

# Reasonable Adjustments in the Workplace Procedure

## Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure describes the process of how to request, develop and implement a reasonable adjustment at the University of Wollongong (the University) to accommodate a disability, mental health, or chronic medical condition, including a temporary medical condition.

## Section 2 - Application and Scope

(2) The Procedure applies to all:

- a. staff of the University who have a temporary, episodic, or permanent disability, mental health issue or chronic health condition.

(3) This Procedure does not apply to:

- a. students at the University (see [Disability Policy - Students](#));
- b. staff employed by other entities controlled by the University; and
- c. staff employed at campuses of the University outside of Australia.

## Section 3 - Policy

(4) This Procedure supports the [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy](#) by providing advice for staff and their supervisors on the processes associated with any reasonable workplace adjustments required in the workplace.

## Section 4 - General Principles

(5) Reasonable adjustments are put into place to allow a person with a permanent or temporary disability, mental health, or chronic medical condition to complete the tasks of their role effectively and comfortably, and/or to allow equal employment opportunity.

(6) The requirement to make a reasonable workplace adjustment applies irrespective of whether a person's disability was pre-existing or commenced during employment.

(7) The requirement to provide reasonable adjustments for staff with a disability applies to all areas of the employment life cycle.

(8) Staff with a disability are not obliged to disclose the details of their disability, mental health or chronic medical condition unless they require services, support, or adjustments.

(9) If a staff member does provide this information to the University, it must be treated in accordance with the

University's [Privacy Policy](#) and not be discussed with anyone unless the staff member has given permission to do so.

(10) A staff member with a disability, mental health or chronic medical condition can bring a support person to any meeting about a service, support, or workplace adjustment. The support persons role is to advocate for and provide assistance to the staff member.

(11) This procedure does not apply to staff who have either lodged or has an accepted workers compensation claim. The process for this can be accessed via the injury management and return to work programs through the support of the Wellbeing Health and Safety Unit.

## Section 5 - Types of Reasonable Workplace Adjustments

(12) Workplace adjustments are either temporary or permanent and may include but are not limited to:

- a. provisions of appropriate equipment or assistance to ensure barriers are reduced in the workplace;
- b. physical changes to the work environment including height adjustable workstations, building access or work-related aids;
- c. flexible working arrangements including changes to start and finish times as well as appropriate break times if required in line with the [Flexible Work Arrangements Procedure](#);
- d. for Academic staff, reasonable timetabling accommodations can be made where necessary. Refer to the [Staff Special Consideration/Reasonable Accommodation](#) form;
- e. technological provisions such as communication technology devices or large-screen monitors; or
- f. use of University facilities such as quiet rooms.

## Section 6 - Implementing a Reasonable Workplace Adjustment

(13) Staff are encouraged to discuss any requirements with their supervisor and must submit a [Staff Special Consideration/Reasonable Accommodation](#) form for approval.

(14) The supervisor should seek the relevant approvals dependent on the request (e.g., Facilities Management Division or IMTS) and ensure that agreed reasonable workplace adjustments are implemented in consultation with the relevant People and Culture representatives.

(15) Staff may be required to provide supporting documentation regarding their disability, mental health, or chronic medical condition to enable appropriate workplace adjustments. This may include a letter from a health professional or any relevant information that might help to inform a decision. The information sought by the university will only be what is relevant to the specific adjustments requested.

(16) All reasonable workplace adjustments should be resolved by the business unit first, where possible. If no budget or resourcing exists, the staff member's supervisor should contact the [Equity Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) team](#) for assistance with applying for funding through the [Employment Assistance Fund \(EAF\)](#) via [JobAccess](#).

(17) The supervisor will respond to formal request for workplace adjustments within 10 working days of the request being made.

(18) Staff members who believe their request for a workplace adjustment has been unreasonably denied, may seek a

review of the decision from the Chief People and Culture Officer. If after the review period the staff member feels that their request has been unreasonably denied, they may submit a grievance through the [Complaints Management Policy](#).

## Section 7 - [JobAccess](#)

(19) Staff with a disability or a mental health issue may access the Australian Government funded [Employment Assistance Fund \(EAF\)](#) to cover the costs of making a reasonable workplace adjustment. This may include:

- a. the cost of making adjustments to your physical workplace;
- b. modifications to work vehicles;
- c. special equipment for the workplace;
- d. information and communication devices;
- e. Auslan interpreting services; or
- f. specialist services for staff with specific learning disorders and mental health issues.

(20) Staff can seek advice from the [Equity Diversity and Inclusion \(EDI\) team](#) where funding for JobAccess is required to support a reasonable adjustment request.

(21) Staff may apply for [JobAccess](#) funding on an individual basis via the online services site. If they need assistance completing the [Employment Assistance Fund \(EAF\) Online Application](#), they could also contact a [JobAccess Adviser](#) on 1800 464 800.

(22) [JobAccess](#) may require a workplace assessment to be performed and will arrange this through the [Employment Assistance Fund \(EAF\)](#) at no cost, to provide advice on the types of modifications or equipment that may best meet the individual staff member's needs, prior to approval for [Employment Assistance \(EAF\) Funding](#).

