



Baseline Analysis of the May 2019 Survey on Workplace Accommodations in the Federal Public Service

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Executive summary

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Background and objectives

The Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA), Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS), was created in 2018 to assist departments in preparing for new accessibility requirements under the *Accessible Canada Act* and to develop a public service accessibility strategy to improve accessibility government-wide. Since minimal information exists regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of current workplace accommodation practices, an internal-to-government quantitative online survey was fielded by OPSA in May 2019 to gather behavioural information about public servants' experiences with existing workplace accommodation practices.

The survey consisted of two parts: one part for supervisors who requested an accommodation for an employee in the last three years, and another for employees who requested an accommodation for themselves in the last three years (a single individual could also answer both parts if both were relevant to their situation). Where possible, questions were the same for both audiences to enable a side-by-side comparison of overall results between employees and supervisors. Because the survey was anonymous, however, there is no direct correlation between the individual responses of employees and supervisors.

The findings from this survey are presented in this report. The survey questions were designed to elicit information about respondents' understanding of the facts related to their experience. The specific research objectives were as follows:

- create a quantitative baseline data set against which progress can be measured over time as accessibility improvements are implemented
- create a summary report that can be used as a key reference document to support future consultations with senior managers, departmental officials, functional experts and employees with disabilities across the federal public service
- create information that can be leveraged in the design of subsequent consultation tools aimed at improving existing workplace accommodation practices

Methodology

OPSA conducted the online survey between May 6 and 24, 2019, with employees and supervisors who requested accommodation in the past three years across Canada. The survey required 20 to 30 minutes to complete, with 20 to 27 questions for the employee survey and 21 to 29 questions for the supervisor survey.

A total of **5,245** surveys were completed by **4,933** different individuals:

- 1,832 surveys were completed by supervisors who requested an accommodation for an employee
- 3,413 surveys were completed by employees who requested an accommodation for themselves
- 312 individuals answered a survey as **both** a supervisor who requested an accommodation for an employee and also as an employee requesting an accommodation for themselves and are counted in both totals

Key findings

These findings provide a quantitative base from which to begin measuring progress within the provision of workplace accommodations inside the federal public service. The most notable finding is in the diversity of experiences employees and supervisors have with the accommodation process. There is a range of experience among supervisors (from managing a single accommodation request up to several), this is a new process for many employees, and there is a wide range of accommodations being requested under varying circumstances. All this points to the need for a streamlined accommodation process that ensures both employees and supervisors feel supported and have their needs met.

In addition, numerous gaps were identified between what supervisors know and what employees perceive, and vice versa, which suggests the need for better communication throughout the process.

Profile of accommodation requests

- Changes in personal health or circumstances are the primary driver of most requests for accommodation. More than half of accommodation requests are for this reason, while difficulty carrying out the job-related duties and changes to the general office workspace are each considered a primary reason by one in five.
- While accommodation requests are generally driven by personal health or circumstances, the types of accommodation requested are more heterogeneous. Workspace-related accommodations (such as specialized desk adaptations and chairs), non-physical adaptations (such as changes to work schedules and additional time off) and environment-related accommodations (such as reducing auditory or visual distractions) are among the most widely mentioned.
- Most supervisors (almost two thirds) report having handled less than one accommodation request per year on average. Moreover, an

accommodation request is a new experience for most employees, with about two thirds who did not have a similar accommodation in the past.

Administration of accommodation requests

- Supervisors most often turn first to labour relations advisors when processing an accommodation request but also identify a wider range of personnel involved in requests than do employees; this reflects a difference in awareness of who is involved in the process. Very few (7%) cases involved a disability management advisor as the first point of contact, and only 14% involved one at all.
- A medical certificate is required in a large proportion (more than three quarters) of cases to support an accommodation request.
- The request for the certificate is most commonly made by the employee's direct supervisor, but it should be noted that around a quarter (24%) of supervisors are unaware whether their employee had a similar accommodation previously.
- In terms of formal assessments, about one in five (22%) employees and supervisors (19%) report that the formal assessment was completed within two weeks; a larger proportion reports waiting for two months or more (33% and 29%, respectively). Those with an invisible disability wait longer for a formal assessment, including those with a cognitive disability (26%) who wait over six months.
- Employees may be asked repeatedly to provide medical certificates and undergo formal assessments to prove their need for accommodation.
- Even after all required information is provided, a third of employees (34%) report waiting over two months for an accommodation decision, with almost one in five (19%) waiting over six months.

Outcome of accommodation requests

- Most employees and supervisors report that their accommodation requests are approved. After receiving approval, a majority of cases took up to two months for the accommodation to be put in place. Delays beyond one month are typically attributed to delays in the delivery or installation of required products or services. Employees tend to place responsibility for these delays on bureaucracy, while supervisors place relatively more responsibility on supplier delays.
- Although around half of the accommodation requests examined in the survey have been approved and are working effectively, a large minority of employees (35%) seeking an accommodation (including some who have approvals in place) have still not obtained a fully implemented and functional accommodation solution.
- The findings identified differing views in reasons for a denial. Employees whose accommodation requests were denied say the denial comes primarily from their direct supervisor and is the result of a disagreement over the need for an accommodation or an interpretation of the doctor's findings. Supervisors are more likely to say the denial comes from senior management and is due to the report from the specialist not showing sufficient evidence of a need for accommodation. A sizable proportion (26% of supervisors) say the denial came from Labour Relations or from someone other than the employee's direct supervisor or senior management.
- Most employees whose request was denied are not intending to appeal, saying that either they feel it will not make a difference or they fear negative consequences for their career or with their supervisor. There is also a group who are seeking outside advice about next steps (for example, from a union representative or legal counsel), and others (16%) who have left, or who are seeking to leave, their position or their department as a result of this decision.

- Non-disability accommodation requests usually involve changes to working hours or locations, are dealt with more quickly and are less likely to be approved.

Observations and considerations

This survey represents an important first step in understanding, and ultimately improving, the accommodation process as it affects federal employees and supervisors. It also raises additional questions and considerations to be explored in greater depth in future studies.

Section 8 of this report identifies key issues or questions raised by the current data that merit further examination, including those related to the following topics:

- the importance of clear guidance, a clear process to follow, and expert advice or support for supervisors, including guidance on the type and amount of documentation required to support accommodation requests
- the role of various functional experts in the assessment and decision-making process, including potential issues related to mandate, training, organizational structure or process-related efficiency, timeliness, consistency or accountabilities
- the role of direct supervisors compared with senior managers in the accommodation decision-making process
- the degree to which the traditional “medical model” of disability may influence requests for medical evidence or assessments
- the impact of delays in the assessment, decision-making and implementation process, including implications for employees, and the determination of appropriate thresholds or service standards for different types of accommodation requests

- differences between experience and outcomes for employees with visible disabilities and those for employees with invisible disabilities
- the relationship between disability-related accommodation outcomes and experiences of harassment and discrimination as reported in the 2018 Public Service Employee Survey
- the likelihood of a communication gap between employees and supervisors with respect to the accommodation process
- the relationship between delays, denied accommodations and the use of extended sick leave by employees with disabilities, and the degree to which better tools and processes for tracking accommodation requests could improve the timeliness and efficacy of outcomes

Introduction

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Background

The Office of Public Service Accessibility (OPSA), Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS), was created in 2018 to assist departments in preparing for new accessibility requirements under the *Accessible Canada Act* and to develop a public service accessibility strategy to improve accessibility government-wide. Minimal information exists regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of current workplace accommodation practices, and available information is primarily anecdotal. To address this gap, an internal-to-

government quantitative online survey was fielded by OPSA in May 2019 to gather behavioural information about public servants' experiences with existing workplace accommodation practices.

The survey consisted of two parts: Part 1 was for supervisors who requested an accommodation for an employee in the last three years (up to 27 questions), and Part 2 was for employees who requested an accommodation for themselves in the last three years (up to 29 questions). A single individual could also answer both parts if both were relevant to their situation.

The intention of this survey was to establish an objective quantitative baseline. Questions were therefore designed to elicit information about respondents' understanding of the facts related to their experience. The survey did not gather opinions and qualitative feedback; that will be sought through a follow-up survey. Where possible, questions were the same for both audiences to enable a side-by-side comparison of overall results between employees and supervisors. Because the survey was anonymous, however, there is no direct correlation between the individual responses of employees and supervisors.

The data set comprises a total of 5,245 completed surveys (3,413 surveys completed by employees and 1,832 completed by supervisors).

The data from this online survey was provided by TBS to Environics Research for analysis. The data set was first "scrubbed" by TBS to remove actual or potential identifying information in order to maintain the anonymity of respondents, and then cleaned and coded by Environics to allow for statistical tabulation. Open-ended responses were reviewed, and answer categories were added where necessary to be included in the totals for each question. The results were analyzed and are presented in this report.

Research objectives

The specific research objectives were to:

- create a quantitative baseline data set against which progress can be measured over time as accessibility improvements are implemented
- create a summary report that can be used as a key reference document to support future consultations with senior managers, departmental officials, functional experts and employees with disabilities across the federal public service
- create information that can be leveraged in the design of subsequent consultation tools aimed at improving existing workplace accommodation practices

About the report

This report begins with an executive summary outlining key findings, followed by a detailed analysis of the survey data and, finally, a summary of key observations and considerations.

Although the survey was intended only for people who had requested (or who had requested for their employee) an accommodation due to a disability, the data collected includes feedback from some people whose accommodation requests were not related to a disability (for example, a family or religious accommodation). The results in the main body of the report reflect only those whose accommodation involves a disability. A comparison of the results for disability and non-disability-related accommodations is located in [Section 6](#).

Both employees and supervisors responding to the surveys were asked to consider a single accommodation (the one that had the greatest impact on that employee) when answering questions about accommodations for themselves or their employees.

Provided under a separate cover is a set of detailed “banner tables” presenting the results for all questions by the relevant segments (including by region, employee compared with supervisor, and other relevant variables). These tables are referenced by the survey question in the detailed analysis.

A detailed description of the methodology for this research is presented in [Appendix A](#). The survey instrument is presented in [Appendix B](#).

Throughout the report, results are expressed as percentages unless otherwise noted. Where base sizes are reported in tables and charts, they reflect the actual number of respondents who answered the question. Results may not add to 100% due to rounding or multiple responses. Net results cited in the text may not exactly match individual results shown in the charts due to rounding. Results of open-ended questions or questions with a large number of responses are truncated to present only relevant results (as a rule, responses provided by fewer than 2% of respondents are not shown, although, in some cases, they do appear where they are above this threshold for one or the other of the employee or supervisor groups).

Detailed findings

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8. Observations and considerations

1. Structure of accommodation requests

Number of accommodation requests in the last three years

Supervisors were asked how many accommodation requests had been requested by their employees in the past three years. Most supervisors have limited experience with accommodation requests. About two thirds (63%) handle no more than one request per year on average (that is, the sum of those who handled no requests and those who handled one to two requests in the past three years). A quarter of supervisors handled an average of one but fewer than two requests per year (that is, three to five requests in the past three years), and only a small proportion (12%) said they handled an average of two or more per year (that is, six or more requests in the past three years).

It is unclear the extent to which this represents the experience that Government of Canada supervisors, as a whole, have with respect to accommodation requests. However, it is likely that the actual number of accommodation requests per supervisor is lower, since many of those who did not handle an accommodation request likely chose not to participate in the survey.

Table 1: number of workplace accommodation requests made to supervisors

Q2. As a supervisor, how many workplace accommodations or accommodation plans were requested for your employees in the past three years?	Supervisor (n=2,346)
Base: all supervisors n = number of respondents	

Q2. As a supervisor, how many workplace accommodations or accommodation plans were requested for your employees in the past three years?	Supervisor (n=2,346)
No requests	22%
1 to 2 requests	41%
3 to 5 requests	25%
6 to 10 requests	6%
More than 10 requests	6%
Base: all supervisors	
n = number of respondents	

Reason for accommodation request

The survey conducted by TBS was intended to include people with a disability. No specific question was asked to determine whether or not the accommodation request was related to a disability because the open invitation issued to employees and the introduction section of the survey itself both articulated this intention. However, the responses to open-ended questions seem to indicate that some respondents were likely describing accommodation requests unrelated to a disability (such as requests related to religion or family circumstances).

The main body of this report focuses on only those who made a request involving a disability (either for themselves or for their employee). Each case was classified as being about a disability or non-disability accommodation by examining the specific accommodation that was requested (further information about this approach is provided in [Appendix A](#)). In total, 95% of all employee requests and 96% of all

supervisor requests were deemed to be related to a disability. [Section 6](#) explores the non-disability request results and compares them to those of disability requests to identify differences.

Of note, supervisors who handled an average of one or more requests per year (three or more over the past three years) were more likely to have handled a disability request than those who handled an average of less than one request per year.

Table 2: reason for accommodation request

Reason for accommodation request	Employee (n=3,413)	Supervisor (n=1,832)
Disability	95%	96%
Non-disability	5%	4%
Base: all respondents		
n = number of respondents		

2. Specific activities and accommodations requested

Reason that prompted the request for an accommodation request

Changes in personal health or circumstances are the primary driver of most requests for accommodation.

Supervisors who completed an accommodation request for an employee, and employees who completed a request for themselves, were asked about the primary reason for the accommodation request. The most common reason given by a majority in both cases is a change in personal health or circumstances. The next most common reason given was difficulties

carrying out existing job-related duties, but this was mentioned more often by supervisors responding for an employee than by an employee responding for themselves (27% compared with 19%). A change in general office workspace and a change in duties (or starting a new job) were the main other reasons given.

Table 3: activities or reasons prompting an accommodation request

Q3 and Q31. Which of the following best describes the primary reason for this accommodation request for your employee? / Which of the following best describes the primary reason for your accommodation request?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Change in personal health / circumstance	57%	55%
Difficulties carrying out existing job-related duties	19%	27%
Change in general office workspace	14%	12%
Starting a new job / existing duties changed	5%	4%
Staffing process	2%	1%
Change in job-related processes / supervisor / co-workers / clients	1%	<1%
Change in general administrative process	1%	<1%
Another reason	6%	3%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

A follow-up question asked what events or activities were related to the primary reason for their accommodation. Almost 4 in 10 (38% of employees and 39% of supervisors) mentioned a change in physical health, a disability or a medical treatment. The other most commonly mentioned specific events included a new injury, a request for telework, a new diagnosis, a return to work, and a change in work hours or schedule.

