

Appalachian State University
Scholars with Diverse Abilities (SDAP) Policies and Procedures

Section 1 Purpose and Overview

1.1 Purpose of the Program

Scholars with Diverse Abilities Program (SDAP or the Program) is designed to provide a two-year, on-campus living and learning experience for individuals with intellectual disabilities. It prepares students for personal and occupational success through coursework in academics, personal development, job preparation, social skills, and community access.

SDAP goals align with Appalachian State University's Strategic Priority #1: Attracting, educating, and graduating students who are prepared to make positive contributions to the region, state, nation, and world form the primary mission of the University. To achieve this goal, we must have programs that develop real-world capabilities by challenging and extending the intellectual development of our students.

SDAP goals also align with Appalachian State University's Student Development goals of helping students to: 1) become intentional learners, 2) foster healthy relationships, 3) appreciate diversity and different perspectives, 4) understand community responsibility, 5) enhance self-awareness, 6) develop autonomy, and 7) live ethically.

1.2 Program Overview

SDAP scholars are fully integrated into the Appalachian State University community. SDAP scholars actively engage in university life by auditing courses of interest to them, living on campus in residence hallitories with their peers, participating in campus social and extracurricular activities, working on campus, and engaging in civic activities. Successful completion of the Program leads to a Collegiate Achievement Award issued through Academic Affairs.

Section 2 Prospective Students

2.1 Limited Enrollment

Due to the individualized nature of SDAP, there is a limited enrollment each year. The program is limited to one incoming student during the pilot launch (Fall 2011-Spring 2012) and four new students each additional year, with a maximum of 16 participants per year by 2015.

Section 3 Admission

3.1 Applying

SDAP scholars must apply for admission to the program by December 1 prior to the fall semester in which they would like to enroll. Consideration of applicants will be based on the admission criteria presented below.

3.2 Admission Criteria

Potential participants must apply for admission through the SDAP office prior to applying to the University. Consideration for admission will be given to individuals who meet the following criteria:

- Have been enrolled in a high school special education program that does not lead to completion of a regular high school diploma and that does not allow students to complete requirements necessary for regular admission to the University.
- Demonstrate adequate communication skills to interact with others on campus. Examples may include the following:
 - Oral and/or written communication skills with or without the use of assistive technology
 - Responding to peers when appropriate
 - Phone skills
- Demonstrate socially acceptable behavior that will allow a favorable experience on campus.

Appropriate social behavior may include the following:

- Appropriate social communication with peers
- Appropriate eating habits
- Personal hygiene
- Appropriate touch
- Emotional independence
- Some experience with overnight trips away from home (camp, sleepovers with friends, etc.).
- Be adequately motivated to learn and benefit from their university experience. Motivation may be shown in the following ways:
 - High grades in high school
 - Recommendations from high school teachers
 - High attendance record in high school
 - Participation in high school, church or community events
 - Participation in sports or hobbies
 - Having volunteer or paid work experience
 - Recommendations from leaders or employers
 - Having career and personal goals
- Have an expressed interest in living and working as independently as possible in their community after completing the Program with support from families or caregivers to do so.

3.3 Application

Application packages must include the following. Applications will not be reviewed until all materials have been submitted.

- Completed application form
- High school transcript
- Three letters of recommendation: one from a teacher, one from a peer, and one from a community member
- A video expressing interest in the program
- Any other supporting material that highlights the skills, interests, and/or accomplishments (copies of awards, newspaper articles about the individual, artistic endeavors, photo album, etc.)

3.4 Application Review

The SDAP Admissions Committee will review all applications. Individuals who meet the criteria in 3.2 are invited to attend a 2-day SDAP Orientation. Final admission decisions of the SDAP Admissions Committee will be made after observing students participating in the orientation. Admission decisions made by the SDAP Admissions Committee will be sent to the Office of Student Development. The Office of Student Development is responsible for confirming the admission status based on approving the student for on-campus housing. Students make seek a waiver to live off-campus.

3.5 SDAP Orientation

SDAP Orientation is an extension of freshmen orientation. It is designed to allow potential participants the opportunity to spend the night on campus for an extended period of time, get to know the campus and other students, and learn more about being an SDAP scholar. Successful completion of the SDAP Orientation is the next step toward enrollment; however, it does not guarantee admission into SDAP. The intention of the SDAP orientation is to determine the fit between the applicants and the program. SDAP orientation takes place in the summer in June or July.

Section 4 Enrollment

Enrollment into the program will be granted upon successful completion of SDAP orientation. Admitted applicants will be referred to as SDAP scholars and will be allowed to participate in the two-year program.

4.1 Individually Designed Program

Each SDAP scholar will work with the SDAP director to develop an individual program based on his or her personal and career goals. This individual program will outline specific ways in which the SDAP scholar will work toward achieving the SDAP Collegiate Achievement Award (see below).

