



Environment fit checklist

How to tell if a workplace may work for you **before you accept the role**

Most people assess a role by asking:

Can I do this job?

But there is another question that matters just as much:

Can I do my best work in this environment?

This checklist is designed to help you spot early signals during the recruitment process.

It is not about finding a perfect employer.

Perfect employers do not exist.

It is about noticing whether the environment, culture, communication, and support are likely to help you thrive - or create unnecessary friction.

1. Clarity

Ask yourself:

- Was the recruitment process clear?
- Did they explain each stage?
- Did they tell you what would happen next?
- Were timelines shared?
- Did they follow through on what they said?
- Were instructions easy to understand?
- Did anything feel unnecessarily confusing?

Why this matters

A lack of clarity during recruitment can be an early sign of unclear communication inside the organisation.

2. Communication

Ask yourself:

- Did communication feel respectful?
- Did they reply within the timeframe they gave?
- If there was a delay, did they explain it?
- Did they use clear language?
- Did they give you information in a format you could use?
- Did they make space for questions?

Why this matters

Communication is one of the strongest signals of workplace culture.

3. Adjustments and support

Ask yourself:

- Were reasonable adjustments mentioned?
- Were adjustments treated as normal?
- Did they seem open to different access needs?
- Did they explain what support is available?
- Did they respond with curiosity rather than discomfort?
- Did you feel safe asking for what you needed?

Why this matters

The answer matters.

But the way they answer often tells you even more.

4. Interview process

Ask yourself:

- Were interview questions shared in advance, or was that option available?
- Did they explain the format of the interview?
- Did they tell you who would be there?
- Did they explain what they were assessing?
- Did the process help you show what you can do?
- Or did it feel like you had to perform confidence?

Why this matters

A good interview process should help people show their capability. It should not rely only on speed, confidence, or guesswork.

5. Definition of success

Ask yourself:

- Did they explain what “good” looks like in the role?
- Did they describe how success is measured?
- Did they explain priorities for the first few months?
- Did they talk about common challenges in the role?
- Did they give practical examples?
- Did success sound realistic and sustainable?

Why this matters

If “good” is vague, people often fill the gap with guesswork.

Guesswork is exhausting.

6. Flexibility

Ask yourself:

- Did flexibility sound real in practice?
- Did they explain how people actually use flexible working?
- Can communication happen in different ways?
- Are people trusted to manage focus and energy?
- Are breaks and different working rhythms normalised?
- Or did flexibility sound like a policy that exists on paper only?

Why this matters

There is a big difference between:

“We have a flexible working policy.”

and

“Here is how flexibility works here.”

7. Response to challenge

Ask yourself:

- Did they welcome your questions?
- Did they respond openly?
- Did they seem curious?
- Did they answer with examples?
- Did they become defensive or vague?
- Did you feel treated as difficult for asking practical questions?

Why this matters

An inclusive environment does not need everyone to agree all the time.

But it should be safe to ask questions.

8. Onboarding

Ask yourself:

- Did they explain what the first week would look like?
- Did they describe how you would be supported?
- Did they tell you who you could go to with questions?
- Did they explain how priorities would be set?
- Did they explain how feedback would be given?
- Did onboarding sound structured?

Why this matters

Poor onboarding can leave people feeling like they were meant to know things no one explained.

9. Culture signals

Ask yourself:

- Did the organisation's values match how they behaved?
- Did their website show real diversity, not just generic statements?
- Did leadership reflect inclusion?
- Did employee stories feel authentic?
- Did reviews or testimonials show repeated patterns?
- Did the culture feel safe enough to be honest?

Why this matters

Inclusion is not a badge.

It is behaviour.

10. Your own response

Ask yourself:

- Did I feel able to be clear?
- Did I feel respected?
- Did I feel I could ask questions?
- Did I feel I had to mask heavily?
- Did I feel I had to perform confidence?
- Did I leave with more clarity or more uncertainty?
- Did anything feel off?

Why this matters

Your response is data.

It may not tell you everything.

But it is worth listening to.

Final reflection

Before accepting a role, ask:

Can I do this job?

Then ask:

Can I do my best work in this environment?

Those are not the same question.

A role can be right on paper and wrong in practice.

A company can say the right things and still create unnecessary barriers.

A recruitment process can tell you a lot about what the workplace may feel like once you are inside it.

Look beyond the promise.

Look at the behaviour.

That is where the truth usually sits.

Using this checklist

For candidates

Use this checklist to help you ask better questions, spot early signals, and make a more informed decision.

You may not always be able to wait for the perfect role.

But knowing what to look for can help you prepare, protect your energy, and ask for support earlier.

For employers

Candidates are not just being assessed.

They are assessing you too.

They are noticing how you communicate.

How you handle adjustments.

How clearly you define success.

How you respond to questions.

How real your inclusion work feels in practice.

If you want to attract and keep talented people, the experience cannot start after they join.

It starts before they apply.

Key takeaway

Inclusion is not what an organisation says.

It is how it behaves.