Table 4: events prompting an accommodation request

Q3A-G and Q31A-G. For which of the following activities did the employee request an accommodation? / For which of the following activities did you request an accommodation?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Change in health / disability / medical treatment	38%	39%
New injury	16%	14%
Request for telework	14%	16%
New diagnosis	13%	14%
Return to work	10%	17%
Change in work hours / schedule	10%	14%
Change in family circumstance	6%	10%
Workspace redesign (for example, Workplace 2.0 or Activity-Based Workspace)	4%	6%
Office move	4%	5%
Setting up physical workspace	3%	3%
Change in personal support arrangements	2%	4%
Reassigned seating	2%	3%
Change to work environment (for example, air quality, lighting, volume)	2%	1%
Obtaining assistive devices, equipment or technology / software	2%	1%
Change to desk / station (for example, switch to a standing desk)	2%	1%
Change in job location	1%	1%
Interpersonal workplace issues	1%	<1%

Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)

n = number of respondents

Q3A-G and Q31A-G. For which of the following activities did the employee request an accommodation? / For which of the following activities did you request an accommodation?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
An interview	1%	1%
A written assessment	1%	1%
Due to an ergonomic assessment	1%	1%
Obtaining ergonomic equipment (general)	1%	1%
Modifying transportation requirements / parking	<1%	1%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Incidence of previous accommodation

Most employees requesting an accommodation did not have a similar accommodation in the past.

Two thirds of employees say that they did not have an accommodation similar to the one they were requesting in the past. While it is part of the accommodation process for supervisors to inquire about previous accommodations, the responses from supervisors to this question show that many (24%) are unaware whether such an accommodation existed in the past. The reason for this is unclear (for example, it may be that the supervisor did not ask, or that the employee chose not to disclose a previous accommodation), but it suggests there may be a communication gap.

Table 5: previous accommodation

Q4 and Q32. Did your employee have a similar accommodation previously? / Did you have a similar accommodation previously?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Yes	34%	28%
No	66%	48%
I don't know	n/a	24%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Employees working in the National Capital Region (40%) are more likely to have a similar previous accommodation than in any other region.

Accommodation requested

Most accommodation requests appear to fall into more than one category, with the most common being workspace-related and non-physical adaptations.

Information about the type of accommodation requested was gathered by first asking about broad categories of accommodations and then, within each category, capturing more specific details about the accommodation. Table 6 summarizes the proportion of respondents who requested an accommodation from each broad category, while the subsequent tables in this section list which specific accommodations were requested.

Most respondents chose multiple categories to describe their accommodation request, suggesting that most accommodations fall within more than one broad type. The most frequently requested accommodations are workspace-related (66% of employees and 76% of supervisors) and non-physical accommodations (50% and 74%,

respectively). The next tier of accommodation requests includes environment-related, information technology (IT)-related and telephony accommodations, and other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment.

Table 6: specific accommodation request

Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Workspace-related accommodations	66%	76%
Non-physical adaptations	50%	74%
Environment-related accommodations	45%	60%
IT-related accommodations	39%	48%
Other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment	20%	31%
Telephony accommodations	19%	29%
Personal support services	2%	4%
Other adaptations	8%	9%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

There is a gap between employees and supervisors, with the latter consistently identifying a greater range of accommodations. Supervisors categorized the accommodation request under multiple categories, while employees chose fewer categories to identify their accommodation request. It is unclear why this gap exists, but one possible explanation could be that there is a difference in how a request of any kind is perceived. For example, employees may see what they are seeking as a “flexible work arrangement” that they are entitled to under existing policies or other broad management commitments, such as the Clerk of the Privy Council’s Beyond 2020 commitments relating to the renewal of the federal public

service, whereas managers may see them as requests for “accommodation.” There is no way to say definitively whether this is the case from this data set, and this topic could be explored in future research.

For **workspace-related accommodations**, requests tend to revolve around specialized office furniture such as adapted or specialized desks or cubicles and chairs. Requesting a move to a different working location (in a different building or floor) is also a common request, with other infrastructure changes such as a designated parking space, specialized security requirements, or changes to the building and storage spaces mentioned less often.

Table 7: specific accommodation request (workspace-related accommodations)

Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Net: Workspace-related accommodations	66%	76%
Specialized desk or adaptations to existing desk / cubicle	44%	59%
Specialized chair (for example, orthopaedic) or adaptations to existing chair	35%	49%
Move to a different location (for example, another floor or building)	12%	19%
Designated car parking space	3%	5%
Security-related requirements (for example, access)	2%	2%
Change to building (for example, ramps, entrances, painted lines on floors, additional signage or markings)	1%	2%
New or adapted storage areas	1%	2%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Non-physical accommodation requests generally revolve around alterations to the standard job duties and parameters. The most common are changes to work schedules, time off for appointments, a gradual return to work, and reduced work hours or job sharing. Other non-physical adaptation requests include being assigned fewer physical duties, having duties reallocated to someone else on the team, and redeployment to a different position.

Table 8: specific accommodation request (non-physical adaptations)

Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Net: Non-physical adaptations	50%	74%
Change to work schedule	23%	47%
Time off for appointments	19%	42%
Gradual return to work	15%	38%
Reduced work hours and/or job sharing	9%	26%
Few physical duties, for example, lifting, driving	8%	15%
Duties reallocated to colleague	5%	17%
Redeployed to a different position in different work unit	5%	8%
Adjustments to meeting location and/or meeting logistics	4%	9%
Personal evacuation plan	3%	7%
Redeployed to a different position in same work unit	3%	7%
Adjustment to performance management agreement objectives	2%	10%
Awareness training for supervisors and/or colleagues	2%	6%

Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)

n = number of respondents

Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Disability-related adaptations with respect to language testing approach	2%	1%
Colleague assistance (for example, navigating fire drills, lifting)	2%	1%
Training on the use of adaptations, for example, new software	2%	4%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only) n = number of respondents		

Environment-related accommodations involve changes to the space that employees work in, including both the actual location of the workspace and other physical elements of it. The most common requests of this type are for telework or to move to another location within the same area as the employee's co-workers. Other environment-related accommodations involve changes to the workspace in order to minimize sensory effects, for example, wearing noise-cancelling headphones, adjusting the lighting, reducing auditory distractions and prohibiting certain products (such as scented products).

Table 9: specific accommodation request (environment-related accommodations)

Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Net: Environment-related accommodations	45%	60%

Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)

n = number of respondents

Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Telework	16%	23%
Move to another location in same area as co-workers	10%	17%
Noise-cancelling headphones	6%	19%
Adjusted lighting	6%	7%
Adaptations to reduce auditory distractions	6%	12%
Prohibition of certain products (for example, scented products)	6%	18%
Raised cubicle walls	5%	13%
Move to another building	4%	7%
Move to another location in the same building but separate from co-workers and/or work unit	4%	8%
Air purification / filter	1%	2%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

IT-specific accommodations mainly revolve around adaptations to standard computer hardware, such as adapted versions of keyboards and mice, large or specialized screens, and non-standard laptops. Most of the other IT-specific accommodations involve either software (for example, speech recognition software, document readers and other specialized programs) or changes to the normal setting or preferences on a computer, such as the font size and high-contrast screen backgrounds.

Table 10: specific accommodation request (IT-related accommodations)

Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
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Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Net: IT-related accommodations	39%	48%
Adapted / specific keyboard	21%	32%
Adapted / specific mouse	19%	32%
Large screen or specialized screen	9%	18%
Non-standard laptop	5%	5%
User preferences (for example, font size, screen background)	4%	6%
Speech recognition software	3%	5%
Other specialized software	2%	1%
Document reader (for example, TextAloud)	2%	5%
Reading assistances	2%	2%
Screen reading software	1%	4%
New printer	1%	3%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Outside of the accommodations given above, other assistive devices or adaptations to existing equipment (principally wrist or foot rests) and telephony accommodations (such as phone headsets and cellular service that would not otherwise be provided) are the most common requests. Other individual accommodations, such as personal support devices and other adaptations, are not common.

Table 11: specific accommodation request (other accommodations)

Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
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Q5 to Q11 and Q33 to Q39. Which of the following accommodations were requested for your employee? / Which accommodations were requested for you?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Net: Other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment	20%	31%
Wrist or foot rest	19%	30%
Net: Telephony accommodations	19%	29%
Phone headset	13%	23%
Cellular service	3%	5%
Net: Personal support services	2%	4%
Net: Other adaptations	8%	9%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

3. Administration of accommodation requests

Personnel involved in handling accommodation requests

Supervisors most often turn first to labour relations advisors when processing an accommodation request. Supervisors also identify a wider range of personnel involved in requests (beyond the employee's immediate supervisor) than do employees, which reflects a difference in awareness of who is involved in the process.

Supervisor's first point of contact

Supervisors who completed an accommodation request for an employee most commonly cited labour relations advisors (38%) as their first point of contact in processing the request. Combined, labour relations and human resources advisors are the first point of contact for more than half (57%) of supervisors.

Table 12: supervisor's first point of contact

Q12. Which of the following functional experts was your first point of contact in processing your employee's accommodation request?	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Labour relations advisor	38%
Human resources advisor	19%
Occupational safety and health advisor	11%
Facilities management	9%
My manager / director / supervisor	7%
Disability management advisor	7%
Departmental IT	3%
Other	5%
Base: all supervisors (disability accommodation requests only)	
n = number of respondents	

There is also a strong connection between the number of accommodation requests that supervisors have made for employees over the past three years and the likelihood of supervisors' first contact being a labour relations advisor, increasing from only 31% for those with less experience (one or two requests) to 51% for those with more experience (more than 10 requests). The proportion of supervisors who first contacted their own manager, supervisor or director is highest among those who had handled only one or two requests. It is not clear whether dealing with Labour Relations more frequently affects how supervisors handle and/or perceive accommodation requests and determining this could be an objective of future research.

Labour relations is a specialization in the broader field of human resources management. In most organizations, labour relations advisors are seen as resources who support management in addressing performance issues

and issues between employees and supervisors. The extent to which employees consider labour relations and human resources advisors to be neutral resources is not clear.

Given that the survey did not assess the implications of different accountability structures, an opportunity exists for research into alternative models, such as functional leadership in a different area of human resources or under a senior manager who has responsibility for multiple functions involved in the overall accommodation process including facilities management, information technology, and contracting.

Personnel involved in handling the request

Most requests include a number of different staff at some point in the process. While an employee’s direct supervisor is almost always involved, senior management and doctors or specialists from outside the public service are also often included.

Both employees and supervisors identify the involvement of the employee’s direct supervisor. Beyond that, supervisors are more likely to identify the involvement of other staff as well. This indicates greater awareness on the part of supervisors (compared to employees) about the various personnel involved in accommodation requests and could also indicate a potential communication gap as employees may not be as well versed in the process and who is involved in their accommodation request process.

Table 13: personnel involved in handling the accommodation request

Q13 and Q40. To the best of your knowledge, who was involved in handling your employee’s / your accommodation request?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
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Q13 and Q40. To the best of your knowledge, who was involved in handling your employee's / your accommodation request?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Employee's direct supervisor / me	87%	90%
My senior management	37%	51%
Doctor or specialist from outside of public service	31%	40%
Human resources advisor	17%	25%
Labour relations advisor	15%	42%
Union representative	14%	18%
Facilities management	13%	25%
Occupational safety and health advisor	11%	23%
Departmental IT	9%	16%
My / my employee's personal advocate or assistant	9%	8%
Disability management advisor	6%	14%
Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology (AAACT) Program	4%	7%
Health Canada doctor or specialist	4%	9%
Accommodations / administrative or corporate staff	3%	2%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Medical certificates

More than three quarters of employees and supervisors say that a medical certificate was required to support the accommodation request. The request is most often made by the employee's direct supervisor.

A majority of employees (more than three quarters) are required to provide a medical certificate as part of their accommodation request. Supervisors report a similar proportion of requests requiring such evidence.

It is unclear why 75% of employees are being referred to a doctor or specialist to obtain medical certification; however, given that a quarter of supervisors are not aware of the employee's previous accommodation status, the reason could be that people are being required to get a certificate without their past accommodation actions having been clarified or without previously submitted medical evidence having been reviewed. With 1 in 3 employees reporting having a similar accommodation in the past (Table 5), this suggests that some employees are being asked to obtain evidence multiple times.

Table 14: medical certificate required for accommodation request

Q14 and Q41. Was your employee / were you required to provide a medical certificate or other evidence to support their / your accommodation?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Yes	77%	79%
No	23%	21%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Looking at results by accommodation type reveals that medical certification is requested in a large majority of cases regardless of the type of accommodation. Whether an employee or supervisor is responding, accommodations for non-physical adaptations and other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment are most likely to require a medical certificate, while those for personal support services are the least likely to.

Table 15: medical certificate required for accommodation request by accom

type

Accommodation type						
Medical certificate required?	Workspace-related	Non-physical adaptations	Environment-related	IT-related	Other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment	Telep
% Yes: employees	77%	82%	78%	77%	83%	76%
% Yes: supervisors	80%	84%	81%	80%	85%	81%

Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)

Source of request

The request for a medical certificate is most commonly made by the employee's direct supervisor, followed by senior management. Some supervisors (33%) also report that the request comes from a labour relations advisor, while only 12% of employees identify Labour Relations as a source of the request.

That employees are being required by their manager or senior management to obtain medical evidence raises questions as to whether the process is unilateral (employees are simply told they need to get one) rather than a collaborative approach aimed at equipping employees to contribute fully. More research should be done to determine whether this is the case and, if so, to what extent.

The largest difference between the two groups relates to the fact that employees are much less likely than supervisors to report the involvement of Labour Relations in their accommodation request. As mentioned earlier,

the implications of this are unclear.

Table 16: source of medical certificate request

Q15 and Q42. Who requested a medical certificate or other evidence to support your employee's accommodation? / To the best of your knowledge, who requested a medical certificate or other evidence to support your accommodation request?	Employee (n=2,504)	Supervisor (n=1,392)
Employee's direct supervisor / me	72%	66%
Senior management	31%	40%
Human resources advisor	13%	14%
Labour relations advisor	12%	33%
Occupational safety and health advisor	6%	7%
Disability management advisor	4%	8%
Employee provided without being requested	3%	3%
Accommodations / administrative or corporate services staff	3%	2%
Base: those where medical certificates were required (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Reason for medical certificate requirement

Employees say the request for a medical certificate was based on Treasury Board policy requirements or was because they were experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing their job-related duties (31%) or having difficulty carrying out job-related duties (27%).

