THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF
HUMAN RESOURCES

80 Lower College Road, Kingston, RI 02881 USA uri.edu/hr

THINK BIG WE DO℠

Supervisors Guide to Responding to Accommodation Requests

Supervisors are often the first point of contact for an employee who is seeking an accommodation. A supervisor's primary responsibilities are to acknowledge the request promptly, maintain strict confidentiality, avoid making medical or accommodation decisions, and connect or refer the employee to Human Resources for appropriate guidance and next steps.

Please see below for a guide on how supervisors can best respond to these types of requests:

1. Recognize the request. Employees do not need to mention the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or even use the word 'accommodation'. A request occurs when an employee communicates that they are experiencing a workplace barrier due to a medical condition.

   Examples:
   - *"I am going to need to come in late for the next couple of weeks because of doctor's appointments"*
   - *"The side effects of my medication are making it hard for me to concentrate at work"*
   - *"I've been feeling really down lately and I'm having trouble keeping up with the workload"*

   If you are unsure if an employee is asking for accommodation, err on the side of caution and ask, "How can I help?"

2. Thank the employee for sharing the information and do not ask about diagnoses or for medical documentation. If an employee shares medical information, do not discuss this with other team members and keep all communications private.

3. Do not agree to accommodation requests or try to manage the situation on your own. There are specific laws under the ADA that must be followed and Human Resources should manage these requests.

4. Refer the employee to Human Resources and let them know that Michael Marzilli, Leave Coordinator, (michael.marzilli@uri.edu) or Mary Previte, Employee Wellbeing Specialist, (mary.previte@uri.edu) will be able to assist with their request.

Resources:
URI Human Resources Accommodations: Workplace Accommodations – Office of Human Resources
URI Office of Equal Opportunity: ADA Compliance – Office of Equal Opportunity