

Accommodation for GME Trainee Disability # 029.000

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/6/2026	LAST REVISION DATE: 7/16/2026	RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/DEPARTMENT Office of Graduate Medical Education
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Purpose

Florida International University (FIU) affirms its commitment to ensuring that each member of the University community shall be permitted to work or study in an environment free from any form of illegal discrimination, including race, color, sex, pregnancy, religion, age, disability, national origin, marital status, and veteran status.

Because residents and fellows serve in dual capacities as learners and employees, accommodation requests may require coordination among AADR, the Human Resources Office of Civil Rights, Graduate Medical Education, and affiliated clinical sites to ensure compliance with applicable federal and state laws and accreditation standards.

The purpose of this policy is to:

1. Establish the non-academic and technical standards necessary for participation in Graduate Medical Education (GME) training programs;
2. Define the process through which applicants and trainees may request reasonable accommodation for disabilities;
3. Ensure compliance with applicable university policies and regulations as well as federal, state, and local laws, including but not limited to:
 - a. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, as amended (ADA);
 - b. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;
 - c. Florida Civil Rights Act;
 - d. Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) Institutional Requirements;
4. Promote a fair educational and clinical environment that supports equal access while maintaining essential program requirements and patient safety.

DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITIONS
Reasonable Accommodation	Any change, modification, or adjustment that enables an individual with a disability to enjoy equal employment opportunity.
Disability	Per Disability Resource Center (DRC) policy 2509.001, DRC adopts the definition of "disability" as set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 as amended, USC 12101, Sec. 3(2), as being "(A) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major activities of such individual; (B) a record of

	such an impairment; or (C) being regarded as having such an impairment.”
Essential Functions	The fundamental educational and clinical requirements of a residency or fellowship program that cannot be eliminated without fundamentally altering the program's nature.
Qualified Individual with a Disability	An individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, meets the program's academic, technical, professional, and essential requirements.
Trainee	A resident or fellow electively rotating through the FIU-GME program who provides clinical care.
Department of Accessibility, Accommodation and Disability Resources (AADR)	The designated department, reporting to the Chief Compliance Officer, provides institutional coordination and oversight for accessibility, disability accommodation, and ADA/Section 504 compliance. AADR includes the Disability Resource Center, which determines reasonable academic accommodations for students, and the Office of Universal Access and Digital Compliance/Section 504 Coordinator, which coordinates reasonable accommodations for employees.
DIO	Designated Institutional Official responsible for institutional ADA and Section 504 coordination and administration of disability accommodation processes. Policy authority resides with the Graduate Medical Education Committee (GMEC).

Institutional oversight into disability accommodation and ADA compliance is shared among: Graduate Medical Education; Accessibility, Accommodation, and Disability Resources (AADR); Human Resources - Office of Civil Rights; Office of General Counsel, as appropriate.

Background

Graduate Medical Education at FIU operates in accordance with:

Qualifying for Services from the Disability Resource Center #2509.001
 Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement #1710.001
 Digital Accessibility # 1705.020

FIU is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to qualified applicants and trainees with disabilities while maintaining essential educational standards, accreditation requirements, and patient safety obligations.

Policy

- FIU does not discriminate on the basis of disability and prohibits discrimination and retaliation against applicants or trainees who request, receive, or participate in the accommodation process.

- No trainee shall be subjected to adverse treatment because they: request accommodation, receive accommodation, participate in the interactive process, file a complaint, or appeal.
- Reasonable accommodations are determined on an individualized, case-by-case basis through an interactive process.
- FIU Regulation FIU-106 prohibits discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on disability in the University's programs, activities, employment, and educational environment. FIU-106 also establishes procedures for reporting, reviewing, and resolving complaints of disability discrimination, harassment, and retaliation. Concerns or alleged violations of FIU-106 should be reported through report.fiu.edu.

