

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES – ADA POLICY

The University of Connecticut School of Medicine (UConn SOM) Graduate Medical Education (GME) Office and the Capitol Area Health Consortium (CAHC) are committed to the fair and equal training and employment of people with disabilities. Reasonable accommodation is the key to this nondiscrimination policy. While many individuals with disabilities can work without accommodation, other qualified applicants face barriers without the accommodation process. It is UConn SOM's policy that no qualified person be excluded from consideration for employment, participation in a residency or fellowship program, be denied the benefits of any GME program, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination with regards to any GME or CAHC program or activity. This policy derives from the UConn SOM's commitment to nondiscrimination for all persons in employment, academic programs and access to facilities, programs, activities and services.

Definition

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and accompanying regulations define a person with a disability as someone with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more "major life activities." The ADA Amendments Act of 2008 (ADA-AA) expands the ADA definition of "major life activities" from walking, seeing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, etc. to also include eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, as well as the "operation of a major bodily function." Transitory or minor conditions (<6 months duration) do not qualify as a disability under the laws. Further information can be obtained from the ADA website (<http://www.ada.gov>).

Reasonable Accommodation

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a job, an employment practice, or the work environment that makes it possible for a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity.

Examples of accommodations for GME may include acquiring or modifying equipment or devices; modifying training materials; making facilities readily accessible; modifying work schedules; and reassignment to a vacant position as eligible and permitted by the accrediting requirements of the program.

Reasonable accommodation applies to three aspects:

- To assure equal opportunity in the application process;
- To enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job; and
- To enable a resident/fellow with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges

Reasonable accommodations, when necessary, will be made for current and future activities, but cannot be made retroactively to remove remediation, probation or termination.

While the use of accommodations may enable the resident/fellow to better demonstrate his/her abilities, accommodations do not guarantee improved performance.

The resident/fellow must be able to successfully complete ALL requirements for the specialty as defined by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Residency Review Committee (RRC) and the subspecialty board with the approved accommodations.

Application Process

The Program Director, the GME designee, and the Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE) will work with a resident/fellow in the development and implementation of reasonable accommodations for a disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is the responsibility of a resident/fellow to communicate directly with the Program Director and request accommodations prior to starting the training program when possible. Documentation and additional testing may be required to validate that the individual is covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act as a disabled individual.

Both the resident/fellow and their qualified medical provider will need to complete the *Reasonable Accommodation Request Form* available in the Forms section of the *Residents/Fellows Policies and Procedures Manual*. The completed form should be returned to:

Address: Office of Diversity and Equity (ODE)
University of Connecticut
241 Glenbrook Road
Wood Hall – Unit 4175
Storrs, CT 06269

Contact information: Telephone – 860-486-2943
Fax – 860-486-2437
Email – ode@uconn.edu
Web – <http://www.ode.uconn.edu>

When a request for accommodation, has been made, the ODE designee may meet with the resident/fellow, GME designee and Program Director to:

- Discuss the purpose and the essential functions of the particular job involved. Completion of a step-by-step analysis may be necessary.
- Determine the precise job-related limitation.
- Identify the potential accommodation and assess the effectiveness each would have in allowing the individual to perform the essential functions of the job.
- Provide a decision to the resident/fellow within a reasonable amount of time.
- Work with the resident/fellow to obtain technical assistance, as needed.
- Select and implement the accommodation that is the most appropriate for both the individual and the employer. An individual's accommodation preference will be given consideration. However, if there are several equally effective accommodations available, UConn SOM may choose the one that is less expensive or easier to provide.