

# COVID-19 Related Workplace Accommodation Request – Manager Instructions

**Please note: this process has recently changed. Workplace Accommodation requests for an employee's own health condition, whether COVID-19 related or not, will now follow the standard Workplace Accommodation process. Requests for adjustments or accommodations for any other reason (employee preference, childcare issues, high risk family member) should be requested as a flexible work agreement through the employee's unit.**

The COVID-19 Transition Task Force is taking every pre-caution to make work environments safe for employees by implementing [safe and healthy guidelines](#). However, Ohio State recognizes that some employees may have medical conditions which put them at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, or interact with COVID-19, even with these precautions in place, and may need accommodations to safely perform their job.

Ohio State recognizes that employees may have other situations (not their own health condition) which interferes with their ability to work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These employees should work with their unit pursuant to request a flexible work agreement.

Workplace Accommodations for an employee's own health condition, COVID-19 related or not, will continue to be handled through the university's standard process, following the guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA). Any employee with a need for an accommodation due to their own health condition should follow the steps below. Please contact [Integrated Absence Management and Vocational Services](#) (IAMVS) for questions related to Workplace Accommodations.

## What are the qualifying reasons for requesting COVID-19 related accommodation?

1. An employee may request an accommodation when they have their own health condition, as defined by the CDC, which puts them at high risk for COVID-19 complications, and the employee's health care provider has advised that they modify their work environment to reduce COVID-19 exposure.
2. An employee has a disability or health condition (other than those defined by the CDC) which interacts with COVID-19 (i.e., diagnosed mental health disorder, developmental disorder), and the employee's health care provider has advised that they modify their work environment due to the condition.

## My employee has requested a COVID-19-related accommodation for their own health condition. What do I do?

1. Provide your employee with the link to [HRConnection](#) and advise them to submit a Workplace Accommodation Request to initiate the process.
2. Your employee will be prompted to have their medical provider complete and return the [Accommodation Medical Certification](#). All medical documentation should be returned directly to IAMVS at [hr-integrateddisability@osu.edu](mailto:hr-integrateddisability@osu.edu) or 614-292-0271 (fax). Medical documentation should never be returned to the unit/manager.
3. Once medical documentation is received, IAMVS will review the request with appropriate unit leadership and determine if granting the accommodation is feasible or would pose a hardship to the operation of your unit. IAMVS and your unit will consider alternatives that may meet the needs of the employee and the unit. For example, if the request is to telework to reduce exposure, other alternatives may be:
  - Individually fitted Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
  - Plexiglass or other shielding



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- Single direction entrances/exits
- Social distancing (more than 6 feet)
- Office hours/meetings in larger room/remote
- Alternative work schedule (earlier morning or later at night to reduce density)
- Hybrid schedule (part time remote work/part time on campus)
- Additional cleaning/sanitation
- Workstation re-arrangement
- Adjusting non-essential job duties (i.e., removing non-essential in person meetings)

4. If the request, or an agreeable alternative can be granted, your IAMVS representative will draft the accommodation plan with the agreed upon modifications. You, your employee and your IAMVS representative will review and sign the accommodation plan.

5. If the accommodation cannot be granted, due to the impact it would have on business operations, your IAMVS representative will work with you to evaluate and document the hardship that granting the accommodation would pose.

6. In situations where accommodations cannot be granted, your IAMVS representative, in coordination with your HR Consultant and Employer and Labor Relations Sr Representative will discuss next steps for and with the employee.

## FAQ's:

### **My employee told me they have a medical condition and need to continue to work from home. What should I do?**

You should follow the above steps and advise your employee to initiate a Workplace Accommodation Request because the request is related to their own medical condition.

### **My employee asked to continue to work from home due to a family members health condition, or for childcare reasons. What should I do?**

You should discuss the Flexible Work Policy and options with your employee. Since this request is not related to their own health condition, your employee should not follow the Workplace Accommodation Request process. Only employees who have their own health condition which requires modifications to their work are eligible to request a Workplace Accommodation (COVID-19 related or not).

### **Should I ask my employee what their medical condition is, or ask for medical documentation before they apply to see if they will qualify for an accommodation?**

No, your IAMVS representative will obtain the appropriate medical documentation and discuss the employees medically related needs with them and coordinate with you for the accommodation request.

### **How is this process different than the “regular” Workplace Accommodation process?**

Since the COVID-19 Related Accommodation Request process is now specifically for employees with their own health condition(s), COVID-19 Related Accommodation Requests and “regular” Workplace Accommodation Requests are the same thing. Requests for accommodation, for an employee’s own health condition will both continue to be evaluated pursuant to ADA guidelines.

**Note:** because COVID-19 vaccines are voluntary at this time, managers or other unit staff should NOT ask employees who request Workplace Accommodations if they are vaccinated or not.

Vaccination status may be reviewed by IAMVS during the accommodation evaluation process as appropriate.