The proportion who experienced health issues as a direct result of their job is higher among employees who self-identify as having a mental health issue (54%) or, more generally, an invisible disability (46%). The information in Table 17 suggests that supervisors may not be aware of some situations

where an employee is experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing their job-related duties. Better communication and greater awareness may offer an opportunity to improve health and productivity.

Supervisors most commonly say the request was because the employee was having difficulty carrying out job-related duties or was returning from an extended sick leave; some also indicate the request was based on Treasury Board requirements or because they wanted professional guidance.

Table 17: reason for medical certificate request

Q16 and Q43. Why was a medical certificate or other evidence required to support a new or revised accommodation for your employee? / To the best of your knowledge, why was a medical certificate or other evidence required to support your accommodation request?	Employee (n=2,504)	Supervisor (n=1,392)
Requested based on Treasury Board policy requirements	32%	27%
Experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing my / their job-related duties	31%	n/a
Experiencing difficulty carrying out job-related duties	27%	58%
I / senior management did not agree with accommodation request	20%	13%
Return to work after extended sick leave	19%	39%
Employee was injured	16%	18%
I / senior management wanted professional guidance	12%	26%
Requested as evidence / prove to management that accommodation was necessary	5%	3%

Base: those where medical certificates were required (disability accommodation requests only)

n = number of respondents

Q16 and Q43. Why was a medical certificate or other evidence required to support a new or revised accommodation for your employee? / To the best of your knowledge, why was a medical certificate or other evidence required to support your accommodation request?	Employee (n=2,504)	Supervisor (n=1,392)
To support accommodation (circumstances specified)	4%	2%
It was required by a third party's policy	4%	3%
Base: those where medical certificates were required (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Formal assessment

Formal assessments are required for a proportion of employees that is much higher than anticipated, particularly when 75% of employees are also asked to provide a medical certificate. More than half (54%) of employees report waiting longer than a month for their formal assessment.

A large proportion of respondents (one third of employees and 4 in 10 supervisors) indicate that the accommodation they were involved with included a formal assessment. This raises concerns that many supervisors may see accommodations first as a medical issue rather than as a way to equip employees to perform job-related duties. This should be more closely explored in future research.

Table 18: formal assessment required for accommodation request

Q17 and Q44. Was your employee / were you required to participate in a formal assessment by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Yes	34%	41%
No	66%	59%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Requests that required a medical certificate are far more likely to also require a formal assessment. Among requests made by supervisors for their employees, half (49%) that required a medical certificate also required a formal assessment (the comparable number among employee-reported requests is 41%). The proportion of accommodations where the subject was required to participate in a formal assessment was lower in the National Capital Region than in most other regions.

Looking at the results by accommodation type reveals that formal assessments are requested in a large proportion of cases regardless of the type of accommodation. Whether an employee or supervisor is responding, accommodations for personal support services and other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment are most likely to require a formal assessment while those for environment- and workspace-related accommodations are the least likely to.

Table 19: formal assessment required for accommodation request by accommodation type

Accommodation type					
					Other assistive devices or adaptations
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)					
Formal		Non-			Formal

Formal assessment required?	Workspace-related	physical adaptations	Accommodation type	IT-related	adaptations to equipment or other	Telephonic
% Yes: employees	37%	38%	36%	38%	assistive devices or adaptations to equipment	3%
Formal assessment required?	42%	Non-physical adaptations	43%	45%	47%	4%
% Yes: supervisors	Workspace-related	45%	Environment-related	IT-related	adaptations to equipment	Telephonic
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)						

Source of request

As is the case with requests for medical certificates, the employee's direct supervisor is the most common source of requests for formal assessments, according to almost two thirds (64%) of employees and 6 in 10 (58%) supervisors. Both employees and supervisors also identify senior management as a source of formal assessment requests, and a substantial number of supervisors (44%) also see these requests coming from a labour relations advisor.

These findings suggest that existing guidance may not adequately define whether medical or other evidence is required for different types of accommodation requests. Given that the survey also identified longer wait times to approve and implement accommodations that involved a requirement for medical evidence, there may be an opportunity to expedite the process by better defining this requirement. This is an area that should also be explored in future research.

Table 20: source of formal assessment request

Q18 and Q45. Who requested a formal assessment by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? / To the best of your knowledge, who requested that you participate in a formal assessment by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service?	Employee (n=1,103)	Supervisor (n=720)
Employee's direct supervisor / me	64%	58%
Senior management	35%	43%
Human resources advisor	15%	15%
Labour relations advisor	14%	44%
Occupational safety and health advisor	7%	7%
Disability management advisor	4%	9%
The employee provided without being requested	4%	4%
Accommodations / administrative or corporate services staff	3%	1%
Employee's doctor / insurance provider	3%	<1%
Base: those where formal assessments were required (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Reason for formal assessment requirement

Employees say the requirement for a formal assessment was because they were experiencing difficulties carrying out job-related duties (39%) or health issues as a direct result of those duties (34%); some also say it was due to Treasury Board policy or because senior management did not agree with their request.

Supervisors most often say the requirement for a formal assessment was because the employee was having difficulties carrying out job-related duties (68%), but also because the employee was returning after extended sick leave (39%) or professional guidance was sought (28%).

Supervisors were not explicitly asked about the health-related impacts of the job for employees. However, employees **were** asked this question, and one in three (34%) reported that they were experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing their job-related duties.

Table 21: reason for formal assessment request

Q19 and Q46. Why was a formal assessment required by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? / To the best of your knowledge, why was a formal assessment required by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service?	Employee (n=1,103)	Supervisor (n=720)
Experiencing difficulties in carrying out job-related duties	39%	68%
Experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing my job-related duties	34%	n/a
Requested based on Treasury Board policy	27%	20%
I / senior management did not agree with accommodation request	23%	15%
Returning after extended sick leave	19%	39%
Employee was injured	18%	17%
I / senior management wanted professional guidance	14%	28%
It was required by a third party's policy	4%	2%
Requested as evidence / to prove to management that accommodation was necessary	3%	1%
Base: those where formal assessments were required (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Wait time for formal assessment request

Only around one in five (22%) employees and supervisors (19%) report that the formal assessment was completed within two weeks, and a very large proportion report waiting for two months or more (33% and 29%, respectively). Wait times of six months or more are reported by 12% of employees and 7% of supervisors.

Delays in formal assessment increase the overall wait time for having an accommodation implemented. Delays could also create or aggravate health-related issues for employees (given that many cite their job-related tasks as causing them health problems already) and have a negative effect on productivity in the interim.

There is also a possibility that, since some supervisors are unaware of employees' previous accommodation circumstances, some employees are being asked to obtain medical certificates or undergo formal assessments when they have already done so in the past, further delaying the required accommodation.

Further research could include exploring the use of service standards for completing an accommodation request within certain timelines and/or disseminating guidance clarifying the circumstances under which a formal assessment should be sought.

Table 22: wait time for formal assessment

Q20 and Q47. How long did you and your employee wait for the formal assessment to be completed by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? / How long did you wait for the formal assessment?	Employee (n=1,103)	Supervisor (n=720)
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Base: those where formal assessments were required (disability accommodation requests only)

n = number of respondents

Q20 and Q47. How long did you and your employee wait for the formal assessment to be completed by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? / How long did you wait for the formal assessment?	Employee (n=1,103)	Supervisor (n=720)
Less than 2 weeks	22%	19%
2 weeks to less than 1 month	24%	28%
1 month to less than 2 months	21%	24%
2 months to less than 6 months	21%	22%
6 months or more	12%	7%
Base: those where formal assessments were required (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

4. Outcome of accommodation requests

Wait time for decision on accommodation request

Two thirds of employees wait longer than two weeks to receive their accommodation decision after all required information is provided; one in five wait six months or longer.

Almost half of employees report waiting longer than one month to receive a decision even after all required information was provided. Around a third of employees (34%) report waiting more than two months to receive a decision, including almost one in five (19%) who say they waited more than six months to receive a decision. These time frames raise questions about what is causing such widespread delays in decision-making and what effects these delays are having on employees.

There is also a notable gap between the responses from employees and supervisors: two thirds (66%) of supervisors and only half (52%) of employees say that the decision was made within a month.

Table 23: wait time for decision on accommodation request

Q21 and Q48. How long did it take to receive a decision for this accommodation request after your employee / you provided all required information?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Less than 2 weeks	34%	41%
2 weeks to less than 1 month	18%	25%
1 month to less than 2 months	13%	15%
2 months to less than 6 months	15%	12%
6 months or more	19%	7%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

There is also a connection between decision timelines and accommodations that require a medical certificate or a formal assessment: those requiring a medical certificate or a formal assessment are much less likely to receive an answer within two weeks and more likely to take longer than six months.

Accommodation request approval

Most report that the accommodation request was approved. In the majority of these cases, it took up to two months for the accommodation to be put in place. Delays beyond one month are typically attributed to delays in the delivery or installation of required products/services, although employees tend to place responsibility for

these delays on bureaucracy while supervisors place relatively more responsibility on suppliers.

A large majority of accommodation requests get approved. About 8 in 10 employees (83%) say that their accommodation request was approved, while almost all (95%) supervisors say their employee's request was approved. Although no option was provided for "it is still pending," a total of 115 employees state in a later question that their request is still pending, which would make the estimate for the proportion who were approved 86% if they were not included here.

It is unclear why, as a group, employees report lower approval rates than do supervisors. A robust accommodation tracking system could provide more information on the process, help in identifying blockages and solutions, and result in a more consistent interpretation of the outcomes.

Table 24: accommodation request approval

Q22 and Q49. Was this request for an accommodation approved?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Yes	83%	95%
No	17%	5%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Looking at results by accommodation type reveals that, among supervisors, there is no difference in approval rates based on the type of accommodation. However, among employees, accommodations that are IT-related, telephone-related, or involve other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment are more likely to receive approval than other types.

Table 25: accommodation request approval by accommodation type

Request for accommodation approved?	Accommodation type				
	Workspace-related	Non-physical adaptations	Environment-related	IT-related	Other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment
% Yes: employees	85%	82%	80%	89%	90%
% Yes: supervisors	95%	95%	94%	96%	95%

Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)



Wait time for accommodation to be put in place

The majority (52%) of employees' approved requests are taking longer than a month to implement or are not yet properly in place. About 1 in 10 employees (9%) say their approved request took six months or longer to implement.

It is not clear what the reason is for the gap between the differences reported between employees and supervisors, but it demonstrates a need for further exploration in future research.

Table 26: wait time for accommodation to be put in place

Q23 and Q50. How long did it take for your employee's / your accommodation to be put in place and working properly (including related training) after the request was approved?	Employee (n=2,679)	Supervisor (n=1,658)
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Q23 and Q50. How long did it take for your employee's / your accommodation to be put in place and working properly (including related training) after the request was approved?	Employee (n=2,679)	Supervisor (n=1,658)
Less than 2 weeks	30%	34%
2 weeks to less than 1 month	18%	25%
1 month to less than 2 months	12%	15%
2 months to less than 6 months	14%	14%
6 months or more	9%	5%
Accommodation in place but not working properly	9%	3%
Accommodation not in place but approved	2%	2%
Accommodation not in place but approved more than one month ago	7%	2%
Base: those whose accommodation request was approved (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Reasons for delay

The two most common reasons given for why accommodations were not implemented within a month of approval are delays in the delivery of products or services and delays in installation. Among other reasons given, employees are relatively more likely to cite a backlog or procurement delays, communication delays, or uncooperative management, while supervisors are relatively more likely to cite a delay in obtaining information from a doctor or specialist or problems encountered during installation.

There is some indication that a communication issue and/or negative perceptions of the other party are contributing to delays in implementing approved accommodations. For instance, 4% of employees cited

discrimination, stigma or attitude of management as a reason for the delay, while 4% of supervisors cited a lack of employee cooperation or agreement. Additionally, another 10% of employees reported a lack of cooperation by management as a reason for the delay.

Table 27: reasons for delay in implementation

Q24 and Q51. (To the best of your knowledge) What were the reasons for the delay if it took (or is currently taking) more than one month for your employee's / your approved accommodation to be satisfactorily implemented?	Employee (n=1,345)	Supervisor (n=645)
Delivery of required products / services delayed	28%	42%
Initial installation of products / services delayed	17%	27%
Backlog / bureaucracy / procurement delays	15%	8%
Internal service provider did not understand requirement	12%	17%
Communication delays	10%	3%
Management is uncooperative	10%	2%
Delay obtaining information from doctor / specialist	8%	23%
Issue with installation / set-up	8%	12%
Accommodation not compatible with existing systems	6%	10%
Accommodation has not been implemented / not considered urgent	6%	2%
Physical space limitations	5%	9%
Budget limitations / waiting for new fiscal year	5%	4%
Discrimination / stigma / attitude of management	4%	n/a
External service provider did not fully understand my requirements	3%	7%

Base: those where accommodation request was approved but took more than one month to be put in place (disability accommodation requests only)

n = number of respondents

Q24 and Q51. (To the best of your knowledge) What were the reasons for the delay if it took (or is currently taking) more than one month for your employee's / your approved accommodation to be satisfactorily implemented?	Employee (n=1,345)	Supervisor (n=645)
Employee not cooperative / doesn't agree with accommodation offered	n/a	4%
Base: those where accommodation request was approved but took more than one month to be put in place (disability accommodation requests only) n = number of respondents		

Reasons for delay of installation or set-up

When asked the primary reason for the delay in delivery, installation or set-up of products or services necessary to their accommodation, employees most commonly report a bureaucratic backlog or procurement delays (29%), while supervisors primarily report delays in the delivery of IT-related products or services (24%) or other assistive devices (31%).

