

Elms College

Student Accommodations and Support Services Handbook



291 Springfield Street Alumnae Library Chicopee, MA 01013 | Telephone: (413) 265-2333
Fax: (413) 474-7188 | Email: sass@elms.edu | Monday-Friday 8:30am-4:30 pm

Revised Fall 2020

Table of Contents

Welcome to Elms College:	0
Elms College Mission:	0
Elms College Core Values:	0
SASS Program Overview:	1
Confidentiality/FERPA	1
The Interactive Process	2
Rights and Responsibilities	2
Documentation Guidelines.....	3
Academic Accommodations	4
Testing Support	4
Note-taking Support	5
Assistive Technology.....	5
Permission to Audio-Record Support	6
Requesting an Interpreter or Captioning	6
Requesting Print Materials in an Alternate Format	6
As-Needed Support	6
Course Substitution and Waiver	6
Priority Registration.....	7
Non-Academic Accommodations	7
Housing.....	7
Dining.....	8
Service Animals.....	9
Parking.....	9
Medical Emergencies.....	9
Elms Alert.....	9
Advisory Board	9
Appeal and Grievance Procedures	10
Helpful Resources.....	10
Transitioning to College and Documentation.....	11
What Is an IEP? Everything You Need to Know About IDEA, IEPs, and 504 Plans.....	11
Assistance Animals (Service and Emotional Support Animals)	11
Assistive Technology.....	11
Regulations	11
Universal Design for Learning.....	11
Student Appeal/Grievance Form.....	0

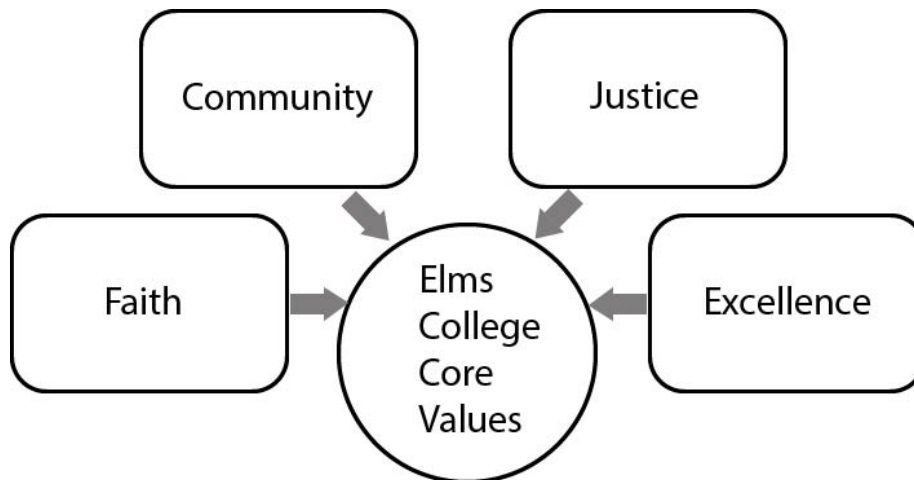
Welcome to Elms College:

Welcome to Elms College! We are excited that you have chosen to be a part of the Elms College community. Elms staff are fully committed to supporting all of our students in their academic careers. As part of that commitment Student Accommodations and Support Services (SASS) staff work to provide accommodations for students who have a documented disability-related need. We look forward to meeting with you!

Elms College Mission:

The College of Our Lady of the Elms, a Catholic college, educates a diverse group of women and men in a supportive, vibrant learning community. Combining a liberal arts education with professional studies, Elms College empowers students to effect positive changes in the community and in the world. Affirming the founding tradition of the Sisters of St. Joseph, Elms College challenges students to embrace change without compromising principle, to respond creatively to the demands of their chosen careers, and to advocate for people in need. Elms College is a community rooted in faith, educated in mind, compassionate in heart, and responsive to civic and social obligations.

Elms College Core Values:



[Elms College Core Values infographic: Four boxes labelled “Faith”, “Community”, “Justice”, and “Excellence” with an arrow from each value box pointing to a circle labelled “Elms College Core Values”.]

Elms College Community affirms our Catholic identity and our relationship with the Sisters of St. Joseph. We, as trustees, faculty, staff and students, aspire to live and work as an academic community according to these core values:

Faith: Elms College, empowered by love and faith, welcomes all, while seeking to promote the traditions of our founders, the Sisters of St. Joseph, through programs that challenge all members of the college community, spiritually, ethically and intellectually.

Community: Elms College commits to compassion and relationship building, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, creating a sense of belonging for the entire campus community. This encourages us to respond to the needs of others, in a spirit of hospitality, within and beyond the college.

