administrative Work

I experience difficulty with organizing digital files and emails due to challenges with attention to detail, which can affect my ability to maintain accurate records, but I can be successful when I use folder templates and schedule file-review time.

Food Service

I experience difficulty with multitasking during busy meal times due to processing multiple orders simultaneously, which can affect my ability to maintain speed and accuracy, but I can be successful when I break tasks into steps and use visual order-tracking tools.

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WIL PLACEMENTS

Marketing Intern

I experience difficulty with creating content under tight deadlines due to challenges with organizing ideas quickly, which can affect my ability to produce high-quality work, but I can be successful when I plan ahead and use content-drafting tools.

Healthcare Assistant (Clinical Placement)

I experience difficulty with remembering patient care procedures due to short-term memory challenges in fast-paced environments, which can affect my ability to follow protocols, but I can be successful when I use checklists and review steps before shifts.

IT Support Intern

I experience difficulty with resolving technical issues on the spot due to troubleshooting challenges under pressure, which can affect my ability to assist users efficiently, but I can be successful when I follow step-by-step guides and consult senior staff.

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Social Work Placement

I experience difficulty with emotionally intense client interactions due to challenges managing emotional responses, which can affect my ability to remain objective and supportive, but I can be successful when I debrief with supervisors and use reflective journaling.

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FIRST JOB

Junior Analyst (Finance)

I experience difficulty with interpreting complex financial reports due to unfamiliar data formats, which can affect my ability to contribute to analyses, but I can be successful when I use templates and review reports with a mentor.

Junior Developer (Tech)

I experience difficulty with debugging unfamiliar codebases due to navigating complex systems independently, which can affect my ability to resolve issues efficiently, but I can be successful when I follow structured troubleshooting steps and consult documentation.

Human Resources Assistant

I experience difficulty with managing confidential information due to uncertainty about workplace privacy protocols, which can affect my ability to handle sensitive tasks confidently, but I can be successful when I follow documented procedures and ask for clarification.

Project Coordinator (Nonprofit/Corporate)

I experience difficulty with tracking multiple moving parts in a project due to challenges organizing updates across teams, which can affect my ability to meet deadlines and communicate progress, but I can be successful when I use collaborative tools and schedule regular check-ins.

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