



FAMILY SUPPORT AND ACCOMMODATION PLAN GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY

Offering faculty members at Clemson University the flexibility and time needed for balancing their professional and personal responsibilities when they experience a life event which may make it difficult to meet their work obligations.

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1. Introduction

The guidelines outlined below are intended to offer faculty members at Clemson University the flexibility and time needed to balance their professional and personal responsibilities when they experience a life event which may make it difficult to meet their work obligations. The University understands that taking a leave of absence is not always the best solution when addressing such matters. In some circumstances, a modified workload for a period of time may offer a better solution than the use of leave. These guidelines establish procedures to request such a modification and provide examples of the circumstances under which the University encourages the use of modified duties in support of its faculty. A modified workload is not guaranteed and will depend on the circumstances and needs of the department in which the faculty member works and the job duties of the faculty member.

These guidelines are *not* intended to diminish the rights and benefits available under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or any other state or federal law. The FMLA allows eligible faculty members to take time away from work for certain family and medical reasons. An eligible faculty member may request an FSAP instead of or in addition to using FMLA leave. Faculty members are encouraged to contact the Office of Human Resources (OHR) to fully review all available leave options before an FSAP is implemented, as these guidelines do not reflect a faculty member's sole option when family circumstances requiring modification of or leave from work duties arise.

Likewise, these guidelines are not intended to cover all situations, including those involving a faculty member's request for a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Requests for modified duties or other types of reasonable accommodations due to an employee's physical or mental disability should be addressed by the Office of Access and Equity.

2. Family Support and Accommodation Plan (FSAP) Overview

Faculty members may request a modification of work duties for a specific time period due to an anticipated or unanticipated family event or situation. Proposed and approved modifications of work duties for such reasons are known as a Family Support and Accommodation Plan (FSAP). The intent of the approved provision of modified duties is neither leave nor time away from the job. Rather, this program's intent is to ensure a faculty member in need can continue to function and perform as a full contributor within the University while reaping the benefits of a more flexible work experience for a specific time period. A faculty member who has been granted modified work duties under these guidelines will continue to be employed in the same status and at the same level as before the plan was implemented, and their compensation will remain the same; the faculty member will continue to perform at a full-time capacity during their period of modified duties. Modification of duties simply alters assigned responsibilities to create flexibility that would not otherwise be available. This type of plan can include alternative assignments, altered schedules and/or a change in location of the faculty member's performance of duties.

3. Circumstances Where a Faculty Member May Request an FSAP

Eligible faculty members may request, and supervisors are encouraged to grant, an FSAP in the following circumstances:

- When the faculty member is a parent or in a parental role and has or shares primary caregiving responsibilities for a newborn or recently adopted or placed child.

- When the faculty member is the primary caregiver for a family member who requires assistance due to a serious health condition or who requires elderly care.

Situations of this nature can cause substantial changes to one's daily routine, thus creating a need to alter work duties for a period of time.

4. Eligibility

All regular full-time equivalent (FTE), temporary time-limited and temporary grant faculty members are eligible to request an FSAP.

If two faculty members who are involved in the same family event or situation and are employed in the same department both request an FSAP for the same period of time, they should be accommodated by their department unless management rules it would cause an undue hardship.

5. Plan Duration

A period of modification may be requested and approved for no more than 18 weeks (the equivalent of an academic semester) per family event or situation.

Intermittent modifications may be permitted so long as the total duration in which intermittent modifications are taking place does not exceed the maximum period of 18 weeks per family event or situation.

In the case of a request for modification of duties due to the birth, adoption or placement of a child, the FSAP must be completed within the 12-month period following the birth, adoption or placement of the child.

6. Number of Plans Permitted

Barring extraordinary circumstances, a request for an FSAP may be granted no more than once per rolling 24-month period for each faculty member.

Multiple FSAPs for the same family event or situation may be requested within a rolling 24-month period if the combined period of modified duties for the event or situation does not exceed 18 weeks, as stated in the "Plan Duration" section of these guidelines. Exception: As stated within the "Plan Duration" section of these guidelines, an FSAP due to the birth, adoption or placement of a child must be concluded within the 12-month period following the birth, adoption or placement of the child.

7. Department Responsibilities

In situations where an FSAP is permitted under these guidelines, supervisors should work with the faculty member to devise a modified workload and schedule that accommodates the needs of the faculty member with minimum disruption to the department. Because an approved modified workload under these guidelines will not impact salary, the faculty member must be given modified duties that are commensurate with existing salary, rank and workload.

Departments must consult the Office of Human Resources to discuss whether supporting medical documentation is required to support a request. **IN NO EVENT SHOULD DEPARTMENTS DIRECTLY SEEK OR RETAIN MEDICAL RECORDS.** Departments may also consult the Office of Human Resources to explore other available options for a faculty member who is requesting an FSAP.

