Guides to Career Services
for Students with Disabilities

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including work and school. An individual is considered to have a disability if there is a physical or mental impairment that significantly limits major life activities, if an individual has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

If you have a disability and are applying for a job, you must be qualified to perform the essential duties of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation in order to be protected by the ADA.

What is Reasonable Accommodation?

Reasonable accommodation is any change or adjustment to a job or work environment that permits a qualified applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process or to perform essential job duties. Reasonable accommodation also includes any adjustments that ensure an individual with a disability has the same rights and privileges in employment that employees without disabilities have. Some examples of reasonable accommodation may include:

- Providing or modifying equipment
- Part-time or modified work schedules
- Reassignment to a vacant position
- Adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies
- Providing readers and interpreters
- Making the workplace readily accessible and useable by people with disabilities
- Providing a quieter workplace or making changes to reduce noise

The part of the ADA enforced by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) outlaws job discrimination by all employers with 15 or more employees. This includes:

- Private Employers
- State and Local Governments
- Employment Agencies
- Labor Organizations

Disclosing Your Disability to an Employer

Job seekers with disabilities must decide whether to disclose their disability, and when to do so. The decision to disclose, including when and how you disclose, is ultimately yours. Under the ADA, people with disabilities are not required to disclose their disability unless they require accommodations. If you have a disability, you must consider whether you can perform the essential job duties, and if you need any accommodations to be successful. It is helpful to take some time to think about how you work and learn best, as well as any accommodations that have been successful for you in the past.
What to Consider before Disclosing Your Disability

- Your knowledge of your disability and how clearly you can discuss it
- Your ability to perform the essential job functions without accommodations
- Your own comfort and trust level with the employer
- Your past accommodations in a professional environment
- Your suggestions for accommodations, if needed
- How stressful will it be for you to hide your disability if you choose not to disclose?

Timing Your Disclosure

Many employers suggest not disclosing your disability if it is undetectable and no accommodations are needed. If your disability is not apparent and you do not require any accommodations, you may use greater discretion about when to discuss your disability.

Disclosing Before the Interview

If your disability requires accommodations during the interview, you should disclose when the potential employer contacts you for an interview so they can make the necessary arrangements. Be prepared to answer any questions regarding specific accommodations, but provide examples of how you have already performed many of the functions of the job. Focus on your strengths, skills, experience, and education.

Disclosing After Being Offered the Job

Many people choose to disclose their disability after a job has been offered to ensure that the employer will focus solely on the individual’s qualifications and skills. If you determine that you do not need accommodations for the interview, but will need accommodations for the job, discuss it prior to your start date to ensure accommodations are made before you arrive.

Disclosing During the Course of Employment

If you discover over time that you have underestimated your need for an accommodation, it is best to disclose your disability to your employer and ask for accommodations before your work performance is affected.

Resources for Individuals with Disabilities

CSCC Disability Services Office – Eibling Hall 101: [http://www.csc.edu/services/disability/](http://www.csc.edu/services/disability/)

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities: [http://www.ood.ohio.gov/](http://www.ood.ohio.gov/)