

Advice for

**Educators
Recruiters
Employers**

Advice for educators

- **Consider ways for students to disclose disability or neurodivergence safely and discreetly.** Consider anonymous disclosures when students sign up for programmes and processes to support disclosure during study. Having visible dedicated staff available for support can encourage students to seek support once they feel comfortable to do so. Staff who are aware of a student's needs may wish to seek out their educational records to further tailor supports.
 - **Provide learning resources in different formats, accessible at any time.** Victoria University of Wellington's recent policy to give students universal access to lecture recordings is a positive step towards accessibility and inclusion (Victoria University of Wellington, 2023). It can greatly benefit students who find it difficult to get to campus regularly and those who need more time digest lecture material. Providing alternate formats aligns with the Universal Design for Learning framework now in use by many providers.
 - **Provide thorough training to academic staff on the experiences of whaikaha students.** In the same way that students want to do well, teachers want to their students to succeed and likely want to have inclusive teaching practices but may not know how. Supporting whaikaha students is not the job of teaching staff only, and providers should ensure their staff have the tools and processes available to support their students' diverse needs. Case studies or testimonials from former students can help bring the whaikaha student experience to life, developing understanding and empathy in staff members.
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Advice for recruiters

- **Reflect on what norms and assumptions are embedded in your recruitment process.** Be aware of implicit bias (ableism). Be openminded about what is really needed to succeed in your organisation rather than applying standard recruitment procedures (and wording in job advertisements). Some whaikaha candidates may have limited work experience. Therefore, an emphasis on their talents, skills, training and potential can be more appropriate.
 - **Ask candidates what works for them.** Your candidate or new hire is the best person to inform you of their needs. Provide a space for open dialogue on any physical, sensory, social, cultural or other barriers the individual might encounter. Then work together to meet those needs. Cultural responsiveness, particularly for Māori, Pacific and ethnic minority groups, as well as sensitivity to past negative experiences, can enable a candidate to be transparent on their situation and needs.
 - **Take guidance from experts to refresh application and interview processes.** Often recruitment processes are based on standard human resource procedures. Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) can help you to think about where your advertising is targeted and how you might pinpoint different skills and needs. Importantly, DPOs can help you identify whether your approach is accessible to different abilities and support you to adjust them.
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Advice for employers

- **Focus on the abilities whaikaha staff have, not the ways they have been disabled by society.** Place emphasis on the experience, skills and abilities whaikaha team members can bring to the team. Shifting your organisational culture begins with a shift in attitude and takes organisation-wide initiative.
 - **Make use of the tools that already exist in your organisation to support whaikaha team members.** Many whaikaha staff do not require major adjustments to effectively do their work. Flexibility in work environment and schedule go a long way for most. Enable remote working and flexible work hours so team members can organise their day in ways that work for them. Seek advice from team members on how to adapt the office space for their needs.
 - **Seek guidance on accessibility and inclusion from experts and peers.** DPOs and disability service experts can provide invaluable guidance on how to support whaikaha team members – see what local organisations provide these services. The Ministry of Social Development provides additional support and some funding, while non-profit organisations like Accessibility Tick, Access Advisors and Be. Lab can partner with your organisation to assess your workplace and establish a long-term accessibility plan. Occupational therapists can provide additional practical advice on adapting work environments. Finally, employers can look to their peers for advice on accessibility and inclusion. Educational events, conferences and training programmes can be safe spaces to unpack challenges around accessibility and inclusion.
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