Table 28: reasons for delay in delivery, installation or set-up of accommodation products/services

Q24a and Q51a. What was the primary reason for the delay in the delivery, installation or set-up of specific products or services related to your/employee's accommodation?	Employee (n=862)	Supervisor (n=402)
Backlog / bureaucracy / procurement delays	29%	13%
There was a delay in the delivery of other assistive devices	17%	31%

Base: those where accommodation request was approved but took more than one month to be put in place and delivery or set-up of products and services is a reason (disability accommodation requests only) n = number of respondents
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Q24a and Q51a. What was the primary reason for the delay in the delivery, installation or set-up of specific products or services related to your/employee's accommodation?	Employee (n=862)	Supervisor (n=402)
There was a delay in the delivery of IT-related products or services	14%	24%
Administrative error / issues with paperwork	12%	4%
There was a delay in installing or setting up other assistive devices	11%	18%
There was a delay in installing or setting up IT-related products or services	10%	18%
Budget limitations / waiting for new fiscal year	6%	4%
There were issues with the IT-related products or services after they were installed or set up	5%	11%
Accommodation request was denied	5%	1%
Accommodation has not been implemented yet / not considered urgent	5%	<1%
There were issues with the other assistive devices after they were installed or set up	4%	6%
Communication delays / difficult coordinating with other departments or organizations	3%	5%
There was a delay in the delivery of telephony-related products or services	2%	4%
<p>Base: those where accommodation request was approved but took more than one month to be put in place and delivery or set-up of products and services is a reason (disability accommodation requests only)</p> <p>n = number of respondents</p>		

Current situation

Less than half of employees report that the approved accommodations are in place and working effectively. Although supervisors are more likely to say that the accommodations are in place and working effectively, it is still only 6 in 10 supervisors that say this.

Employees and supervisors were asked the current situation of employees' accommodation requests. Less than half of employees responding about their own request (45%) and more than 6 in 10 supervisors (62%) said that the accommodations are in place and working effectively.

Given the anonymous nature of the survey, there is no direct correlation between employees' and supervisors' individual responses. The discrepancy in the results may stem partly from the fact that respondents in the two groups provided feedback on different accommodation requests. The size of the discrepancy, however, suggests that employees and supervisors may draw different conclusions from their experiences with existing accommodation processes and on the outcomes of those processes.

Table 29: current situation

Q27 and Q55. Which of the following best describes your employee's / your current situation?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
All accommodation approved and in place		
The approved accommodations are in place and working effectively	45%	62%
Approved accommodations in place but accessibility barriers continue to exist	6%	3%

Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only)

n = number of respondents

Q27 and Q55. Which of the following best describes your employee's / your current situation?	Employee (n=3,247)	Supervisor (n=1,753)
Some or all approved but process not finished		
Approved accommodations in place but one or more needs to be reviewed or adjusted	11%	9%
Some accommodations approved and in place, other accommodations not approved	7%	6%
Some accommodations approved and in place, others approved but not yet in place	6%	4%
Accommodations were approved but none are in place yet	5%	3%
Accommodation request denied		
Accommodations were not approved	8%	2%
Awaiting approval decision		
Accommodations process is still ongoing / still waiting on decision	6%	1%
Accommodations no longer necessary		
Accommodations are no longer required because of other reasons / were temporary	2%	2%
Accommodations are no longer required because employee left the position	2%	3%
The employee is on leave	<1%	2%
Base: all respondents (disability accommodation requests only) n = number of respondents		

Among both employees and supervisors, requests that did not involve a medical certification or formal assessment are more likely to be approved, in place and working effectively.

5. Denial of accommodation request

Source of accommodation denial

There are gaps in perception about the source of request denials, with employees more likely to say it comes primarily from their direct supervisor and supervisors being more likely to say the denial comes from senior management.

Those who said their accommodation request was not approved were asked who denied it. Almost half of employees (47%) say the denial came from their direct supervisor and another third (36%) say it came from senior management. One in five are still waiting on a decision.

Less than a quarter of supervisors (22%) say that they are the source of the denial. Instead, the majority (53%) say the denial came from senior management.

In addition, more than a quarter of supervisors identified labour relations staff and others who are not the employee's direct supervisor or senior management as the source of the denial. This result may suggest the need for better guidance and communications to managers with respect to their accountabilities.

Table 30: source of accommodation request denial

Q25 and Q52. Who denied the accommodation request?	Employee (n=569)	Supervisor (n=95)
Employee's direct supervisor / me	47%	22%
Senior management	36%	53%
Accommodations staff	5%	5%
Labour Relations	2%	8%
Base: those whose accommodation request was denied (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Q25 and Q52. Who denied the accommodation request?	Employee (n=569)	Supervisor (n=95)
Facility or property management	2%	4%
Other	9%	18%
Still waiting on decision	20%	8%
Base: those whose accommodation request was denied (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Reason for request denial

When asked the reason why the accommodation request was denied, employees tend to say their direct supervisor or senior management did not agree with the need for an accommodation (31%) or with the doctor's findings (24%). Other reasons include supervisors being unwilling to vary their policies, no established precedent for accommodations, and concerns about perceived favouritism by other staff.

Among supervisors, the main reason given for denying an accommodation is that the specialist did not adequately demonstrate the need (34%). Other reasons include concerns about perceived favouritism by other staff, because the accommodation did not meet operational or client requirements, and a lack of precedent.

A quarter of supervisors state the denial was based on their, or their senior management, not agreeing that there was a need for accommodation or disagreeing with a doctor's findings.

Table 31: reason for accommodation request denial

Q26 and Q53. What were the reasons for denying this accommodation request?	Employee (n=569)	Supervisor (n=95)
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Q26 and Q53. What were the reasons for denying this accommodation request?	Employee (n=569)	Supervisor (n=95)
Supervisor / I or senior management didn't agree there was a need for accommodation	31%	15%
Supervisor / I did not agree with doctor's findings	24%	9%
Supervisor / I not willing to vary policies	19%	7%
No established precedent for accommodation	18%	19%
Concern of perceived favouritism by other staff	17%	20%
Accommodation process ongoing	16%	12%
Because of operational or client requirements	9%	20%
Specialist report didn't adequately demonstrate need for accommodation	8%	34%
No medical certificate provided	5%	13%
Base: those whose accommodation request was denied (disability accommodation requests only)		
n = number of respondents		

Response to accommodation request denial

Most employees whose request is denied do not appeal because they feel it will not make a difference or because they are afraid of negative consequences. The most common active response is to speak to a union representative.

Employees whose request was denied were asked how they responded. In most cases, these employees indicate that they did not appeal the decision (69% altogether), either because it will not make a difference (44%), due to concerns about negative consequences (32%) or concern about their relationship with their supervisor (28%), or for another reason (12%).

Some have taken some action (39% overall) by requesting advice from their union representative (27%), a doctor (13%) or a legal advisor (6%). Others have filed a formal complaint (12%) or are pursuing the issue with a more senior manager (11%) or have repeated their request (4%).

These results indicate that approximately one in six (16%) of those whose request was denied say they have left their job, are trying to change jobs or departments, or began an extended period of leave as a result of not receiving an accommodation.

Table 32: response to denied accommodation

Q54. How did you respond to your organization's decision to deny your accommodation request?	Employee (n=569)
Net: Did not appeal	69%
Did not appeal / believed it wouldn't make a difference	44%
Did not appeal / afraid of negative consequences	32%
Did not appeal / concerned about relationship with supervisor	28%
Did not appeal for other reasons	12%
Did not appeal because I left my job	7%
Searching for other jobs / department change	5%
Did not appeal due to extended sick leave	4%
Net: Did appeal (or at least escalating / pushing)	39%
Requested advice from union rep	27%
Requested advice from doctor	13%
Filed formal complaint / grievance	12%
Escalated request to more senior manager	11%

Base: all employees whose accommodation request was denied (disability accommodation requests only)

n = number of respondents

Q54. How did you respond to your organization's decision to deny your accommodation request?	Employee (n=569)
Sought legal advice	6%
Repeated request / still trying to get it	4%
Process still ongoing / awaiting decision	13%
Base: all employees whose accommodation request was denied (disability accommodation requests only) n = number of respondents	

6. Non-disability accommodation requests

Comparison of disability and non-disability accommodation requests

Non-disability accommodation requests usually involve changes to working hours or locations, are dealt with more quickly and are less likely to be approved.

The great majority of accommodation requests examined within this research centre around an accommodation for a disability, but a sizable number of respondents to the survey described accommodations that revolve instead around other accommodation needs, such as those related to family or religious requirements. This section examines the differences observed in the responses given within the surveys by the respondents classified into this category.

There are not many clear and consistent differences between disability-related accommodation requests and those that do not involve a disability. Generally speaking, non-disability requests are less complex, involve fewer staff in the process, are decided faster and are less likely to be approved. When they are approved, they are decided and implemented more quickly.

Non-disability accommodation requests often involve telework or flexible work hours; they are therefore faster to implement and easier to administer, and when they are denied, the requesters are less likely to look for recourse.

According to supervisors, disability-related requests (42%) are much more likely to involve Labour Relations than non-disability requests (6%).

The main observed differences among both employees reporting about their own requests and supervisors reporting about a request for their employee are summarized in Table 33.

Table 33: notable differences between disability and non-disability results

Question / Topic	Employee		Supervisor	
	Disability request (n=3,247)	Non-disability request (n=166)	Disability request (n=1,753)	Non-disability request (n=79)
Staff involved in the request process				
Senior management	37%	27%	51%	51%
Doctor or specialist from outside of the public service	31%	2%	40%	3%
Human resources advisor	17%	9%	25%	25%
Labour relations advisor	15%	4%	42%	6%
Base: all respondents				
n = number of respondents				

Question / Topic	Employee		Supervisor	
	Disability request (n=3,247)	Non-disability request (n=166)	Disability request (n=1,753)	Non-disability request (n=79)
Decision time on accommodation request				
Base: all respondents				
n = Number of respondents				

Question / Topic Decision time on accommodation request	Employee		Supervisor	
	Disability request (n=3,247)	Non-disability request (n=166)	Disability request (n=1,753)	Non-disability request (n=79)
Less than 2 weeks	34%	61%	41%	71%
6 months or more	18%	10%	7%	4%
Base: all respondents n = number of respondents				

Question / Topic Approval of request	Employee		Supervisor	
	Disability request (n=3,247)	Non-disability request (n=166)	Disability request (n=1,753)	Non-disability request (n=79)
Approved	83%	67%	95%	86%
Denied	17%	33%	5%	14%
Base: all respondents n = number of respondents				

Question / Topic Response to denial	Employee		Supervisor	
	Disability request (n=568)	Non-disability request (n=55)	Disability request	Non-disability request
Did not appeal (afraid of negative consequences)	32%	55%	n/a	n/a
I requested advice or intervention by a union representative	27%	9%	n/a	n/a
Base: all respondents n = number of respondents				

7. Visible and invisible disabilities

Comparison of visible and invisible disabilities or long-term health conditions

Those with invisible disabilities are more likely to have to provide medical certification or undergo formal assessments but are less likely to have their request approved; management is more likely to be named as a reason for denied requests.

This section examines differences among employees who self-identify as having a disability or long-term health condition (supervisors were not asked about their employees' condition, so no conclusions can be drawn from the supervisor portion of the results).

These respondents are first classified into two groups based on whether their primary disability or health condition is visible or invisible. For the purpose of this analysis, visible disabilities or conditions were deemed to include those involving mobility, hearing, seeing, flexibility and dexterity; and invisible disabilities or conditions were deemed to include chronic health conditions and issues involving mental health, environmental sensitivities and cognition.

In addition, respondents in this second group (that is, invisible disabilities or conditions), were further classified into three subcategories:

- Group 1: those with mental health issues
- Group 2: those with chronic health conditions; pain; or environmental or sensory conditions, including sensitivities to light, auditory or visual distractions, allergens, scents or other environment-related issues
- Group 3: those with cognitive conditions, including memory, communication or learning disabilities

When comparing those with visible and invisible disabilities, the accommodation requested differs in that those with invisible disabilities are more likely to mention non-physical adaptations and environment-related accommodations, and those with physical disabilities are more likely to mention IT, telephony and personal support service requests.

Table 34: notable differences between visible and invisible disability (accommodation type)

Question / Topic Accommodation requested	Visible (n=409)	Invisible n=794)
Net: Non-physical adaptations	52%	67%
Net: Environment-related accommodations	42%	58%
Net: IT-related accommodations	50%	38%
Net: Telephony accommodations	31%	18%
Net: Personal support service	6%	3%
Base: all employees who self-identify as having a disability / long-term health condition		
n = number of respondents		

Staff and medical certificate

In terms of the staff involved in the request, those with invisible disabilities are more likely to have senior management, doctors or specialists, labour relations advisors, a union representative or a personal advocate involved.

They are also more likely to be required to get a medical certificate and have it requested by senior management or Labour Relations.

They are more likely to say the certificate was requested because they were experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing their job, they were experiencing difficulties carrying out job-related tasks, and they

did not agree with management on what was required for their accommodation.

Table 35: notable differences between visible and invisible disability (staff and medical certification)

Question / Topic Staff involved in the request process	Visible (n=409)	Invisible (n=794)	Mental health (n=234)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=428)	Cognitive (n=132)
Senior management	39%	46%	50%	44%	45%
Doctor or specialist from outside of the public service	30%	42%	40%	45%	38%
Labour relations advisor	14%	26%	30%	25%	23%
Union representative	12%	22%	23%	20%	23%
Departmental IT	17%	10%	8%	11%	9%
My personal advocate or assistant	9%	15%	14%	13%	23%
n = number of respondents					

Question / Topic Required to provide a medical certificate	Visible (n=409)	Invisible (n=794)	Mental health (n=234)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=428)	Cognitive (n=132)
Yes	77%	87%	88%	88%	80%
No	23%	13%	12%	12%	20%
n = number of respondents					

Question / Topic Who requested the medical certificate (those who got a medical certificate)	Visible (n=313)	Invisible (n=689)	Mental health (n=207)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=376)	Cognitive (n=106)
My senior management	27%	37%	41%	35%	37%
Labour relations advisor	10%	19%	21%	19%	14%
n = number of respondents					

Question / Topic Why was it requested (those who got a medical certificate)	Visible (n=313)	Invisible (n=689)	Mental health (n=207)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=376)	Cognitive (n=106)
I was experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing my job-related duties under regular working conditions	23%	36%	37%	40%	22%
I was experiencing difficulties in carrying out some of my job-related duties under regular working conditions, and professional guidance was needed to determine whether accommodations were required	26%	36%	40%	31%	43%
I requested an accommodation and my supervisor / manager or my senior management did not agree with me on what was required	16%	29%	31%	26%	31%

n = number of respondents

Question / Topic Why was it requested (those who got a medical certificate)	Visible (n=313)	Invisible (n=689)	Mental health (n=207)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=376)	Cognitive (n=106)
I was returning to work after an extended sick leave	16%	27%	32%	26%	21%
n = number of respondents					

Formal assessment

Similarly, those with invisible disabilities are more likely to be required to get a formal assessment and have that request come from senior management or the labour relations advisor. They are more likely to mention experiencing difficulty doing their job, to have experienced health-related issues as a direct result of their job, and to disagree with management about what was required.

