

Module 3 Video 1 Managing your career strategies for graduates with disabilities

Module: Three

Addressing employment barriers

Video one: Defining barriers

Welcome to Module 3 of our Career and Disability series, brought to you by the UTSC AccessAbility services and the Academic Advising and Career Centre.

This module focuses on employment barriers. We'll first provide you with a definition of the term barrier according to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, otherwise commonly known as AODA.

The word barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from participating fully in society, due to their disability narrowing it down even further. An employment barrier is anything that impedes a person with a disability from fully participating in seeking, obtaining and maintaining employment.

According to the government of Ontario there are five identified barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities. These barriers are attitudinal, organizational, or systemic architectural, or physical information or communications and technology. To help respond to any type of barrier, it's crucial to be proactive and plan skills you already have developed as a UTSC student.

Employers have a responsibility to remove barriers to employment, however not all employers, for example small businesses, have a full understanding of everyone's individual needs or disability in general. Therefore, if you encounter a barrier you may need to inform your employer about what your needs are and take part in discussions about solutions to remove the barrier.

Sometimes you may have the solution to the barrier and be in a position to implement it, in other instances, the employer may have the solution and additional support is required for implementation.

When communicating with employers either online, by phone or in person it's best not to focus on the challenges you have related to your disability. Instead, clearly convey your strengths, your skills and evidence of past accomplishments in relation to the position where you do need to address your disability. Focus on what you're encountering for example, the font is very small in the print material or furniture is impeding your ability to travel through the workplace.

If you'd like to learn more about disclosure in the job search, please review Module 4 on self-advocacy and disclosure. For a reminder of what your strengths are, go to Module 1 and review or complete the activities.

If you would like to provide feedback on these videos or if you have questions or concerns. Please contact the Academic Advising and Career Centre at aacc.utsc@utoronto.ca or the AccessAbility Services at ability.utsc@utoronto.ca