

A photograph of two men in a clinical or office setting. The man on the left is wearing a blue t-shirt and light grey pants, using a silver walker. He has a blue brace on his right wrist. The man on the right is wearing a light blue polo shirt and khaki pants, holding a notepad and a pen, looking at the first man. The background shows a white wall with anatomical charts and a wooden chair.

accommodation guidelines for UWaterloo employees with disabilities

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UWaterloo is committed to making every reasonable effort to assist all employees with disabilities when they require accommodation in the workplace.

This approach is consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

The most appropriate accommodation is one that respects the dignity of the individual with a disability, meets individual needs, promotes integration and full participation, and ensures confidentiality. The accommodation process is a shared responsibility between the employee, manager and the University. For a successful accommodation, it is necessary for everyone involved to co-operatively engage in the process, share relevant information and collaborate on potential accommodation solutions.

request for accommodation

Employees may request an accommodation of non-essential duties of your job at any time. The process begins with the employee notifying the University — usually the manager, Disability Advisor or Occupational Health Nurse that he/she cannot perform the essential duties of his/her job without accommodation. Once received, all requests should be referred to Occupational Health.

If you require accommodation without being absent from work, this document is for you. If you are returning to work from a sick leave absence, then please refer to the Disability Management Guide, which can be found on the [Human Resources website](#) under Absences for Work.

medical documentation

» The employee needs to provide identifiable, verifiable medical documentation indicating the restrictions and limitations of the employee's disability to the Occupational Health Nurse. The University's Sick Leave/Return to Work Form may also be used in providing this information. This documentation will be reviewed by Occupational Health; if further medical information is necessary to help with the accommodation process, more information may be required by the employee.

The Sick Leave/Return to Work Form is available:

- » online at the [Human Resources website](#) under Absences from Work
- » from your work area manager
- » from the Human Resources Disability Advisor.

process

» The medical documentation is reviewed by Occupational Health; the department manager will be contacted to set up a meeting to discuss the non-confidential portions, (the abilities, limitations, restrictions and anticipated duration of accommodation). Occupational Health will provide the department manager/chair/dean (depending on the nature of the request) with a written accommodation request which will provide the specific accommodations and duration of request.

The department will review the request (limitations, restrictions abilities etc. which will allow the employee to fulfill the essential duties of his/her job); guided by the Disability Management Team, the Human Resources Advisor, and relevant stakeholders as necessary to aid in the accommodation process and any impacts to the work unit.

Once an agreement has been reached, a meeting is arranged with the employee and all relevant stakeholders. The meeting purpose will be to review the functional abilities, identify accommodation possibilities, clarify the expected duration of accommodation, identify any non-medical issues that may have an impact on the success of the accommodation and/or that may require follow-up by Human Resources (HR) or the department, assignment of responsibilities and determine next steps. In some cases, more than one accommodation meeting is required before the accommodation can be put into place and ready for the employee.

If all parties agree, the manager/chair and employee will sign the document accommodation agreement. A copy will be given to each participant in order to avoid any future misunderstanding. A copy of this document will also be retained by the Disability Management Team.

In some cases, the accommodation request may not require a meeting, but instead may be accomplished by emails/phone calls. A signed accommodation agreement is required.

Accommodations require ongoing monitoring and reassessment. If an accommodation is short term, the medical supplied initially may be all that is required. To support ongoing accommodations, the employee must provide annual documentation at the direction of Occupational Health. The department or the employee should contact Occupational Health immediately if they believe the functional abilities have changed.

roles and responsibilities

»» The employee is required to:

- » Advise the University of the need for accommodation by providing medical documentation to support your request
- » Answer questions or provide information regarding abilities or limitations, including relevant information from health care professionals as needed.
- » Participate in discussions regarding possible accommodation solutions
- » Co-operate with the accommodation process

»» The manager is required to:

- » Review and consider the employee's request for accommodation
- » Obtain expert opinion or advice from the Disability Management Team, as needed
- » Take an active role in ensuring that alternative approaches and possible accommodation solutions are investigated as part of the duty to accommodate
- » Keep a record of the accommodation request and action taken
- » Maintain confidentiality. Keep in mind that, as a manager, you are not entitled to your employee's medical information and it is important that your initial reaction to the absence be positive so that your employee feels supported.
- » Grant accommodation requests in a timely manner, to the point of undue hardship
- » Bear the cost of any equipment/software/furnishings required as part of the accommodation solution

»» The Union, Staff and Faculty Associations are required to:

- » Take an active role as partners in the accommodation process including supporting accommodation measures that are responsive to the individuals needs

The University of Waterloo gathers and maintains information used on this form for the purposes of supporting the University's income continuance programs. Information will be protected, used, and released in compliance with applicable law, including but not limited to Ontario's Personal Health Information Protection Act (S.O.2004, c.3), Workplace Safety and Insurance Act (S.O. 1997, c.16) and Occupational Health and Safety Act (R.S.O. 1991, c.0.1) and UWaterloo Policies. Questions about the collection, use and disclosure of information on this form should be directed to the Disability Advisor, University of Waterloo, 200 University Avenue West, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1.



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