Reasonable Accommodation: may be approved provided that it:

- Enables equal access and participation
- Does not fundamentally alter the nature of the program
- Does not eliminate essential functions or educational requirements
- Does not create undue hardship
- Does not create a direct threat to patient safety that cannot be mitigated through reasonable accommodation

Examples of reasonable accommodation may include modified schedules, adaptive equipment, ergonomic devices, assistive technology, captioning services, CART services, modified testing environments, temporary adjustments to rotations, leave of absence as accommodation, accessible instructional materials; digital accessibility modifications.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR ADMISSION AND RETENTION:

Technical standards are intended to identify essential outcomes rather than prescribe a specific method for achieving competencies. Reasonable accommodation may permit alternative methods of demonstrating competency, provided the accommodation does not fundamentally alter program requirements or compromise patient safety.

- Technical standards are criteria that go beyond academic requirements or training prerequisites for acceptance into a GME residency or fellowship and are essential to meeting the academic and clinical requirements of the training program, though additional competency and performance expectations may occur in certain GME programs.
- Trainees with or without disabilities, applying to and continuing in a GME residency or fellowship, will be expected to meet the same requirements and will be held to the same fundamental standards. Beginning and continuing in a GME training program assumes a certain level of cognitive and technical skills. Although not all trainees are expected to

achieve the same level of proficiency in all technical skills, some skills are so essential that mastery must be achieved, with reasonable accommodations where necessary.

- **Every reasonable attempt will be made to facilitate the progress of trainees, where it does not compromise training standards or interfere with the rights of other trainees or the care or rights of patients. Applicants and active trainees must be capable of completing the entire GME curriculum and progressing to the point of independent practice in their GME specialty or sub-specialty training program.** The use of a trained intermediary is not acceptable in many clinical situations as it implies that the trainee's judgment must be mediated by someone else's power of selection and observation.

The technical standards are:

- **Observation** - Trainees must have the functional ability to observe and must make sufficient use of the necessary senses to perform all necessary physical examinations and patient care pursuant to their specialized area of training.
- **Communication** - Trainees must be able to relate reasonably to patients and establish sensitive, professional relationships with patients, peers, colleagues, and staff. They must be able to communicate with the patient and their colleagues accurately, clearly, and efficiently.
- **Motor** - Trainees must have sufficient motor skills and abilities to perform the patient examination and treatment procedures required for their specialty.
- **Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative, and Quantitative Abilities** - Trainees must be able to analyze, synthesize, solve problems, and reach reasonable diagnostic and therapeutic judgments. Trainees must be able to display good judgment in the assessment and treatment of patients. They must be able to respond promptly and appropriately in emergent situations.
- **Behavioral and Social Attributes** - Trainees must be able to accept criticism and respond with appropriate modification of their behavior. They must possess the perseverance, diligence, and consistency necessary **to complete the training program's curriculum, gain progressive independence in accordance with the timeline** outlined by the Program Director (PD), and enter independent practice in their specialty upon **program completion**. They must demonstrate professional and ethical demeanor and behavior in all dealings with peers, faculty, staff, and patients.
- **Professionalism and Respect for Persons**-Trainees must demonstrate the ability to provide safe, effective, and compassionate patient care and to interact professionally with patients, families, faculty, staff, and colleagues from a wide variety of backgrounds, experiences, cultures, beliefs, and identities. Trainees are expected to provide patient care and participate in educational activities in a manner consistent with professional standards, ethical obligations, applicable law, and institutional nondiscrimination policies. Personal beliefs or characteristics of the trainee or patient shall not interfere with the trainee's ability to fulfill the essential requirements of the training program or provide appropriate patient care.

PROCESS FOR REQUESTING REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

GME trainees seeking disability-related accommodation shall initiate the process by contacting the DRC within the AADR and completing a Welcome Appointment, during which supporting documentation is reviewed.