Justice: Elms College aspires to the highest standards of social responsibility as an institution and is committed to instilling values of equal opportunity and justice in our college community. Individually and collectively, we are dedicated to pursuing the common good and to improving the lives of all people.

Excellence: Elms College fosters excellence in our students and in our community by educating the whole individual, intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically. We challenge each other to realize our full potential to impact the world through our knowledge and enhanced skills.

SASS Program Overview:

Elms College is committed to providing equal education opportunities for people with disabilities in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Fair Housing Act, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act (ADAA) of 2008. The aforementioned laws protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination and allow for equal access to all programs and services including education. In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 students must be “otherwise qualified” to meet the programmatic requirements and receive reasonable and appropriate accommodations.

A disability is defined as a mental or physical impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Substantially limiting is defined as being unable to perform a major life activity, or significantly restricted as to the condition, manner, or duration under which a major life activity can be performed, in comparison to the average person or to most people. A major life activity is defined as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. (American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973).

The Student Accommodations and Support Services Office is a department in the division of Academic Affairs. The purpose of the office is to coordinate equal access for students with documented disabilities. Equal access may pertain to academic studies, housing, dining services, or physical access and are approved for the individual through an interactive process. SASS will partner with faculty, staff, and administrators to provide reasonable and appropriate accommodations. Students play a key role self-advocating for accommodations. It is the responsibility of the student to engage in the interactive process and request accommodations on a termly basis. SASS will work with the student to help promote access and success for the student during their time at Elms College. All students, including undergraduate, graduate, professional, on-campus, and off-campus are welcome to work with SASS and may be eligible for support based on a documented disability-related need.

The role of SASS includes providing students with one-on-one advising relating to their disability. Guidance may include instruction on how to obtain disability documentation and connecting students with campus resources such as counseling or the Tutoring Center. SASS houses a testing room which is available for students that have been approved for a reduced-distraction testing environment. The assistive technology lab includes a Merlin LCD video magnifier and other assistive technology tools.

SASS staff serve as advocates of Universal Design for Learning principles. SASS may provide information about disability compliance issues and responsibilities. The SASS Advisory Board Committee reviews SASS policy, procedures, and fosters advocacy and inclusivity on campus. The Board will also review complex requests as needed and review student grievances and appeals.

Confidentiality/FERPA

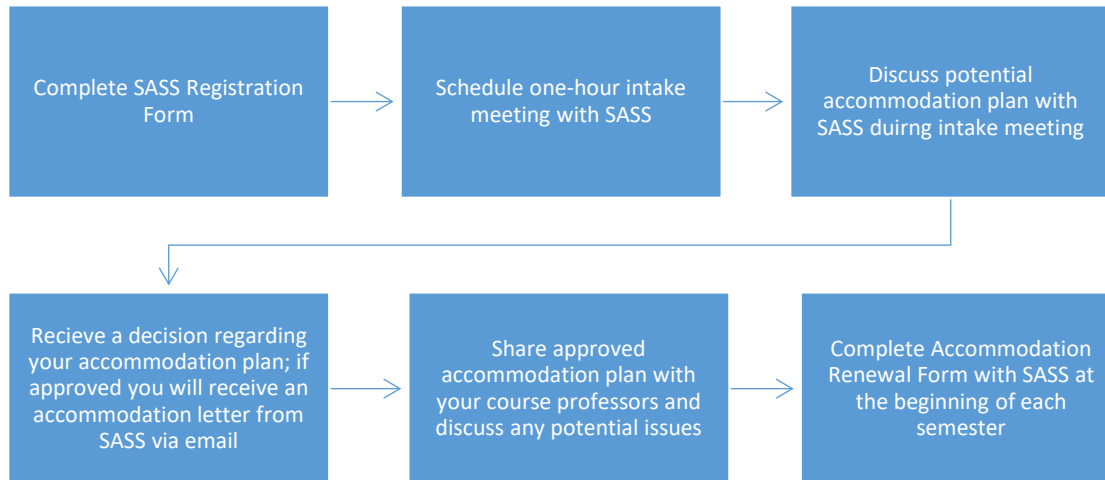
Students working with SASS are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). SASS may share information about a student if there is an educational-need-to-know, i.e. setting up testing accommodations or connecting students with appropriate resources such as counseling or the Tutoring Center. Shared information will be limited; SASS will not release a diagnosis unless authorized to do so by the student.

SASS may not share information with family members or guardians without a signed release of information from the student. Students may request a Release of Information form at any time from SASS.

A student has the right to review their SASS file with reasonable notification and may request to have copies of their documentation released to themselves. SASS will retain files and student documentation for five years after completion of a degree or program.

