Reasonable Accommodation Fund (RAF) for Equipment and Supplies:  
*Guiding Principles and Process for Accessing the Fund*

The University of Alberta has a duty to accommodate, to the point of undue hardship, those staff members who request accommodation related to a protected ground under law. The University’s Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures and the University of Alberta Reasonable Accommodation Policy can be located at [www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/gfcpolicymanual](http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/gfcpolicymanual), Section 44. This provides information about the University’s responsibilities and obligations with respect to accommodating staff with disabilities. Because specialized equipment and supplies sometimes are required to accommodate staff with disabilities, the University’s Policy mandates creation of a Reasonable Accommodation Fund (RAF) for equipment and supplies for staff members with disabilities. The RAF is a central fund that helps departments to offset the costs of reasonable accommodation measures for faculty and staff with disabilities or disabling conditions.

This document describes the coordination and administration of the RAF. Please note that this document is written with the assumption that the reader is familiar with the University’s Reasonable Accommodation Policy as there is information contained in the Policy that is not repeated here. For example, the Policy contains detailed information on the roles and responsibilities of both the person requiring accommodation and the supervisor. This document is written from the perspective that the reader is knowledgeable about the contents of the University’s Reasonable Accommodation Policy. Members of the University community who may require further information about interpreting and applying the University’s Reasonable Accommodation Policy are encouraged to contact the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights.

The remainder of this document is divided into two main sections; the first section outlines the guiding principles underpinning the use of and access to the fund, and the second section lays out the process for accessing the fund.

**Guiding Principles**

- The dignity of the staff member needing accommodation will be maintained.
- The staff member will be involved in discussions about accommodation.
- Individuals from various service units on campus will work with the staff member and the staff member’s supervisor to encourage effective communication in order to facilitate the reasonable accommodation process.
- The applicant to the RAF is the employing department, not the individual in need of accommodation.
- The RAF will be used to offset funds provided by the employing department.
- Each case will be evaluated on an individual basis.
- Supplies and equipment purchased with assistance from the RAF are property of the University of Alberta.
- The RAF supports the University in achieving its employment equity goals. When an accommodation is funded through the RAF, the staff or faculty member will be invited to identify on the University’s Employment Equity Census Questionnaire as a person with a disability.
Process for Accessing the Fund

Eligibility

- Any University of Alberta staff member (i.e., temporary, continuing, full-time, part-time, trust) who, due to a disability or disabling condition, requires assistance in the form of supplies or equipment as an accommodation to meet their job responsibilities is eligible for funding through the RAF. This includes newly recruited staff members with disabilities.

- Requests for funding through the RAF should be made after the staff member has accessed alternate funding sources (e.g., WCB, Alberta Aids to Daily Living, the University’s benefits program, insurance programs) for which they are eligible.

- The RAF normally will not be used to provide personal support to daily living (e.g., wheel chairs, eyeglasses, hearing aids) as these are covered by benefits and other programs.

Application for supplies or equipment through the RAF

- As per the University’s Reasonable Accommodation Policy, the staff member needing accommodation is responsible for advising the appropriate person (e.g., Supervisor, APO, Director, Dean, or Department Chair) of the need for accommodation, if this is not apparent.

- There are various service providers on campus that may be contacted for information during the process. These providers include, for example, Specialized Support and Disability Services (SSDS), Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S), Health Promotion and WorkLife Services (HPaWS) and the Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights. Information on these providers can be found from the main University of Alberta web page by doing a search. If the staff member requiring accommodation has been in contact with one of these service providers before advising their supervisor of the need for accommodation, the individual from the service unit will encourage the staff member to communicate the need for accommodation to their supervisor. This will ensure that the supervisor can play a role in ensuring that the necessary accommodation is provided in a timely manner. For example, if a staff member returning from disability leave has been dealing with HPaWS and requires accommodation upon their return to the workplace, the supervisor needs to be aware of the need for accommodation in order to help facilitate a resolution.

- Once the supervisor is aware of the need for accommodation, it is the supervisor’s responsibility to help the University meet its legal obligation by seeking appropriate accommodation for the staff member. While it is essential that the staff member has input into the process, it is ultimately the supervisor’s responsibility to ensure that a solution is sought and implemented. The “applicant” to the fund is therefore the employing department rather than the staff member. For further information on the supervisor’s roles and responsibilities in the accommodation process, please refer to http://www.uofaweb.ualberta.ca/gfcpolicymanual, Section 44 for the University’s Discrimination and Harassment Policy and, in particular, Appendix D Accommodation Process.

- A component of a RAF Application is an assessment of needs to determine what equipment or supplies are needed to allow the staff member to perform the essential duties of their job. The referral for an assessment may be made by one of the service providers on campus or by the employing department. In most cases, the assessment will be performed by someone in either EH&S or SSDS.
• The representative in EH&S or SSDS who completes the assessment will make a recommendation, in writing, to the employing department. The recommendation will provide a clear description of the item including, vendor information and a cost estimate. In the case of adaptive technology, the recommendation will also include precise technical specifications. If it is noted in the assessment that the adaptive technology requires training then the employee will make a commitment to complete the training and the employer the time required to complete the training.

• If the employing department requires funding assistance to purchase the recommended equipment or supplies, an application can be made to the RAF. The application form is available at www.hrs.ualberta.ca/HealthRecovery/Ergonomics.aspx.

• NOTE: if the need for accommodation of a disability is not apparent, the application must include the RAF Medical Documentation Form to be completed by a licensed and/or certified health care professional that includes the following:
  • Description of the functional impact of the disability on the staff member’s job requirements.
  • Recommendation(s) of possible equipment or supplies that would accommodate the staff member’s disability.

• The completed application form, signed by both the staff member and the Supervisor, and accompanying documentation should be sent to:
  Reasonable Accommodation Fund
  Health Promotion and Worklife Services (HPaWS)
  Human Resources
  2-60 University Terrace

• The form will review applications for completeness. Final approval of applications will be determined by Health Promotion and WorkLife Services. To maintain confidentiality, applications and documentation will be reviewed only by individuals authorized to determine eligibility for funding.

• If the application is approved for funding from the RAF, Health Promotion and WorkLife Services will discuss cost-sharing arrangements with the employing department. Based on the recommendation and information provided by EH&S or SSDS, the employing department will order and pay for the equipment. The Health Promotion and WorkLife Services will arrange for transfer of the agreed-upon funds to the employing department’s account.

Ownership of Equipment and Supplies

• All equipment and supplies purchased with funds from the RAF are property of the University of Alberta.

• Equipment and supplies purchased with funds from the RAF may be taken off campus only for University business.

• When the staff member no longer needs the equipment or if the staff member leaves the University, equipment and supplies purchased with funds from the RAF will be returned to an appropriate central location.

• Equipment and supplies purchased with funds from the RAF stay with the staff member if the staff member moves to another position within the University.