
Procedure To Request Reasonable Adjustments Under The Staff Disability Policy

For use by all Monash University staff

Overview

These procedures are designed to facilitate the prompt and effective provision of reasonable adjustments under the Staff Disability Policy. The provision of reasonable adjustments aims to create an inclusive environment that ensures:

- staff with a disability and/or health condition are able to work productively and are given the opportunity to reach their full potential as employees;
- the University meets its legal and industrial obligations.

These aims will be achieved by adopting a collaborative approach involving the staff member, supervisor and other relevant staff. At all times, the staff member will be treated with dignity and respect.

Each faculty or division is responsible for ensuring that there are sufficient staff with appropriate knowledge to implement the policy and procedures effectively.

Operative date

Operative from 26/09/2002

Policy authorisation

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Resources)

Policy administrator

Director, Equity and Diversity Centre

Parent policy

Staff Disability Policy

Requesting adjustments for existing disabilities

A member of staff who requires an adjustment because of an existing disability should request the needed changes as early as possible in the employment process. Opportunities for enquiring about and/or requesting adjustments may arise:

- during the selection interview/s;
- during orientation or induction processes;
- at any stage of the performance management cycle.

Guidelines setting out the information required for a request can be obtained from the Manager, Equity and Diversity Centre. A staff member may consult in confidence the Disability Liaison Unit or a designated staff member in the faculty or division for advice on making the request.

Requesting adjustments for acquired disabilities

If a staff member acquires a disability (as the result of accident or illness) during the course of his or her employment, he/she may request adjustments to be made, these may include flexible work practices if appropriate.

Action on adjustments

On receiving a request from a member of staff regarding the provision of an adjustment(s), the staff member's supervisor should make every reasonable effort to act on the request within a reasonable time. The action taken by the supervisor may include:

- seeking advice from the Disability Liaison Unit or designated staff member in the faculty or division;
- requesting information about staff entitlements or policies from employee relations;
- referring the matter to the relevant manager or department;
- referring the request to the Disability Liaison Unit or Campus Facilities and Services if a building modification or special equipment is required;
- making a request for financial assistance from the Dean, Divisional Director or equivalent where the adjustment required would impose financial difficulties on the department.

The supervisor should also ensure that appropriate arrangements are made with the staff member for regular review of the adjustments, to allow for changed circumstances.

Evaluating a request – is it 'reasonable'?

In evaluating an adjustment request all relevant circumstances will be taken into account including the cost and the ease of making the adjustment.

Documentation

A member of staff requesting an adjustment may be asked to provide to the supervisor and/or the Disability Liaison Unit documentation from an appropriately qualified professional person specifying the nature of the staff member's disability and setting out recommended adjustments and accommodations. The University is not bound to accept the recommendations but such documentation is sought in order to (i) help assess the reasonableness of the request for adjustments in the circumstances and (ii) ensure that only ergonomically/ medically appropriate adjustments are provided.

Types of adjustments

Since position descriptions vary from job to job and the nature and degree of disability is different for every individual, adjustments need to be made to suit each individual's needs and circumstances. In most cases, the adjustment required will be relatively minor. For example:

- 1 A laboratory technician with a hearing impairment may not be able to hear an emergency alarm therefore he/she would require a flashing emergency light in their work area. The person may also require access to a telephone typewriter and the services of an Auslan interpreter for meetings.
 - 2 A casual gardener with an intellectual impairment may need to be reminded to drink regularly in hot weather to avoid dehydration or be given instructions in shorter sequences.
 - 3 A visiting professor with a Learning Disability or Acquired Brain Injury or blindness experiencing difficulty processing print materials may request a scanner, screen reading software and texts on CD ROM (from the publisher).
- A middle manager with a health condition may request access to a room for rest breaks or provision of flexible work arrangements including permission to work from home or adjustments to working hours and leave arrangements.

Resolving Problems

If the request for adjustment is not met within a reasonable time, the staff member may:

- Remind the supervisor of the request;
- Consult an appropriate person in their area with specialised knowledge of adjustments;
- Consult a Discrimination and Harassment Adviser who will assist the staff member to resolve the problem through informal action, conciliation or formal investigation, as provided in the Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedures.
- Consult, as appropriate, the Disability Liaison Unit, Employee Relations, Occupational Health, Safety and Environment and/or the Counselling Service;
- Consult an industrial representative of his/her choice;

Where a matter is not resolved through internal means, the staff member may consult the Equal Opportunity Commission Victoria or the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Redeployment

If, after adjustments are considered or implemented, a staff member is not able to meet the inherent requirements of the job, redeployment may be considered under the redeployment process prescribed by University policy.

Financial responsibility

The obligation to provide reasonable adjustments rests with the university.

The relevant Dean, Divisional Director or equivalent holds financial budgetary delegation and responsibility for the implementation of reasonable adjustments.

Implementation and financial responsibility for reasonable adjustments not related to the immediate work environment are the responsibility of the relevant Divisional Director or manager responsible for university services.

Associated policies, guidelines & procedures

- Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Grievance Procedures
- Enterprise Agreements
- AWA Terms and Benefits Policies
- Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Policy
- Workcover policy
- Risk Management Policy
- PD construction guidelines

Advice and further information

Director, Equity and Diversity Centre

Disability Liaison Officers, Disability Liaison Unit

Manager, Workcover/ Rehabilitation Coordinator, Workcover Unit

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

Job Accommodation Network, West Virginia University

Review dates

Amendment No	Authorisation	Date	Reference

Key words & phrases

Adjustments, accommodations, assistive technologies, confidentiality, disability, Disability Discrimination Act 1992, disclosure, discrimination, Equal Opportunity, equity, flexible work arrangements harassment, health condition, illness, impairment, performance management, reasonable, recruitment and selection, training.