



**Title of Procedure:** Disability Support Services

**Policy No. #** 1.5005

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2021

**Last Revised:** New

**Policy Owner:** Academic Affairs

**Policy Contact:** Associate Provost of Academic Affairs

## **I. ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENTS AND SERVICES**

Approved reasonable accommodations for FMU students are documented by the academic accommodations coordinator on an individualized Academic Adjustments Agreement (AAA) and a corresponding Notification of Approved ADA Academic Adjustments (N4A) to be shared with the faculty or staff authorized by the student. It is the student's responsibility to initiate conversations with his/her instructors each semester about accommodations and the N4A is the student's appropriate basis for doing so. The AAA and corresponding N4A will specify the approved classroom or testing accommodations which students must provide to each instructor each semester.

Personal attendants and individually prescribed devices are the responsibility of the student who has a disability and not of the institution. Students are responsible for self-identifying and/or requesting necessary accommodation(s). For more information see Higher Education's Obligations Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA: Auxiliary Aids and Services for Postsecondary Students with Disabilities.

## **II. REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

Appropriate and current documentation serve in establishing the most appropriate accommodations to help a student in the postsecondary learning environment and will vary according to the specifics of the student's condition.

Documentation must meet the following standards to support a student's request for reasonable accommodations:

1. Dated within the past three (3) years.
2. Affirmed and signed by a professional qualified to assess the nature and extent of the disability (i.e., licensed physician, psychologist, audiologist, speech pathologist, clinical social worker, rehabilitation counselor, learning disability specialist, or other proper certified/licensed professional). This cannot be a friend or relative of the student or his/her family.
3. Evaluation/Report should include the following:
  - a. A specific diagnosis of the condition(s) and the DSM-V criteria that have been met for each condition. Other potential diagnoses must be ruled out in the report.
  - b. The specific means of testing used to conclude the diagnosis.
  - c. A history and description of each specific diagnosis, any coexisting conditions, any confounding factors, and/or treatment plans.

- d. A clear indication of the individual student's functional limitations and the related educational impact of the condition on the learning environment.
- e. Recommendations for applicable academic adjustments or accommodations that are directly related to the functional limitations (and relevant to a higher education environment, where applicable).
- f. Contact information and qualifying credentials of licensed medical professional or educational psychologist making assessment

Note: A secondary school Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is NOT sufficient to meet the documentation requirements in the postsecondary environment.

If the initial documentation is incomplete or inadequate to determine the extent of the disability and reasonable accommodations, the academic accommodations coordinator has the discretion to require additional documentation. Any cost of obtaining supporting documentation is the responsibility of the student.

### **III. PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING ACCOMMODATIONS**

Eligibility for accommodations is determined on a case-by-case basis upon receipt of verifying documentation and completion of an in-take appointment with the academic accommodations coordinator. Matriculating or admitted students must do the following to register with the academic accommodations coordinator before they will be eligible to receive services:

1. Complete an intake form with supporting documentation, and send to [access@fmuniv.edu](mailto:access@fmuniv.edu). Ideally, a student would begin this process at least six weeks in advance of the start of a semester to allow for completion of their request in a timely manner.
2. Schedule an appointment with the academic accommodations coordinator ([access@fmuniv.edu](mailto:access@fmuniv.edu)) to discuss learning needs and request. After this meeting, the academic accommodations coordinator will review all documentation and supporting information given by the student during the intake interview and evaluate the requested accommodations.
3. Once notified, meet with the academic accommodations coordinator to review and sign necessary protocol which specify the approved classroom or testing accommodations and serve to communicate those needs with faculty:
  - a. Academic Adjustments Agreement (AAA): Kept in the applicable student file, this document is completed by the academic accommodations coordinator and signed by the student. It serves as a record of the documentation received and any approved academic adjustments for the time period listed.
  - b. Notification of Approved ADA Academic Adjustments (N4A): This corresponds to the information on the AAA (above). It is prepared by the academic accommodations coordinator and signed by the student to authorize allowable campus communication beyond the academic accommodations coordinator and designated support staff. The original is kept by the student who is responsible for copying each semester and delivering to his/her faculty.
4. Make copies of the N4A to deliver to your faculty (prior to the first week of classes each semester). It is recommended students contact their instructors early in the semester to review accommodation needs.

5. Time Considerations for Requesting Academic Adjustments: For a student's initial request for ADA-based accommodations at Florida Memorial University, he/she is strongly encouraged to begin the process at least six weeks prior to the start of the semester. This will allow time for an evaluation of the request and communication with campus partners, as applicable and authorized by the student. With each semester that follows, students are encouraged to check in with the academic accommodations coordinator regularly with any updates, follow-ups, or needs. For any change to the Academic Adjustment Agreement, students should allow for at least two weeks to process. While accommodations may be done anytime during or before the midterm of the semester, the timing of a student's request for academic adjustments will affect the availability and/or delivery of services.

#### **IV. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Compliance with the University's Disability Support Services Policy is a shared partnership between the student and faculty and staff. All faculty and staff are responsible for understanding and adhering to the policy so that both incoming and current students have equitable access.

The student is responsible for initiating the request for accommodations and completing the necessary paperwork each semester. The student is also responsible for communicating approved academic adjustments to his/her faculty each semester.

The academic accommodations coordinator is responsible for supporting the student through the request process, reviewing submitted documentation, and communicating with the student the approved academic adjustments. Students are also encouraged to consult the Testing and Accommodations Coordinator each semester about strategies for academic success relative to the approved academic adjustments.

Faculty and staff are responsible for supporting an equitable learning environment. Should a student share a Notice of Approved Academic Adjustments, faculty and staff are responsible for providing the requested accommodations to the best of their ability, so long as it does not significantly alter the learning outcomes of a class or cause an undue burden. Undue burden means significant difficulty or expense for the University in relationship to the cost or difficulty of providing a specific accommodation. Undue hardship refers not only to financial difficulty, but to reasonable accommodations that are unduly extensive, substantial, or disruptive, or those that would fundamentally alter the nature of the course or learning environment. Faculty or staff who do not believe they approved academic adjustments are applicable or appropriate to their course/environment, should consult with the Testing and Accommodations Coordinator before responding to a student to ensure University alignment in serving the student.