



Reasonable Accommodation Fund for Equipment and Adaptive Technology: Guiding Principles and Process for Accessing the Fund

The University of Alberta has a duty to accommodate, to the point of undue hardship, those staff members who request an accommodation related to a protected ground under the Alberta Human Rights Act. Please review the University's [Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy](#) as well as the [Duty to Accommodate](#) procedure.

This document provides information about the University's responsibilities and obligations with respect to accommodating staff with permanent medical restrictions and limitations. Because specialized equipment and adaptive technology is sometimes required to accommodate staff with permanent medical restrictions and limitations, the University's Policy mandates creation of a Reasonable Accommodation Fund (RAF) for equipment and/or adaptive technology. The RAF is a central fund that assists departments by offsetting the costs of reasonable accommodation measures for faculty and staff with permanent medical restrictions and limitations.

This document describes the coordination and administration of the RAF. Please note that this document is written with the assumption that the reader is familiar with the University's Duty to Accommodate policy as there is information contained in the policy that is not repeated here. For example, the policy contains detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of both the person requiring accommodation and the supervisor. Members of the University community who may require further information about interpreting and applying the University's Duty to Accommodate policy are encouraged to contact the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights.

The remainder of this document is divided into two main sections; the first section outlines the guiding principles underpinning the use of and access to the fund and the second section lays out the process for accessing the fund.

Guiding Principles

- Accommodation is based on objective medical documentation provided to the University's third-party disability management program provider (Homewood Health Inc.) regarding a permanent physical or mental health condition that requires modification(s). For the purpose of RAF, this is reflected in the need for adaptive equipment and/or technology.
- The dignity of the staff member needing accommodation will be maintained.
- The staff member will be involved in discussions about accommodation.
- Individuals from various service units on campus will work with the staff member and the staff member's supervisor to encourage effective communication in order to facilitate the reasonable accommodation process.
- The applicant to the RAF is the employing department, not the individual in need of accommodation.



- The RAF will be used to offset funds provided by the employing department when deemed medically necessary. Each case will be evaluated on an individual basis.
- Equipment and adaptive technology purchased with assistance from the RAF are property of the University of Alberta. If the staff member transfers departments within the University, the adaptive equipment and/or technology will follow them until they are no longer employed by the University of Alberta. At this point, the department can redeploy the equipment to other employees in need of support.
- Eligible costs will include workspace modifications, access modifications, furniture (e.g. desk/ergonomic chair), tools, adaptive software and technology. RAF funding will not be applied to items such as computer mouse/key board, keyboard tray, foot rest, related supplies or stationary.
- The RAF supports the University in achieving its employment equity goals. When an accommodation is funded through the RAF, the staff or faculty member will be invited to identify on the University's Employment Equity Census Questionnaire as a person with a disability

Process for Accessing the Fund

Eligibility

- Any University of Alberta staff member (i.e., temporary, continuing, full-time, part-time, trust) who, due to a permanent medical restriction and limitation, requires assistance in the form of equipment or adaptive technology as a medical accommodation to meet their job responsibilities may be eligible for funding through the RAF. This includes newly recruited staff members.
- Requests for funding through the RAF should be made after the staff member has accessed alternate funding sources (e.g., WCB, Alberta Aids to Daily Living, the University's benefits program, insurance programs) for which they are eligible.
- The RAF normally will not be used to provide personal support to daily living (e.g., wheelchair, eyeglasses, hearing aids) as these are covered by benefits and other programs.
- RAF will not be used to provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that is normally required as part of the job.

Application for Equipment and/or Adaptive Technology Through the RAF

- As per the University's Duty to Accommodate policy, the staff member needing accommodation is responsible for advising the appropriate person (e.g., Supervisor, APO, Director, Dean, or Department Chair) of the need for accommodation, if this is not apparent. The staff member must complete the [Medical Documentation](#) form – the completed form is to be provided to Homewood Health. The staff member must also complete the Accommodation Request form in conjunction with their supervisor. This form can be requested by contacting ODEH at



recovery@ualberta.ca

- Appropriate objective medical documentation is required to support an accommodation. Homewood Health will review the RAF [Medical Documentation](#) form and/or any other relevant medical information the staff member may supply. Homewood Health will gather further information as required to evaluate the need and make recommendations to ODEH. The employing department will be advised by the RTWC on the outcome of Homewood Health's assessment. If the accommodation is supported, the department will be provided a list of the required equipment and/or adaptive technology.
- There are various service providers on campus that may be contacted for information during the process. These providers may include, for example, Student Accessibility Services (SAS) now Student Services, Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S), Organizational Development, Equity and Health (ODEH) and the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights. Information on these providers can be found by searching from the main [University of Alberta](#) web page. If the staff member requiring accommodation has been in contact with one of these service providers before advising their supervisor of the need for accommodation, the individual from the service unit will encourage the staff member to communicate the need for accommodation to their supervisor. This will ensure that the supervisor can play a role in ensuring that the necessary accommodation is provided in a timely manner.
- Once the supervisor is aware of the need for accommodation, it is the supervisor's responsibility to help the University meet its legal obligation by seeking appropriate accommodation for the staff member. While it is essential that the staff member has input into the process, it is ultimately the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that a solution is sought and implemented. The "applicant" to the fund is therefore the employing department rather than the staff member. Please refer to our web page on the [supervisor's roles and responsibilities in the accommodation process](#).
- The supervisor will need to submit an [On Line Notification](#) once the Medical Documentation form has been submitted to Homewood Health.
- A component of a RAF Application is an assessment of needs to determine what equipment or adaptive technology are needed to allow the staff member to perform the essential duties of their job. Please review the [steps to initiate an assessment](#) of needs.
- When all required information has been gathered and a thorough review has taken place, the ODEH Return To Work Consultant (RTWC) will advise the employing department on the outcome. Other assessments may be required (e.g. Ergonomic; Occupational Therapy; Adaptive Technology Specialist) to fully understand what is required. The employing department will be provided a clear description of the item(s) including vendor information and a cost estimate. In the case of adaptive technology, the recommendations will also include precise technical specifications. If it is noted that the adaptive technology requires training, then the employee will make a commitment to complete the training and the employer will provide the time required to complete the training.



- If the employing department requires funding assistance to purchase the recommended equipment or adaptive technology as directly relates to a medical condition, an [Application](#) can be made to the RAF.
- The employing department will order and pay for the required items and then complete the RAF [Application](#) form. The form is signed by both the staff member and the supervisor and is sent to:

Reasonable Accommodation Fund - Organizational Development, Equity and Health
Human Resource Services, 2-60 University Terrace

- ODEH will review applications and will determine eligibility for funding based on medical recommendations from Homewood Health.
- If the application is approved for funding from the RAF, ODEH will review cost-sharing arrangements with the employing department (in most cases, usual reimbursement to the department is 50% of the required equipment/technology). ODEH will arrange for transfer of the agreed-upon funds to the employing department's account.

Ownership of Equipment and Supplies

- All equipment/technology purchased with funds from the RAF are property of the University of Alberta. If the employee no longer requires the item, or no longer works for the University, these items may be redeployed within the department so that other staff may use as appropriate.
- Equipment/technology purchased with funds from the RAF may be taken off campus only for University business. The staff member is to review this with the appropriate supervisor to ensure compliance with the security policy.

To discuss further, or to obtain the appropriate form, please contact ODEH at recovery@ualberta.ca