

Accommodations for Employees under The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Auburn University complies with Titles I and II of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), which prohibits discrimination in employment and participation in university activities against “qualified individuals with disabilities,” as well as requires “reasonable accommodations” in the workplace and the academic environment.

A qualified individual with a disability is defined as: an individual with a disability who meets the skill, experience, education, and other job-related requirements of a position held or desired, and who with or without reasonable accommodations, can perform the essential functions of a job.

Reasonable accommodation in the interview process and in the employment setting is a key nondiscrimination requirement of the ADA because of the special nature of discrimination faced by persons with disabilities. Refusing to make reasonable accommodation for a qualified applicant or employee with a disability, unless the accommodation would pose an undue hardship on the organization, is a violation of University policy and the ADA. Many people with disabilities can perform jobs without any need for accommodations; but many others are excluded from jobs they are qualified to perform because of unnecessary visible or invisible barriers in the workplace. The ADA recognizes that such barriers may discriminate against qualified people with disabilities just as much as overt exclusionary practices. For this reason, the ADA requires reasonable accommodation as a means of overcoming unnecessary barriers that prevent or restrict employment opportunities for otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities.

Persons with disabilities have historically been restricted in employment opportunities by many different kinds of barriers. Some face physical barriers that make it difficult to get into and around a work site or to use necessary work equipment. Some are excluded or limited by the way people communicate with each other. Others are excluded because of rigid work schedules that allow no flexibility for people with special needs caused by disability. Many are excluded only by barriers in other people’s minds; these include unfounded fears, stereotypes, presumptions and misconceptions about job performance, safety, absenteeism, costs, or acceptance by co-workers and customers.

Under the ADA, when an individual with a disability is qualified to perform the essential functions of a job an employer must try to find a reasonable accommodation that would enable this person to perform these functions. The reasonable accommodation should reduce or eliminate unnecessary barriers between the individual’s abilities and the requirements for performing the essential job functions.

Reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a job, the work or educational environment, a policy or practice, or the manner in which work is usually done that enables a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity.

The Office of AA/EEO at Auburn University is located in Suite 317, James E Foy Hall and provides assistance to employees with disabilities and their supervisors. Faculty, staff and administrators who need an accommodation should contact the AA/EEO office at 844-4794. The Office of AA/EEO also serves as the office of complaint for students who believe they have not been properly accommodated. Students with disabilities are served by the Program for Students with Disabilities, located in Haley Center, and can be reached at 844-2096. Documentation of the impairment is generally required.