

Participant Information Sheet (PIS) August 2025 (Version 1)

Title of Study: Staff Perceptions of Disability Inclusion (DI) in Higher Education

Lead Researcher: Professor Carol Evans

Research collaborators: Cathy Easte, Griffith University; ATEND - the Australian Tertiary Network on Disability.

Overview

You are being invited to take part in a research project on staff perceptions of disability inclusion in higher education (this includes colleges offering higher education courses). Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information carefully.

1. What is the purpose of the study?

This project aims to understand the experiences of staff with disabilities and long-term health conditions and/or chronic illness in academic and professional services and technical support roles within Higher Education (HE) in Australia, and to also look at comparisons between the nature of disability inclusion in the UK and Australia. This project seeks to gain this understanding by collecting data from participants via a voluntary, anonymous survey.

We are undertaking an annual national survey to understand the experiences of staff with disabilities and living with long-term health conditions and chronic illness, and those who are neurodivergent working in academic, research, technical support and professional services roles within higher education institutions including colleges offering HE courses). Participation in this survey is voluntary and anonymous. The data collection will support better understanding of the lived experiences of those with disability in higher education.

Please contact Professor Carol Evans at c.evans@salford.ac.uk if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

2. Why have I been invited to take part?

We are inviting you to take part if you are a member of staff working in higher education, with a self-identifying disability or long-term health condition/chronic illness, and/or neurodivergence, as we believe you can offer relevant and valuable insights towards our project aims. We hope this project will be of interest to you.

3. Do I have to take part?

No, your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and it is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part, we will discuss the research project with you and ask you to sign a consent form.

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in the research project at any time without giving a reason. If you do withdraw you should, however, note that the University may continue to

process the information or samples you have already provided. It will only do this for research purposes and in an anonymised way and in a way that you cannot not be identified.

4. What will taking part involve?

If you agree to take part, you will be asked to complete an online, anonymous survey which will ask you some questions about the following: your demographics (age, sex, gender, disabilities/health conditions, ethnicity, etc.), your job role in higher education, and your experiences of working in Higher Education with a disability or long-term health condition, and/or neurodiversity. We anticipate the survey will take up to 30 minutes to complete.

5. Will I be paid for taking part?

No, you will not be paid for taking part in this project. Any data/information you provide will be as a gift and you will not benefit financially now or in the future, even if this project leads to the development of new policy.

6. What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

We do not believe there are any specific risks associated with your participation in this project, but please contact us if you have any specific concerns.

7. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

We cannot promise the study will help you but the information we get from the study will help us understand the experiences of staff with disabilities and long-term health conditions and/or chronic illness, and/or neurodiversity in academic and professional services and technical support roles within Higher Education in Australia. We are a university and so it is part of our reason for being that we advance knowledge through research as well as through teaching. Your participation in this research helps us to do that.

8. What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher [Professor Carol Evans – c.evans@salford.ac.uk] who will do their best to answer your questions. However, if you remain dissatisfied and wish to complain formally, please forward your concerns to the Chair of the School Research Ethics Approval Panel [Graeme Sherriff who can be contacted at G.Sherriff@salford.ac.uk].

Complaints can also be directed to: research-governance@salford.ac.uk

9. Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential? / What will happen to the results of the research project?

All information collected from you during the research project will be kept confidential unless there are legal or exceptional circumstances that may require us to make specific disclosures e.g., in order to protect the safety and wellbeing of yourself or others, or to report a crime. Any personal information you provide will be managed in accordance with data protection legislation (General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and [Caldicott Principles](#)).

10. What will happen to my Personal Data?

By participating in this project, you will be providing us with Personal Data, including via the consent form. Data will be collected via an online survey.

All questions in the survey are optional and include questions about your demographic information (age, sex, gender, ethnicity, job role, etc.). Providing your name or any other contact details (e.g., e-mail or postal address) is not a compulsory part of the survey. Hence, while we will be collecting some demographic information from you, we will ensure these data will not make you identifiable as an individual.

Individual participant research survey data, and any follow up interview data will be anonymous and given a research code, known only to the Principal Investigator (PI) and data analyst support at the University of Salford. Electronic data will be stored on a password protected computer known only by the PI and/or primary research team.

The data may be combined with previous and subsequent data as part of longitudinal analysis of data 2024-2030 but the data used in this way will be fully anonymised.

On rare occasions, if the researcher identifies a safeguarding issue, they may need to report the matter for the safety of anyone who may be at risk.

All data (excluding the consent form) will be de-identified (anonymised) for use in any write-up/output/publication to ensure that your identity remains anonymous. Selected anonymised and aggregated data sets may be made available dependent on journal publication requirements and restricted access provided to the anonymised data sets on the University of Salford's repository.

The University of Salford is the Data Controller for this project and is committed to respecting and protecting your Personal Data in accordance with your expectations and Data Protection legislation. the University's Privacy Notice that sets out details about the University's processing of personal information for research purposes: www.salford.ac.uk/privacy

After a minimum of 5 years following completion of the project, the research team will de-identify the Personal Data it has collected from, or about, you in connection with this research project, with the exception of your consent form. Completion of the project will have occurred once completion of a project closure report or publishing of final articles has/have occurred.

11. What will happen if I want to stop being part of the study?

If you give us your consent but then withdraw your consent prior to providing any Personal Data, then we will retain only your original consent form confidentially for the duration stated above. Because any Personal Data that you provide will be anonymous, it will not be possible to remove your data from our research project once you have provided this to us if you choose to later withdraw your consent.

12. What will happen to the results of the research study?

All de-identified data and information will be kept for a minimum of 5 years following completion of the project but may be published anonymously in support of the research project and/or retained indefinitely, where it is likely to have continuing value for research purposes.

Participants will not be identified in any write-up, report, publication or presentation arising from this project. Verbatim quotes from participants may be used in write-ups, publications, presentations, or reports, but these will always be presented anonymously.

13. Who is organising or sponsoring the research?

This research is organised by the University of Salford and supported by the Australian Tertiary Network on Disability (ATEND).

14. Further information and contact details

If you require further information, please contact Professor Carol Evans at c.evans@salford.ac.uk. Information will also be provided via the ATEND website and contact for this is Cathy Easte who can be contacted at c.easte@griffith.edu.au

This information sheet is available to download from the survey information weblink provided.

Thank you for taking time to read the information sheet. Your participation in this project is invaluable, and your time taken to engage with the survey is much appreciated.