

ADA Reasonable Accommodations for Employees Procedural Guidelines

In compliance with federal regulations outlined in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is the policy of East Tennessee State University to make workplace accommodations for qualified employees with disabilities. To insure that employees are appropriately accommodated, the University has established a formal process for self-identification. Before beginning the formal process, however, employees are encouraged to talk to their supervisor about their accommodation requests. Many situations do not require extensive accommodations, and in those cases, an informal process is preferable. The informal process is not required and at any time, the employee can ask to stop the informal discussion and begin the formal process. During either the informal or formal process, the employee and/or the supervisor can meet with the ADA Coordinator to discuss the accommodation request(s).

To engage in the formal request process, employees should complete an **“Employee Request for an ADA Reasonable Accommodation Form”** prior to making an appointment with the ADA Coordinator for an intake. During an intake, the ADA Coordinator will review the employee’s request to be sure that the information clearly explains the employee’s concerns. The employee will be asked to **“Employee Permission to Release Medical/ Mental Health Information”** allows the ADA Coordinator request medical/psychological information and to talk to the identified professionals (doctors, therapists, etc.). This form also allows the ADA Coordinator to talk to other University personnel (including supervisors and department chairs) as needed. Every effort will be made to ensure that personal information contained in the request is handled with discretion; however, since other University personnel may need to be involved in the determination of appropriate accommodations, strict confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Medical information of a sensitive nature may be disseminated as a part of the decision-making process. A **“Medical/Mental Health Provider”** form is available to help professionals determine what information to supply; however, this is an abbreviated format that may not provide sufficient information. Employees should meet with their medical/mental health provider to discuss the best way to document their disability and accommodation needs.

While all employees with disabilities are protected from discrimination, not all employees with disabilities will be eligible for workplace accommodations. Reasonable accommodations are determined on an individual case-by-case basis. Reasonable accommodations will be made in accordance with the nature of the disability and the nature of the employee’s work. In the workplace; disabilities must substantially limit the employee’s functional ability to perform an essential function of their job. When the University evaluates an employee’s request for a reasonable accommodation, any mitigating measures that can reduce the impact of the disability are considered.

If accommodation(s) are granted, the University reserves the right to request periodic updates of the employee’s condition as such status reports may be necessary to maintain or modify the accommodation. Changes in the employee’s condition or in the job functions can warrant a review of the original accommodation(s).

The University also reserves the right to direct, at the University’s expense, the employee to undergo an independent evaluation. The independent evaluation will be conducted by a physician that the University selects regarding the request for accommodation and the impact of the disability to perform job functions. All information regarding an employee’s disability and the reasonable accommodation request is confidential. Any documentation will be kept confidential and separate from the employee’s departmental personnel file.