

Procedure for Employees to Request Religious Workplace Accommodations

Cornell University is committed to providing inclusive learning and workplace environments. As part of this commitment, and consistent with relevant laws and regulations regarding religious beliefs, Cornell is committed to engaging in an interactive process to provide reasonable religious accommodations to faculty and staff.

Step 1: Employee Makes a Request for Workplace Accommodations

The employee is responsible for requesting a reasonable accommodation based upon their religion or sincerely held religious belief. This is the first step in the interactive process. The request should be submitted to the Cornell Office of Civil Rights (“COCR”), who will engage in the interactive process with the employee on behalf of the University.

Requests may be submitted by completing and submitting the Request for Religious Accommodation Form, found at <https://cornell.guardianconduct.com>.

If employees need assistance due to a disability in submitting a written accommodation request, they should contact the University’s Employee Accommodations Specialist at accommodations@cornell.edu.

Note to Supervisors: If a request is submitted directly to a supervisor or human resources representative, verbally or in writing, the supervisor or HR representative who received the request is responsible for promptly forwarding the request to COCR. The reasonable accommodations process begins when the written request for accommodation is received by the employee’s supervisor or human resources representative.

Step 2: Interactive Process

Duration of Interactive Process: The interactive process will be completed in a reasonably prompt time frame, taking into account the timeliness of responses from employees and providers.

Interactive Communications: Upon receipt of an employee’s request for accommodation, COCR will promptly engage in the “interactive process,” which is a series of communications with the employee and the employee’s human resources representative and supervisor to determine appropriate reasonable accommodations. The employee is expected to cooperate with the interactive process, including responding to meeting requests with COCR, and supplying additional information as requested. COCR will consult with other University offices (e.g., IT for technology solutions), as needed, as a part of this process.

Additional Documentation from Employee: If additional documentation is needed to support the request, COCR will contact the employee to provide documentation related to the tenets of the religious practice or belief that supports the request. As part of this process, COCR will ensure that the employee understands what additional documentation is required and why.

Approval/Denial of Request: What constitutes a reasonable accommodation will be determined on a case-by-case basis, with input from the employee, supervisor, and human resources. COCR makes the final determination regarding approved accommodations.

If a requested accommodation is denied because it is determined to be unreasonable or that it constitutes an undue hardship, the employee will be notified in writing of this determination and the basis for the determination.

Once accommodations are agreed upon and approved, COCR will provide the employee with a document outlining the reasonable accommodations, a copy of which will be shared with the employee's human resources representative and supervisor and maintained by COCR.

Step 3: Implementation of Reasonable Accommodations

University colleges/units are responsible for covering the cost of approved, reasonable accommodations, not the employee receiving the accommodations.

Once a supervisor receives the signed document outlining the approved accommodations, the supervisor is responsible for:

- implementing the reasonable accommodation;
- keeping the request confidential, except as necessary for implementing the accommodation; and
- notifying COCR if accommodations are not effective or if business needs change thus that the reasonableness of an accommodation should be re-evaluated.

If an accommodation is no longer needed, or no longer meets the employee's needs, the employee is responsible for promptly notifying COCR.

Privacy

COCR will document in writing all requests for reasonable accommodation and the conversations that occur during the interactive process and will privately maintain the information.

Retaliation/Discrimination

Employees are protected from retaliation pursuant to Policy 6.4. Any employee who believes that they have been subject to retaliation and/or religious discrimination may file a complaint with the

COCR. Employees may also file a complaint with an external agency authorized to accept such complaints or pursue other remedies available to them under state or federal law.

Related Forms

- [Request for Religious Accommodation](#)