

Accommodations FAQs

1. Who is a “qualified individual” under ADA?

A qualified individual is a person who meets legitimate skill, experience, education, or other requirements of an employment or training position, and who can perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.

2. What are “essential functions?”

In order to be qualified for a position, an applicant or trainee must be able to perform essential role functions. Essential functions are duties that are fundamental to the position, they are the reason the position exists. Essential role functions for residents are outlined in the Physical and Environmental Standards section of resident contracts (attached) and [Resident Essential Role Functions / Attachment 1](#) of the GMEC Selection, Evaluation, Graded Responsibility, Promotion/Non-Promotion and Dismissal of Residents Policy.

3. What is a reasonable accommodation?

A reasonable accommodation is any change to the application or hiring process, to the job, to the way the job is done, or the work environment that allows a person with a disability who is qualified for the job to perform the essential functions of that job and enjoy equal employment opportunities. Accommodations are considered “reasonable” if they do not create an undue hardship or a direct threat.

4. Who is an “individual with a disability?”

The ADA originally defined a person with a disability as an individual:

1. “With a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
2. Who has a record of such an impairment; or
3. Who is regarded as having such impairment.” (This means that the attitudes of others toward them substantially limit a major life activity, or they are treated as having an impairment.)

The definition of a “major life activity” included but was not limited to: caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, **learning**, and working.

The Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA), passed in 2008, added to the list of “major life activities” that were covered under the definition of “disability.” The following activities were added: eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, **reading, concentrating, thinking, and communicating.**

If a resident makes a request for accommodations and is asked to provide medical documentation, who sees the medical information?

For SIU residents, a request for accommodations is received and managed by the SIU Human resource (HR) ADA contact. Medical documentation from a health care provider may be requested to confirm the presence of a disability and/or the need for accommodations. If a disability is not obvious to an employer, they can ask for medical documentation from a health care provider to confirm the need for an accommodation. The health care provider is not required to provide a resident’s diagnosis. Personal health information is not shared with the program.

5. Who decides what is reasonable?

The HR/ADA contact will communicate with the resident, PD, and if necessary the HR personnel of the residents employing hospital to assess the nature of the requested accommodations and the level of hardship (if any) to the program.

6. Can a Program Director (PD) or other individuals submit a request for reasonable accommodations on behalf of a resident?

No, a PD can encourage a resident to submit a request or can reach out to the appropriate ADA contact person for information regarding available resources, but cannot make a request for reasonable accommodations on behalf of a resident.