The Interactive Process

SASS staff guide students through an interactive process to determine and implement reasonable and appropriate accommodations. As a student transitions from high school into higher education the student will be expected to play a significant role in the accommodation process. Students with a diagnosis should complete an intake form, submit documentation, and schedule a meeting with SASS. During the intake meeting potential accommodations will be reviewed, along with the possible need for additional supporting documentation. The student will be provided with a digital letter for any agreed upon approved accommodations following the meeting. Students must share their letters with their professors to finalize their termly request. Students are expected to renew their accommodations each semester by contacting SASS and requesting a renewal.



[Process flowchart with six text boxes and arrows leading from box to box: “Complete SASS Registration Form”, “Schedule one-hour intake meeting with SASS”, “Discuss potential accommodation plan with SASS during intake meeting”, “Receive a decision regarding your accommodation plan; if approved you will receive an accommodation letter from SASS via email”, “Share approved accommodation plan with you course professors and discuss any potential issues”, “Complete Accommodation Renewal Form with SASS at the beginning of each semester.”]

Approved accommodations allow a student equal access to a course, program, service or internship but must not fundamentally alter the academic integrity or objectives of the course or program. Accommodations must be reasonable and not create an undue hardship, such as an accommodation that is costly, extensive, or a substantial or disruptive modification. If a requested accommodation is not deemed appropriate and reasonable the accommodation may be denied by SASS.

Students that do not have a diagnosis but feel they might benefit from accommodations should schedule a meeting with SASS to learn more about the process of obtaining documentation and available resources.

Students with temporary conditions may be eligible to receive temporary accommodations based on documentation of a short-term need (i.e., a concussion, health-related emergency). Provisional accommodations may be approved on a short-term basis with the expectation of SASS receiving supporting documentation. A student will only be granted provisional accommodations for a single term and must provide documentation and request services to be approved for on-going accommodations.

Rights and Responsibilities

Each participant in the interactive process has certain rights and responsibilities within their role. Once a student has reached out to start the interactive process SASS is expected to review any documentation provided and request additional information or documentation as needed. SASS is responsible for issuing accommodation

letters based on documented disability-related needs. SASS staff may provide guidance regarding specific accommodation requests, self-advocacy skills, and helping students connect with appropriate resources. SASS is responsible for implementing accommodations in a timely manner, however, some accommodations may take longer to facilitate.

All Elms staff, faculty and administrators, are expected to respect student confidentiality. Faculty should include a disability statement on all syllabi and are welcome to refer students to SASS as needed. Faculty and administrators should make SASS and the student aware of any request that would fundamentally alter a course or program. Additionally, faculty and staff should work with the student to implement all approved accommodations authorized by SASS.

The student is responsible for initiating a request for accommodations and must identify as having a documented disability, as well as scheduling meetings with SASS and alerting SASS of any issues related to their accommodation plan. Students should reach out to SASS at the beginning of each semester to request accommodations. It is recommended that students request/renew accommodations as soon as possible at the start of the term as some accommodations may take more time to implement. Students must be approved by SASS for all accommodations; accommodations are not retroactive.

Students utilizing SASS services are expected to review the SASS handbook, forms, and follow SASS procedures to request accommodations. Students are responsible for sharing their accommodation letters with their faculty each term and making SASS aware of any questions or concerns. Students are responsible for reminding professors of testing accommodations prior to each test. For special consideration accommodations that operate on an as-needed basis students are expected to communicate with their professors and SASS regarding their specific need. Accommodations are approved based on disability documentation; to receive accommodations students must provide eligible documentation and take part in the interactive process.

Documentation Guidelines

Documentation will vary depending on nature of the disability and the evaluation resources utilized. SASS staff are not certified to provide diagnostic testing nor diagnoses; diagnosis must be provided by a licensed practitioner. Disability documentation should be typed, dated, and signed by a licensed professional. The documentation should include a diagnosis of the current disability; the date of the diagnosis; how the diagnosis was reached (i.e. testing performed); the credentials of the professional; how the disability affects a major life activity; and how the disability affects academic performance. Documentation may also include recommendations or suggestions for accommodations; these recommendations are not guaranteed.

Students may submit prior 504 plans, neuropsychiatric evaluations, and IEP plans. IEP plans do not apply to higher education and supplemental documentation may be needed to support use of SASS services. Documentation for most learning disabilities and chronic health conditions should be completed within the past three to five years, however, some exceptions will apply. Documentation for mental health conditions should generally be completed within one year of the request. Student may submit records of prior accommodations received in high-school or from a post-secondary institution, however, it is not guaranteed that the accommodations will be applicable to Elms College.

Practitioners may complete the [Practitioner Disability Documentation Form](#) and submit a supplemental letter to SASS directly via email, mail, or fax.

