



HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
University Disability Resources  
<http://accessibility.harvard.edu/>

## **Reasonable Accommodations Fact Sheet**

Harvard University implements exploration of possible workplace reasonable accommodations for employees with disabilities who request them under the guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) (or other applicable disability law). Individuals wishing to initiate the interactive reasonable accommodation process should contact their local accommodation coordinator (Human Resources/Faculty Affairs Representative or University Disability Resources UDR)).

### **Definitions**

#### **Disability:**

Under the ADA, a person is considered to have a disability if (1) he or she has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity such as, but not limited to, hearing, seeing, speaking, breathing, performing manual tasks, walking, caring for oneself, learning, or the operation of a major bodily function; (2) has a record of having such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

#### **Reasonable Accommodations:**

A reasonable accommodation is any change or adjustment to a job or work environment that permits a person with a disability to participate in the job application process, to perform the essential functions of a job, or to enjoy benefits and privileges of employment equal to those enjoyed by staff without disabilities. For example, a reasonable accommodation may include, but is not limited to:

- acquiring or modifying equipment or devices,
- job restructuring,
- modified work schedules,
- removing readily achievable barriers

It is important to note that employees must perform the essential functions of their jobs and meet all job-related requirements, with or without reasonable accommodations. Under the guidelines of the

ADA, what is reasonable by way of accommodation is typically a fact-specific inquiry, informed by job requirements, and an accommodation that does not create an undue financial, administrative, or business hardship for the employer.

In some instances, access to flexible leave opportunities such as, but not limited to, short term disability (STD) and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), may be an appropriate reasonable accommodation.

In addition, employees may request transportation reasonable accommodations such as close-proximity parking to the workplace or close-proximity access to campus locations via the university shuttle and van system.

### **The Process**

The Reasonable Accommodation Process, following the guidelines established by Title I of the ADA, is a collaborative and interactive process between the employee, Human Resources/Faculty Affairs, the manager/department head, UDR and/or other subject matter experts.

When an employee with a physical and/or mental impairment requests an accommodation to assist in the performance of a job, it is the employee's responsibility to obtain and submit signed medical documentation on his/her health care provider's letterhead.

The documentation must (1) establish that the employee has a physical and/or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, and (2) identify functional limitations related to the job, and the duration of those limitations. The documentation may provide suggested recommendations for potential reasonable accommodations. While awaiting this medical documentation, reasonable accommodations may be provided on a provisional basis.

To assist healthcare providers in this regard, an employee should contact Human Resources/Faculty Affairs to obtain a copy of his/her job description and provide it to her/his healthcare provider.

If necessary, the local accommodation coordinator (Human Resources/Faculty Affairs Representative or UDR) may request that the employee sign an authorization release form to consult with the employee's health care provider(s) in order to explore possible reasonable accommodations.

The local accommodation coordinator will review requested reasonable accommodations with the manager/department head and other relevant personnel before a final offer of reasonable

accommodations is made to the employee.

Questions regarding the interactive reasonable accommodation process may be directed to your local accommodation coordinator.

Harvard University provides equal opportunity in employment for all qualified persons and prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, age, veteran status, disability unrelated to job requirements, genetic information, military service, or other protected status.

**This document is available in alternate format upon request.**