4.2 SDA Program

During the two-year period, participants will complete requirements for a SDAP Collegiate Achievement Award based on the successful completion of his or her individually designed program. SDAP scholars will only be eligible for a Collegiate Achievement Award of their individually designed programs and will not accrue undergraduate course credits or a degree.

4.3 SDAP Collegiate Achievement Award

SDAP scholars will work towards completing individual requirements to obtain their Collegiate Achievement Award that will be offered through Academic Affairs. The program is designed to help participants be successful, contributing citizens after completion of SDAP.

The SDAP Collegiate Achievement Award will be awarded after a two-year period based on satisfactory completion of five program components. These components include the following:

- Personal Development Skills (e.g. communication skills, personal care skills, self-determination, etc.)
- Community Participation Skills (e.g. using public transportation, budgeting, grocery shopping, etc.)
- Vocational Preparation Skills (e.g. learning specific job skills on or off-campus)
- Social Participation and Learning (e.g. participating in university functions such as athletic events, belonging to university clubs or organizations)
- Course Auditing (e.g. auditing 3 to 4 courses per semester in the student's areas of interest)

At the start of every semester, each participant will outline 2-3 individual objectives in each of these areas with the assistance of the SDAP director. These individual objectives will be the steps needed to make progress towards the completion of the Program. Learning activities required to achieve the objectives will be designed and weekly monitoring systems will be established to monitor progress for all objectives for each participant. Within each area, approximately 6 hours of learning activities per week will be required for a total of 30 hours per week (including auditing 3 classes). At the end of every semester, the participants and director will review the objectives to evaluate progress made. The Board of Directors will review these end-of-semester evaluations.

At the completion of the two-year period, the student will be eligible for an SDAP Collegiate Achievement Award based on the following criteria:

- Completion of 1800 hours of learning activities over a four semester period (450 hrs per semester);
- Achievement of at least 80% of the objectives per semester
- Recommendation for a SDAP Collegiate Achievement Award by the SDAP director and Board of Directors.

Section 5 University Life

5.1 Residential Living

SDAP scholars may live in on-campus housing under the same university guidelines and policies that are in effect for other students and will pay normal residential fees to do so. Students who are not capable of living semi-independently in the residence hall will not be given entrance into the SDA Program. For current housing policies, please see: <http://housing.appstate.edu/pagesmith/218>. The university will offer reasonable accommodations within residential facilities based on the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Special accommodations will be addressed on an as needed basis and offered within university guidelines.

5.1.1 Roommates

SDAP scholars will be assigned a roommate. SDAP staff will select roommates for SDAP scholars based on an application process and an evaluation of the potential roommate's maturity and interest in working with an individual with an intellectual disability. Housing will have final approval of any potential roommate selected by SDAP personnel. SDAP personnel will train the selected roommate and will provide the roommate with a list of responsibilities. The roommate will be compensated for their service to the SDA Program with a scholarship each semester s/he lives with an SDAP scholar

5.1.2 Residence Advisors/Residence Directors

SDAP scholars will not be randomly assigned to residence halls. SDAP staff will work with Housing to identify residence directors and residence advisors interested in housing and supporting a SDAP scholar in their rooms and on their floors. Housing will make all decisions regarding the selection of the residence hall for the SDAP scholar. SDAP staff will train and support RD's and RA's and other housing staff prior to and during the SDAP scholar's time in the residence hall.

5.1.3 SDAP Residence Hall Access

The SDAP staff may need access to the residence hall(s) in which SDAP scholars are residing. SDAP staff that may be granted access to the residence hall includes only the director and graduate students directly working with the SDAP scholar. SDAP staff needing access to the residence hall will request such access from residence hall staff and may be escorted in the residence hall by housing staff as needed. Each semester, SDAP staff will provide University Housing with a listing of those SDAP staff members that may need access to the residence hall during the semester. Parents of SDAP scholars may not have access to the residence halls.

5.1.4 Emergency Situations

The SDAP Board of Directors will develop with University Housing an emergency contact procedure to ensure SDAP staff is informed of emergency situations involving SDAP scholars that may occur in the residence hall. Such emergency contact procedure will be reviewed and revised prior to the beginning of each semester.

5.2 Medical Services

SDA Program scholars are provided with the same level of medical care as other University students. University Health Services serves as a primary care ambulatory health clinic and provides health care and prevention services for all University students. University Health Services may refer SDAP scholars to outside services as deemed appropriate. SDAP scholars must be responsible for administering their own medication. The University does not have the personnel to support and supervise any students who may have challenging or difficult behaviors.

5.3 Counseling Services

SDAP scholars are provided with the same level of counseling services as other students enrolled at the University provided the Counseling Center determines that its professionals are properly trained to support the intellectual disability needs of the SDAP scholar. Depending on the nature of intellectual disability of the SDAP scholar, it may be necessary for SDAP scholar to be referred to services within the community.