Documentation Criteria:

- Printed on letterhead, dated, with signature of evaluator
- Credentials of the evaluator(s)
- Diagnostic statement identifying the disability
- Description of the diagnostic methodology/tool

- Description of current functional limitations
- Description of expected progression or stability
- Description of current and past accommodations, services and/or medications
- Recommendations for accommodations, adaptive devices, assistive services, compensatory strategies, and/or collateral support services.

Documentation for a temporary disability may be less comprehensive but should include provider information, date and signature, as well as diagnosis, duration of need, and may include recommended accommodations.

Academic Accommodations

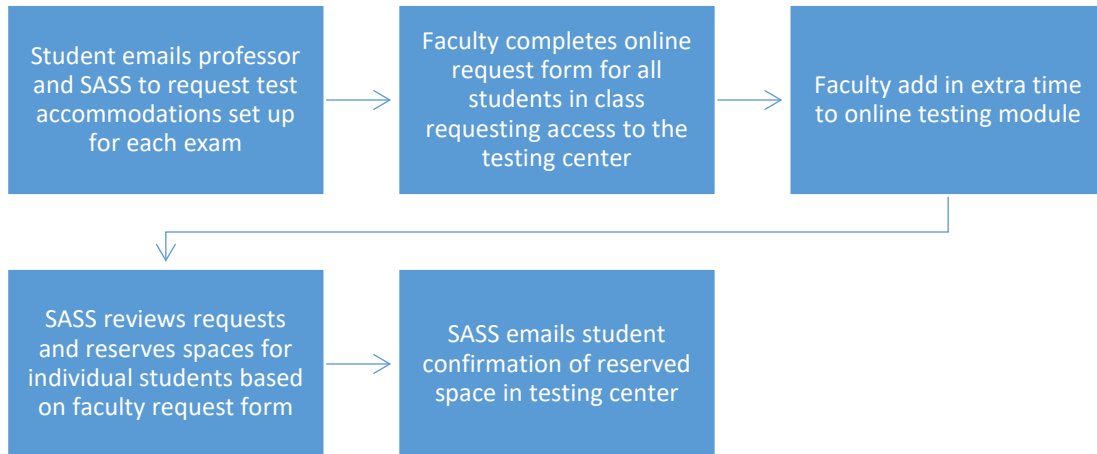
Academic accommodations range from extended time on tests, in-class supports, to the use of assistive technology. During the interactive process SASS and the student will identify adjustments that will help students have equal access to their academic programs. Common adjustments include assistance with notetaking, test-taking environment, extended testing time, and access to course materials, such as digital textbooks. Each student should have a plan based on their individual documentation and needs.

Incoming students or new students should complete the [Academic Accommodations Registration Form](#) along with submitting their disability documentation. Current students with approved documentation and accommodations may request to renew accommodations using the [Accommodation Renewal Request Form](#). Current students seeking to revise or change their accommodations should schedule a meeting with SASS to discuss their request.

Students are expected to share their current SASS approved accommodations letter with their professors each term. It is recommended that students schedule a time to meet with their professors to review all accommodations together. Any questions or concerns regarding the accommodations should be shared with SASS. SASS will provide clarification or work with the student and faculty to identify alternative adjustments if an accommodation poses a fundamental alteration of the course objectives. More complex requests may need approval from the SASS Advisory Board Committee.

Testing Support

The SASS testing center provides students with a distraction-reduced environment. Space is limited; students should make their request to faculty as soon as possible in order to coordinate their accommodations. Testing accommodations require coordination between SASS, the student, and faculty. Students may receive accommodations for extended time to take a test and/or access to test in a distraction-reduced environment. The student must email the professor, and include SASS, a week in advance before any exam to let them know they would like to use their approved accommodations for the exam. Once the professor has received a student request the professor may complete an [online request form](#) for the SASS testing center to reserve a space for the student. SASS will send the student an email confirmation of their space once it has been reserved.



[Process flowchart with five text boxes and arrows leading from box to box: “Student emails professor and SASS to request test accommodations set up for each exam”, “Faculty completes online request form for all students in class requesting access to the testing center”, “Faculty add in extra time to online testing module”, “SASS reviews requests and reserves spaces for individual students based on faculty request form”, and “SASS emails student confirmation of reserved space in testing center.”]

Testing Center Expectations

All students receiving testing accommodations are expected to follow the College’s Student Code of Conduct. Any actual or suspected incident of improper test-taking, dissemination of exam materials, or violation will be documented by Student Accommodations and Support Services. Failure to comply with the policies and procedures will result an Academic Honesty violation which will be reported to your professor. Personal items such as bookbags, purses, textbooks, notes, and communication devices will not be allowed unless authorized in writing by the professor.

Students are expected to take their exams on the same day and time as the class in which they are enrolled. Any request for exceptions must be approved by the faculty and SASS and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. If a student is more than 20 minutes late for an exam they will have to request permission to retake the test from the professor. It is recommended that students arrive at the testing center at least five minutes prior to the exam.

