

# **General SAS Appeal Procedures**

## **Student Accessibility Services' (SAS) Reasonable Accommodation Decisions**

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) is responsible for evaluating all relevant information when determining accommodations. If a student disagrees the SAS team's reasonable accommodation decision, the student may request a review through the SAS Appeal Process, in accordance with Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Appeals must be initiated by the student directly. Third-party submissions are not accepted. The following outlines the steps in the appeal process:

### ***Step 1: Student Submits Appeal Request***

If SAS denies an accommodation, the student will receive an appeal form via email. The form must be completed within 10 business days of the initial decision.

### ***Step 2: SAS Director Reviews Appeal***

The SAS Director or designee will review the appeal and offer a meeting within 7 business days of receiving the appeal. The student is not required to attend a meeting. A written decision will be sent via UCF email within 3 business days of the meeting or the appeal submission (if no meeting occurs). In some cases, the Director may delegate the review to a designee.

### ***Step 3: ADA Coordinator Reviews Appeal***

If unresolved after Steps 1–2, the student may appeal to the UCF ADA Coordinator. The SAS Director or designee will provide information on how to initiate an appeal if the accommodation is not approved during Step 2. The student must contact the ADA Coordinator within 10 business days of the Step 2 decision. The ADA Coordinator will have access to relevant documentation provided to SAS.

The ADA Coordinator will review the appeal and contact the student within 7 business days to offer a meeting. A written decision will be sent via UCF email within 3 business days of the meeting or contact with the student (if no meeting occurs).

***Process Note:*** If a student provides substantially new personal information or documentation during Steps 1–3 that was not shared with the SAS team, then the appeal reviewer or designee may refer the student back to their original SAS contact for reassessment. The new details may impact the original decision.

## ***Disability Grievance Procedures***

Students may file a Discrimination Grievance with the Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance (ONAC) at any time if the student believes that UCF faculty or staff discriminated against them on the basis of disability. Information on this process can be found on the [ONAC webpage](#) or the student may contact ONAC directly via email ([onac@ucf.edu](mailto:onac@ucf.edu)) or phone (407-823-1336).

## Specific Access and Accommodation Use within the Classroom

SAS staff work to ensure students with disabilities have equal access and opportunity to UCF's academic and housing programs. Accommodation decisions consider both the nature of the disability and the essential elements of courses, programs, policies, and practices.

If a professor or SAS determines that an accommodation would fundamentally alter a course or program, and the student disagrees, the student may request a review under the Fundamental Alteration Assessment Procedure, which may ultimately include a faculty committee evaluation.

To initiate this process, the student should email the SAS Director at [adam.meyer@ucf.edu](mailto:adam.meyer@ucf.edu). The Director will guide the student through the review and advise on any required documentation. In some cases, the Director may initiate the review independently if the SAS Director has concerns with the professor's accommodation decision.

More details on the process of a Fundamental Alteration Assessment review can be found below:

### Procedure for Conducting Fundamental Alteration Assessments

UCF conducts an individualized assessment when a requested accommodation may fundamentally alter a course or program, such as preventing completion of an essential academic requirement. For example, a request to miss class or make up work that conflicts with course policies may raise this issue.

Student Accessibility Services (SAS) will be the entity that initially assesses the accommodation question. The Office of Nondiscrimination & Accommodations Compliance (ONAC) will assist, to fulfill the roles of the Rehabilitation Act §504 and/or ADA Coordinator. An ONAC representative should be consulted at any stage of this process when there is a question as to whether a proposed accommodation would cause an undue hardship on the University. The process steps include:

1. An SAS representative will work with the student and faculty member to explore reasonable accommodations through a collaborative process. If a faculty member believes a requested accommodation would fundamentally alter a course or program, SAS will consult with department faculty leadership. If no initial or alternative accommodation is agreed upon, SAS will inform the student of the faculty's assessment and the option to appeal to a Faculty Review Panel for a final decision. The SAS Director may also initiate the Faculty Review Panel if dissatisfied with the faculty department decision.
2. If the student or SAS requests utilization of the Faculty Review Panel, the following will occur:
  - SAS will alert the department chair or program director that the Faculty Review Panel process is being utilized;
  - SAS will advise and select three members of the Faculty Review Panel to serve as the panel reviewing the particular request<sup>1</sup>; and,
  - The department chair or program director will designate two faculty members in the same college who have some knowledge of the subject matter of the course involved to serve as additional members of the Faculty Review Panel only for the particular request.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The faculty selected must be from departments distinct from the course in question. Faculty within the same college is permissible.

<sup>2</sup> The department chair or program director may serve as one of these two faculty members that comprise the Faculty Review

3. The faculty member, SAS representative, and student will have the option (neither required) to present their positions to the Faculty Review Panel either in person when the panel meets to discuss the matter or by written statement submitted prior to the panel's first meeting. An ONAC representative may provide input as needed or requested.
4. The panel will review the following information:
  - a) Course syllabus, assignment sheets and other materials establishing course/program requirements;
  - b) All written statements provided by the faculty member, SAS and/or the student;
  - c) Any medical documentation deemed relevant by SAS that the student provided to support the request<sup>3</sup>; and,
  - d) Any other relevant information that SAS, the faculty member and/or the student presents to the panel. In addition to the requested accommodation, the Faculty Review Panel will discuss with SAS, the faculty member, and the student whether there are other accommodations that could enable the student to meet the essential academic requirements of the course.
5. The Faculty Review Panel will meet, either in person or virtually, to determine if the requested accommodation would fundamentally alter the course or program, and to consider alternative accommodations as necessary. SAS will moderate but not vote. SAS will issue a written decision on behalf of the panel within 10 business days of initiating the review. This may be extended for good cause, such as the need for additional medical documentation.
6. If the student, faculty member, or SAS representative is dissatisfied with the Faculty Review Panel's decision, they may ask the ONAC Director or their designee to review the panel's decision within 10 business days of the panel decision. The ONAC Director or their designee will issue a written decision to the student, SAS and the faculty member involved in the matter within three (3) business days of ONAC's receipt of a request for a review of the panel's decision, the panel's written decision, and the documentation reviewed by the panel to reach a decision. ONAC's decision will be the University's final decision as to whether an accommodation requested by the student would "fundamentally alter" a course or academic program.
7. The University will maintain the most current version of these procedures on the SAS website. The ONAC website will provide a link to these procedures.

The University will provide annual notification of this procedure to faculty members, students currently registered with SAS, and current SAS staff members.

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Panel. The professor of the course involved cannot be selected.

<sup>3</sup> The Faculty Review Panel may request additional medical documentation if necessary to determine the extent of the student's limitations related to the course requirements. Each member must maintain the confidentiality of the medical information examined. This information may be shared with other University employees only on a strict need-to-know basis.