Overall, those with an invisible disability are slightly more likely to wait longer for a formal assessment, but those with a cognitive invisible disability are much more likely to wait more than six months for a formal assessment (26%).

Table 36: notable differences between visible and invisible disability (formal assessment)

Question / Topic Required to participate in a formal assessment	Visible (n=409)	Invisible (n=794)	Mental health (n=234)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=428)	Cognitive (n=132)
Yes	37%	44%	39%	44%	53%
No	63%	56%	61%	56%	47%
n = number of respondents					

Question / Topic Who requested the formal assessment (those who got a formal assessment)	Visible (n=150)	Invisible (n=351)	Mental health (n=91)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=190)	Cognitive (n=70)
My senior management	33%	39%	43%	37%	39%
Labour relations advisor	12%	20%	23%	19%	19%
n = number of respondents					

Question / Topic Why was it requested (those who got a formal assessment)	Visible (n=150)	Invisible (n=351)	Mental health (n=91)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=190)	Cognitive (n=70)
I was experiencing difficulties in carrying out some of my job-related duties under regular working conditions, and professional guidance was needed to determine whether accommodations were required	36%	46%	54%	38%	54%
I was experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing my job-related duties under regular working conditions	23%	36%	40%	41%	20%
I requested an accommodation and my supervisor / manager or my senior management did not agree with me on what was required	19%	30%	27%	35%	20%

n = number of respondents

Question / Topic Why was it requested (those who got a formal assessment)	Visible (n=150)	Invisible (n=351)	Mental health (n=91)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=190)	Cognitive (n=70)
I was returning to work after an extended sick leave	14%	24%	23%	26%	19%
n = number of respondents					

Question / Topic Wait time for assessment (those who got a formal assessment)	Visible (n=150)	Invisible (n=351)	Mental health (n=91)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=190)	Cognitive (n=70)
Less than 2 weeks	21%	15%	16%	17%	7%
2 weeks to less than 1 month	22%	21%	26%	19%	21%
1 month to less than 2 months	19%	20%	21%	19%	19%
2 months to less than 3 months	13%	12%	8%	14%	11%
3 months to less than 6 months	13%	15%	14%	15%	16%
6 months or more	12%	17%	14%	15%	26%
n = number of respondents					

Outcome

Those with an invisible disability are less likely to have their request approved, but do not report having to wait longer for a decision or to have an approved accommodation in place. Among those who did experience a delay, however, people with invisible disabilities are more likely to say it was due to management not cooperating or a delay in obtaining

supplementary information from a doctor or specialist. There is no difference between those with visible and invisible disabilities in terms of their accommodation being resolved and implemented.

Table 37: notable differences between visible and invisible disability (outcome)

Question / Topic Request approved	Visible (n=409)	Invisible (n=794)	Mental health (n=234)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=428)	Cognitive (n=132)
Yes	88%	78%	73%	83%	73%
No	12%	22%	27%	17%	27%
n = number of respondents					

Question / Topic Reasons for delay (those who experienced a delay)	Visible (n=203)	Invisible (n=331)	Mental health (n=74)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=202)	Cognitive (n=55)
The initial installation or set-up of the required products or services was delayed	21%	12%	4%	14%	15%
Management is not cooperative / does not agree with request	8%	14%	16%	14%	9%
There was a delay obtaining supplementary information from a medical doctor or specialist	6%	12%	16%	10%	15%

n = number of respondents

Question / Topic Reasons for delay (those who experienced a delay)	Visible (n=203)	Invisible (n=331)	Mental health (n=74)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=202)	Cognitive (n=55)
The approved accommodation was not compatible with existing computer systems, software, equipment or standards	12%	6%	4%	7%	5%
n = number of respondents					

Denial of request

Those with invisible disabilities are more likely to say they were denied by their supervisor and by management, and to say the reason for the denial was a concern that the accommodation would be seen as favouritism or that it was not taken seriously. However, those with invisible disabilities are more likely to have taken some action as a result of the denial.

Table 38: notable differences between visible and invisible disability (denial of request)

Question / Topic Who denied request	Visible (n=51)	Invisible (n=172)	Mental health (n=63)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=74)	Cognitive (n=35)
My direct supervisor / manager	39%	52%	54%	54%	43%
My senior management	24%	40%	51%	30%	40%
n = number of respondents					

Question / Topic Reasons for denial	Visible (n=51)	Invisible (n=172)	Mental health (n=63)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=74)	Cognitive (n=35)
There was a concern that this accommodation may be perceived by other employees as favouritism or special treatment	8%	20%	30%	15%	11%
The accommodation request was not taken seriously / ignored	2%	9%	10%	11%	3%
The accommodation request was denied without a reason given	2%	8%	6%	7%	11%
n = number of respondents					

Question / Topic Response to denial	Visible (n=51)	Invisible (n=172)	Mental health (n=63)	Pain/ sensory/ environmental (n=74)	Cognitive (n=35)
Net: Did appeal / escalate / push	37%	55%	51%	57%	60%
n = number of respondents					

8. Observations and considerations

This survey represents an important first step in understanding and, ultimately, improving the accommodation process as it affects federal employees and supervisors. It also raises additional questions and considerations to be explored in greater depth in future studies. The following are some key issues or questions raised by the current data that merit further examination:

- The data suggest that supervisors have limited experience with the accommodation request process (based on the number of requests managed). This suggests it is important to have clear guidance, a clear process to follow and expert advice and support for supervisors, who are not experts and who typically have limited experience with the many different types of disabilities or conditions and accommodation options.
- In very few cases do employees and supervisors indicate that a disability management advisor was involved in the process. It is unclear whether this indicates that the department doesn't have such a function or resource, or whether supervisors are unaware that such a resource exists. A related finding is that the denial of an accommodation request is linked in some cases to supervisors and/or senior management who disagreed with the need for accommodation and/or with the expert advice of a physician or specialist. These findings raise questions as to the implications of a lack of involvement of accommodation experts in the assessment and decision-making process.
- A key area for discussion is the roles and responsibilities of multiple, diverse functional areas involved in the accommodation process. Labour Relations is identified as one of the main contacts for supervisors during the accommodation request process, but many of the employees surveyed were not aware of their involvement. Moreover, in situations where a request was denied, some supervisors indicated that Labour Relations made that decision. On a related note, responses from supervisors show that Labour Relations is involved in the request process for 42% of disability-related accommodation

requests and only 6% of non-disability requests. This discrepancy raises questions as to why the accommodation process is different for employees with disabilities.

Labour relations is a discipline in the human resources management field. In most organizations, labour relations advisors are seen as resources who support management in addressing performance issues and issues between employees and supervisors. The survey did not ask about employees' views with respect to the role of various functional experts. Future research could explore the consequences of having accommodation requests coordinated by a neutral resource, ideally someone with a specialization in disability or accommodation management. That said, labour relations advisors and other functional experts play a critical role in ensuring effective relationships between employees and supervisors: they add significant value to the overall accommodation process and their engagement needs to be timely and appropriate to the circumstances of each accommodation-related request.

In addition, given that the survey did not assess the implications of different accountability structures, alternative models could be explored. For example, other models could include functional leadership in a different area of human resources or under a senior manager with responsibility for multiple functions involved in the overall accommodation process (for example, facilities management, information technology or contracting).

- When supervisors report that an accommodation request was denied, they are twice as likely to say the decision was made by senior management instead of by themselves personally (as the employee's direct supervisor). It would be valuable to explore the reasons for this:

for example, are supervisors not feeling empowered or supported to make decisions, or are they not being given that authority?

- A key objective of the Public Service Accessibility Strategy is to shift toward a culture that embraces accommodation (“yes by default”) as a way of equipping all employees, including those with disabilities, to contribute to their full potential and moves away from the traditional “medical model” that looks at disability as an illness, disease or condition to be proven with evidence.

There is substantial opportunity here, with three in four requests requiring a medical certificate and one in three requiring a formal assessment. It is not clear to what extent this amount of involvement by doctors and specialists is necessary to handle the majority of accommodations requests, and there are concerns that some employees are being required to prove the need for their accommodation multiple times. Given the high level of internal and external resources involved in providing each of these pieces of medical evidence, a standardized process, with clear guidelines and a toolkit to support managers and functional experts, would be beneficial.

It would also be helpful to gain a better understanding of the types of assessments requested (for example, fitness-to-work assessment, ergonomic assessment) and the circumstances and types of disabilities and conditions for which they are requested (for example, for visible or invisible conditions or disabilities).

- A large proportion of formal assessments take longer than two months to be completed. There is a need to better understand the implications of delays in assessment, decision and implementation. Some respondents reported a worsening of their condition and/or a need to

take extended sick leave (or stay on leave) because they were not being properly accommodated. Lengthy wait periods can have serious implications for productivity, morale and health, and this needs to be considered by those managing, and looking to improve, the accommodation process. Also, the establishment of service standards for completion of accommodation requests could reduce existing waiting times.

- Findings of the 2018 Public Service Employee Survey suggest that experiences of harassment and/or discrimination are more widespread among those with a health condition or disability. These concerns were apparent among the 7 in 10 employees who chose not to appeal the decision to deny their request, due to concerns about reprisal or damage to their career or relationship with management, or because they felt it wouldn't make a difference. Future research could more deeply explore the relationship between experiences of harassment or discrimination and accommodation outcomes and could explore the productivity implications of poorly managed workplace accommodations.
- The survey data point to a substantial perception and communication gap between employees and supervisors. For instance, there is a gap between what a supervisor knows about the accommodation process but an employee perceives (for example, reasons for delayed decisions, implementation), as well as between what an employee knows but a supervisor perceives (for example, reasons for requesting an accommodation). As well, one in four supervisors did not know whether their employee had a similar previous accommodation, which suggests this vital question is not always being asked when an employee first raises the need for an accommodation. Improved communication could help minimize and resolve differences, but

increased awareness, better tools and processes, and access to functional advisors with expertise in workplace accommodations (where possible) would reduce the likelihood of differences from the outset.

Appendix A: Methodology

The findings presented in this report are based on data collected internally by TBS using an online survey of federal public service employees. The survey consisted of two parts, with respondents answering as either supervisors who requested an accommodation for an employee in the last three years (the supervisor survey), employees who requested an accommodation for themselves in the last three years (the employee survey), or both.

Information related to the survey was disseminated to all federal public servants through various channels, including:

- newsletters and other departmental communications distributed via deputy ministers and departmental heads of communication
- announcements on social media and on the internal GCintranet and GCpedia platforms
- targeted communications distributed via key stakeholders, including:
 - collective bargaining agents
 - departmental heads of human resources (HR Council)
 - the National Joint Council (subcommittee on employment equity)
 - the National Managers' Community
 - champions/chairs of interdepartmental employment equity working groups

The survey was open between May 6 and May 24. A total of 11,115 individuals accessed the online survey during this period. Overall, 5,245 surveys were completed (that is, 3,413 employee surveys and 1,832 supervisor surveys completed) by 4,933 unique individual respondents (312 respondents completed both the employee and the supervisor sections). Each survey required about 20 to 30 minutes to complete, with 20 to 27 questions for the employee survey and 21 to 29 questions for the supervisor survey

Environics Research was responsible for data analysis and reporting. TBS provided the results of the survey in Excel format after scrubbing the data for all potential personal identifiers. Environics then cleaned and coded the data in order to conduct statistical analysis and tabulate results. Additional codes were created from open-ended results and incorporated into the final data. The final data are unweighted, since there is no data on the universe of federal employees who have completed an accommodation request for themselves or an employee on which to base weighting targets.

The analysis in this report makes a distinction between accommodations for those with a disability and accommodations for non-disability purposes. As this question was not asked directly, these categories were defined in the supervisor survey using the results of the questions about the accommodations requested for employees (Q5 to Q11) and whether a medical certificate or formal assessment was required for their employee's request (Q14 and Q17). The same distinction was made in the employee survey using the corresponding questions about the accommodation requested (Q33 to Q39) and medical certificate or formal assessment (Q42 and Q44).

Employees who self-identified as having a disability or long-term health condition were classified based on their primary disability or condition into having either a visible disability/condition (those with issues related to mobility, hearing, seeing, flexibility or dexterity) or an invisible disability/condition (those with issues related to mental health, pain, environmental, sensory, cognitive, learning, communication or memory).

Table 39 summarizes the key characteristics of the sample.

Table 39: characteristics of the sample

Self-identify as a person with a disability	All respondents	Employees	Supervisor
Yes	31%	40%	15%
Visible disability	10%	12%	6%
Invisible disability	18%	24%	8%
Unknown visible / invisible	3%	4%	1%
Invisible disability: mental health	5%	7%	2%
Invisible disability: chronic pain / sensitivities	10%	13%	4%
Invisible disability: cognitive	3%	4%	2%
No	57%	46%	77%
I prefer not to respond	12%	15%	8%

First official language	All respondents	Employees	Supervisor
English	75%	77%	69%
French	25%	23%	31%

Work location	All respondents	Employees	Supervisor
British Columbia	10%	10%	9%

Work location	All respondents	Employees	Supervisor
Prairies	13%	13%	13%
Ontario (excluding National Capital Region)	18%	19%	14%
National Capital Region	44%	42%	49%
Quebec (excluding National Capital Region)	6%	6%	6%
Atlantic	9%	9%	8%
Territories	1%	<1%	1%

Place of employment (top responses)	All respondents	Employees	Supervisor
Canada Revenue Agency	33%	33%	31%
Correctional Service Canada	10%	11%	9%
Shared Services Canada	9%	7%	10%
Public Services and Procurement Canada	5%	4%	5%
Canada Border Services Agency	4%	5%	3%
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	4%	3%	5%
Indigenous Services Canada	4%	3%	3%
Employment and Social Development Canada	3%	3%	3%

Appendix B: Research instrument

Survey questionnaire

Consultation: Workplace Accommodation Practices in the Federal Public Service

Context

Under the proposed *Accessible Canada Act* (Bill C-81), a “barrier” is defined as anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with an impairment, including a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or a functional limitation. This can include something physical, architectural, technological or attitudinal; something that is based on information or communications; or, something that is the result of a policy or a practice.

Sometimes employment-related barriers are not obvious: for example, the way in which a process is designed or performance is measured can prevent a qualified person with disabilities from being hired, finding meaningful work or moving up in an organization. Also, sometimes people with disabilities are excluded, or treated badly or differently, because of ideas, beliefs or assumptions that other people have about disability: this is called an “attitude barrier.”