Students using the testing center are provided with a distraction-reduced environment not a distraction-free environment.

Note-taking Support

A student may request a note-taker based on their documented disability-related need. A student must make a request each term for each class in which they would like note-taking assistance via the [Note-taker Request Form](#). SASS and the professor will coordinate to find a volunteer note-taker for the course; faculty may ask the class for volunteers.

Note-takers will be expected to provide class notes on a timely basis to either SASS or the student. Note-takers must keep the name of students receiving notes confidential and must complete an [agreement with SASS](#). The instructor may share notes or slides if available instead of providing a student note-taker.

Assistive Technology

SASS provides access to several assistive technology aids, including Kurzweil 3000, Bookshare, and a Merlin LCD video magnifier. Room 303 in Alumnae Library serves as an assistive technology lab—Windows-based computers include access to Kurzweil and Dragon-Naturally speaking. Students must be approved through SASS to have

access to College owned AT supports. Student may also elect to purchase their own AT aids or use free AT software on their own devices.

Permission to Audio-Record Support

Students may be approved for permission to audio-record lectures or visually-capture materials based on a documented need. If a student is approved to audio record the accommodation will be listed on their accommodation letter and shared with the instructor. The instructor may share with the class that the sessions will be recorded but not the name of the student recording. Recording access may be denied by the professor if the material being presented is confidential, personal in nature, or would compromise the academic objectives of the course. Recordings are for academic use by the individual only and may not be shared. Students must dispose of the recording after the completion of the course. Students with permission to audio record will sign an agreement housed with SASS detailing the terms of use.

Requesting an Interpreter or Captioning

Students approved for an interpreter or captioning based on a documented disability-related need should request assistance from SASS via email at least three weeks prior to the event or course to guarantee that services will be available. Requests made with less lead time may be possible but are not guaranteed. If a student is unable to attend a session, class is canceled, or a student drops the course they should contact SASS as soon as possible to inform them that they will not need the resource.

Requesting Print Materials in an Alternate Format

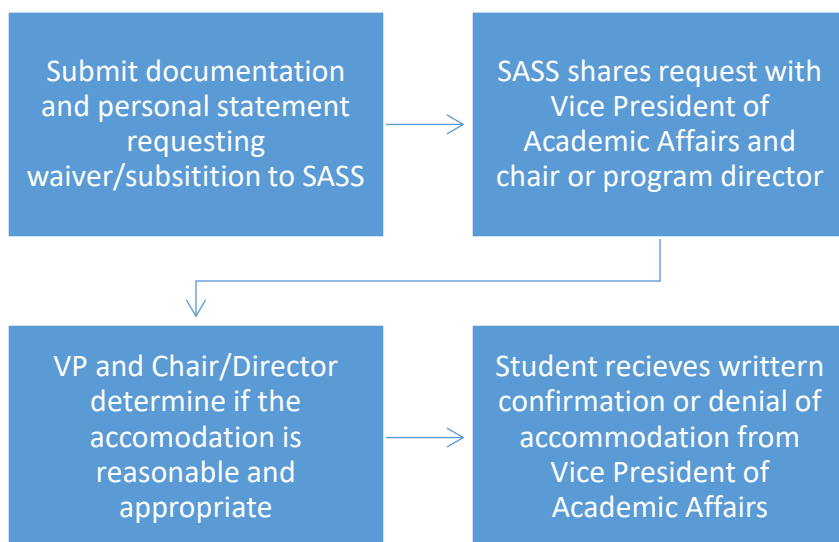
Students approved by SASS for alternate format text should [complete a request](#) for materials each semester as needed. Students are responsible for purchasing or obtaining their own course materials. The conversion process may take up to seven weeks; students are strongly encouraged to request alternate materials once they register for courses and have access to required course materials. Alternate format materials are for the individual's educational purposes only and will not be shared or distributed.

As-Needed Support

Some disabilities may warrant as-needed support (i.e. allowing for some flexibility related to a chronic, ongoing medical condition). This accommodation may not fundamentally alter the academic objectives of a course, nor may it eliminate an essential component such as attendance or participation. As-needed accommodations allow a student some flexibility but must have the approval of faculty and SASS and are determined on a case-by-case basis. As-needed accommodations will be included in the SASS-approved termly accommodation letter.

Course Substitution and Waiver

Course substitution and waiver requests must not fundamentally alter the degree requirements of a particular program and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis. To petition for a substitution or waiver a student must provide relevant documentation and a written request for the substitution or waiver. The student must explain the rationale for the request in a personal statement and illustrate the connection between the disability diagnosis, need, and the request. The request will be reviewed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the chair or program director. The student will be notified in writing if the request has been granted or denied.