TIMELINE

Applicants and trainees are encouraged to request accommodation as early as possible. Accommodations generally are not retroactive and cannot remedy clinical or academic performance deficiencies that occurred before a request for accommodation was made. Consistent with University practice, if a disability and need for accommodation are readily apparent and the need for services is immediate, the University may implement interim accommodation while awaiting additional or updated documentation.

If a trainee is unable to complete their scheduled rotations while the interactive process is underway, they may request a leave of absence as accommodation until the process is complete.

INTERACTIVE REVIEW PROCESS

Accommodation determinations shall occur through an individualized interactive process involving, as appropriate: the applicant or trainee, the GME Program Director, the DRC representative and/ or Access Consultant, the Clinical site representatives, and the Office of General Counsel, when necessary.

The interactive process seeks to:

1. Facilitate a shared understanding of the requested accommodation;
2. Review disability-related documentation and functional limitations;
3. Determine whether the applicant or trainee is a qualified individual with a disability;
4. Evaluate whether the requested accommodation enables the trainee to satisfy essential functions and technical standards;
5. Determine whether the accommodation would fundamentally alter the program, create an undue hardship, or compromise patient safety;
6. Consider equally effective alternative accommodation when appropriate;
7. Develop an implementation plan for approved accommodation.

DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Documentation submitted in support of an accommodation request should:

Establish the existence of a disability, describe the functional limitations associated with the disability, support the requested accommodation, and be current and complete when appropriate.

The University reserves the right to request additional supporting documentation if the information provided is insufficient to establish a disability or does not adequately support the requested accommodation.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- Disability-related information shall be maintained separately from educational and employment records.
- Information will be shared only with individuals who have a legitimate educational or business need to know it for the purpose of implementing approved accommodations.
- Applicants and trainees are not required to disclose diagnoses or medical details to faculty, residents, preceptors, or clinical supervisors.

FEES AND COSTS

- There shall be no fee for applicants or trainees to request or receive accommodation through the University.
- Applicants and trainees are responsible for costs associated with obtaining and providing disability-related documentation.

APPEAL

An applicant or trainee who disagrees with an accommodation determination may submit an appeal to the FIU HR Office of Civil Rights Compliance.

References:

1. FIU Policy #2509.001 Qualifying for Services from the Disability Resource Center Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 Procedure, Medical Student Disability Accommodations.
2. Disability as Diversity. A Guidebook for Inclusion in Medicine, Nursing, and the Health Professions. Chapter: Clinical Accommodations and Simulation
Christopher J. Moreland, Lisa M. Meeks.
3. Webinar Recording: <https://youtu.be/-dxJ-SR3Unk>
4. ACGME Disability Resource Hub: [Disability Resource Hub](#)
5. The Disability Resource Hub (GME)
https://bit.ly/DisabilityResourceHUB_GME
6. Disability Policy Toolkit (Direct Link)
<https://dl.acgme.org/pages/disability-resource-hub-policy-toolkit>
7. The Disability Policy Toolkit: Resource Development and Applications Within Graduate Medical Education. <https://jgme.kglmeridian.com/view/journals/jgme/17/6/article-p792.xml>
8. Realizing a Diverse and Inclusive Workforce: Equal Access for Residents With Disabilities
<https://jgme.kglmeridian.com/view/journals/jgme/11/5/article-p498.xml>

9. The Unexamined Diversity: Disability Policies and Practices in US Graduate Medical Education Programs.
<https://jgme.kglmeridian.com/view/journals/jgme/12/5/article-p615.xml>
10. Internal Medicine Program Directors' Perceptions About Accommodating Residents with Disabilities: A Qualitative Study.
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11606-024-08936-y>
11. Community of Practice: Disability in Graduate Medical Education (DiGME)
<https://www.docswithdisabilities.org/digme>

CONTACTS

Institutional oversight into disability accommodation and ADA compliance is shared among: Office of Graduate Medical Education; Accessibility, Accommodation, and Disability Resources (AADR); Human Resources - Office of Civil Rights; Office of General Counsel, as appropriate.

HISTORY

Initial Effective Date: 8/6/2026

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