Working Together For Your Success

The information on this webpage is also available via this disability-accessible PDF.

Disability Resources

In collaboration with the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD), the Career Development Center (CDC) assists currently enrolled degree seeking FAU students and registered alumni who have various disabilities by providing career planning services and guidance pertaining to their specific disability related issues.

Services Provided:

- Prepare students for the Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP)
- Major and career exploration through assessment tools.
- Career counseling and career advising.
- Job-seeking skills.
- Interview prep for self-disclosure skill development.
- Interview techniques and preparation.
- Information regarding rights, responsibilities and options for reasonable accommodation in the workplace.

Workforce Recruitment Program (WRP) at FAU

The CDC assists FAU students in preparing their resumes, and conducting mock interviews with all WRP applicants.

The WRP is a recruitment and referral program that connects federal and private sector employers nationwide with highly motivated FAU students and recent graduates with disabilities who are eager to prove their abilities in the workplace through summer or permanent jobs. The program is managed by The U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the U.S. Department of Defense's Office of Diversity Management & Equal Opportunity (ODMEO). Since the program's expansion in 1995, over 6,000 students and recent graduates have received temporary and permanent employment opportunities through the WRP (source: wrp.gov). For additional information and the WRP instructional videos that will help you navigate the job search process, please click here.

Students that accept an internship position through this program may be eligible to register the experience for college credit via FAU's Cooperative Education/Internship Program.

Things to Think About

As a student with a disability there are important factors for you to consider as you search for internships or employment or apply to graduate school. You may have questions about your rights, disclosure, accommodations and which laws might apply to you. Here are some resources to guide your career:
Your Legal Rights
As a student with a disability you may have concerns about experiencing discrimination within your job search or career and what to do should it arise. The following are resources to help you understand your rights if you encounter discrimination on an application, in a job interview or in the work place:

- **Handling Improper Interview Questions** written by career experts from the National Association of Colleges and Employers.
- For local legal resources specifically related to disability contact the [Disability Rights Florida](#).
- [National legal rights resources](#)

Campus Career Resources & Events
Get involved in student groups on campus. The [Owls Supporting Diversity Club](#) is a student run organization for students with disabilities and allies. Other meaningful experiences outside the classroom can be found through the office for [Student Involvement and Leadership (SIL)](#). Professional associations are groups of people who work in a specific industry or field of study. You can attend meetings, special events or get to know professionals in some of the following organizations:

Professional Contacts and Associations
Meeting with other students or professionals who have successfully made the transition from student to professional is a great way to gain useful information and network. The following are resources focused on mentorship programs:

1. [FAU’s Professional Mentor database](#). Mentors are professionals representing a variety of industries who have volunteered to share their experience and expertise with our FAU Owls. Take advantage of this incredible opportunity to begin building your network.
2. Create an account on the online professional networking site [LinkedIn](#) and join groups such as the [Minority Professional Network](#) or [Diversity in Florida](#).
3. Attend career fairs, organization information sessions/networking events, and employer panels to expand your professional network. View campus events on [FAU’s calendar of events](#).

[American Association of People with Disabilities](#)
[Advancing Science, Serving Society](#)
[Disability Power and Pride](#)
Additional Information and Links for Students with Disabilities

Below are resources to help you in the career exploration and preparation process. This list is not exhaustive but will hopefully help you as you develop and achieve your career goals.

1. The Sierra Group Recruit Disability - The first step for any job seeker with a disability.
2. Stand Among Friends - Stand Among Friends is a non-profit organization located on FAU's Boca Raton campus that helps college students and adults with disabilities prepare for, seek and secure active employment.
3. American Foundation for the Blind, Career Connect - This website includes mentor match, career exploration, tips for job seekers, etc.
4. Careers and the Disabled Magazine - established in 1986, is the nation's first and only career-guidance and recruitment magazine for people with disabilities who are at undergraduate, graduate, or professional levels. Each issue features a special Braille section.
5. Cornell University's ILR School Employment & Disability Institute
7. Disability Disclosure To Tell or Not to Tell - Article on Monster.com
8. DO-IT - For people with disabilities pursuing college and careers in the fields of business, science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.
9. Entry Point - Internship opportunities for students with disabilities in science, engineering, mathematics, computer science, and some fields of business.
10. Equal Opportunity Publications, Inc. - Provides a list of companies that are actively recruiting college graduates and professionals with disabilities. This site also has a resume database and links to CAREERS & the disabled magazine's career expos.
11. Hire Deaf - Job Postings
12. Hire Disability Solutions - Empowers individuals with disabilities to reach their goals by providing them with the tools to succeed. They present information and resources for individuals to connect with employers, build their skills, and discover the feeling of accomplishment.
13. Job Accommodation Network - International toll-free consulting service that provides information about job accommodations, the employability of people who have disabilities, and other information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act.
14. Just One Break, Inc. - Employment services for people who have disabilities, including job placement services, college internship programs, mentoring programs, ADA consulting services, and interviewing tips.
15. Lift, Inc. - This non-profit organization identifies, trains, and hires computer professionals who have physical disabilities through contracts with major corporations. After training, people who are assigned to corporations that can hire the specialists after a one-year apprenticeship.
16. National Business and Disability Council - Leading national corporate resources for hiring, working with, and marketing people with disabilities. They have a nationwide resume database for college grads with disabilities.
Get Experience! Internship and Volunteer Sites
50% of employers expect students to have 2 or more internships by graduation and graduate schools like applicants who have conducted research. Don’t know where to begin? The Career Development Center can help you get started.
1. Owl CareerLink - FAU’s centralized online job search portal. It is available to all currently enrolled degree-seeking FAU students and registered alumni and allows you to: Search for job postings for full-time, part-time, and Co-op & internship opportunities; Submit resumes to employers; Apply for on-campus interviews; Have employers view your resume and profile; and stay informed of career events.
2. Entry Point - Internship opportunities for students with disabilities in science, engineering, mathematics, computer science, and some fields of business
3. Impact Online - Matches volunteers with opportunities.
4. Internship and Leadership Development Opportunities - Assists college students with disabilities find and secure fulfilling internship and leadership opportunities.

