

MAINE MARITIME ACADEMY

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS Section 401

SUBJECT: DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT

PURPOSE: To establish guidance for accommodating disabled employees

A. Introduction

Pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Maine Human Rights Act and related laws, Maine Maritime Academy is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to those employees and employment applicants (hereinafter collectively referred to as “employees) who are both disabled and otherwise qualified within the meaning of those laws. The goal of the Academy is to balance on a case-by-case basis the specific needs of its employees with the operational integrity and administrative resources of the Academy.

B. Request for Accommodation

An employee must request an accommodation from the Academy Director of Human Resources (“Director”) in order to start the interactive process. A request for accommodation is a statement that an employee needs a work-related adjustment or change in working conditions, benefits or privileges of employment for a reason related to a mental or physical disability. A request for accommodation may be made orally or in writing by the employee, the employee’s health care provider or other person authorized by the employee to act on the employee’s behalf.

C. Interactive Process

A request for accommodation will be evaluated and addressed through an interactive process. The interactive process is an exchange of information between the employee and the Director for the purpose of making an individualized assessment of what, if any, reasonable accommodation may be made that will allow the employee to perform the essential functions of the job. The process is coordinated by the Director and may involve certain other appropriate Academy officials. Depending on the circumstances of an individual case, the process may also involve authorized health care professionals who have or can provide relevant information about the employee’s disability, ability to perform the essential functions of the job and/or need for accommodation, as well other professionals with knowledge or expertise relevant to the process.

D. Employee’s Responsibilities

An employee who has requested or is otherwise in need of reasonable accommodation is required to engage fully and in good faith in the interactive process. In addition to other requirements imposed by law, an employee requesting any accommodation from the Academy must:

1. Be an individual with a disability who is otherwise qualified, with or without reasonable accommodation, to perform the essential functions of the job in question;
2. Present a timely request for accommodation to the Director. A timely request is one that gives the Academy a meaningful opportunity to review and consider a request for accommodation; and
3. Upon request, provide current and valid medical information concerning the condition that the employee believes is a disability. If the employee declines to provide appropriate information or to authorize the Academy to obtain medical information or contact the appropriate health care provider, the Director will assess the request for accommodation based on the information available. The failure to provide appropriate medical information or to cooperate in the Academy's efforts to obtain such information may result in a denial of the employee's request.

E. Academy's Responsibilities

Supervisors whose employees clearly appear to request or need a reasonable accommodation should promptly notify, and promptly refer the employee to, the Director. In addition to other requirements imposed by law, the Director shall:

1. Promptly review information regarding the employee's disability, the requested accommodation and any other pertinent information. The Director may consult confidentially with professional(s) assessing the employee's condition provided the employee so consents. The Director may also consult with other Academy personnel, such as legal counsel, the Accessibility Services Coordinator and the employee's supervisor, who are necessary or helpful to the appropriate decision;
2. Discuss with an eligible employee any accommodations that will permit the employee to perform the essential functions of the job and that are reasonable and do not constitute an undue hardship for the institution;
3. Through the interactive process, attempt in good faith to reach agreement with the employee on whether there is a reasonable accommodation and, if so, the nature of the accommodation. If the employee and Director do not agree on the form of reasonable accommodation, the employee may be offered an alternative reasonable accommodation that has been identified; and
4. Keep a record of the interactive process, any accommodations that have been considered, the response or result of the offer of reasonable accommodation, and a description of the reasonable accommodation that has been offered to the employee. The Director and the employee will enter into a written agreement that memorializes the accommodation that has been determined to be reasonable and the plan for its implementation.

F. Implementation

If a reasonable accommodation has been identified and agreed upon by the Director and employee, information regarding the agreement and accommodation will be given to the employee's supervisor or other personnel as necessary to implement the accommodation.

G. Complaints

An employee who has a complaint regarding disability discrimination, including but not limited to a claim that the Academy has failed to make reasonable accommodation, must attempt to resolve that complaint through the following complaint procedure:

1. Contents of the Complaint

A complaint must be in writing; contain the name, address and telephone number of employee; and the location, date and description of the complaint. Alternative means of complaining, such as personal interview or tape recording, may be used if required because of an individual's disability.

2. Filing the Complaint

The complaint must be submitted to the person designated by the Academy to review appeals of employee and student disability-related decisions ("ADA Appeals Officer") as soon as possible, and no later than twenty (20) calendar days after the occurrence of the event that is the subject of the complaint unless there is a compelling reason why the employee could not meet this time period.

3. Officer's Decision

As soon as practical after receipt of the complaint, the ADA Appeals Officer will meet with the employee to discuss the complaint. As soon as practical after the meeting, the ADA Appeals Officer will respond in a format accessible to the employee. That response will explain the position of the Academy and, where practical, offer options for substantive resolution.

4. Employee Appeal to Academy President

Within ten (10) calendar days after receiving the ADA Appeals Officer's decision, the employee may appeal to the Academy President or designee.

5. Decision of the Academy President

As soon as practical after the receipt of the appeal, the Academy President or designee will meet with the employee to discuss the appeal. As soon as practical after the meeting, the Academy President or designee will issue in a format accessible to the employee a final decision regarding the complaint.

H. Other

1. Postings

The Academy shall post in conspicuous places the right of employees to request and receive reasonable accommodations and the procedure by which they may do so in that institution.

2. Confidentiality

All persons participating in assessments and decisions relating to issues of disability and reasonable accommodation shall keep confidential all information related to such matters, except as disclosure is required in order to make such an assessment or decision or determine or implement a reasonable accommodation.

3. Record Retention

The Academy must retain all documentation relating to disability determinations, including but not limited to records of interactive process, grievances, appeals and institutional responses for at least seven (7) years for employees and three (3) years for employment applicants.

4. Other

No portion of this policy is intended to expand or diminish any right or obligation imposed by external law, collective bargaining agreement or other contract or binding obligation.

REFERENCES: P. & S.L. 1941, ch. 37, §2 as amended; 5 M.R.S.A. §4553-A; 29 U.S.C. §794; 42 U.S.C. §12182; 34 C.F.R. Pt. 104; 29 C.F.R. §1630

DATE ADOPTED: April 9, 2014

DATE(S) AMENDED: