
TITLE:	REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS
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REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

Whatcom Community College is committed to the fair and equal employment of people with disabilities as established by the College's Policy 4010, *Affirmative Action/Fair Employment Practices* and Policy 4020 *Complaints—Discriminations* (Chapter 132U-300 WAC). Reasonable accommodation is the key to the college's non-discrimination policy as outlined in the two aforementioned policies. While many individuals with disabilities can work without accommodation, other qualified applicants and employees face barriers to employment without the accommodation process.

Whatcom Community College will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship upon the College. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, accommodations will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities when such accommodations are directly related to performing the essential functions of a job, competing for a job, or to enjoying the equal benefits and privileges of employment. Procedures to reasonably provide accommodations pursuant to these policies apply to all applicants, employees, and employees seeking promotional opportunities.

Definitions

Disability: For purposes of determining eligibility for a reasonable accommodation, a person with a disability is one who has a physical or mental impairment that materially or substantially limits one or more major life activities.

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 in the employment context may include acquiring or modifying equipment or devices; modifying training materials; making facilities readily accessible; modifying work schedules; and reassignment to a vacant position.

Reasonable accommodation applies to three aspects of employment:

1. To assure equal opportunity in the employment process;
2. To enable a qualified individual with a disability to perform the essential functions of a job; and
3. To enable an employee with a disability to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment.

Current employees and employees seeking promotion

1. Whatcom Community College will inform all employees that this accommodation procedure can be made available in accessible formats.
2. The employee shall inform their supervisor or the Human Resources Director of the need for an accommodation. The supervisor or the Human Resources Director will then direct the employee to submit a formal request for reasonable accommodation.

3. The Human Resources Director may request documentation of the individual's functional limitations to support the request, including medical documentation. Any medical documentation must be collected and maintained on separate forms and in separate, locked files and not be contained in any section of the employee's personnel records. No one will be told or have access to medical information unless the disability might require emergency treatment.
4. When a qualified individual with a disability has requested an accommodation, the College shall, in consultation with the individual:
 - Discuss the purpose and essential functions of the particular job involved. Completion of a step-by-step job analysis may be necessary.
 - Determine the precise job-related limitation.
 - Identify the potential accommodations and assess the effectiveness each would have in allowing the individual to perform the essential functions of the job.
 - Select and implement the accommodation that is the most appropriate for both the individual and the employer. While an individual's preference will be given consideration, Whatcom Community College is free to choose among equally effective accommodations and may choose the one that is less expensive or easier to provide.
 - The Human Resources Director will work with the employee to obtain technical assistance, as needed.
 - The Human Resources Director will provide a decision to the employee within a reasonable amount of time.
 - If an accommodation cannot overcome the existing barriers or if the accommodation would cause an undue hardship on the operation of the business, the employee and the Human Resources Director shall work together to determine whether reassignment may be an appropriate accommodation.

Procedure - Job applicants

1. Current reasonable accommodation request processes are delineated on job announcements, employment applications and on the college's public website. www.whatcom.ctc.edu
2. The job applicant shall inform Human Resources of the need for an accommodation during the selection (interview) process. Human Resources will discuss the needed accommodation and possible alternatives with the applicant.
3. The Human Resources Director will make a decision as to whether the requested accommodation can be provided without creation of an undue hardship. If the request is approved, the Human Resources Director will take the necessary steps to see that the accommodation is provided.

Procedure for funding accommodations

Funding will be approved by Whatcom Community College's Vice President for Administrative Services if the administration has made the determination that the requested accommodation(s) does not cause an undue hardship per the procedure below.

Definition

Undue hardship. An undue hardship is an action that is unduly costly, extensive, substantial, or disruptive, or that would fundamentally alter the nature or operation of Whatcom Community College.

Procedure for determining undue hardship

1. The employee will meet with the Human Resources Director to discuss the requested accommodation.
2. The Human Resources Director will review undue hardships by considering:
 - The nature and cost of the accommodation in relation to the size, the financial resources, and the nature and structure of the operation; and
 - The impact of the accommodation on the nature or operation of Whatcom Community College.
3. The Human Resources Director will propose a decision and consult with the Vice President for Administrative Services. After a final determination has been made, Human Resources Director will advise the employee of the decision.

Appeals

Employees or applicants who are dissatisfied with the decision(s) pertaining to his/her accommodation request, may file an appeal with the College President, within a reasonable period of time, 30 days, for a review of the decision. The President's decision will be final.

If the individual believes the decision is based on discriminatory reasons, then they may also file a complaint internally through the college's discrimination/harassment procedure subject to all time limits stated therein.

Supported work

Whatcom Community College will review vacant positions and assess the current workload and needs of the office or department, to determine if job tasks might be performed by a supported employment worker(s).