Disclosing a Disability
The information in this section is also available via this disability-accessible PDF.

Issues to Consider about Disclosure
- **Prepare for how and what you might disclose:** Spend some time examining your feelings about your disability. How comfortable are you discussing it? Identify accommodations you might need to request in order to perform the new position. Weigh the advantages and disadvantages of disclosing your disability at different points in the job-search process. *(See below for tips about specific timing.)*
- **If you do plan to disclose your disability:** Decide how detailed you want to be. Study the job description. Be ready to describe the skills you have that make you qualified for the position and capable of doing it well. Also be prepared to discuss any limitations caused by your disability, and workplace accommodation needs. Be informative but concise, and expect to be asked questions.
- **Consider invisible vs. visible disabilities:** A visible disability might put you in the position of having to discuss it. Be prepared for that. If you have workspace accommodation needs, you may want to discuss that at the same time. Be aware that some employers will make assumptions about a visible disability, so your disclosure can be an opportunity to correct any misconceptions about your ability to do the job effectively.
- **Be able to clarify workplace accommodations** if you discuss them. One of the unspoken concerns some employers will have is the cost of workplace accommodations, even though they
often turn out to be minimal or free. You may want to briefly explain what you need and what the costs would be (e.g., inexpensive, free, or a specific sum).

- **Preparing a script in advance can be helpful:** After you’ve considered what you want to say, write it down. Keep in mind the potential employer wants to know 3 things:
  1) Will you be reliable?
  2) Can you do the job as well or better than anyone else? and
  3) Will you be valuable to the organization?

Practice what you want to say until you feel comfortable with it. (See below for script ideas.) While discussing your disability, positively describe your skills. The more you focus on your disability, the more relevant it will become to the employer. The more positive you are about what you can do, the more your strengths and personality will come across over any disability issues.

- **If you decide not to disclose your disability:** Be sure you can perform the essential functions of the position before accepting it. If you can’t—for whatever reason—you can be fired for that later. Be aware that the employer can’t make helpful accommodations unless you disclose what you might need. Also, if an emergency medical situation were to arise while you were at work, you may want to have explained what should be done to help.

**Suggested Disclosure Script**

"I have ____ *(preferred term for disability)*. I do have the skills and ability to do this job. It helps if I have ____ *(specific accommodations you need)*. I am confident I can do the job well, and I would look forward to the opportunity to contribute to ____ *(organization or company name)*."

The point is that you and your future employer must both feel comfortable.

**Disclosure Timing Options: Pros and Cons**

As you read the tips below, keep in mind that some potential employers will be comfortable with your disability disclosure and some won’t, no matter when or how you disclose it. What’s more important is how comfortable you are. The more comfortable you are, the more likely you are to be effective in the job search, and to find a position that’s a good fit.

**Disclose on Your Resume or Cover Letter**

**Pros:** You’re being honest and can have some peace of mind. Let the employer decide if disability is an issue.

**Cons:** Might disqualify you before you can present your qualifications. You might have a harder time finding work.
Disclose When an Employer Calls for an Interview

**Pros:** Honesty. Provides you with peace of mind. Reduces the element of surprise before you meet in person. The employer may feel more comfortable being told in advance of a potential interview.

**Cons:** You might not be considered as seriously. Your performance abilities may be doubted before you’ve had a chance to discuss them.

Disclose During the Interview

**Pros:** Honesty. Demonstrates your confidence and poise. Allows you to explain briefly and positively in person. Discrimination is less likely face-to-face.

**Cons:** The surprise factor may make the employer uncomfortable. Employer may be distracted during the interview or doubt your ability to perform. Puts the responsibility on you to avoid over-explaining your disability, and to mention it at an effective time. *(TIP: Bring up your disability at a natural time—when you're discussing job qualifications and duties. Be concise and focus on the positives—how well you can do the position.)*

Disclose After The Interview But Before You Start a Position

**Pros** If accommodations are needed, the employer will have a chance to arrange them before you arrive.

**Cons:** Employer may distrust you for waiting to disclose.

Disclose After You Start a Position

**Pros:** You get a chance to prove yourself on the job before disclosure, and discuss it with coworkers if you choose. *(NOTE: If your disability doesn't impact job performance, but your employment situation somehow changes after disclosure, you may have legal recourse.)*

**Cons:** The longer you put off disclosure, the harder it becomes. It may be difficult to reestablish trust afterward. The employer might accuse you of falsifying your qualifications. Coworkers may treat you differently and the office climate could become poor.

Disclose After a Job-Related Problem Cause by Disability

**Pros:** You’ve had a chance to prove yourself on the job before disclosure.

**Cons:** Employer might accuse you of falsifying your qualifications. If you disclose now (rather than never), the employer may think you’re unable to perform the essential job duties. Relationships with your coworkers or supervisor may be hurt if they feel you haven’t been honest.

**Sources:**

*Disclosing a Disability was adapted from CLA Career Services at the University of Minnesota: [http://www.clacareer.umn.edu/interviews/disability.html](http://www.clacareer.umn.edu/interviews/disability.html)*

*Discloser Timing Information was adapted from Aase and Smith, Disability Services, University of Minnesota: [https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/](https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/)*