[Process flowchart with four text boxes and arrows leading from box to box: “Submit documentation and personal statement requesting waiver/substitution to SASS”, “SASS shares request with Vice President of Academic Affairs and chair or program director”, “VP and Chair/Director determine if accommodation is reasonable and appropriate”, “Student receives written confirmation or denial of accommodation from Vice President of Academic Affairs.”]

Priority Registration

Priority registration allows students to participate in registration on the first scheduled day of course registration. This accommodation may be applicable for students with conditions that impact mobility or have chronic health concerns. Priority registration is coordinated with the Registrar; approved students will receive an email from SASS alerting them of the date that they may start course registration. If a student is unable to register on the first-day of the schedule the priority registration will not apply for the remainder of the course registration period.

Non-Academic Accommodations

Non-Academic accommodations provide equal access for housing, dining, and physical access needs. These accommodations are granted utilizing the same process and documentation guidelines as academic accommodations. Many of these accommodations may take longer to authorize as they will require coordination with multiple office. More complex requests may need approval from the SASS Advisory Board Committee.

Incoming students or students new to SASS should complete the [Non-Academic Accommodations Registration Form](#) along with submitting their disability documentation. Current students with approved documentation and accommodations may request renewed accommodations using the [Accommodation Renewal Request Form](#). Current students seeking to revise or change their accommodations should schedule a meeting with SASS to discuss their request.

Housing

Students may request housing accommodations for the duration of their time at Elms or on a temporary basis (i.e. a single semester for an injury). Students should be aware that a single room allows for a reduced-distraction housing environment not a distraction-free one. Coordination for housing may be complex, students should request housing accommodations when registering by the deadlines posted on the [Residence Life webpage](#). Students with housing accommodations are expected to adhere to the same deadlines and policies set forth by Residence Life in the Student Handbook. Students must complete a request for campus housing with Residence Life as well as submitting a request to SASS for housing accommodations. Students’ preference

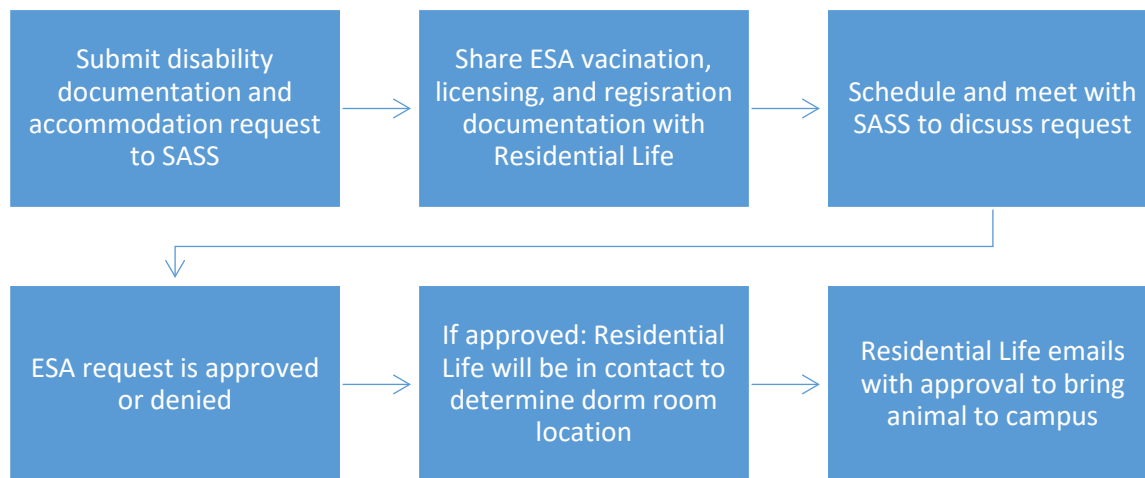
for a specific house will be considered but may not always be met in situations where the unique character and age of a particular hall limits access. Rooming with a particular individual is not an accommodation; the accommodation process cannot guarantee placement with a specific roommate.

Dining

All students that live on campus are required to participate in the College meal plan. Students may request an accommodation for the meal plan through SASS. SASS will coordinate the request with dining services to provide an adjustment to the meal plan based on a documented disability-related need. Students seeking accommodations for their meal plan should provide documentation and submit a request to SASS. Campus dining locations have signage to indicate food allergens or dietary restriction options such as gluten free, peanut free, and dairy free. Meal plan accommodations are not guaranteed.

Emotional Support Animal Requests

Elms College students may request an emotional support animal in residence as an accommodation under the Fair Housing Act. Students requesting an Emotional Support Animal must request residential access for the animal by contacting SASS. This process will require coordination with both Residential Life and Public Safety. Students must provide disability documentation supporting the need for an animal as well as licensing, registration, and vaccination documentation for the animal. Student documentation will be housed with SASS while animal documentation will be housed with Residential Life. Emotional Support Animals are not pets but do provide emotional support or assistance.



