



REQUESTING ACCOMMODATION

Finding what you need to be successful at work

The following tipsheet provides strategies for how and when to request accommodation in the workplace. These strategies can help you navigate and prepare to make your own request.



When can I request accommodation?

There are many occasions when you can request accommodation.

They include:

- Before an interview
- After accepting an offer
- During your onboarding process
- After you have been in the role for some time

Remember: there is no one perfect time to request accommodation. It is important that you ask when it feels right for you.



Quick tips for requesting accommodation:

- Focus on what you need, not your diagnosis or why
- Focus on your strengths
- Keep an open mind
- Contact your Human Resources (HR) representative to gather details on how accommodation requests are usually made

Requesting accommodation for an interview

If you think you will need accommodation for any part of the job interview process, communicate with the person who contacted you for the interview.

Example email:

Email subject: Accommodation request for upcoming interview

Dear [name],

I am looking forward to my interview next week and would like to request that [request]. Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you in advance.

*Best,
[Name]*



Making a request after accepting an offer or when in a role

While the specific details of accommodation requests look different from person to person and situation to situation, the basics for setting up a meeting and having a conversation with an employer and/or HR representative usually follow similar steps: requesting a meeting, preparing for the meeting, attending the initial meeting, and following up. Below you will find examples of these different steps.



1. Email your employer to set up a meeting

A straightforward email to request a meeting about accommodation is a great way to start this process.

Before you begin a role, example email:

Email Subject: Exploring Options for Accommodation

Dear [employer name],

I am looking forward to starting my role in a couple of weeks. In the meantime, I would like to have a conversation about accommodation options so that we can start the process of finding what works best. Do you have any availability on Thursday this week to have a meeting?

*Thanks,
[Name]*

Once you are in a role, example email:

Email Subject: Accommodation Options

Dear [employer name],

I have been enjoying learning about the organization in my role so far and working as part of the design team. Having been in the role for a few weeks, I believe that I would benefit from accommodations pertaining to [need]. It would be helpful for me to have a meeting and discuss what options are available. Do you have any availability on Thursday this week to have this conversation?

*Thanks,
[Name]*



2. Prepare for the meeting

You might find it helpful to outline aspects of the conversation you would like to have in advance of the meeting. For example:

Meetings Notes

Introduction

- Thank you for meeting with me today...
- I am really enjoying ... [give some examples of what you like about your role]

Explain the situation

A. Share functional limitation or need: When working on/in [detail] I have a functional limitation pertaining to...

OR

B. I would like to attend [religious observance, medical appointment, etc.]

OR

C. I have come to realize [need or limitation] and believe I would benefit from [accommodation]...

Share accommodation suggestion(s)

A. In the past I have found that [accommodation] works well for me, but I am also open to different options or ideas ...

OR

B. I would be happy to make up the hours I will miss by [scheduling change] ...

OR

C. What options are available so that I can continue to perform at the level I feel is my best and that makes a full contribution to my team?

Follow-up/next steps

What are the next steps here? What additional information might be helpful?



Tip: make your request as clear and as detailed as possible. It is very unlikely that you will need to give any medical information. If medical information does need to be shared, it would be unusual for this to occur in the initial meeting.



3. Follow-up with an email

After the meeting it can be helpful to have a written summary of the discussion and next steps. Often your employer or HR representative will send a summary email, but if they do not you could write and send one. For example:

Email subject: Following-up on our meeting today

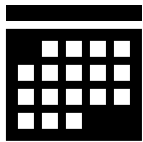
Dear [names],

Thanks for meeting with me yesterday to discuss my accommodation request. Below I have listed some of the key things we discussed as well as what was outlined as next steps.

[content]

Please let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to... [sign off, name]

*Sincerely,
[name]*



4. Set up check-in meetings

It can be beneficial to have explicit conversations with your employer or HR representative to make sure your needs are being met and to make sure no unforeseen barriers have arisen since you started your role. If you received accommodation after starting a role, you may also find check-in meetings helpful. You can send an email to schedule or request these meetings to formalize your accommodation request. For example:

Email subject: Monitoring Accommodation

Dear [name],

As I settle into my role, I would find it helpful to check in with you for 10-15 minutes to discuss the accommodations I have in place. Would it be possible to have these meetings at the following intervals?

