

# DMEO FACT SHEET

## Reasonable Accommodations

### REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION

This Fact Sheet:

- Defines reasonable accommodation
- Describes a reasonable accommodation request
- Provides links to the DoDEA policies and procedures on reasonable accommodation

### Background on Reasonable Accommodations

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires federal agencies to provide reasonable accommodation to qualified employees or applicants with disabilities, unless to do so would cause undue hardship.

### What is a Reasonable Accommodation?

An accommodation is a change involving the workplace that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunities.

It is the policy of the DoD Education Activity (DoDEA) to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship. This policy applies to all applicants, employees, and employees seeking promotional opportunities.

### Three Categories of Reasonable Accommodation

#### Application Process

Modifications or adjustments to a job application process to permit an individual with a disability to be considered for a job, such as providing application forms in alternative formats of large print or Braille.

#### Performing Essential Functions

Modifications or adjustments to the work environment, or circumstances under which the position is customarily performed, that enables a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of the position, such as providing sign language interpreters.

#### Benefits and Privileges

Modifications or adjustments that enable an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment, such as removing physical barriers in a cafeteria.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### Q. What is a reasonable accommodation request?

A. A request for a reasonable accommodation occurs when an employee or their representative makes the agency aware that the employee needs an adjustment or change at work for a reason related to a medical condition. When requesting an accommodation, an individual may use "plain English" and need not mention the phrase "reasonable accommodation." A verbal request is sufficient to place the agency on notice to begin the reasonable accommodation process.

The following are examples of reasonable accommodation requests from employees and/or an employee's representative:

- "I'm having trouble getting to work at my scheduled starting time because of medical treatments that I'm undergoing."
- "I need six weeks off to get treatment for a back problem."
- An employee's spouse phones the employee's supervisor on Monday morning to inform her that the employee had a medical emergency due to multiple sclerosis, needed to be hospitalized and requires time off.

### Q. What do I do if I believe an employee is making a reasonable accommodation request?

A. Supervisors and managers should initially clarify that the employee is requesting a reasonable accommodation. If the employee says no, the agency has met its obligation. If the employee says yes, supervisors and managers must engage in an interactive discussion with the employee to make an informed decision about the request. Supervisors and managers must seek assistance from the servicing HQ or Regional Disability Program Manager in processing the request.

### Q. May DoDEA ask for documentation when an employee requests reasonable accommodation?

A. Yes. When the disability and/or the need for accommodation are not obvious, the agency may ask the employee for reasonable documentation about his/her disability and functional limitations. The agency is entitled to know that the employee has a covered disability for which s/he needs a reasonable accommodation.

### Getting Started – Contact your HQ or Regional Disability Program Manager (DPM)

After a supervisor or manager receives a reasonable accommodation request, he/she must contact their servicing HQ or Regional DPM for assistance to ensure the request is processed in accordance with DoDEA policies and procedures.

- Employee and supervisor guidance is contained in DoDEA Pamphlet 12-EEO-01, [Procedures to Facilitate the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation](#).
- Agency policy on reasonable accommodation can be found [here](#).