## Section 8 - Roles and Responsibilities

(23) All staff members will:

- a. Advise their supervisor of any adjustments that they may need to effectively work at the University. This might include:
  - i. physical adjustments to their workstation;
  - ii. access adjustments to their work environment;
  - iii. changes to the way they perform their duties;
  - iv. flexible work arrangements in certain circumstances.
- b. Where a reasonable adjustment is required, disclose to the University, and in conjunction with their supervisor, complete a [Staff Workplace Reasonable Adjustment Request Form](#).
- c. Advise their supervisor if they are having any issues in their workplace in relation to their disability and the inherent requirements of their role.

(24) Supervisors will:

- a. Receive requests for a reasonable adjustment from new or existing staff members.
- b. Contact new staff members (before first day) to discuss reasonable adjustments they require to work to the best of their ability.
- c. May request a reasonable adjustment on behalf of a staff member.

- d. In consultation with the staff member, discuss and complete a [Staff Workplace Reasonable Adjustment Request Form](#).
- e. Ensure the adjustment is implemented in a timely manner, in consultation with the relevant People and Culture contacts.
- f. Ensure records related to this process are retained as appropriate.
- g. Hold regular discussions with staff members about any requirements or workplace adjustment needs.
- h. Respond to the staff members' application for a reasonable adjustment within 10 working days.
- i. Maintain confidentiality as required when dealing with a staff members application for a reasonable adjustment.

(25) Talent Acquisition Team will:

- a. Consider requests from applicants for workplace adjustments during the recruitment process, including interviews.
- b. Provide necessary adjustments in consultation with the relevant People and Culture representative.

(26) People and Culture Business Partners will:

- a. Advise supervisors on the process to request a reasonable adjustment for staff with a disability, mental health issue or chronic medical condition.
- b. Provide support to supervisors when needed.

(27) Health, Safety and Wellbeing team will:

- a. Assist supervisors in the provision of a safe work environment by implementing risk management activities.
- b. Assist with the development and implementation of return-to-work plans for staff with a disability as required.
- c. Consult with staff members to determine if a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) is required.

(28) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team will:

- a. Integrate disability provisions into staff policies and Procedures.
- b. Act as first point of contact for staff with a disability seeking workplace adjustments, with or without their supervisor.
- c. Liaise with community and government agencies to encourage applications for positions and traineeships for people with disabilities.
- d. Liaise with external agencies to arrange funding for workplace adjustments.
- e. Support supervisors to apply for funding for workplace adjustments.
- f. Keep appropriate records about the reasonable adjustment process.

## Section 9 - Definitions

Word	Definition
Access	Access refers to people's ability to participate in the life of the University including its learning, teaching, physical, digital, living and communication environments. Access is a principle that is applied to goods, services, and environments, such as learning, work, social, digital, and built environments. It describes the degree to which a person with a disability can participate in or access goods, services, or the environment.

Chronic medical condition	A Chronic medical condition is a temporary or permanent condition that may be hereditary, genetically acquired or of unknown origin. The condition may not be obvious or readily identifiable, is severely debilitating, and may result in fluctuating levels of wellness and sickness, and/or periods of hospitalisation; for example, HIV/AIDS, cancer, chronic fatigue syndrome, Crohn's disease, cystic fibrosis, asthma, or diabetes.
Direct disability discrimination	Direct disability discrimination occurs where a person with disability is treated less favourably than someone without disability and/or reasonable adjustments are not made for the person with disability, and therefore, they are treated less favourably than someone without disability.
Indirect disability discrimination	Indirect disability discrimination occurs where a requirement or condition is applied equally to people with disability and those without disability, but because of disability, a person does not, will not or is not able to comply with the requirement or condition and is therefore disadvantaged, or; A person with disability may be able to comply with a requirement or condition if reasonable adjustments are made, but the reasonable adjustments are not made, and the person with disability is disadvantaged.
<a href="#">JobAccess</a>	The national hub for workplace and employment information for people with disability, employers, and service providers. Created by the Australian Government, it brings together the information and resources that can 'drive disability employment.'
Mental health issue	A mental health issue is a health problem that significantly affects how a person feels, thinks, behaves, and interacts with other people. It is diagnosed according to standardised criteria.
Modification	The implementation of a piece of equipment or technology, or modification to an existing piece of equipment or technology or implementation of a service available that assist a worker with disability to access or carry out essential employment duties of a particular job.
People and culture representative	Any member of any team within the People and Culture division, could include a People and Culture Business Partner, Work Health and Safety representative, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team member or Talent Acquisition team member.
Workplace adjustment for staff	Workplace adjustments help to remove barriers so that an employee with a disability can perform the essential requirements of their job. Most workplace adjustments are low cost and easy to put in place.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	11th July 2024
<b>Review Date</b>	11th July 2025
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Chief Operating Officer and Vice-President Operations
<b>Approval Date</b>	5th June 2024
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Stephen Phillips Vice-President Operations
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