

An important issue that comes up early in the training year is that of **Accommodations for Disability**. The Health Science Center's policy [Request for Accommodations under the ADA](#) addresses processes for the entire HSC. The GME policy is [GME Policy 7.4](#), located in the [GME Policy Manual](#).

Several points are important:

1. Definition of DISABILITY - a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits at least one major life activity of an individual, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.
2. The term does not include a current condition of addiction to the use of alcohol, a drug, an illegal substance, or a federally controlled substance; or a currently communicable disease or infection as defined in Section 81.003, Health and Safety Code, or required to be reported under Section 81.041, Health and Safety Code, that constitutes a direct threat to the health or safety of other persons or that makes the affected unable to perform the duties of the person's employment.
3. Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), individuals may request to work and train under accommodations. In UTHSCSA, this includes employees, [visitors](#), students, fellows, and residents.
4. To be granted accommodations, an individual must meet the definition of a QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WITH A DISABILITY (a person with a disability who satisfies the requisite skill, experience, education and other job-related requirements of the employment position such individual holds or desires, and who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of such position).
5. Not every disability can readily be accommodated – several are outlined in [GME Policy 2.1.2](#), Essential Abilities Requirements, including
 - a. Cognitive abilities (conceptual, integrative, and quantitative abilities for problem solving and diagnosis)
 - b. Behavioral/social/professionalism
 - c. Communication
 - d. Sensory/motor/physical.
6. Individual residency programs may require different specific abilities of their residents, and these may vary, as appropriate to the practice requirements of the specialty. Further, active duty military residents in joint programs must meet and continuously maintain those standards required by SAUSHEC as well as all requirements of the UTHSCSA program. Programs with requirements stricter than those of GME Policy 2.1.2 are well advised to communicate those expectations clearly to applicants during the interview process.
7. The application process for resident/fellow accommodation is detailed in [GME Policy 7.4](#).
8. Careful management of documents is essential – attached is the recent important communication from Dr. Bonnie Blankmeyer and Mr. Jack Park. Medical-related

information must be kept confidential and maintained separately from other personnel records

Residents and fellows may enter training with a known disability. Occasionally an individual may develop a disability during residency. In either case, it is best for the individual to request accommodations as early in the program as possible. A record of performance deficiencies cannot be corrected after the fact, and putting in place agreed-upon accommodations can enable the individual to receive maximum benefit from his/her residency training program.

Not all accommodations that are requested can be granted – each case is different and requires careful and expert management - the Executive Director of the Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Office plays an essential role in this process.

For questions, please contact the Office of the Executive Director, Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action.