

# AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a developmental disorder affecting the development of social interaction and communication skills and is characterized by unusual patterns of behavior. Autism is referred to as a *spectrum disorder*, meaning symptoms and characteristics can vary widely, with symptom combinations from mild to severe.

Students with ASD may have difficulty understanding and responding to the thoughts and feelings of others. They may experience sensory overload and, as a result, may react strongly to loud noises, blinking lights, and large crowds. Other symptoms include difficulty understanding nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions, speech patterns, misinterpreting implied meanings and figurative speech, and inflexible adherence to nonfunctional routines or rituals.

---

## ACCESSIBILITY

Students with ASD may be affected academically in various ways. Some students may be overwhelmed easily, have difficulty establishing relationships with faculty, staff, and students, speak out inappropriately during class, and may not understand irony and metaphors.

---

# REGISTERING WITH STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (SAS)

To be eligible for academic accommodations at FAU, a student must first be accepted to the University and then must apply for services with SAS. **There are two steps to apply for services:**

1. Register with SAS by completing an Application for Academic Accommodations. Applications can be found at <https://clockwork.fau.edu/ClockWork/user/intake/default.aspx>.
2. Provide appropriate documentation. Following are documentation requirements

*\* Documentation on prescription pad is not accepted. IEPs/504 plans are not acceptable as documentation. Documentation requirements are firm.*

## DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

Documentation must be in the form of a complete psychological or psychoeducational evaluation conducted by a licensed psychologist.

- The evaluation must include at least an intelligence test, e.g. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale, and an achievement test, e.g., Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement. Communication or interpersonal skills assessments must also

be included. It should contain an integrated summary of the clinical interview and test scores.

*\*The Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales and the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test are not accepted.*

- A specific DSM-5 diagnosis should be stated as well as the anticipated effects of the student's functional limitations within the academic setting and suggestions for accommodating the student.
- There must be a direct link established between the requested accommodations and the functional limitations.
- The evaluation must have been conducted within the last five years; however, SAS reserves the right to make modifications to this time frame.

**If a housing accommodation is requested due to ASD, the following should be included in the documentation, in addition to the above documentation requirements:**

- Establish a direct link between the condition and the requested housing accommodation.
- Clearly state a specific housing accommodation recommendation as a result of the condition.

*\*Please refer to the SAS Housing brochure for more information:*

<http://www.fau.edu/sas/Brochures.php>

## DETERMINING ACCOMMODATIONS

Once the application and documentation are submitted, they will be reviewed by SAS. *Incomplete applications are not accepted.* The student will be notified if any documentation is missing and will be asked to submit additional documentation to meet the requirements. *The cost for obtaining appropriate documentation is the student's responsibility.*

It may take one to two weeks for the Application for Academic Accommodations to be processed, even with appropriate documentation. If the documentation submitted is inadequate, the processing time will increase.

Once the documentation requirements are met and the application is complete, the student will meet with an SAS consultant for a collaborative interview. During the interview, the student will be asked to provide information about his/her disability experience, barriers to learning, and effective / ineffective prior accommodations. Appropriate accommodations are then determined based on an interactive process between the student and the SAS consultant.

The student may be eligible for one or more of the following accommodations:

- Notetaking assistance
- Audio recording of lectures
- Exam adaptations, e.g., extended time to take exams, distraction reduced setting
- Time management and study skills training

Accommodations are drafted into an official letter, an Academic Accommodation Agreement (AAA). The AAA is submitted by the student to each professor every semester, officially informing the professors of the approved accommodations. The professors then confirm the accommodations, thereby agreeing to provide them to the student. Once the accommodations are confirmed, the student can use them.

Accommodations are necessary to ensure complete access to, and full participation in, the educational process. Academic standards cannot be lowered nor can the essential nature of the course or degree requirements be altered.

---



Division of Student Affairs  
Florida Atlantic University

## Accommodating Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

**Boca Raton Campus**, SU 80, Room 133  
561.297.3880  
Fax: 561.297.2184  
TTY: 711

**Broward Campuses**, LA Room 131  
954.236.1222  
Fax: 954.236.1123  
TTY: 711

**Northern Campuses**, SR Room 111F  
561.799.8585  
Fax: 561.799.8819  
TTY: 711

[www.fau.edu/sas](http://www.fau.edu/sas)

\*Alternate format is available upon request.