Confidentiality

Department administrators may have access to sensitive information and possibly confidential medical records during the process of a faculty member's request of an FSAP. This information should not be disclosed (outside of the appropriate OHR staff) without first obtaining permission for such disclosures from the faculty member. There should be no disclosures to individuals outside of Clemson University. If a request for a disclosure from someone outside of the University is received, it should be referred to the Office of General Counsel.

8. Faculty Member Responsibilities

To minimize hardship of the department/unit and to provide maximum time for planning, faculty members are encouraged to speak with their supervisors as soon as possible about the need for an FSAP. Delays in raising the issue, however, are not ordinarily sufficient to deny the request, though they could result in delayed approval and commencement of an FSAP.

9. Plan Development

The FSAP will be developed jointly by the faculty member and their department chair. It is understood by both parties that the creation of the plan may include multiple rough drafts and discussions regarding solutions before arriving at the ideal arrangement. A negotiation period is standard when creating a plan of this nature.

Statement of Accommodation

The plan must describe the specific duties from which the faculty member will be relieved and the specific work to be done in its place, as well as any alterations to the faculty members work schedule and/or location of work. Because an approved modified workload under these guidelines will not impact salary, the faculty member must be given modified duties that are commensurate with existing salary, rank and workload.

Substitute duties might include: preparation of research proposals, papers and course materials; devotion of full-time effort to research; development of curricula and/or course materials; work on accreditation and/or certification materials; supervision of graduate student research; and academic service that is compatible with the need for modified work duties.

Subsequent Goals and Expectations of Faculty Members

The plan must include details outlining any adjustments to the faculty member's goals and expectations that are the result of implementing the plan. If a plan is in use over multiple periods of time (e.g., semesters) wherein original goals may have differed, the plan must include adjustments to both periods of time.

The Faculty Activity System (FAS) goals should be revised as needed to reflect the modified duties arrangement. In the case of tenure-track faculty, the department's Tenure, Promotion, and Reappointment (TPR) committee should be informed of any change in approved goals.

Changes to the Plan

If changes to an existing, approved plan are required, these changes must be submitted for approval in writing and go through the same review/approval process as stated within the "Procedures" section of these guidelines.

10. Legal and Medical Documentation

The Office of Human Resources should be contacted to assist in determining what legal or medical documentation may be required to verify a request and eligibility for modified duties. IN NO EVENT SHOULD DEPARTMENTS DIRECTLY SEEK OR RETAIN MEDICAL RECORDS.

11. Procedures

Requesting an FSAP

A faculty member who wishes to request modified duties through an FSAP may request such a plan by submitting a completed *Family Support and Accommodation Plan Request Form* and a draft FSAP to their department chair.

The faculty member and department chair will review the draft FSAP together and, if necessary, they will work jointly to develop a revised FSAP which accommodates the faculty member and minimizes hardship on the department. It is understood by both parties that the creation of the plan may include multiple rough drafts and discussions regarding solutions before arriving at the ideal arrangement. A negotiation period is standard when creating a plan of this nature.

If the faculty member and department chair are both in agreement of the proposed plan, each will sign the *Family Support and Accommodation Plan Request Form* and the following steps will be taken.

Plan Approval Process

The developed FSAP and the completed request form will be forwarded to the faculty member's dean for review and approval. If approved by the dean, the request will be sent to the provost for review and final decision.

If medical documentation is necessary, assistance in gathering such documentation should be requested by the Office of Human Resources.

The provost's final decision approving or denying the FSAP will be returned to the faculty member and the faculty member's dean.

Changes to the Plan

If a plan has been approved and has taken effect, changes to the plan must be made in writing and must go through the same approval process as the original request.

Returning to Original Duties

Once the faculty member has returned to original duties, the department chair must send a notice confirming the faculty member's return to assigned duties to the dean and provost.

12. Impact of Modified Duties on Future Work

A modification of ordinary duties should not result in additional duties before or after the plan is implemented. That is, the faculty member should not be asked to make up released duties before or after the period of modified duties.

For regular and special rank faculty, course stacking—the process of aggregating courses which were originally spread over the academic year to a single semester—is allowed so long as: 1) the arrangement of the faculty member's modified duties ensures a continuous full-time workload, 2) this utilized option is documented within the FSAP and 3) this option

has been approved through the proper channels as stated within the “Procedures” section of these guidelines.

13. Effect of FSAP on Tenure Clock

A faculty member’s tenure clock will continue unless the faculty member requests otherwise and the department agrees to stop the clock. Use of an FSAP is independent of the tenure clock. Faculty members should reference the [Clemson University Faculty Manual](#) for details regarding an extension of the tenure clock.

14. Retaliation is Prohibited

Clemson University faculty members are not to be retaliated against because they requested and/or were approved for an FSAP. A faculty member who is subjected to retaliation should report the incident to the Office of Human Resources.

15. Related Forms:

[Family Support and Accommodation Plan Request Form](#)

16. Related Policies and Procedures

[Lactation Support Policy](#)

[Telecommuting Policy](#)

[Temporary Light Duty Return to Work Program](#)

[Workweek Policy](#)