5.4 Meal Plan

As a part of on campus living, SDAP scholars will be required to participate in the meal plan program. This meal plan is used for on-campus dining facilities and purchasing food items in on campus locations to prepare in communal residence hall kitchens.

5.5 Social Activities

SDAP Scholars engage in social activities according to their individual interests. These activities may include volunteering, attending sporting events, participating in clubs, attending arts events, participating in club sports or Special Olympics, and social activities as a part of Residents' Life.

5.6 Class Attendance

Class auditing is a central part of SDAP. Scholars are required to attend 80% of all classes they audit in addition to other requirements determined with agreement from the professors. Peer supports will help modify course requirements according to the abilities of SDAP scholars.

5.7 Personal Development

Students need to engage in various types of personal development. Personal development can be covered in weekly meetings and includes meal shopping and preparation, personal safety, budgeting for expenses, exercise, time management, developing greater independence, etc. Some students may seek out additional personal development through support programs or through individual therapies.

5.8 On-campus employment

Part of SDAP is vocational training. SDAP scholars engage in on-campus employment. Vocational Rehabilitation will assist as needed.

5.9 Compliance with Code of Student Conduct and Other Policies

Students will be expected to comply with the Code of Student Conduct and all other applicable policies of the University. Failure to comply can result in a student's removal from SDAP. For the most updated version of the Code of Student Conduct, please see:

http://studentconduct.appstate.edu/index.php?module=pagesmith&uop=view_page&id=4

Section 6 Supports

6.1 Interagency/Community Supports

It is expected that other agencies within the community will provide special supports to SDAP scholars who qualify for the services. Such agencies may include Watauga Opportunities, Special Olympics, Up with Downs Camp, Public Schools, and Vocational Rehabilitation. Community agencies providing services will do so in collaboration with the SDAP director.

6.2 Volunteer Supports

Each SDAP scholar has a team of volunteer supports known as AppVocates. Volunteer supports serve as tutors, social support facilitators, and in other areas as needed. SDAP scholars will each help select their support networks. Volunteers are screened and carefully selected based on experience and personalities.

6.3 Family/Caregiver responsibilities

Families or caregivers may be required to supply additional support services for their student should the need arise and will be expected to arrange outside support services and therapies that are not provided by the SDAP.

Section 7 Cost

7.1 Fees

SDAP scholars will be charged fees comparable to those charged to undergraduate students. These will include application fees, tuition for courses audited, housing and meal plan fees, other program related fees, and university activity fees. SDAP scholars may also be required to pay program fees related to their participation in SDAP. Families will be notified of additional SDAP fees prior to enrollment. For current Appalachian tuition and fees, please see:

<http://studentaccounts.appstate.edu/tuition-and-fees>.

7.2 Grants and scholarship opportunities

Parents or caregivers are responsible for paying all costs of SDAP scholars. Funding sources to help defray the costs of participating in SDAP may be found at www.thinkcollege.net. SDAP administration will help parents or caregivers navigate financial aid opportunities.

7.3 SDAP Orientation

SDAP orientation fees cover the following: room, board, and activities. Fees will be charged according to university orientation fees. Parents who wish to attend orientation will also be charged a fee.

Section 8 SDAP Administration

8.1 SDAP Administration

SDAP will be overseen by the program director. The program director will hold quarterly meetings with the SDAP Board of Directors. The SDAP director reports to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education. The director of the program will be responsible for managing all activities of the program and for interacting with key personnel within and outside of the university to ensure the smooth operation of the program.

8.2 SDAP Board of Directors

These university and community personnel will include the following:

- The director of SDAP
- Community member
- Special Education student (junior/senior/graduate level)
- Two faculty members from appropriate discipline (Education, HLES, MT, etc).

8.3 SDAP Admissions Committee

These university and community personnel will include the following:

- The director of SDAP
- The director of the Office of Disability Services (ODS)
- A representative from Student Development
- A representative from Admissions
- A representative from the SDAP Board of Directors

Section 9 Americans with Disabilities Act

9.1 Accommodations

Consistent with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, it is the policy of Appalachian State University that no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance. ODS

works diligently to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided equal access at Appalachian State University. Any additional supports required by individual SDAP scholars (such as personal assistance) will be the responsibility of the SDAP scholars and their families. These are worked out on a case-by-case basis.

Section 10 Program Termination

Students enrolled in the SDA Program will be terminated after a two-year period with the satisfactory completion of the requirements for the SDA Collegiate Achievement Award. An individual's program may also be terminated if the SDAP Board of Directors determines that the SDAP scholar has not progressed satisfactorily over two consecutive semesters or if the participant violates university disciplinary policies. Students may be removed at any time from the SDA Program at the discretion of the SDAP Board of Directors for failure to comply with the Student Code of Conduct and all University rules, policies, and procedures.

Section 11 Amendments

The SDAP Policies and Procedures may be amended at any time.

