

## PSYCHOLOGICAL DISORDERS

A psychological disorder is a significant disturbance in a person's thought processes, emotions, or behavior. It results in significant distress in social, occupational, or other important life activities. These limitations may also affect perception, energy level, and/or relationships. Examples of psychological disorders include bipolar disorder, major depression, panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and schizophrenia.

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## ACCESSIBILITY

Students with a psychological disorder may be affected academically in various ways. Some students may struggle with time management, organization, and class attendance. Others may be challenged with communication and social skills, making it difficult to establish and maintain appropriate relationships with faculty, staff, and/or peers. The cyclical nature of some psychological disorders may result in more pronounced symptoms at any given time.

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## 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 a psychological report, psychiatric report, or letter on official letterhead from a licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, licensed clinical social worker, or licensed mental health counselor.

- It should be signed and dated, and the clinician's credentials must be clearly stated. Attach the clinician's business card.

- Documentation must include a specific DSM-5 diagnosis and specifically state the anticipated effects of the student's functional limitations within the academic setting as well as suggestions for accommodating the student.
- There should be a clearly establish link between the recommended or requested accommodations and the functional limitations of the condition.
- 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 psychological disorder, the following should be included in the documentation, in addition to the above documentation requirements:**

- An explanation of how the condition relates to the request for a housing accommodation. There must be a **direct link** established between the functional limitations of the psychological condition and the housing accommodation requested.
- A clear statement of 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>.

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## 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.



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Division of Student Affairs  
Florida Atlantic University

## Accommodating Students with a Psychological 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.