The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to job applicants and employees with disabilities. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Amendments to the ADA protect “people with disabilities” and defines a person as disabled if he or she:

* has mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one of life’s major activities, such as walking, hearing, etc., or
* has a record or history of such an impairment, or
* is regarded as having such an impairment.

In addition, a person who is associated with someone with a disability is protected from employment discrimination based on unwarranted assumptions (e.g., a person misses work to care for a disabled individual).

Applicants and employees are not required to identify themselves as having a disability; self-identification is strictly voluntary. The job-related skills and experience of applicants should be evaluated without regard to disability or any accommodations that may be necessary.

The ADA defines a person with a disability as “qualified” for a position if he or she is able to perform the essential job functions with or without reasonable accommodations. Essential job functions are the fundamental tasks of a job, as defined by the employer. Accommodations may include changes in facilities, equipment, or policies that enable an otherwise qualified disabled individual to perform the essential job tasks, while not placing an undue hardship on the employer. Decisions about accommodations or undue hardships are made on an individual basis.

Job applicants or employees seeking accommodation or department heads receiving accommodation request from job applicants or employees (or indications from a job applicant or employee that they have a disability that will impact their ability to do their job) should contact Human Resources at extension 3369 (253.879.3369 from off-campus) or hr@pugetsound.edu for assistance with the following steps.

*Step 1:* Determine whether an individual has a disability as defined above. Request certification from an individual’s health care provider.

*Step 2:*  Determine which essential functions an individual needs accommodation to perform.

Provide the current job description for the individual to give to the healthcare provider(s).

*Step 3:* Determine whether any of the functions that an individual is unable to perform are essential job functions.

Human Resources should be consulted for assistance with this step of the process. Generally, essential job functions are ones which are so critical that they cannot be eliminated from the job without significantly changing that position’s role and contribution to the organization. If any function is not essential and an employee is unable to perform the nonessential function due to the disability, the nonessential function may be eliminated from the job or reassigned. If an employee’s disability limits or prevents performance of an essential function, proceed to *Step 4*.

*Step 4:* Based on the healthcare provider’s assessment, determine whether there are any accommodations that would permit an employee to perform the essential job functions.

At this step, a supervisor or department head and the applicant or employee, with the assistance of Human Resources, should identify all alternatives. Human Resources can help a supervisor or department head find other sources for ideas. The employee should be involved in this process as he or she may be a good source of ideas on accommodations.

Examples of reasonable accommodations include, but are not limited to, making facilities readily accessible, part-time or modified work schedules, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, or modification/reassignment of nonessential job functions.

*Step 5:* Evaluate possible accommodations.

This is the step when a supervisor or department head, an employee, and Human Resources should focus on the effectiveness of each alternative. Health care providers, both treating and examining, may also be consulted as an aid to evaluating the effectiveness of the alternatives. An accommodation is reasonable if it is effective in eliminating the limitations. It should be reliable and capable of being provided in a timely manner. It should allow an employee to attain the same level of performance as a non-disabled employee.

The university is not required to make an accommodation which imposes an undue hardship on its operations. Undue hardship is generally an action requiring great difficulty or expense. The determination of whether an accommodation constitutes an undue hardship, e.g., an action that is unduly costly, extensive, substantial, and disruptive or will fundamentally alter the nature of the program, may only be made in consultation with Human Resources.

*Step 6:* Select an accommodation.

After considering the various accommodation options, the university will choose the final reasonable accommodation, keeping in mind an employee’s preference(s). If the university does not choose an accommodation preferred by an employee, the university’s choice should be justified by the university’s business needs or operations.

If no reasonable accommodations can be made in an employee’s present job, the university will consider any other open positions for which an employee is qualified. If there is no alternative open position or if an employee declines an offer of alternative position, he or she will be advised of the university’s leave policies.

*Step 7:* Monitor and evaluate the accommodation following implementation.

A supervisor or department head should periodically talk to the employee after the accommodation is implemented to evaluate its ongoing effectiveness. Changes should be considered if the accommodation is found not to be effective or if the accommodation becomes unreasonable. The search for replacement accommodations may follow the same six steps used before. Over time further modifications may be needed, either due to changes in the university’s operations or an employee’s condition. If this happens, the same steps may be used again.