

Reasonable Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities

A Guide for Supervisors

If an employee in your unit is having difficulty performing his or her job due to a disability or chronic medical condition, you will need to consider whether a reasonable accommodation can be made. Reasonable accommodation is any change or modification to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that enables a qualified individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform the duties of a job, and enjoy benefits and privileges of employment equal to those without disabilities, without causing significant difficulty or disruption in the workplace or posing a health or safety threat.

As a supervisor it is important for you to know how to recognize and respond to a potential accommodation request and to know what to do with confidential medical information. You should consult your Divisional Disability Representative (DDR), who is appointed to manage reasonable accommodations and medical leave in your school, college or division.

Recognizing a Request

Watch for an employee making a **link** between having difficulties in the workplace and a disability or medical issue. For example:

- An employee says she's been late for work because of her medical appointments.
- During a performance review an employee states more severe migraines are preventing him from meeting deadlines.
- You receive a medical note indicating your employee is unable to shovel snow.
- It is obvious that a new employee in your unit will not be able to reach high shelves because she uses a wheelchair.

Responding to a Request

Ask "What do you need to get your job done?" AND call your DDR.

All Medical Information is Confidential.

- You cannot ask if an employee has a disability or medical condition.
- You cannot disclose that an employee has a disability accommodation.
- Any medical information (written or verbal) that you receive should go to your DDR and should not be shared with others.
- If an employee's conversations about confidential information are disruptive, you can direct him or her to stop. You should consult your DDR in these circumstances.

Consult Early & Often!

Your DDR really wants to hear from you whenever you recognize a significant change in an employee's attendance, performance or behavior, or if you believe that a disability or medical condition is contributing in any way to performance, conduct, or attendance issues.

Call your DDR when an employee:

- is using a lot of leave
- gives you a doctor's note
- states he or she cannot do a task because of a medical condition
- uses more FMLA leave than authorized
- has made a Workers' Comp claim
- requests leave for medical treatment or surgery

Additional Information Employee
Disability Resources Office
Disability Coordinator/Employment
186 Bascom Hall
608-263-2407

