

CAREER TIPS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Today's workforce is more diverse than ever, employing individuals of all backgrounds including those with disabilities. To become their best self-advocates in the workplace, students with disabilities should prepare themselves to face unique challenges in their career planning and employment processes. This guide helps students with disabilities better understand these challenges and highlights resources and services that will advance their career success.



CAREER PLANNING WITH A DISABILITY

Make time for Career Development.

Students with disabilities are typically a year to two years behind their peers in relation to progress in career development. Because of their added attention to coursework and other commitments, students with disabilities may feel they don't have the time to engage in career development activities. This can make a student feel like they have little control over their own career development. It is important that you make time to seek out experiences in college that will help you clarify your career interests.

Know Your Strengths.

Look beyond your disability and know your unique strengths, skills, and traits so that you can articulate your value to employers.

Build Skills Now.

Understand how disability impacts you across academic and employment settings. Self-advocacy skills, requesting accommodations, and being comfortable with your disabilities are important transferable skills for employment that you will learn in college.

TIP: Call (785) 864-3624 to make an appointment with a UCC career coach if you would like help getting started with your career planning process.



DISCLOSING YOUR DISABILITY TO EMPLOYERS

When to Disclose.

Deciding when to disclose your disability to an employer or potential employer is a personal decision that will likely vary based on your specific disability and what type of accommodations you need.

You are not required to disclose your disability or request an accommodation before a job offer is made. Some applicants choose to disclose during the interview process and others wait until after they are offered the job.

How to Disclose.

How much information you disclose to your employer is up to you. You are not required to give a specific diagnosis, only that you need an adjustment due to a medical condition or disability.

However, keep in mind that if your disability is not obvious, the employer may request that you provide documentation to establish that there is a need for an accommodation as required by the ADA.

Before disclosing your disability to an employer, consider creating a script for yourself to help you prepare for the conversation. If you are anxious about disclosing your disability, consider practicing your script with a family member, friend, or advisor.

TIP: Staff at the UCC and at Disability Resources can help you develop a script for disclosing your disability to employers and practice delivering your disclosure. Contact our offices to set up an appointment.



ON THE JOB WITH A DISABILITY

About the Law.

Qualified individuals with disabilities are protected from employment discrimination through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To be considered “qualified” you must be able to perform the “essential functions” of the job with or without accommodations.

TIP: For more information on legal issues associated with individuals with disabilities, visit the Job Accommodation Network (JAN)’s Legal section under the “Hot Topics” tab.

Essential Job Functions.

Despite disability, employees must be able to perform all essential job functions. This can include: meeting deadlines, planning and organizing tasks, and producing a quality product. Your disability should not hinder your ability to meet the standards of your employer or the demands of your position. If you have concerns about fulfilling expectations, take the initiative to find solutions that will help you succeed.

Accommodations.

New professionals with disabilities should carefully think through what is needed to function optimally on the job prior to the hiring process. Reflect on the accommodations you might need and research your options thoroughly before making a request.

- Job Accommodation Network (JAN): For comprehensive information about job accommodations, visit the Job Accommodation Network online.
- Visible Disabilities: Individuals with visible disabilities will need to initiate discussions about reasonable accommodations prior to or during the hiring process.
- Invisible Disabilities: Individuals with invisible disabilities have the option to initiate discussions about reasonable accommodations after the hiring process.
- Cost of Accommodations: Most accommodations cost less than \$500. Employers can receive tax incentives for accommodation costs.



ABOUT THE UCC AND DISABILITY RESOURCES AT KU

The University Career Center provides comprehensive career services to KU students. Some of our services and resources include:

- Career coaching
- Career assessments
- Resume, cover letter, and CV reviews
- Mock interviews
- Part-time job, full-time job, and internship postings
- Career workshops
- Career courses
- Networking events (career fairs, employer information sessions, etiquette dinners)
- Comprehensive web resources
- Career resource library

To learn more about us, visit our website: career.ku.edu

As part of the Academic Achievement and Access Center, the Disability Resources office is dedicated to facilitating appropriate resources, services and auxiliary aids to allow each qualified student with a disability to equitably access educational, social, and career opportunities at KU.

To learn more, visit: achievement.ku.edu