Under existing legislation and policy, employers must remove systemic barriers and, where other barriers exist, they must provide appropriate supports or workplace adaptations to enable people with disabilities to contribute to their full potential. To help departments and agencies meet this responsibility, the Office of Public Service Accessibility at Treasury Board Secretariat is conducting a benchmarking study of existing workplace accommodation practices from a user perspective to identify common experiences, challenges and best practices. This study will help us identify opportunities to remove barriers and to improve our process for work-related adaptations so employees with disabilities can contribute to their full potential as valued team members. Information gathered from this study will also create a baseline that we can use to measure progress over time.

This anonymous survey of federal public servants is the first phase of the benchmarking study. Additional phases may follow in the coming months to help us more fully understand the experiences of employees with disabilities and of supervisors in obtaining the work-related adaptations, tools and services they need to perform their jobs effectively.

Your participation in this survey will help us to enable success for all employees!

Survey Details

This survey is intended for two audiences: employees who requested a workplace accommodation in the past **3** years, and supervisors with an employee that requested an accommodation in the past **3** years.

Supervisors who requested an accommodation for their employee and also requested one for themselves will be offered a choice to complete this survey twice i.e., once as a supervisor and once as an employee.

Most questions are mandatory and several questions offer an option to select “I prefer not to respond”. Based on your answers to certain questions, the questionnaire will automatically skip any questions or sub-questions that do not apply to your situation.

It is estimated that an employee or supervisor will require about 30 minutes to complete this survey. Those who choose to complete the survey twice (i.e., as both a supervisor and an employee) will require an additional 15-20 minutes.

If you would like to complete this survey in an alternative format, or if you would like to review all of the questions before completing the survey online, you can access this information on our GCPedia page at: [OPSA](#)

GCPedia page. You can also contact us through our generic mailbox at Accessibility.accessibilite@tbs-sct.gc.ca should you have any questions regarding this benchmarking study.

Privacy notice

The information in this survey is collected by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) under the authority of the Financial Administration Act to collect feedback to inform a Public Service Accessibility Strategy. The survey uses the third-party online service SimpleSurvey. For additional information on how SimpleSurvey stores and protects information, please see their Frequently Asked Questions and Privacy Policy.

Completion of this questionnaire is voluntary. Please do not include any sensitive, confidential or personal information about yourself or any other individual in your responses. Any personal information collected in this survey, if you have provided any, will be used and protected in accordance with the Privacy Act and as described in Personal Information Bank PSU 938 (Outreach Activities) and PSU 914 (Public Communications).

Information gathered through this survey will be anonymous and will be summarized in order to protect the identity of individual respondents. A summary of the feedback may be posted on the GCPedia page for the Office of Public Service Accessibility and/or on the Library and Archives Canada website as Public Opinion Research. Since survey responses are intended to be collected anonymously and are not attributed to any one individual, TBS will not be able to provide rights to access or correction of information you have submitted.

After submitting your survey, you will be asked if you would like to be considered for possible participation in future phases of this study. All information gathered through this survey will remain anonymous,

regardless of whether you answer “yes” or “no” to this question.

If you have any privacy concerns or questions about this notice, please contact the TBS Access to Information and Privacy Coordinator by email at atip.aiprp@tbs-sct.gc.ca. If you are not satisfied with TBS’s response to your privacy concerns, you may wish to contact the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

This survey is intended for current employees of the federal public service, and it can only be completed through the use of an authorized Government of Canada network. Please choose one of the following statements to continue:

- ☐ I am currently a federal public servant
- ☐ I am not currently a federal public servant – skip to “Thank You for Your Interest” message

Questions for All Survey Respondents

Question 1* (mandatory):

Have you supervised one or more employees in the past **3** years? (choose one)

- Yes
- No – skip to Q30 for (Questions for Employees)

Questions for Supervisors

Question 2* (mandatory)

As a supervisor, how many workplace accommodations or accommodation plans were requested for your employees in the past **3** years? Note: if you select “No requests”, you will be redirected to the “Questions for Employees” (choose one)

- No requests – skip to Q30 (Questions for Employees)
- 1 to 2 requests
- 3 to 5 requests
- 6 to 10 requests
- More than 10 requests

Preamble: When answering the rest of the survey, please think of the accommodation request that was made for one of your employees in the last **3** years that had the greatest impact on that employee – either because the request was approved and accommodation received, or because the request was denied and the employee never received the requested accommodation. You will need to keep that example in mind as you move through the survey answering any questions regarding your employee’s accommodation request.

Question 3* (mandatory)

Which of the following best describes the **primary** reason for this accommodation request for your employee? (choose one)

- The employee needed an accommodation because they were experiencing difficulties in carrying out some of their **existing job-related duties** under regular working conditions – if selected, skip to Q4
- The employee needed an accommodation related to a **staffing process** that they were involved in – if selected, skip to Q3a
- The employee needed an accommodation because they **started a new job or their existing duties changed** – if selected, skip to Q3b
- The employee needed an accommodation because of a **change in their job-related processes or a change in their supervisor, co-workers or clients** – if selected, skip to Q3c
- The employee needed an accommodation because of a **change in a general administrative process (e.g., new HR process) or business**

policy (e.g., new standard equipment) – if selected, skip to Q3d

- The employee needed an accommodation because of a **change in the general office workspace** – if selected, skip to Q3e
- The employee needed an accommodation because of a **change in their personal health or circumstances** – if selected, skip to Q3f
- The employee needed an accommodation for **another reason** – if selected, skip to Q3g

Question 3a* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to the **staffing process** did the employee request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q4 after response

- Job application
- Written assessment
- Interview
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to official language testing
- Other (specify)

Question 3b* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to their **new job or a change in their existing duties** did the employee request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q4 after response

- Setting up physical workspace
- Obtaining assistive devices, equipment or technology/software
- Obtaining computer system accesses
- Accessing required job-related training
- Accessing disability-related adaptations with respect to training, coaching or other support required to meet official language requirements of the position

- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the official language requirements of the position
- Permanently modifying job-related duties
- Temporarily modifying job-related duties (e.g., gradual return to work)
- Implementing flexible work arrangements (e.g., telework, reduced work hours or modified work schedule)
- Other (specify)

Question 3c* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to a **change in their job-related processes or a change in their supervisor, co-workers or clients** did the employee request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q4 after response

- New supervisor
- New co-worker
- New client or service provider
- New training or certification requirement
- New second official language requirement
- Job-specific process change (e.g., automation)
- Other (specify)

Question 3d* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to a **change in a general administrative process (e.g., new HR process) or a business policy (e.g., new standard equipment)** did the employee request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q4 after response

- Change in standard equipment (e.g., mobile phones)
- Change in standard software/hardware (e.g., new travel system, new pay system)

- Change in IT support options and/or service standards
- Change in administrative or HR process
- Other (specify)

Question 3e* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to a **change in the general office workspace** did the employee request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q4 after response

- Office move
- Reassigned seating
- Workspace redesign (e.g., conversion to Workplace 2.0 or Activity-Based Workspace)
- Other (specify)

Question 3f* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to the **change in their personal health or circumstances** did the employee request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q4 after response

- Change in employee's health, disability or medical treatment
- New diagnosis
- New injury
- Return to work
- Request for telework
- Change in work hours or schedule
- Change in personal support arrangements
- Change in family circumstances
- Other (specify)

Question 3g* (mandatory)

Why did the employee request an accommodation? (specify) – skip to Q4 after response

Question 4* (mandatory)

Did your employee have a similar accommodation previously e.g., in another department, in another position, or under a different supervisor in their current position? (choose one)

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Question 5* (mandatory)

Which of the following **workspace-related** accommodations were requested for your employee? (choose one or more)

- No workspace-related accommodations were requested – skip to Q6
- Specialized chair (e.g., orthopaedic) or adaptations to existing chair
- Specialized desk or adaptations to existing desk, cubicle or physical space (note: do not include adaptations made to reduce visual or auditory distractions, as these are addressed in the next question)
- Change to building (e.g. ramps, entrances, painted lines on floors, additional signage or markings)
- New or adapted storage areas
- Designated car parking space
- Induction loop (i.e., a system that transmits an audio signal directly into a hearing aid to reduce acoustic distortions that reduce clarity of sound)
- Move to a different location (e.g., another floor or building)
- Security-related requirements e.g., access
- Other workspace-related adaptations (specify)

Question 6* (mandatory)

Which of the following **environment-related** accommodations were requested for your employee? (choose one or more)

- No environment-related accommodations were requested – skip to Q7
- Prohibition of certain products (e.g., scented products, nut oils) within a designated area
- Noise-cancelling headphones
- Raised cubicle walls, barriers or other adaptations to physical workspace intended to reduce visual distractions
- Adaptations to physical workspace intended to reduce auditory distractions
- Move to another location in the same area as the employee's coworkers and/or work unit
- Move to another location in the same building but separate from the employee's coworkers and/or work unit
- Move to another building
- Full-time telework
- Other environment-related adaptations (specify)

Question 7* (mandatory)

Which of the following **IT-related** accommodations were requested for your employee? (choose one or more)

- No IT-related accommodations were requested – skip to Q8
- Document reader (e.g., TextAloud)
- Screen reading software
- Speech recognition software
- Reading assistances
- Large screen or other specialized screen
- Adapted or specific type of keyboard

- Adapted or specific type of mouse
- Non-standard laptop (e.g., weight or advanced graphics)
- Alternate output (e.g., braille)
- New printer
- User preferences e.g., font size, screen background
- Other IT-related request (specify)

Question 8* (mandatory)

Which of the following **telephony** accommodations were requested for your employee? (choose one or more)

- No telephony accommodations were requested – skip to Q9
- Specific type of desk phone
- Specific type of mobile phone
- Telephone amplifier
- Phone headset
- Bluetooth-enabled telecommunication device (for hearing-aid users)
- Cellular service
- Cellular policies
- Other telephony adaptations (specify)

Question 9* (mandatory)

Which of the following **other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment** were requested as an accommodation for your employee? (choose one or more)

- No other assistive devices were requested – skip to Q10
- Hearing aid accessories
- Coin Trolley
- Lightweight stamps
- Wrist or foot rest

- Adaptations to government-owned vehicle
- Other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment (specify)

Question 10* (mandatory)

Which of the following **personal support services** were requested as an accommodation for your employee? (choose one or more)

- No personal support services were requested – skip to Q11
- Support worker (attendant care)
- Sign language interpreter
- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) service
- Palantypist
- Note taker
- Service dog
- Taxi to and from work
- Other personal support (specify)

Question 11* (mandatory)

Which of the following **non-physical adaptations** were requested as an accommodation for your employee? (choose one or more)

- No non-physical adaptations were requested – skip to Q12
- Reduced work hours and/or job sharing
- Change to work schedule
- Gradual return to work
- Time off for appointments
- Duties reallocated to colleague
- Adjustment to PMA objectives
- Few physical duties e.g., lifting, driving
- Adjustments to meeting location and/or meeting logistics
- Redeployed to a different position in same work unit

- Redeployed to a different position in different work unit
- Training on the use of adaptations e.g. new software
- Awareness training for supervisors and/or colleagues
- Reader attendant or other type of service provider
- Personal evacuation plan
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the language designation for my employee's position (bilingual vs. unilingual)
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the linguistic profile of my employee's position (e.g., BBB vs. CBC vs. CCC)
- Permanent exemption from second official language requirements
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the delivery of official language training or coaching
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the language testing approach
- Technological tools required as a result of a disability in order to perform their duties in one or both official languages
- Other non-physical adaptations (specify)

Question 12* (mandatory)

Which of the following functional experts was your **first** point of contact in processing your employee's accommodation request? (choose one)

- Human Resources Advisor
- Labour Relations Advisor
- Disability Management Advisor
- Occupational Safety and Health Advisor
- Departmental IT (Information Technology)
- Facilities Management (e.g., real property)
- Financial Advisor
- Other (specify)

Question 13* (mandatory)

To the best of your knowledge, who was involved in handling your employee's accommodation request? (choose one or more)

- Me (the employee's direct supervisor/manager)
- My senior management
- Human Resources Advisor
- Labour Relations Advisor
- Disability Management Advisor
- Occupational Safety & Health Advisor
- Health Canada doctor or specialist
- Doctor or specialist from outside of the public service
- Departmental IT (Information Technology)
- Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program (AAACT) i.e., Shared Services Canada
- Facilities Management (e.g., real property)
- Security
- Ombudsman or other neutral party
- Union representative
- Employee's personal advocate or assistant (e.g., family member, expert or doctor)
- Other (specify)

Question 14* (mandatory)

Was your employee required to provide a medical certificate or other evidence to support their accommodation? (choose one)

- Yes
- No – skip to Q17

Question 15* (mandatory)

Who requested a medical certificate or other evidence to support your employee's accommodation request? (choose one or more)

- Me (the employee's direct supervisor/manager)
- My senior management
- Human Resources Advisor
- Labour Relations Advisor
- Disability Management Advisor
- Occupational Safety & Health Advisor
- Other (specify)

Question 16* (mandatory)

Why was a medical certificate or other evidence required to support a new or revised accommodation for your employee? (choose one or more)

- My employee was returning to work after an extended sick leave
- My employee was injured
- My employee was experiencing difficulties in carrying out some of their job-related duties under regular working conditions, and professional guidance was needed to determine if accommodations were required
- My employee requested an accommodation and I and/or my senior management did not agree on what was required
- I and/or my senior management requested a medical certificate or other evidence, based on our interpretation of Treasury Board policy requirements
- I and/or my senior management wanted professional guidance before changing or removing an existing accommodation
- Other (specify)

Question 17* (mandatory)

Was your employee required to participate in a formal assessment by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? (choose one)

- Yes
- No – skip to Q21

Question 18* (mandatory)

Who requested a formal assessment by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? (choose one or more)

- Me (the employee's direct supervisor/manager)
- My senior management
- Human Resources Advisor
- Labour Relations Advisor
- Disability Management Advisor
- Occupational Safety & Health Advisor
- Other (specify)

Question 19* (mandatory)

Why was a formal assessment required by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? (choose one or more)

- My employee was returning to work after an extended sick leave
- My employee was injured
- My employee was experiencing difficulties in carrying out some of their job-related duties under regular working conditions, and professional guidance was needed to determine if accommodations were required
- My employee requested an accommodation and I and/or my senior management did not agree on what was required
- I and/or my senior management requested a formal assessment, based on our interpretation of Treasury Board policy requirements

- I and/or my senior management wanted professional guidance before changing or removing an existing accommodation
- Other (specify)

