



Office of Institutional Equity

Employee's Guide: Requesting and Using ADA Accommodations in the Workplace

Purpose

This guide helps employees understand their rights and responsibilities regarding workplace accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). It outlines how to request accommodations, what to expect during the process, and how to navigate workplace interactions respectfully and effectively.

Quick Checklist

If you remember nothing else:

- You have the right to request a workplace accommodation.
- You do not need to use specific language like “ADA” or “reasonable accommodation.”
- Submit the [Employee Disability Accommodation Request Form](#) to begin the process.
- Your medical information will remain confidential.
- Contact [OIE](#) or [HR](#) if you have questions or concerns.
- You are still expected to perform the essential functions of your job, with or without accommodations.

Your Role as an Employee

- Communicate your accommodation needs clearly and promptly.
- Participate in the interactive process in good faith.
- Work collaboratively with your supervisor and the ADA Coordinator.
- Follow the agreed-upon accommodation plan.
- Maintain professionalism and respect in the workplace.

The Interactive Process

If you need an accommodation or are experiencing difficulty at work due to a medical condition or disability:

What Counts as a Request?

You do **not** need to use specific legal terms. Statements like:

- “I’m having difficulty completing my work because of a medical condition.”
- “I need help or flexibility because of some health issues.”

...may be treated as a request for accommodation.

Steps to Follow:

1. **Notify Your Supervisor or OIE**
 - You can initiate a request by speaking to your supervisor or contacting OIE directly.
2. **Complete the Request Form**
 - Submit the [Employee Disability Accommodation Request Form](#) provided by OIE.
3. **Provide Documentation**
 - Any medical documentation will be handled securely by OIE—not your supervisor.
4. **Engage in the Interactive Process**
 - The [ADA Coordinator](#) will facilitate a collaborative discussion between you and your supervisor to identify reasonable accommodations.
5. **Review and Sign the Agreement**
 - Once reasonable accommodations are agreed upon, the ADA Coordinator will draft a Letter of Agreement for the employee and supervisor to sign. This Letter of Agreement will be maintained by OIE in a secure document management system and will be kept separate from the employee’s personnel file.

Confidentiality: Your Privacy Matters

- Your medical condition or disability is confidential.
- Your supervisor will not share your medical information or the reason for your accommodation with coworkers.
- Accommodation details are shared only when necessary to implement them.

If you have concerns about confidentiality, contact OIE.

Interacting with Coworkers

Coworkers may notice changes in your schedule, responsibilities, or work environment.

- You are **not required** to explain your accommodation to others.
- You are **not responsible** for managing others' questions or concerns.
- Your supervisor is responsible for addressing team dynamics appropriately.

If Coworker Ask Questions or Make Comments

If coworkers ask questions or make inappropriate comments:

- You are not expected to respond or justify your situation.
- You may redirect them to your supervisor if needed.
- Report concerns if behavior becomes disruptive, disrespectful, or inappropriate.

A respectful work environment is a shared responsibility.

Using Your Accommodations Effectively

- Follow the agreed-upon accommodation plan.
- Communicate if something is not working.
- Do not make changes independently—contact OIE if adjustments are needed.
- Continue to perform your job responsibilities to the best of your ability.

Performance Expectations and Accommodations

Receiving an accommodation does **not** change the expectation that you perform the essential functions of your job.

- You will still be evaluated based on job performance.
- Accommodations are designed to support your success—not remove job responsibilities.

If you experience challenges:

- Communicate early with your supervisor and/or OIE.
- Request additional review of accommodations if needed.

If you request an accommodation during or after a performance discussion, you may still initiate the interactive process. OIE and HR can help guide next steps.

If You Experience Disability-Related Concerns

If you feel:

- Singled out
- Treated unfairly
- Subjected to negative or inappropriate behavior because of a disability or accommodation

You should:

- Report the concern to OIE using the [Reporting Form](#).
- Seek guidance and support from OIE and/or HR.

You do not need to handle these situations on your own.

What NOT to Do

- Do not delay requesting help if you need it.
- Do not feel obligated to share personal medical details with coworkers.
- Do not attempt to negotiate or manage accommodations outside the official process.
- Do not ignore workplace concerns related to your accommodation or treatment.

When to Seek Help

Contact the [ADA Coordinator](#) if:

- You need to request an accommodation.
- You have questions about the process.
- Your accommodation is not working as expected.
- You have concerns about confidentiality or treatment.

Contact [HR](#) if:

- You have performance-related concerns.
- You have questions about leave (e.g., [FMLA](#).)

Contact Information

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