

Education

Applying - Interviews and Auditions

Lack of support to access
interview or perform at your best



**RIGHT TO
PARTICIPATE**

Useful knowledge

Under the Equality Act 2010, all colleges and universities are expected to provide support and make changes to admissions and selection procedures to make sure they're accessible to disabled applicants. These changes are called 'reasonable adjustments'.

This duty applies to all aspects of application and selection, including interviews, assessments and selection decisions. Examples of changes to interviews could include; moving to a more accessible room or venue, providing an induction loop to help an applicant with a hearing impairment and being flexible with the timing of the interview.

Useful knowledge

- Effective communication
- Negotiation skills
- Writing clearly
- Decision making
- Record-keeping
- Being able to keep track

Ways to assert your legal rights

1. Make sure you communicate with the college or university about your access needs before the interview. Although there are certain things education providers should anticipate, they can't make adjustments if don't know the particular barrier you're facing.
2. Describe the barrier you're facing and the impact it would have on your ability to do well at interview. Ask to speak to the Admissions Officer or Course Administrator. They may then seek advice from the staff member responsible for disability. This person is usually called the learning support adviser, inclusive learning coordinator or disability adviser. Suggest the

changes you would like made to the interview process and how these would ensure you aren't placed at a major disadvantage compared to non-disabled applicants.

3. If you don't get the support you need and/or you want to challenge the outcome of the interview, ask the education provider about their appeal process. Most colleges and universities have written policies covering applications, interviews and course selection which include the appeal process.
4. If there is no appeal process, write to the interview panel describing the barrier, highlighting any adjustments previously agreed but not implemented and the resulting disadvantage you experienced. Make sure to send a copy to learner support or disability services. Give the facts of the case, being clear and specific.

If you're not satisfied after informal discussions, you can make a formal complaint. You can usually find information about the internal complaints procedure from your student handbook, the college or university website or directly from the college. They must make the complaints procedure available to you in your preferred format.

[Download template complaint letter about failure to make reasonable adjustments](#)

If you've exhausted the complaints process and the education provider has failed to make a reasonable adjustment to the application process, you may be able to take legal action. Taking court action can be a long, stressful and sometimes very expensive process. There are strict time limits for taking legal action under the Equality Act. You will have six months minus one day from the date of discrimination to make your claim in the County Court. The court can consider claims outside the time limit if it considers it 'just and equitable' to do so. You should take legal advice should you wish to pursue this through the legal route.

You can have confidence in the process because

Colleges and universities have been covered by the Disability Discrimination Act since 2001 and the Equality Act since 2010. Most have a good understanding of their legal duties and well developed systems for making sure disabled people can successfully apply to their courses.

We regularly hear examples of students who have successfully negotiated the support and adjustments they need for course interviews through informal discussion and working through the learner support or disability service.

You can get more help from

The [Equality Advisory & Support Service \(EASS\)](#) runs a free helpline assisting individuals with equality and human rights issues across England, Scotland and Wales.

Telephone • 0808 800 0082
Text phone • 0808 800 0084
Email • [through websites form](#)

Disability Rights UK [student helpline](#)

Telephone • 0330 995 0414
Email • students@disabilityrightsuk.org

Disability Rights UK free factsheets on [Understanding the Equality Act](#) and [Making a complaint](#)