- after my first two days (date)*
- after my first week (date)*
- at the end of my first month (date)*

*Thank you,
[Name]*



Your turn!

In the space below, consider outlining:

- When do you plan to make your request?
- How would you like to set up the meeting and what you might say in the meeting request email?
- What do you want to discuss in the meeting (explain what accommodation(s) you are requesting and/or what has worked in the past)?
- If you would like to set up check-ins to discuss your accommodation, what time intervals would be helpful?

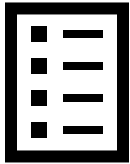


I am not sure who to contact to request accommodation



Sometimes people work on different teams and have different supervisors for different roles. In these types of situations, it can be unclear who you should contact to start a conversation about accommodation. Consider contacting the supervisor with whom you have the strongest working relationship with or start with HR for advice. These people can often help you get started or direct you to the staff member who can help.

Things to remember:



- Requesting accommodation is the first step in what will likely be a multi- step process.
- Just because one accommodation has worked for you in the past doesn't mean that there aren't other accommodations that will work and are reasonable. In addition, accommodations that worked in a university setting may not directly translate to a workplace. Being open to different options and ideas can be a helpful approach to this process.
- If you are part of a union, your union representative may be a source of information on accommodation requests, procedures, and what you can expect during this process.
- There are many different types of accommodations. Some may be more straightforward to implement whereas others might include involving experts. Regardless, it is important to remember that *you are within your rights to request accommodation*.

Additional Resources

Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC)

The OHRC works to build respect for human rights into all aspects of life in Ontario. It looks at the roots of discrimination, develops policy for preventing different forms of discrimination, and works to raise awareness of human rights issues. The OHRC intervenes, as needed, at tribunals and all levels of court on human rights issues with broad public interest or concern, with different sectors and groups, to promote organizational change and to break down barriers to equity and success.

http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/social_areas/employment

Lime Connect

A global not for profit organization that works to connect high potential university students and professionals with disabilities with scholarships, internship sand careers. Lime Connect works with several corporate partners to help educate them and develop opportunities for persons with disabilities. Check out their opportunities and programs on their website.

<https://www.limeconnect.com/>



Discover Ability Network

The Discover Ability Network is a government funded resource that connects organizations with people with disabilities who are seeking employment. It includes a job-matching platform, tip sheets, and links to additional resources.

<https://discoverability.network/job-seeker/>

CareerWise

CareerWise is produced by CERIC, a charitable organization that advances education and research in career counselling and career development. On this page you can find curated articles around employment. You can also use the tags on the right-hand side of the page to view other topics.

<https://careerwise.ceric.ca>

Consider the following article that describes strategies for young people disclosing disabilities early on in their careers.

<https://careerwise.ceric.ca/2020/11/12/6-strategies-youth-use-to-disclose-disabilities-at-work/#.YTdyZp5Kiqk>

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

For further information and examples of accommodations in the workplace, the AODA is a great resource.

<https://www.aoda.ca/>

Human Rights Legal Support Centre – Understanding the Duty to Accommodate

<https://www.hrlsc.on.ca/en/how-guides-and-faqs/your-right-accommodation>

Human Rights Legal Support Centre – Human Rights at Work FAQ

<https://www.hrlsc.on.ca/en/frequently-asked-questions/human-rights-work#8>

Ontario Human Rights Commission - Accommodations for Religious Observances

<http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/frequently-asked-questions/employer-do-i-have-give-people-time-religious-leave-and-do-i-also-have-pay-them>

References

Discrimination based on disability and the duty to accommodate: Information for employers. (n.d.). Ontario Human Rights Commission. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/discrimination-based-disability-and-duty-accommodate-information-employers>

Meeting the accommodation needs of employees on the job. (n.d.). Ontario Human Rights Commission. Retrieved September 28, 2021, from <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/iv-human-rights-issues-all-stages-employment/8-meeting-accommodation-needs-employees-job>

The Ontario Human Rights Code. (n.d.). Ontario Human Rights Commission. Retrieved September 17, 2021, from <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code>



Understanding the Duty to Accommodate. (n.d.). Human Rights and Legal Support Centre. Retrieved September 14, 2021, from <https://www.hrlsc.on.ca/en/how-guides-and-faqs/your-right-accommodation>