

University of Maryland Eastern Shore
PROCEDURE FOR STUDENTS SEEKING A DISABILITY-RELATED
ACCOMMODATION

These procedures (“Procedures”) incorporate the definitions set forth in the UMES ADA and Section 504 policy for providing individuals with reasonable accommodations for disabilities.

I. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

SAS makes determinations regarding Reasonable Accommodations for students with Disabilities. To begin the process and ultimately receive an Accommodation, students must register with SAS and engage in the interactive process.

II. Requesting an Accommodation

To initiate the process and request an accommodation, students should submit an Application form to SAS. The form can be found at: <https://www.umes.edu/oie>. For assistance filling out, completing, or submitting a Student Accessibility Services Application form, please contact SAS via telephone: (410) 651-6135.

Along with the Application, Students must also provide Disability Supporting Documentation that includes a diagnosis of their current Disability and demonstrates how their Disability limits participation in courses, programs, services, jobs, activities, and/or access to facilities of the University. SAS provides guidelines about the type of documentation which is typically adequate. See Documentation Guidelines (attached).

Applications for accommodations should be made far enough in advance to allow SAS adequate time to engage in the Interactive Process by, among other things, reviewing the facts, establishing whether the student is qualified, and determining a Reasonable Accommodation. Generally, it is best to request an Accommodations several weeks before a semester begins or as soon as a Disability becomes known.

III. Eligibility Determinations

SAS determines whether a student has a Disability that may qualify them for a Reasonable Accommodation (if any). It does so by meeting with the student and reviewing various information provided by the student. This may include Disability Supporting Documentation, student statements, observations made during interactions with the student, the nature of previous Accommodations provided and/or requested, the unique characteristics of a course or program, and other academic information (e.g., nature of an assignment, format of an exam, etc.).

Documentation of the Disability should be current and from appropriate professionals who are credentialed to diagnose the student’s particular Disability. The type of required documentation will vary depending on the nature of the disability and accommodations requested. UMES recommends that students contact SAS before consulting a provider for Disability Documentation. SAS will inform the student if the Supporting Disability Documentation provided is not sufficient for SAS to

determine if the student is a Qualified Student and/or entitled to a Reasonable Accommodation.

IV. Interactive Process

In all cases, the University engages in the Interactive Process with the student. This involves cooperative communication about the Accommodation sought and how to implement it effectively. The student's failure to actively engage in the Interactive Process may preclude the University from effectively evaluating and addressing the student's Disability and/or request for an Accommodation.

V. Accommodation Determinations

After eligibility has been established, SAS determines Accommodations on an individualized basis. To do so, SAS reviews the functional limitations of the Disability, the student's Disability Supporting Documentation, and the Accommodation requested. As part of this process, SAS and the student should continue the Interactive Process through ongoing communication to identify, implement, and adjust a Reasonable Accommodation. This process may also involve other employees (e.g., faculty, Department Chair, Dean, ADA Coordinator, etc.). A Reasonable Accommodation shall not require the University to fundamentally alter the academic objective of an individual course, curriculum, program, or degree.

If SAS determines that a requested Accommodation is not a Reasonable Accommodation, SAS will notify the student in writing of the basis of their decision. In the event that a student wants to appeal that decision, the student should contact the Executive Director of the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (OIE) in writing within ten (10) days of the written notice from SAS and identify the basis for appealing the original determination. The Executive Director of OIE will review the student's submission, engage in the interactive process, and render a final determination within ten (10) days of receipt of the student's written submission.

VI. Implementation

SAS will prepare an Accommodation Memo for the student. This document identifies the Reasonable Accommodation and provides basic information about how to implement it. After receiving the Accommodation Memo, students should (a) meet with each course instructor from whom they expect to receive an accommodation and (b) provide them with a copy of the Accommodation Memo. This must occur far enough in advance that the instructor and/or SAS can implement the accommodation.

The student, SAS, and faculty should work cooperatively to ensure effective and timely implementation of accommodation(s). However, a student should contact SAS immediately if they believe an agreed-upon Reasonable Accommodation is denied or not being implemented properly. SAS will use good faith efforts to resolve any outstanding issues within ten (10) business days.

VII. Accommodations that Fundamentally Alter an Academic Course or Program

If the instructor or Department Chair believes an accommodation fundamentally alters the academic objectives of a course or program, they should notify SAS immediately in writing and provide an explanation. With ten (10) business days, SAS in consultation with the student, instructor, Department Chair, Dean, and/or other administrator or faculty member will work to identify a resolution to ensure the student's need for an accommodation is met whenever possible.

VIII. Complaints

Students who believe that they have been denied a Reasonable Accommodation, otherwise discriminated against on the basis of Disability, or retaliated against for asserting rights under UMES Policy, should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance ("OIE"). OIE processes such complaints consistent with its policies and procedures.

To file a report with OIE, an individual may contact the ADA Coordinator (Jason A. Casares) via:

- a. Email at: ADA@umes.edu or jacasares@umes.edu
- b. Telephone at: (410) 651-6135
- c. In-person or via regular mail at:
 - Early Childhood Research Building
 - Suite 1129
 - Princess Anne, MD 21853

Questions and Contact Information:

Jason A. Casares
Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance
Email: jacasares@umes.edu
Phone: (410) 651-6135