

University of Pennsylvania
Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs

Policy on Individuals with Disabilities

POLICY

It is the policy of the University of Pennsylvania that no qualified individual with a disability shall, on the basis of the disability, be excluded from participation in University programs and activities, and affirmative action shall be taken with regard to the employment of qualified individuals with disabilities.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- A “disability” is defined as:
 1. Any physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or
 2. Having a record of such an impairment; or
 3. Being regarded as having such an impairment.

- A “qualified individual with a disability” means an individual as defined above, who is capable of performing the essential functions of a particular job or of participating in a particular course of study, with or without reasonable accommodations for his/her disability.

- “Reasonable accommodations” are determined on a case by case basis and may include, for example:
 1. Making facilities used by faculty, staff and students readily accessible to and usable by, individuals with disabilities
 2. The acquisition or modification of equipment or devices
 3. The provision of qualified readers and interpreters
 4. Modified work schedule
 5. Restructured job responsibilities or reallocation of non-essential (marginal) job functions
 6. The appropriate adjustment or modification of examinations, training materials or policies.

REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

The University will reasonably accommodate a qualified individual with a disability, provided that the accommodation does not impose an undue burden on the University. Reasonable accommodations will be provided only when an individual properly identifies him/herself as a qualified individual with a covered disability and provides the appropriate documentation. Faculty and staff should submit requests for accommodations to the Program for Faculty and Staff with Disabilities in the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs, Sansom Place East, Suite 228, 3600 Chestnut Street, (215) 898-6993. Students should contact the Office of Student Disabilities Services, Learning Resources Center, 3820 Locust Walk, Suite 110, and (215) 573-9235 for academic related accommodations and the Program for People with Disabilities for any accommodations needed for on-campus employment.

The University is not required to provide an accommodation that will have the effect of eliminating an essential function of the job in question or an essential requirement of an academic program, or to provide an accommodation or service which is personal in nature, such as a hearing aid, a wheelchair, or a personal care attendant.

FUNDING FOR ACCOMMODATIONS

If an accommodation is deemed appropriate and reasonable for an employee, then the department bears the initial responsibility for funding the accommodation. If the cost is beyond the means of the department, then higher levels in the department's reporting line should share the cost. Funding for accommodations related to a student's academic program is coordinated by the Office for Student Disabilities Services.

RESOLVING DISAGREEMENTS

The Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs is responsible for ensuring the University's compliance with its equal opportunity and non-discrimination obligations arising under federal, Commonwealth and local laws. In the event that an employee or student disagrees with the determination and/or proposed accommodation, s/he may contact the Executive Director, Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity Programs, Sansom Place East, Suite 228, 3600 Chestnut Street, (215) 898-6993 for assistance in resolving the disagreement.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All medical records that are related to requests for accommodations will remain confidential and will be maintained in locked files separate from academic and personnel records. Limited information may be shared with supervisors or faculty in order to arrange for necessary accommodations, but only with the knowledge and agreement of the individual requesting the accommodation.