

MEDICAL IMPAIRMENTS

A medical impairment is a health-related condition that may affect the respiratory, neurological, circulatory or immune systems of the body. The symptoms are often unpredictable and may be episodic.

Recognizing medical impairments may be difficult because many medical conditions are *hidden*. The primary diagnosis may be accompanied by secondary impairments in mobility, vision, hearing, speech or coordination, depending on the nature and/or progression of the condition. In order to qualify for accommodations, the medical impairment must substantially limit a major life activity, e.g., seeing, hearing, learning.

ACCESSIBILITY

Students with medical impairments may be affected academically in a number of ways. Symptom flare-ups, side effects of medication, or hospitalization may affect the student's ability to complete exams as scheduled and may necessitate an absence from class. Symptoms may result in difficulty focusing or may require occasional breaks during classes.

REGISTERING WITH STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES (SAS)

To be eligible for academic accommodations at FAU, a student must first be accepted to the University. Once accepted, a student 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 either a medical report or a physician's letter. It must be on official letterhead and signed and dated by the treating physician. Attach a copy of the physician's business card.

Other requirements include:

- The diagnosis must be made by a physician qualified to make the

diagnosis. For example, an orthopedic physician would not be an appropriate provider to diagnose a gastrointestinal disorder.

- Documentation must state the student's specific diagnosis. It should include the anticipated effects of the student's functional limitations within the academic setting and suggestions for accommodating the student. Suggested accommodations must be linked clearly to the functional limitations.
- The evaluation must have been conducted within the last two years; however, SAS reserves the right to make modifications to this time frame.

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

- An explanation of how the medical condition relates to the request for a housing accommodation. There must be a **direct link** established between the functional limitations of the medical condition and the housing accommodation requested.
- A clear statement of a **specific housing accommodation** recommendation as a result of the medical 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
- Breaks as needed
- Exam adaptations, e.g., extended time to take exams, distraction reduced setting
- Excused absences (extends each professor's attendance policy by 50% for an unexpected exacerbation of disability symptoms)
- 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.



Division of Student Affairs
Florida Atlantic University

Accommodating Students with a Medical Impairment

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

*Alternate format is available upon request