



A University for All – Embracing Diversity

Employees with disabilities

Guiding Principle



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Guiding Principle

This brochure supports the vision of an accessible university where everyone can accept and embrace themselves as they are. Inclusion is a matter of attitude.

Different lifestyles, needs, and abilities should be recognized as strengths in society. Successful societal development relies on empathy, exchange, helpfulness and solidarity rather than maximum performance and standardised expectations.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has been in force in Germany since March 2009.

According to this, people with disabilities do not need to adapt to their environment; instead, the environment must change to enable equal participation for all.

The University of Potsdam, as an employer, is committed to providing the necessary conditions for barrier-free work and study environments.



Photo: Karla Fritze



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Impairment Experience





Information for Employees with Disabilities



Who is entitled to apply for severe disability or equalisation?

The severely disabled person's pass is issued to all people with legal residence in Germany, including those with toleration, regardless of citizenship, who have a proven impairment.

What counts as an impairment?

An impairment is a physical or health condition that deviates from the norm for a person's age. This includes physical, mental and sensory impairments likely to prevent equal participation for over six months (see section 2, paragraph 1 SGB IX).

How are chronic and mental illnesses considered?

Chronic and mental illnesses can count as disabilities under section 2, Paragraph 1 SGB IX if they impair physical function, mental ability, or mental health for longer than six months, affecting participation in society.

When is there a case of severe disability or equalisation?

A degree of disability of 50 or more constitutes a severe disability, qualifying for a severely disabled person's pass. A degree of disability of 30 can qualify for equalisation if the job is at risk or no suitable job can be found without it.



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What support does a severely disabled status offer?

- Increased protection against termination
- Additional five days of holiday leave
- Assistance in maintaining or obtaining a suitable workplace
- Tax benefits
- Entitlement to part-time employment
- Discounts on public transport and facilities
- Use of parking spaces for severely disabled persons (with aG mark)
- Early retirement without deductions (two years before the general retirement age, depending on year of birth)

What support does equal status entail?

Equal status provides many of the benefits of severely disabled status, excluding additional leave, transport discounts and early retirement without deductions.

Where do I apply for proof of disability?

Apply to the pension office for a disability certificate.

Where do I apply for equalisation?

Submit your degree of disability with the application form to the Employment Agency.

Where to apply for a severely disabled person's pass (from GdB 50)?

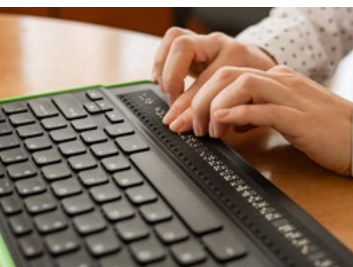
Apply or extend a pass at the relevant pension office with required documents (medical findings, official reports, etc.).



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Where to register severely disabled or equivalent status as an employee of the University of Potsdam?

Contact the responsible administrator in Department 3 for Human Resources and Legal Affairs or the Representative Body for Severely Disabled Employees. Direct superiors do not need to be informed.



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Where to get equipment for a barrier-free workplace?

- Inform your line manager and involve the representative body for severely disabled employees or the inclusion team at the University of Potsdam.
- Specific requirements can be determined during a workplace inspection.
- Adjustments can be implemented by the inclusion team, the representative body for severely disabled employees, or the staff council based on internal university resources or funding



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Options in case of health deterioration

Employees whose health deteriorates can seek support from:



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Medical / Psychological	Structural / Strategic
Company doctor	Decentralised and central confidants
University Outpatient Department at the New Palais	Representative for severely disabled employees
Psychological/Psychotherapeutic Outpatient Clinic	Inclusion officer for employees
	Staff Council
	Department 3 for personnel and legal matters



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Together, measures can be developed to continue to enable and support work at the university. These include, for example:

- Reduction of working hours
- Adaptation of the workplace
- Application for severe disability or equalisation (if not already done)

Returning to work after a long illness

If off sick for more than six weeks in 12 months, you will be offered an interview as part of the company integration management programme (BEM) to investigate the causes and seek ways to reduce future incapacity for work.

Supervisors and Colleagues





Information for Supervisors and Colleagues

Creating a working atmosphere that supports the full potential of all colleagues leads to team success. Effective personnel management and teamwork are key. Recognizing and respecting the needs of others is essential for an inclusive university.

- Engage in dialogue
- Change your perspective
- Seek support if needed
- Involve responsible people (inclusion officers, representatives for severely disabled employees, equal opportunities coordination office)
- Provide support
- Attend awareness and training programs
- Be patient and open
- Follow the „encourage and challenge“ approach



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- See involvement as an opportunity for personal growth
- Refer to the information for employees with disabilities for valuable tips

Inclusive Job advertisements

Inclusion in the workplace starts with recruitment. Inclusive job advertisements encourage applications from people with disabilities, chronic, or mental illnesses.

- Emphasize welcoming applications from people with disabilities.
- Highlight the university's inclusion concept and action plan.
- Support health-promoting measures and provide various contact persons for equal opportunities, care and family, psychological counselling and inclusion.
- Promote health-friendly working practices, such as mobile working, flexitime, university sports, special workplace equipment and sensitive reintegration management after long-term illness.



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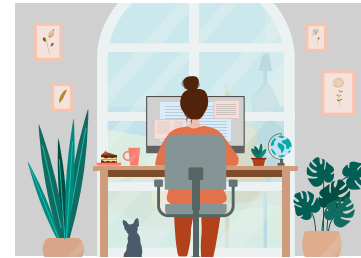
Accessible Working

People with disabilities and chronic or mental illnesses need certain prerequisites to work effectively. Consider:

- Height-adjustable desks
- Adapted seating furniture
- More space and adapted room layout
- Quiet and retreat areas
- Mobile working
- Adapted technical devices (telephones, keyboards, screens, etc.)
- Software for the hearing and visually impaired



Photo: Karla Fritze



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The Inclusion Team





Photo: Thomas Roesse
From left to right: Annette Guzmán, Robert Meile, and Katrin Völker

Current Core Team

The Inclusion Team at the University of Potsdam is available for help and advice.

The inclusion team at the University of Potsdam provides advice and support. It consists of members from different departments and works intersectionally. The inclusion commissioners and the representative for severely disabled persons form the core team with their expertise.

Commissioners for Inclusion

Represent the university in all matters concerning people with disabilities and

ensure the inclusion topic is anchored beyond legal requirements. They offer counselling to students with disabilities, provide support with compensation applications and work closely with the teaching staff.



Representative Body for Severely Disabled Persons

Represents the interests of employees with disabilities, providing advice and assistance and participating in recruitment interviews. It is elected by employees with severe disabilities and can negotiate with the employer.

Staff Council Representatives

Represents the interests of all employees, advising and supporting in personnel matters. Contact a staff council member with any issues.

Youth and Trainee Representatives

Support trainees and young people in recruitment, employment and dismissal, advising on contractual and legal issues.

Occupational Safety Representatives

Advise on identifying and assessing work-related hazards and health promotion, preparing safe and humane work systems.

Department of Human Resources and Legal Affairs

Handles administrative personnel measures and legal matters, including health management, family services, personnel development and training.

- Company doctor
- Experts from the relevant specialist areas
- Other relevant groups of people



Photo: Karla Fritze

Further Contacts Find specific points of contact within and outside the university via the QR code.



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