# **INTERACTIVE ADA ACCOMMODATIONS PROCESS: WHAT TO EXPECT**

NOTE: The interactive workplace accommodations process requires an individualized assessment of each request. This chart provides a framework of the steps taken in most cases, but individual cases may vary. If you have any questions, need an accommodation, or work with or supervise someone that you believe might require an accommodation, please contact Institutional Equity & Access directly: 214-648-4343 or EqualOpportunity@UTSouthwestern.edu.

#### **The Request**

The employee (i.e., "requestor") communicates the need for workplace accommodations to a supervisor or Institutional Equity & Acess (OIEA). An "accommodations request" happens anytime an employee communicates his or her need for assistance at work because of a disability. The request does not need to contain specific words or to be made in a specific format.

#### Discussion with Requestor

OIEA meets with the requestor to explain the interactive process generally and discuss the employee's essential job functions, medical conditions and limitations, and the accommodations sought to allow the employee to perform his or her job. OIEA also obtains a medical release from the requestor allowing UTSW to consult directly with the requestor's medical provider(s).

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OIEA engages in communication with the requestor and management to explore the requested accommodations and other alternative accommodations. OIEA assists the parties, as needed, to evaluate what accommodations would allow the requestor to perform his or her essential job functions without presenting an undue hardship to the department's business needs.

**Interactive Dialogue** 

#### Interim Accommodations

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OIEA will explore whether any interim accommodations are needed while the interactive accommodations process is un derway. OIEA will work with the requestor and his or her manager to assist in implementing interim accommodations, which may expire at the conclusion of the full interactive process.

#### OIEA Communicates with Medical Provider

When necessary, OIEA communicates directly with the requestor's medical providers to obtain information regarding the medical conditions (to determine if the requestor is "disabled" under state/federal law) and the accommodations sought. OIEA will serve as a repository for any confidential medical information, which will not be shared outside of necessary UTSW employees.

### If Request is Medically Supported: OIEA Discussion with Manager

OIEA meets with the requestor's management to dis cuss the requestor's essential job functions, limitations (but not medical diagnoses), and requested accommoda tions. The manager explores the request in light of the requestor's job functions and the business needs of the department, including an examination of the hardship, if any, entailed by granting the request.

OIEA Provides a Written Outcome of the Interactive Process

At the conclusion of the interactive process, OIEA will provide the requestor with a written decision regard ing the request and the reasonable accommodations that have been ap proved, if any.

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#### If Request is Not Medically Supported

If the employee does not have a "disability" or the request is not medically supported, there is no obligation to continue with the process. OIEA will provide written notice to the requestor. Managers may still consider whether other steps may be taken voluntarily to help the employee perform his/ her job functions.