2.2.7 REQUESTING WORKPLACE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

Last updated on: 12/15/2011

Formerly Known As Policy Number: 23.5
This Guide Memo outlines Stanford University's policies and procedures for employee requests for disability-related accommodations.

Authority: Approved by the President.

Applicability: This policy applies to all University employees, including SLAC. However, some procedures discussed here do not apply at SLAC. Employees should contact the SLAC Human Resources Department for information on how to request workplace accommodations.

1. Policy

Stanford University values diversity and is committed to provide equal employment opportunities to all qualified employees, including those with disabilities. The University follows all state and federal laws and regulations, including the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (CFEHA), the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504). Disability is defined as any physical or mental impairment that limits one or more of an individual's major life activities (e.g., caring for oneself, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, sitting, standing). To ensure equality of access for employees with disabilities, the University will provide reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids to enable the employee to perform the essential functions of his/her job and participate in University programs and activities.

2. Implementation and Responsibility

a. Employees: are responsible for initiating requests for any desired disability related workplace accommodations. Requests by non-faculty employees should go to the supervisor or human resources manager; faculty employees should contact their Chair, departmental or school faculty affairs officer, or the ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer.

b. Supervisors: are responsible for receiving requests for workplace accommodations, informing employees of the process and referring requests to the appropriate human resources manager. Supervisors are
responsible for initiating a discussion concerning accommodations when they have reason to believe an employee’s disability precludes the employee from initiating a request. Supervisors should inform the local human resources manager of all requests and accommodations.

c. Human Resources Managers: are responsible for evaluating the request, determining what type of documentation is necessary, and determining if the requested accommodation is appropriate and effective. To identify your human resources manager, call the appropriate number: Campus (650) 721-4272; School of Medicine (650) 736-6924; SLAC (650) 926-2358.

d. Compliance Officer: The ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer provides information on the employment provisions of the ADA and employer obligations. You can also contact the Compliance Officer for information on campus accessibility, how to get technical and assistive equipment, and funding sources. You can reach the ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer at the Diversity & Access Office located in Mariposa House, 585 Capistrano Way, (650) 725-0326, FAX (650) 723-1791, TTY (650) 723-1216.

e. Chairs and Faculty Affairs Officers: are responsible for receiving requests for workplace accommodations and referring requests to the ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer for handling under procedures similar to Section 3.

3. Process—Recommended Steps

a. Step One – Request: The employee is responsible for requesting a workplace accommodation for his/her disability. The request shall be made to either the employee’s supervisor or the local human resources manager. Requests should be in writing and include:

- Employee’s name, telephone number and address
- Department
- Supervisor
- Physical or mental condition and its duration
- Nature of request
- Brief explanation of how the requested accommodation will enable the employee to perform the essential functions of his/her job.

b. Step Two – Discussion: When received, the supervisor or human resources manager will meet with the employee to acknowledge the request and explain the process. The supervisor or human resources manager will also meet with the employee as necessary to discuss the request and accommodation alternatives.

c. Step Three – Documenting the Disability: The supervisor or human resources manager evaluating the requested accommodation will determine what type of documentation is necessary to verify the disability. This may vary depending on the nature and extent of the disability and the accommodation requested. It is the employee’s responsibility to provide the requested documentation on his/her disability. If the University determines it is appropriate to get a second professional opinion concerning the nature or impact of a physical or mental disability, the Department will bear the cost of the second opinion. The request for an accommodation will be evaluated once the employee submits all documentation to the human resources manager and/or the supervisor.

d. Step Four – Evaluation: Appropriate accommodations are determined following an individualized assessment of each request. The supervisor or human resources manager will consider the needs and requests for reasonable accommodation to determine whether the necessary equipment or services exist
already in a different department or unit before investing in new equipment or additional services. Among the factors considered in determining reasonable accommodations for employees are:

(1) What is the nature of the employee's physical or mental condition and how does it affect his/her needs in the workplace setting?
(2) Does the employee's physical or mental condition limit one or more major life activities?
(3) Will the requested accommodation allow the employee to perform the essential job functions effectively?
(4) Will the requested accommodation alter or remove an essential function of the job?
(5) What impact will the requested accommodation or modification have on the department or unit?

The University is not required to provide an accommodation that will eliminate an essential function of the job in question or to provide an accommodation or service that is personal in nature, such as a hearing aid or wheelchair. Furthermore, the University is not required to lower performance, production or conduct standards, or alter attendance requirements expected of all employees.

e. Step Five - Notification: The supervisor or human resources manager evaluating the request for an accommodation shall provide the employee with written notification of the determination within 15 calendar days of receiving the completed request (including the requested documentation). If the determination includes an accommodation, the notice will also include the expected implementation date. If the supervisor or the human resources manager needs additional time to assess a request or to provide an accommodation, he/she shall provide the employee with written notification of the status of the request and the proposed date of determination.

4. Funding

If the accommodation is appropriate and reasonable, then the department bears the initial responsibility for funding the accommodation. If the cost is beyond the department's means, the cost should be shared by higher levels in the department's/office's reporting line. For information on additional funding resources for disability-related accommodations, contact the Diversity & Access Office at (650) 725-0326.

5. Resolving Disagreements

In the event an employee disagrees with the determination and/or proposed accommodation, he/she may contact the ADA/Section 504 Compliance Officer at the Diversity & Access Office, Mariposa House, 585 Capistrano Way, telephone 723-0755, FAX 723-1791, for assistance in resolving the disagreement.

6. Confidentiality and Records
All University employees have a legal obligation to maintain confidentiality regarding a staff or faculty member's disability-related information. To that end, Supervisors and local human resources managers shall provide information to staff and faculty only when necessary to facilitate accommodations.