[Process flowchart with six text boxes and arrows leading from box to box: “Submit disability documentation and accommodation request to SASS”, “Share ESA vaccination, licensing, and registration documentation with Residential Life”, “Schedule and meet with SASS to discuss request”, “ESA request is approved or denied”, “If approved: Residential Life will be in contact to determine dorm room location”, “Residential Life emails with approval to bring animal to campus”.]

Emotional Support Animals (ESA) are most commonly a dog or cat but other animals may be allowed based on a documented need and if the animal does not pose a direct threat to health or safety. ESA’s are granted based upon the student’s disability-related need and must perform a function in relation to the student (i.e. a support animal cannot require its own support animal or companion). ESAs are not allowed access to the classrooms or other areas with animal restrictions. Animals are expected to be on leash in all open areas and not left unattended in public areas. The animal must be housebroken and if the animal demonstrates dangerous, disruptive, or unsafe behavior a request may be made to have the animal removed from the residential setting. Students are responsible for the care, cost and supervision of their animal at all times. Additionally, students are

responsible for the cost of any damages incurred by the animal on campus. Animals may not be left unattended or with other tenants on weekends or evenings. The care of the animal may not be transferred to other individuals in the absence of the owner.

Service Animals

Elms College adheres to the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II and Massachusetts Service Animal Law Section 98A regarding service animal regulations. Students with a service animal may elect to register with SASS but it is not required. Students that use a service animal (dog or miniature horse) should register their animal with Public Safety to provide documentation for the animals' licensing, registration, and vaccinations. Service animals are not required to wear identification and are allowed in any places that are open to the public. Students using a service animal are not required to provide documentation nor have the animal demonstrate its work. If the student's disability is invisible, two questions are allowed to be asked of the individual:

1. Is the animal a service animal required because of a disability?
2. What task or service is the animal trained to perform?

Service animals are expected to be under their handlers care at all times, most often on a leash or harness, and be housebroken. The animal should not pose a legitimate threat to health or safety. Best practice recommends that individuals request permission from the handler to pet or approach the animal.

Parking

Accessible parking space permits may be provided for students with a documented disability-related need. Students will need to complete the online [parking registration form](#) for Public Safety. Students will also need to submit documentation and a request for an accessible location parking permit to SASS. SASS will coordinate with Public Safety to provide use of the accessible parking spaces on campus.

Medical Emergencies

If a student has a diagnosis that may require medical attention, the student is strongly recommended to discuss their diagnosis with their instructors, [Residential Life](#), their Residential Assistant, and [Health Services](#) to ensure proper response if a situation should arise. Students are also encouraged to register with Elms Alert if assistance is needed in a campus emergency situation.

Elms Alert

Elms Alert is a system that allows SASS to share information with the [Public Safety](#) office regarding need for assistance in emergency situations. All students should familiarize themselves with the emergency procedures and exits posted in each classroom. If students with disabilities have concerns or questions about emergency procedures, they can contact the Elms College Public Safety Department. Public Safety will provide training and provide emergency assistance for any student that registers with Elms Alert.

Students that use a mobility aid, such as crutches, a scooter, or wheelchair, should avoid using elevators during emergencies, remain on the stairway balcony and ask someone to notify emergency personnel. The stairway balconies are protected with fire safe doors. Emergency personnel are trained to check these areas.

Advisory Board

The SASS Advisory Board Committee consists of two subcommittees: one for academic concerns and one for non-academic concerns. The Committees consist of faculty and staff that are experts in their area. The Committee serves to create community around common areas of interest and concern among faculty, staff, and students; to promote awareness of disabilities impacting learning; to create an inclusive environment; and to provide resources that benefit the College. The Committees also review complex individual requests, including course substitutions and waivers, housing requests, and other needs on a case-by-case basis. The Committee plays a key role in the SASS Appeal and Grievance Procedure.