Question 20* (mandatory)

How long did you and your employee wait for the formal assessment to be completed by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? (choose one)

- Less than 2 weeks
- 2 weeks to less than 1 month
- 1 month to less than 2 months
- 2 months to less than 3 months
- 3 months to less than 6 months
- 6 months to less than 12 months
- 12 months or more

Question 21* (mandatory)

How long did it take to receive a decision for this accommodation request after your employee provided all required information including, if applicable, any requested medical certificates, assessment reports or other evidence? (choose one)

- Less than 2 weeks
- 2 weeks to less than 1 month
- 1 month to less than 2 months
- 2 months to less than 3 months
- 3 months to less than 6 months
- 6 months to less than 12 months
- 12 months or more

Question 22* (mandatory)

Was this request for an accommodation approved? (choose one)

- Yes
- No – skip to Q25

Question 23* (mandatory)

How long did it take for your employee's accommodation to be put in place and working properly (including related training) after the request was approved? (choose one)

- Less than 2 weeks – skip to Q27
- 2 weeks to less than 1 month – skip to Q27
- 1 month to less than 2 months
- 2 months to less than 3 months
- 3 months to less than 6 months
- 6 months to less than 12 months
- 12 months or more
- My employee's accommodation has been put in place but it is not working properly and/or it does not fully meet their requirement
- My employee's accommodation has not been put in place yet and the accommodation was approved less than 1 month ago – skip to Q27
- My employee's accommodation has not been put in place yet and the accommodation was approved more than 1 month ago (please specify the number of months that your employee has been waiting since the request was approved)

Question 24* (mandatory)

To the best of your knowledge, what were the reasons for the delay if it took (or is currently taking) more than 1 month for your employee's approved accommodation to be satisfactorily implemented? (choose one or more)

- There was a delay obtaining supplementary information from a medical doctor or specialist – skip to Q27
- The approved accommodation was not compatible with existing computer systems, software, equipment or standards – skip to Q27
- There were challenges obtaining and/or implementing the approved accommodation in my employee's official language of choice – skip to Q27
- The internal service provider (e.g., HR, IT, Occupational Safety & Health, Facilities Management) did not fully understand my employee's requirements – skip to Q27
- The external service provider (e.g., supplier, contractor) did not fully understand my employee's requirements – skip to Q27
- Delivery of the required products or services was delayed
- The initial installation or set-up of the required products or services was delayed
- There were issues with the required products or services after they were installed or set-up
- There was a delay receiving the training needed to effectively use the accommodation – skip to Q27
- We could not implement changes to my employee's work arrangements until additional resources were hired – skip to Q27
- We could not implement changes to my employee's work arrangements until a specific project, deadline or other deliverable was completed – skip to Q27
- We had difficulty implementing the accommodation due to physical office space limitations – skip to Q27
- Other (specify) – skip to Q27

Question 24a* (mandatory)

What was the **primary** reason for the **delay in the delivery, installation or set-up** of specific products or services related to your employee's accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q27 after response

- There was a delay in the **delivery of IT-related** products or services
- There was a delay in **installing or setting up IT-related** products or services
- There were **issues with the IT-related products or services** after they were installed or set-up
- There was a delay in the **delivery of telephony-related** products or services
- There was a delay in **installing or setting up telephony-related** products or services
- There were **issues with the telephony-related products or services** after they were installed or set-up
- There was a delay in the **delivery of other assistive devices**
- There was a delay in **installing or setting up other assistive devices**
- There were **issues with the other assistive devices** after they were installed or set-up
- Other (specify)

Question 25* (mandatory)

Who denied the accommodation request? (choose one or more)

- Me (the employee's direct supervisor/manager)
- My senior management
- Other (specify)

Question 26* (mandatory)

What were the reasons for denying this accommodation request? (choose one or more)

- The employee did not provide a medical certificate or other required evidence from a doctor or specialist
- The report from the doctor or specialist did not adequately demonstrate the need for one or more of the requested accommodations
- I and/or my senior management did not agree with the doctor or specialist's findings or recommendations
- I and/or my senior management did not agree that there was a need for an accommodation
- The requested accommodations were too costly
- There was no established precedent for this type of accommodation, or there was a concern that this accommodation would establish a new precedent
- There was a concern that this accommodation may be perceived by other employees as favoritism or special treatment
- The required accommodations were not compatible with existing hardware, software or other equipment
- Existing procurement options and/or policies did not allow for exceptions to be made in procuring the required goods or services
- Some personal support services are limited due to security requirements (e.g., requirement for a Secret security clearance, exclusion from certain meetings or discussions)
- The request was denied because of operational or client requirements
- I and/or my senior management were not able to vary existing policies or processes
- I and/or my senior management were not willing to vary existing policies or processes
- Other (specify)

Question 27* (mandatory)

Which of the following best describes your employee's current situation?
(choose one)

- Accommodations were not approved
- Accommodations were approved but none are in place yet
- Some accommodations were approved and are in place, and other accommodations were not approved
- Some accommodations were approved and are in place, and others were approved but are not yet in place
- The approved accommodations are in place and working effectively
- The approved accommodations are in place but one or more of these needs to be reviewed or adjusted
- The approved accommodations are in place but training is required and/or my employee is still adapting or learning how to use them effectively
- The approved accommodations are in place but accessibility barriers continue to exist or emerge
- Other (specify)

Question 28* (mandatory)

Did you request a workplace accommodation for yourself in the past 3 years? (choose one)

- Yes
- No – skip to Q56 (Demographic Questions)

Question 29* (mandatory)

Would you like to repeat this survey to report your experience requesting a workplace accommodation for yourself? (choose one)

- Yes – skip to Q31 (Questions for Employees)
- No – skip to Q56 (Demographic Questions)

Questions for Employees

Question 30* (mandatory)

Did you request a workplace accommodation for yourself in the past **3** years? (choose one)

- Yes
- No – skip to “End of Survey-Thank You For Your Interest” message

Preamble: When answering the rest of the survey, please think of the accommodation request that you made in the last **3** years that had the greatest impact on you – either because the request was approved and accommodation received, or because the request was denied and you never received the requested accommodation. You will need to keep that example in mind as you move through the survey answering any questions regarding your accommodation request.

Question 31* (mandatory)

Which of the following best describes the **primary** reason for your accommodation request? (choose one)

- I needed an accommodation because I was experiencing difficulties in carrying out some of my **existing job-related duties** under regular working conditions – if selected, skip to Q32
- I needed an accommodation related to a **staffing process** that I was involved in – if selected, skip to Q31a
- I needed an accommodation because I **started a new job or my existing duties changed** – if selected, skip to Q31b
- I needed an accommodation because of a **change in my job-related processes or a change in my supervisor, co-workers or clients** – if selected, skip to Q31c

- I needed an accommodation because of a **change in a general administrative process (e.g., new HR process) or business policy (e.g., new standard equipment)** – if selected, skip to Q31d
- I needed an accommodation because of a **change in the general office workspace** – if selected, skip to Q31e
- I needed an accommodation because of a **change in their personal health or circumstances** – if selected, skip to Q31f
- I needed an accommodation for **another reason** – if selected, skip to Q31g

Question 31a* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to the **staffing process** did you request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q32 after response

- Job application
- Written assessment
- Interview
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to official language testing
- Other (specify)

Question 31b* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to your **new job or a change in your existing duties** did you request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q32 after response

- Setting up physical workspace
- Obtaining assistive devices, equipment or technology/software
- Obtaining computer system accesses
- Accessing required job-related training

- Accessing disability-related adaptations with respect to training, coaching or other support required to meet official language requirements of the position
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the official language requirements of the position
- Permanently modifying job-related duties
- Temporarily modifying job-related duties (e.g., gradual return to work)
- Implementing flexible work arrangements (e.g., telework, reduced work hours or modified work schedule)
- Other (specify)

Question 31c* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to a **change in your job-related processes or a change in your supervisor, co-workers or clients** did you request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q32 after response

- New supervisor
- New co-worker
- New client or service provider
- New training or certification requirement
- New second official language requirement
- Job-specific process change (e.g., automation)
- Other (specify)

Question 31d* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to a **change in a general administrative process (e.g., new HR process) or a business policy (e.g., new standard equipment)** did you request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q32 after response

- Change in standard equipment (e.g., mobile phones)
- Change in standard software/hardware (e.g., new travel system, new pay system)
- Change in IT support options or service standards
- Change in administrative or HR process
- Other (specify)

Question 31e* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to a **change in the general office workspace** did you request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q32 after response

- Office move
- Reassigned seating
- Workspace redesign (e.g., conversion to Workplace 2.0 or Activity-Based Workspace)
- Other (specify)

Question 31f* (mandatory)

For which of the following activities related to the **change in your personal health or circumstances** did you request an accommodation? (choose one or more) – skip to Q32 after response

- Change in my health, disability or medical treatment
- New diagnosis
- New injury
- Return to work
- Request for telework
- Change in work hours or schedule
- Change in personal support arrangements
- Change in family circumstances

- Other (specify)

Question 31g* (mandatory)

Why did you request an accommodation? (specify) – skip to Q32 after response

Question 32* (mandatory)

Did you have a similar accommodation previously e.g., in another department, in another position, or under a different supervisor in your current position? (choose one)

- Yes
- No

Question 33* (mandatory)

Which of the following **workspace-related** accommodations were requested for you? (choose one or more)

- No workspace-related accommodations were requested – skip to Q34
- Specialized chair (e.g., orthopaedic) or adaptations to existing chair
- Specialized desk or adaptations to existing desk, cubicle or physical space (note: do not include adaptations made to reduce visual or auditory distractions, as these are addressed in the next question)
- Change to building (e.g. ramps, entrances, painted lines on floors, additional signage or markings)
- New or adapted storage areas
- Designated car parking space
- Induction loop (i.e., a system that transmits an audio signal directly into a hearing aid to reduce acoustic distortions that reduce clarity of sound)
- Move to a different location (e.g., another floor or building)
- Security-related requirements e.g., access

- Other workspace-related adaptations (specify)

Question 34* (mandatory)

Which of the following **environment-related** accommodations were requested for you? (choose one or more)

- No environment-related accommodations were requested – skip to Q35
- Prohibition of certain products (e.g., scented products, nut oils) within a designated area
- Noise-cancelling headphones
- Raised cubicle walls, barriers or other adaptations to physical workspace intended to reduce visual distractions
- Adaptations to physical workspace intended to reduce auditory distractions
- Move to another location in the same area as my coworkers and/or work unit
- Move to another location in the same building but separate from my coworkers and/or work unit
- Move to another building
- Full-time telework
- Other environment-related adaptations (specify)

Question 35* (mandatory)

Which of the following **IT-related** accommodations were requested for you? (choose one or more)

- No IT-related accommodations were requested – skip to Q36
- Document reader (e.g., TextAloud)
- Screen reading software
- Speech recognition software
- Reading assistances

- Large screen or other specialized screen
- Adapted or specific type of keyboard
- Adapted or specific type of mouse
- Non-standard laptop (e.g., weight or advanced graphics)
- Alternate output (e.g., braille)
- New printer
- User preferences e.g., font size, screen background
- Other IT-related request (specify)

Question 36* (mandatory)

Which of the following **telephony** accommodations were requested for you? (choose one or more)

- No telephony accommodations were requested – skip to Q37
- Specific type of desk phone
- Specific type of mobile phone
- Telephone amplifier
- Phone headset
- Bluetooth-enabled telecommunication device (for hearing-aid users)
- Cellular service
- Cellular policies
- Other telephony adaptations (specify)

Question 37* (mandatory)

Which of the following **other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment** were requested as an accommodation for you? (choose one or more)

- No other assistive devices were requested – skip to Q38
- Hearing aid accessories
- Coin Trolley

- Lightweight stamps
- Wrist or foot rest
- Adaptations to government-owned vehicle
- Other assistive devices or adaptations to equipment (specify)

Question 38* (mandatory)

Which of the following **personal support services** were requested as an accommodation for you? (choose one or more)

- No personal support services were requested – skip to Q39
- Support worker (attendant care)
- Sign language interpreter
- Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) service
- Palantypist
- Note taker
- Service dog
- Taxi to and from work
- Other personal support (specify)

Question 39* (mandatory)

Which of the following **non-physical adaptations** were requested as an accommodation for you? (choose one or more)

- No non-physical adaptations were requested – skip to Q40
- Reduced work hours and/or job sharing
- Change to work schedule
- Gradual return to work
- Time off for appointments
- Duties reallocated to colleague
- Adjustment to PMA objectives
- Few physical duties e.g., lifting, driving

- Adjustments to meeting location and/or meeting logistics
- Redeployed to a different position in same work unit
- Redeployed to a different position in different work unit
- Training on the use of adaptations e.g. new software
- Awareness training for supervisors and/or colleagues
- Reader attendant or other type of service provider
- Personal evacuation plan
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the language designation for my position (bilingual vs. unilingual)
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the linguistic profile of my position (e.g., BBB vs. CBC vs. CCC)
- Permanent exemption from second official language requirements
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the delivery of official language training or coaching
- Disability-related adaptations with respect to the language testing approach
- Technological tools required as a result of a disability in order to perform their duties in one or both official languages
- Other non-physical adaptations (specify)

Question 40* (mandatory)

To the best of your knowledge, who was involved in handling your accommodation request? (choose one or more)

- My direct supervisor/manager
- My senior management
- Human Resources Advisor
- Labour Relations Advisor
- Disability Management Advisor
- Occupational Safety & Health Advisor

- Health Canada doctor or specialist
- Doctor or specialist from outside of the public service
- Departmental IT (Information Technology)
- Accessibility, Accommodation and Adaptive Computer Technology Program (AAACT) i.e., Shared Services Canada
- Facilities Management (e.g., real property)
- Security
- Ombudsman or other neutral party
- Union representative
- My personal advocate or assistant (e.g., family member, expert or doctor)
- Other (specify)

Question 41* (mandatory)

Were you required to provide a **medical certificate or other evidence** to support your accommodation? (choose one)

- Yes
- No – skip to Q44

Question 42* (mandatory)

To the best of your knowledge, who requested a **medical certificate or other evidence** to support your accommodation request? (choose one or more)

- My direct supervisor/manager
- My senior management
- Human Resources Advisor
- Labour Relations Advisor
- Disability Management Advisor
- Occupational Safety & Health Advisor

- Other (specify)

Question 43* (mandatory)

To the best of your knowledge, why was a **medical certificate or other evidence** required to support your accommodation request? (choose one or more)

