

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS

Specific learning disorders are neurodevelopmental disorders that persistently affect a student's ability to perceive or process verbal or nonverbal information efficiently or accurately (DSM-5). As a result, the student has difficulty learning and may perform well below expected levels academically.

Learning disorders can vary in scope and severity; however, three academic areas are typically affected:

- Reading
- Written expression
- Mathematics

ACCESSIBILITY

Students with a specific learning disability may be affected academically in various ways. They may read slowly or inaccurately and may have trouble comprehending what is read. Their writing may lack clarity and paragraph organization, and there may be grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors. Mathematical reasoning may be faulty, and the student may have difficulty with calculations, basic number facts, and memorization.

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 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/inline/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 psychological or psychoeducational evaluation conducted by a licensed psychologist. It must be signed and dated. **The evaluation must include three types of tests:**

1. A standardized individual intelligence test, e.g. Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale. *The Reynolds Intellectual Assessment Scales and the Kaufman Brief Intelligence Test are not accepted.*

2. A standardized individual achievement test, e.g., Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement.

3. Information processing tests of memory, reception/expressive language, auditory/visual perception, and/or processing speed.

Other documentation requirements include:

- Documentation must state a specific DSM-5 diagnosis with test scores. It should include 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 if children's norms were used. If adult norms were used, the evaluation is acceptable for an unlimited time, provided the above requirements are met. SAS reserves the right to make modifications to this time frame.

Florida Atlantic University does not provide a housing accommodation based solely on a diagnosis of a specific learning disorder.

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. 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.

COURSE SUBSTITUTIONS

Occasionally a student is unable to master mathematics or a foreign language due to a specific learning disability. If so, a student can petition FAU for a course substitution, only if the course is not essential to the student's degree program or to a licensing requirement. If a student believes s/he may be eligible for a course substitution, the student must register with SAS as described above.



Division of Student Affairs
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Accommodating Students with a Specific Learning Disorder

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*Alternate format is available upon request.