

Participants' Guide to Disability-Related Workplace Accommodation

Scope:

The focus of this guide is to provide participants with an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and desired outcomes in relation to the disability-related workplace accommodation process.

What are the goals of our accommodation program?

The University promotes a campus environment that is equitable, inclusive and accessible, and is committed to providing a workplace in which all employees are treated with dignity. To this end, the University will make every reasonable effort to:

- meet the disability-related needs of employees;
- assist employees with performing the essential duties of their job to a reasonable standard; and,
- ensure employees enjoy the same benefits and privileges irrespective of disability

When is the duty to accommodate triggered?

It is typically an employee's obligation to identify potential accommodation needs and trigger the accommodation process. Occasionally, a manager may trigger the process if they reasonably become aware that the employee requires accommodation.

Who is involved in the accommodation process?

The main participants in the process are the employee, the supervisor or manager (management), the Health and Disability Management Specialist (Human Resources - HR) and Homewood Health. Depending on the complexity of the situation and the needs of the employee, other stakeholders may be engaged as needed, e.g. rehabilitation specialists, union representatives, Environmental Health and Safety Officer, etc.

How is private medical information protected?

We recognize that the accommodation process involves disclosure of private information that employees may not otherwise disclose to their employer. Sensitive medical information pertaining to diagnosis and treatment is kept secure and confidential by our third-party benefits provider (Homewood Health) and is not shared with HR, management or other employees.

Role of Employee:

- engage in the accommodation process in good faith
- proactively request accommodation from management
- ensure that required forms and medical documentation are submitted to Homewood Health in a timely manner
- cooperate in the search for accommodation measures by providing input and feedback as needed and accepting reasonable accommodation measures

Role of Management:

- accept requests for accommodation in good faith and take immediate steps to commence the process by contacting HR (Health and Disability Management Specialist)
- maintain confidentiality and provide input as needed throughout the process, including information pertaining to job demands, team structures, etc.
- provide support implementing and overseeing accommodation plans
- understand the accommodation process and be a resource for employees seeking information and guidance

Role of Health and Disability Management Specialist (HR):

- oversee the disability-related workplace accommodation process from start to finish
- engage with both employee and management and maintain open communication throughout the process; providing information and guidance as needed
- compile job demands information and submit it on behalf of the University to Homewood Health
- ensure that policy and procedures are applied with consistency and fairness
- ensure that confidentiality standards are met
- create, implement and monitor accommodation plans based upon Homewood Health's assessment and in a collaborative and consultative manner

Role of Disability Case Manager (Homewood Health):

- collect the employee's signed release of information form to ensure the necessary consent has been given to complete the accommodation process
- receive and assess employee medical documentation and, if necessary, follow up to clarify existing medical information and/or request additional medical documentation
- maintain information in strict accordance with the policy provisions concerning privacy and confidentiality
- ensure that there is sufficient and appropriate medical information to validate functional limitations and restrictions, and to complete the appropriate accommodation assessment
- recommend appropriate accommodation measures based upon a comprehensive review of the functional limitations and restrictions in relation to job demands and communicate the employee's functional limitations and restrictions to HR

Tips for all participants engaged in the disability-related workplace accommodation process:

- focus on abilities rather than limitations
- be positive and cooperative in your communication and approach to the process
- be flexible, creative and open to change
- reach out to the Health and Disability Management Specialist (HR) with questions or when additional support is required

- keep records of meetings so that you can keep track of progress and keep things moving forward in a timely manner

Additional Resources:

[Ontario Tech University Procedure for Accommodating Employees and Job Applicants With Disabilities](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Commission Duty to Accommodate](#)

[PSAC Duty to Accommodate](#)

[Canadian Human Rights Commission](#)

[Conference Board of Canada Disability Management: "Opportunities for Employer Action"](#)

[Mental Health Works CMHA](#)