- I was returning to work after an extended sick leave
- I was injured
- I was experiencing difficulties in carrying out some of my job-related duties under regular working conditions, and professional guidance was needed to determine if accommodations were required
- I was experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing my job-related duties under regular working conditions
- I requested an accommodation and my supervisor/manager or my senior management did not agree with me on what was required
- My supervisor/manager or my senior management requested a medical certificate or other evidence, based on their interpretation of Treasury Board policy requirements
- My supervisor/manager or my senior management wanted professional guidance before changing or removing an existing accommodation
- Other (specify)

Question 44* (mandatory)

Were you required to participate in a **formal assessment** by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? (choose one)

- Yes
- No – skip to Q48

Question 45* (mandatory)

To the best of your knowledge, who requested that you participate in a **formal assessment** by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? (choose one or more)

- My direct supervisor/manager
- My senior management
- Human Resources Advisor
- Labour Relations Advisor
- Disability Management Advisor
- Occupational Safety & Health Advisor
- Other (specify)

Question 46* (mandatory)

To the best of your knowledge, why was a **formal assessment** required by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? (choose one or more)

- I was returning to work after an extended sick leave
- I was injured
- I was experiencing difficulties in carrying out some of my job-related duties under regular working conditions, and professional guidance was needed to determine if accommodations were required
- I was experiencing health-related issues as a direct result of performing my job-related duties under regular working conditions
- I requested an accommodation and my supervisor/manager or my senior management did not agree with me on what was required
- My supervisor/manager or my senior management requested a formal assessment, based on their interpretation of Treasury Board policy requirements

- My supervisor/manager or my senior management wanted professional guidance before changing or removing an existing accommodation
- Other (specify)

Question 47* (mandatory)

How long did you wait for the **formal assessment** to be completed by a medical doctor or specialist from Health Canada or outside of the public service? (choose one)

- Less than 2 weeks
- 2 weeks to less than 1 month
- 1 month to less than 2 months
- 2 months to less than 3 months
- 3 months to less than 6 months
- 6 months to less than 12 months
- 12 months or more

Question 48* (mandatory)

How long did it take to receive a decision for this accommodation request after you provided all required information including, if applicable, any requested medical certificate, assessment reports or other evidence? (choose one)

- Less than 2 weeks
- 2 weeks to less than 1 month
- 1 month to less than 2 months
- 2 months to less than 3 months
- 3 months to less than 6 months
- 6 months to less than 12 months
- 12 months or more

Question 49* (mandatory)

Was your request for an accommodation approved? (choose one)

- Yes
- No – skip to Q52

Question 50* (mandatory)

How long did it take for your accommodation to be put in place and working properly (including related training) after the request was approved? (choose one)

- Less than 2 weeks – skip to Q55
- 2 weeks to less than 1 month – skip to Q55
- 1 month to less than 2 months
- 2 months to less than 3 months
- 3 months to less than 6 months
- 6 months to less than 12 months
- 12 months or more
- My accommodation has been put in place but it is not working properly and/or it does not fully meet my requirement
- My accommodation has not been put in place yet and the accommodation was approved less than 1 month ago – skip to Q55
- My accommodation has not been put in place yet and the accommodation was approved more than 1 month ago (please specify the number of months that you have been waiting since the request was approved)

Question 51* (mandatory)

To the best of your knowledge, what were the reasons for the delay if it took (or is currently taking) more than 1 month for your approved accommodation to be satisfactorily implemented? (choose one or more)

- There was a delay obtaining supplementary information from a medical doctor or specialist – skip to Q55
- The approved accommodation was not compatible with existing computer systems, software, equipment or standards – skip to Q55
- There were challenges obtaining and/or implementing the approved accommodation in my official language of choice – skip to Q55
- The internal service provider (e.g., HR, IT, Occupational Safety & Health, Facilities Management) did not fully understand my requirements – skip to Q55
- The external service provider (e.g., supplier, contractor) did not fully understand my requirements – skip to Q55
- Delivery of the required products or services was delayed
- The initial installation or set-up of the required products or services was delayed
- There were issues with the required products or services after they were installed or set-up
- There was a delay receiving the training needed to effectively use the accommodation – skip to Q55
- We could not implement changes to my work arrangements until additional resources were hired – skip to Q55
- We could not implement changes to my work arrangements until a specific project, deadline or other deliverable was completed – skip to Q55
- We had difficulty implementing the accommodation due to physical office space limitations – skip to Q55
- Other (specify) – skip to Q55

Question 51a* (mandatory)

What was the **primary** reason for the **delay in the delivery, installation or set-up** of specific products or services related to your accommodation?
(choose one or more) – skip to Q55 after response

- There was a delay in the **delivery of IT-related** products or services
- There was a delay in **installing or setting up IT-related** products or services
- There were issues with the **IT-related** products or services after they were installed or set-up
- There was a delay in the **delivery of telephony-related** products or services
- There was a delay in **installing or setting up telephony-related** products or services
- There were issues with the **telephony-related** products or services after they were installed or set-up
- There was a delay in the **delivery of other assistive devices**
- There was a delay in **installing or setting up other assistive devices**
- There were issues with **other assistive devices** after they were installed or set-up
- Other (specify)

Question 52* (mandatory)

Who denied your accommodation request? (choose one or more)

- My direct supervisor/manager
- My senior management
- Other (specify)

Question 53* (mandatory)

What reasons were given for denying your accommodation request?
(choose one or more)

- I was unable to obtain a medical certificate or other required evidence because the doctor or specialist was not willing to provide one
- I was unable to obtain a medical certificate or other required evidence because I could not find a doctor or specialist with the required expertise or credentials
- I was unable to obtain a medical certificate or other required evidence because I could not get an appointment with the doctor or specialist and/or the waiting list for an appointment was too long
- The report from the doctor or specialist did not adequately demonstrate the need for one or more of the requested accommodations
- My direct supervisor/manager or my senior management did not agree with the doctor or specialist's findings or recommendations
- My direct supervisor/manager or my senior management did not agree that there was a need for an accommodation
- The requested accommodations were too costly
- There was no established precedent for this type of accommodation, or there was a concern that this accommodation would establish a new precedent
- There was a concern that this accommodation may be perceived by other employees as favoritism or special treatment
- The required accommodations were not compatible with existing hardware, software or other equipment
- Existing procurement options and/or policies did not allow for exceptions to be made in procuring the required goods or services
- Some personal support services are limited due to security requirements (e.g., requirement for a Secret security clearance, exclusion from certain meetings or discussions)
- The request was denied because of operational or client requirements

- My direct supervisor/manager or my senior management was not able to vary existing policies or processes
- My direct supervisor/manager or my senior management was not willing to vary existing policies or processes
- Other (specify)

Question 54* (mandatory)

How did you respond to your organization's decision to deny your accommodation request? (choose one or more)

- I did not appeal the decision because I began a period of extended sick leave, or I was already on extended sick leave at the time of my request
- I did not appeal the decision because I left my job
- I did not appeal the decision because I believed it would not make a difference
- I did not appeal the decision because I was concerned that it may damage my relationship with my direct supervisor/manager or senior management
- I did not appeal the decision because I was afraid that there could be negative consequences for my career
- I escalated the request to a more senior manager
- I requested advice or intervention by an Ombudsman
- I requested advice or intervention by a union representative
- I requested advice or intervention by my doctor or specialist
- I requested intervention by a family member or other personal advocate
- I filed an informal complaint with the HR Branch
- I filed a formal complaint or grievance
- I sought legal advice
- Other (specify)

Question 55* (mandatory)

Which of the following best describes your current situation? (choose one)

- Accommodations were not approved
- Accommodations were approved but none are in place yet
- Some accommodations were approved and are in place, and other accommodations were not approved
- Some accommodations were approved and are in place, and others were approved but are not yet in place
- The approved accommodations are in place and working effectively
- The approved accommodations are in place but one or more of these needs to be reviewed or adjusted
- The approved accommodations are in place but training is required and/or I am still adapting or learning how to use them effectively
- The approved accommodations are in place but accessibility barriers continue to exist or emerge
- Other (specify)

Demographic Questions (for those completing the Employee and/or Supervisor Questions)

The following questions ask for general information that will be used to better understand the survey results. To ensure confidentiality, responses will be grouped, and individual responses and results for very small groups will not be published.

Question 56* (mandatory)

Do you self-identify as a person with a disability and/or long-term health condition which regularly affects your ability to carry out your daily activities? (choose one)

- Yes

- No – skip to Q59
- I prefer not to respond – skip to Q59

Question 57* (mandatory)

As a person with a disability and/or a long-term health condition, which of the following categories most closely describes the nature of your **primary** impairment, meaning the one that causes you the most difficulty in carrying out your daily activities? (choose one)

- Seeing (also known as visual impairment, it affects a person's ability to see)
- Hearing (also known as deaf or hard of hearing, it affects a person's ability to hear)
- Mobility (also known as a physical disability, it affects a person's ability to move)
- Flexibility (also known as a physical disability, it affects a person's ability to move their joints)
- Dexterity (also known as a physical disability, it affects a person's ability to do tasks, especially with their hands)
- Pain (also known as chronic pain disorder, it affects a person's ability to function due to pain)
- Learning (also known as learning disabilities, it affects the way a person receives, understands, and uses information)
- Intellectual (also known as developmental disabilities, it affects a person's ability to learn and to adapt their behaviour to different situations)
- Memory (also known as memory disorder, it affects a person's ability to remember information)
- Mental health-related (also known as mental illness, it affects a person's psychology and / or their behavior)

- Communication (also known as a communication disorder, it affects a person's ability to receive, understand and respond to communication with others. This includes, but is not exclusive to, speech and language disabilities)
- Cognitive (it affects a person's ability to carry out tasks involving executive functioning, such as planning and organization)
- Sensory (it affects a person's sensitivity to light, sound or other distractions, as well as allergens and other environmental sensitivities)
- I prefer not to respond – skip to Q59

Question 58* (mandatory)

In addition to the **primary** impairment that you identified in the previous question, which of the following categories most closely describe the nature of **additional** impairments that regularly affect your ability to carry out your daily activities? (choose one or more)

- Seeing (also known as visual impairment, it affects a person's ability to see)
- Hearing (also known as deaf or hard of hearing, it affects a person's ability to hear)
- Mobility (also known as a physical disability, it affects a person's ability to move)
- Flexibility (also known as a physical disability, it affects a person's ability to move their joints)
- Dexterity (also known as a physical disability, it affects a person's ability to do tasks, especially with their hands)
- Pain (also known as chronic pain disorder, it affects a person's ability to function due to pain)
- Learning (also known as learning disabilities, it affects the way a person receives, understands, and uses information)

- Intellectual (also known as developmental disabilities, it affects a person's ability to learn and to adapt their behaviour to different situations)
- Memory (also known as memory disorder, it affects a person's ability to remember information)
- Mental health-related (also known as mental illness, it affects a person's psychology and / or their behavior)
- Communication (also known as a communication disorder, it affects a person's ability to receive, understand and respond to communication with others. This includes, but is not exclusive to, speech and language disabilities)
- Cognitive (it affects a person's ability to carry out tasks involving executive functioning, such as planning and organization)
- Sensory (it affects a person's sensitivity to light, sound or other distractions, as well as allergens and other environmental sensitivities)
- I do not have additional impairments
- I prefer not to respond

Question 59 (optional)

In which department or agency are you currently employed? (choose one)

- [List of all federal organizations]

Question 60 (optional)

If you completed this survey as a supervisor who requested an accommodation for your employee, in which department or agency were you working when this request was made? (choose one)

- [List of all federal organizations]

Question 61 (optional)

If you completed this survey as an employee who requested an accommodation for yourself, in which department or agency were you working when this request was made? (choose one)

- [List of all federal organizations]

Question 62* (mandatory)

With which of the following functional communities do you most closely identify in relation to your current job? (choose one)

- Client contact centre
- Health care practitioners
- Federal regulators
- Compliance, inspection and enforcement
- Communications or public affairs
- Access to information and privacy
- Security
- Science and technology
- Library services
- Legal services
- Administration and operations
- Human resources
- Financial management
- Real property
- Procurement
- Materiel management
- Information management
- Information technology
- Internal audit
- Evaluation
- Data sciences

- Policy
- Project management
- Other services to the public
- Other (specify)
- I prefer not to respond

Question 63* (mandatory)

What is your first official language? (choose one)

- English
- French

Question 64* (mandatory)

In which province or territory do you work? (choose one)

- National Capital Region
- Ontario (excluding National Capital Region)
- Quebec (excluding National Capital Region)
- Northwest Territories
- Nunavut
- Yukon
- British Columbia
- Alberta
- Saskatchewan
- Manitoba
- New Brunswick
- Nova Scotia
- Prince Edward Island
- Newfoundland and Labrador
- Outside Canada

Pop-up Message to Accompany “Submit” Button

After you click on “Submit” to complete the survey, you will be asked about your interest in participating in further phases of this benchmarking study. Your input to this survey will remain anonymous regardless of your response.

Pop-up Questions After “Submit” Survey Response (Secondary Survey)

Question 65* (mandatory)

Additional phases of this benchmarking study may be carried out over the next few months and may include additional opportunities for supervisors and employees to provide input to help us improve the workplace accommodation process.

Please choose one of the following options to indicate whether or not you would like to be contacted regarding your possible participation if there are future phases of this benchmarking study: (choose one)

- I have requested and/or received an accommodation for myself in the past **3** years and I would like to be contacted regarding my possible participation in future phases of this study
- I have supervised one or more employees who requested accommodations in the past **3** years and I would like to be contacted regarding my possible participation in future phases of this study
- I do not wish to be contacted – skip to “End of Survey – Thank You For Your Participation” message

Question 66* (mandatory)

Please provide your **work email address** so we may contact you regarding your possible participation in a confidential interview:

Pop-up Message After Respond to Secondary Survey

End of Survey – Thank You for Your Participation – automatic message for those completing secondary survey (i.e., seeking volunteers)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey, your feedback is important to us and will be used to improve how work-related accommodations are provided in order to enable federal employees with disabilities to contribute to their full potential.

Close Survey Screen

Pop-up Message if not Eligible to Complete Survey

End of Survey – Thank You for Your Interest

This survey is intended for current federal public servants who requested an accommodation for themselves and/or for their employee in the past **3** years.

Since your experience does not meet this criteria, unfortunately you are not eligible to participate in the survey.

Thank you for your interest in improving accessibility in the federal public service!

Date modified:

2020-02-11