Committees will meet twice annually to review policies and procedures and will convene to review requests and grievances on an as-needed basis. In working towards promoting disability awareness the Committees will:

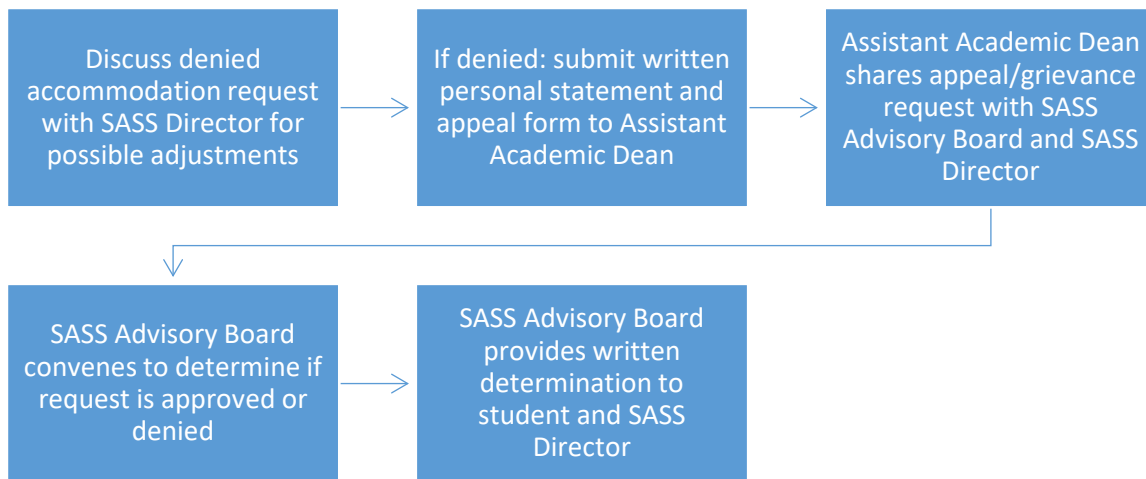
- Provide recommendations regarding SASS policies and procedures

- Facilitate campus-wide input regarding disability services and supports within the campus community
- Raise campus awareness of various disabilities, needs, and responsibilities
- Provide leadership in helping to build an inclusive Elms College community
- Provide guidance and promote Universal Design for Learning at Elms College
- Provide guidance on creating accessible on-line and in-person learning environments

Appeal and Grievance Procedures

A student that has engaged in the interactive process has the right to submit an appeal of an accommodation decision to SASS. An *appeal* is a formal request to review information regarding a decision related to an accommodation and revise the outcome. A *grievance* is any complaint other than one that involves an accommodation decision and may include concerns related to accommodation implementation with a particular staff or faculty member. It is recommended that a student first address any concerns with the Director of SASS to discuss possible resolution/adjustments.

If the student feels further review is needed they may submit an appeal or grievance request along with a written personal statement *within one business week* of the notice of the accommodation decision, unless there are extenuating mitigating factors (i.e. substantial personal illness requiring medical intervention, loss of access to Elms College email system verified by the Elms College IT department, etc.). Students should submit their appeal/grievance request and personal statement to the Assistant Academic Dean for Student Support. They will in turn share the request with the SASS Advisory Board and the Director of SASS. The SASS Advisory Board will make a determination on the request and inform the student and Director of SASS of the outcome in a written determination letter, generally within 30 days of the appeal/grievance request submittal.



[Process flowchart with five text boxes and arrows leading from box to box: “Discuss denied accommodation request with SASS Director for possible adjustments”, “If denied: submit written personal statement and appeal form to Assistant Academic Dean”, “Assistant Academic Dean shares appeal/grievance request with SASS Advisory Board and SASS Director”, “SASS Advisory Board convenes to determine if request is approved or denied”, “SASS Advisory Board provides written determination to student and SASS Director”.]

Helpful Resources

Many students entering into college are new to the process of self-advocacy and managing accommodations. This process may seem overwhelming and intimidating. It is recommended that students read their own documentation prior to requesting accommodations; documentation can often serve as a guide to illustrate how

the disability is creating a barrier and what steps might be beneficial to provide equal access.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of resource links that students might find helpful.

Transitioning to College and Documentation

[Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education](#)

[The Difference between IEPs and 504 Plans](#)

[What Is an IEP? Everything You Need to Know About IDEA, IEPs, and 504 Plans](#)

Assistance Animals (Service and Emotional Support Animals)

[ADA \(service animals\)](#)

[Mass.gov \(about services and assistance animals\)](#)

[Massachusetts Service Animal Law](#)

[Massachusetts Fair Housing Act](#)

Assistive Technology

[Kurzweil](#)

[Bookshare](#)

[Dragon Speech Recognition Solutions](#)

[Merlin LCD](#)

Regulations

[Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[Protecting Students with Disabilities](#)

[Disability Laws, Regulations, and Guidance](#)

Universal Design for Learning

[About UDL](#)

Student Appeal/Grievance Form

Name _____ Date _____
Phone _____ Email _____
Major _____ Minor _____
Expected Date of Graduation _____

Approved Accommodations _____

Please attach a written statement regarding your accommodation request. In your statement you should include the accommodation requested, when you made the request, your rationale for why this accommodation is appropriate and reasonable, and information about any interaction you have with SASS for the specific request. Please also include any appropriate documentation relating to the request such as medical diagnoses or evaluations.