

Reasonable Accommodation FAQs

What is Reasonable Accommodation?

Under the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (“FEHA”) and the Federal Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”), reasonable accommodations are defined as modifications or adjustments to the work environment, or to the manner or circumstances under which a position is customarily performed, that enables a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of that position.

What is an Essential Function?

Essential function means the fundamental job duties of the employment position. For example, for a position as a proofreader, the ability to read documents accurately is an essential function because that is the reason the position exists. Additionally, a job function may be essential because of the limited number of employees available to perform the function, or among whom the function can be distributed.

What is a Functional Limitation?

A functional limitation is the inability to perform an action or a set of actions because of a physical or mental restriction. Determining whether a limitation in performing essential functions exists due to a physical or mental disability is the first step in establishing whether an individual is entitled to a reasonable accommodation.

How is Disability Defined?

An individual is considered to be disabled if he/she:

- Has a permanent physical or mental impairment that limits the performance of one or more major life activities
- Has a record of such an impairment
- Is regarded as having such impairment

What is a Major Life Activity?

Major life activities are functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. Primary attention is given to those life activities that affect employability, or otherwise present a barrier to employment or advancement.

How does Reasonable Accommodation Work?

A request for reasonable accommodation is a statement that an employee needs a work-related adjustment or change for a reason related to a mental or physical disability. A request may be made orally or in writing by the employee or by someone on his or her behalf. Requests for accommodation will be responded to in a prompt, fair and efficient manner.

The employer and the employee should identify possible accommodations. In general, a reasonable accommodation is one that effectively enables an employee to perform the essential functions of the job. Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- Leave of absence
- Reassignment
- Modified equipment
- Assistive devices
- Modification of existing facilities
- Restructuring the job

The interactive process is used to determine what, if any, reasonable accommodation will be made.

What is the Interactive Process?

To determine appropriate accommodation(s), the employee and Sacramento State will engage in a meeting to identify the areas of inaccessibility in the employee’s position, workspace, and in physical spaces around the institution. This process should identify the precise barriers and limitations resulting in a need for disability-related accommodations. In essence it means timely, good faith communication between the supervisor, Human Resources, and the employee or (when necessary) a representative, to identify areas of inaccessibility and what accommodations need to be arranged for the employee to perform the basic functions of their job. The employee may identify a representative as part of the interactive process due to disability or other circumstances.