

Tips for Service Providers Communicating with Students about Workplace Accommodations



Accommodations are reasonable adjustments made at any stage of the employment journey that allow a person with a disability to apply for jobs, interview and fully perform the duties of a position. Accommodations level the playing field and help people reach the same outcomes as their peers by using a modified process.

Reasonable Accommodations

Most accommodations, or adjustments, are simple to implement and relatively inexpensive (or free!). Here are some common examples:

ACCOMMODATION FORM	ACCOMMODATION EXAMPLES
Restructuring work or daily tasks	Larger tasks divided into smaller ones
Acquiring or modifying equipment, software or devices needed to do the job	Computer screen magnifier, voice input or speech recognition aids, ergonomic chair
Changing work locations or improving the facility	Quiet workspace, working from home, improved lighting, accessible door opener
Creating flexible or modified work schedules	Flexible hours, frequent breaks, self-paced workload
Providing assistance through a support service or person	ASL interpreter

Tips for Students

Requesting accommodations is a conversation! When it comes to obtaining accommodations or adjustments, it is important to understand that it is the responsibility of the student to communicate their needs for an accommodation by disclosing what they need to about their disability.

There is no formula, but applicants should consider the following tips:

- Explain the need (try to do this in writing); the disability does not need to be disclosed directly.
- Provide information that is directly relevant to the specific needs, restrictions or limitations; this can include medical information, but only the information that is directly related to your request for accommodation.
- Participate in discussions with the employer about possible accommodation solutions.
- Try different forms of accommodation even if it is not the perfect accommodation.

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Legal Rights

Students applying for jobs may encounter employers who have not experienced hiring individuals with disabilities or have not implemented accommodations before, but know that it is the legal right of the student to receive necessary accommodations. **The Ontario Human Rights Commission and the Canada Human Rights Act** both legislate that employers cannot discriminate against persons with disabilities and requires employers to provide reasonable accommodations.

Here are the basics:

- Legally, a student does not need to disclose the disability unless it will affect their ability to do the job or it puts their safety of their co-workers at risk. If they choose to disclose and request accommodations, they have the right to confidentiality and respectful treatment of information about the disability.
- The employer cannot treat the employee less favourably than they would an employee without a disability.
- The employer must grant reasonable accommodation requests in a timely manner and cover all related costs.
- Employers must provide accommodations up to the point of undue hardship, meaning it would be too expensive for the financial survival of the organisation or it would violate health and safety requirements.

Source: Carleton University, Accessible Career Transition Program
<https://carleton.ca/career/job-search-support/students-with-disabilities/accomodations>

Additional Resource: University of Guelph, Co-operative Education & Career Services Accommodations
www.recruitguelph.ca/cecs/students-alumni/students-disabilities/accommodations

Accompanying Document: Academic Accommodations Translated into Employment Settings
www.recruitguelph.ca/cecs/system/files/Academic%20Accommodations%20translated%20into%20the%20Workplace_AODA_MF.pdf

Sources: Ontario Human Rights Commission: Duty to Accommodate
<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-preventing-discrimination-based-mental-health-disabilities-and-addictions/13-duty-accommodate>

Government of Canada: Duty to Accommodate: A General Process For Managers
<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/wellness-inclusion-diversity-public-service/diversity-inclusion-public-service/working-government-canada-duty-accommodate-right-non-discrimination/duty-accommodate-general-process-managers.html>

