

Berkeley Center on Comparative Equality and Anti-Discrimination Law

Disability Rights Working Group

Making Universities More inclusive for Staff with Disabilities

Call for Abstracts for the Papers to be Presented at the Online Seminar to be held in October 2025

The Disability Rights Working Group of the Berkeley Center on Comparative Equality and Anti-Discrimination Law is planning a two-day, online conference on the theme of "Making Universities More Inclusive for Staff with Disabilities". The conference will take place online in October 2025.

The seminar focuses on policies and good practices which universities are adopting to become more inclusive of staff with disabilities, as well as related academic research.

A selection of the authors will be invited to submit chapters to the book *Disability Rights in Higher Education: Universities as Disability Champions of Change* (Routledge) edited by Professor Paul Harpur, the University of Queensland, to be published in 2026.

The goal of the seminar is to:

- Focus on actual policies, actions and good practice at universities (and other higher education institutions), which make the institution more inclusive for staff with disabilities.
- Understanding how those policies, actions and good practice came into being, including the role played by staff with disabilities in lobbying, drafting and implementation.
- Promoting peer to peer learning which can be used to empower and inspire participants to take action at their own academic institution.
- Legal obligations, whether at UN, regional or national level are not the focus as such, but they may relate to the good practice.

We invite proposals for papers for the conference to be submitted to Brittany Postle (postleb@berkeley.edu) and Rachel Weissman (rachelweissman@berkeley.edu) by May 15 2025. Please provide the proposed title of your paper and a short abstract of 300 words or less. Please also include a brief biography (suitable for publication on the conference website) and clearly indicate your objectives and methodology in your abstract.

We will notify those with accepted papers by May 31 2025. Accepted papers must be submitted in draft form 2 weeks before the seminar in October 2025.

Possible Topics for Papers include (but are not limited to) the following:

Analysis of specific policies and actions which reflect good practice.

Analysis of the process which led to adoption of specific policies and actions which reflect good practice, including explaining how resistances were overcome.

The importance and impact of disability leadership within universities in advancing a disability inclusive agenda.

How staff with disabilities are participating in shaping and implementing policy and actions.

Positive consequences for teaching and research of disability inclusive policies and actions targeting staff.

Analysis of how universities can advance the CRPD through their actions regarding staff.

Papers can adopt a variety of approaches / methodologies, including qualitative methods (interviews, surveys etc.), analysis of how the practice implements the CRPD, and cover a variety of different policies and practices, such as human resources policies, staff networks, bodies which give staff with disabilities a voice in policy making and implementation, research networks / priorities etc.

Lead authors who do not have a disability are encouraged to consider co-authoring with an author who does have a disability, including a junior academic or student.

Timeline:

15 May 2025: Submission of 300 word abstract.

31 May 2025: Invitations to submit full papers sent out.

1-2 weeks before the seminar: Submission of full draft papers of 5-7000 words.

Second half of October 2025: Online seminar, with at least two different sessions to accommodate people in different time zones.

End October / Early November 2025: Invitation to submit book chapters sent out, with feedback.

January 2026: Submission of draft book chapters.