

Some Examples of Academic Accommodations:

Students with VISUAL Disabilities are constantly challenged by classroom instructional strategies because a large part of traditional learning is visual. Persons are considered legally blind when visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of corrective lenses. Most persons who are legally blind have some vision. Possible accommodations (low vision):

- Seating near front of class
- Large print handouts, lab signs, and equipment labels
- Class assignments made available in electronic format
- Notetaker
- Computer equipment to enlarge screen characters and images
- Extended exam time, alternative testing arrangements

Possible accommodations (total blindness):

- Audio-taped, Brailled or electronic-formatted lecture notes, handouts and texts
- Verbal descriptions of visual aids
- Raised-line drawings and tactile models of graphic materials
- Braille lab signs and equipment labels, auditory lab warning signals
- Adaptive lab equipment (e.g. talking thermometers and calculators, light probes, and tactile timers)
- Computer with optical character reader, voice output, Braille screen display and printer output
- Reader for tests and assignments
- Notetaker

Students with HEARING Disabilities face major challenges with communication. Most students who are deaf or hard of hearing have experience communicating with the hearing population. Let the student be the guide as to how best to communicate. Possible accommodations:

- Interpreter or real-time captioning
- FM system
- Notetaker
- Open or closed-captioned films, use of visual aids
- Written assignments, lab instructions, demonstration summaries
- Visual warning system for lab emergencies
- Use of electronic mail for class and private discussions

Students with MOBILITY Disabilities have a wide variety of characteristics depending upon their functional limitations. Physical access is one of the major concerns of students with mobility disabilities. Students may have trouble getting to or from class, performing in class, and managing out of class assignments and tests. Possible accommodations:

- Notetaker
- Lab assistant; group lab assignments
- Classroom, labs, and field trips in accessible locations
- Adjustable tables; lab equipment located within reach
- Class assignments made available in electronic format
- Computer equipped with special input device (e.g., voice input, alternative keyboard)
- Extended exam time

Scribe for exams

Students with MEDICAL (often hidden) Disabilities may experience conditions such as arthritis, asthma, cancer, diabetes, orthopedic limitations, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, post-surgery, chronic fatigue syndrome, or seizure disorder. The student may have limited energy or functional limitations. Possible accommodations:

- Notetaker
- Extended exam time
- Assignments made available in electronic format
- Use of email to facilitate communication
- Class assignments made available in electronic format

Students with LEARNING Disabilities have difficulty processing information. DS requires extensive diagnostic assessments to verify the disability and accommodation needs. Persons diagnosed with learning disabilities have at least average or higher intelligence but exhibit significant discrepancies in one or more areas of achievement, aptitude or information processing. Possible accommodations:

- Notetaker and/or audio-taped class sessions
- Extended exam times (generally time and a half; possibly double-time)
- Alternative testing arrangements
- Computer with voice output, spell checker and grammar checker

Students with ATTENTION DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER exhibit a consistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity that is more frequent and severe than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development. Students may have difficulty with concentration, organization, following directions, completing tasks, and secondary tasks like reading. Possible accommodations:

- Notetaker, access to class notes
- Extended exam times (generally time and a half; possibly double-time)
- Distraction reduced test space

Students with PSYCHIATRIC Disabilities exhibit persistent psychological disorders that adversely affects their educational access, their academic performance, and daily functioning. Although a psychiatric disability may not be apparent, it can have a dramatic impact on interpersonal and school behavior so that learning is more difficult. Functional limitations of a psychiatric disorder may include cognitive, behavioral/physical, perceptual, psychosocial, and side effects of medication. Possible accommodations:

- Notetaker
- Extended exam times (generally time and a half; possibly double-time)

Legislation Governing Accommodations

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and State law mandate that institutions of higher education not discriminate against "otherwise qualified" individuals with disabilities. The federal regulations implementing Section 504 and the ADA establish that reasonable and appropriate academic accommodations must be provided to students with disabilities to allow equal access to educational opportunities. For additional information on the shared institutional responsibility in providing accommodations for students with disabilities in compliance with these federal and state mandates, please contact Disability Services.

Guide for Instructors of Students with Disabilities



University of California, Merced
Disability Services

5200 N. Lake Rd.
Kolligian Library, Suite KL 109
Merced, CA 95343

Phone: 209-228-6996 • Fax: 209-228-4661
TTY: 209-228-TTY0 (209-228-8890)
<http://disability.ucmerced.edu>

Providing equal opportunities for students with disabilities is a campus-wide responsibility and commitment.

The purpose of this guide is to provide support for UC Merced professors as they work and interact with students with disabilities. Providing appropriate and reasonable accommodations for those with documented needs is critical to the learning process. The first step is to create an atmosphere for good communication and understanding...

FAQ's

To guide Faculty and Teaching Assistants

Who determines the appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities?

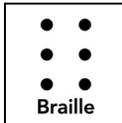
Disability Services (DS) is the designated campus office to determine appropriate accommodations and auxiliary aids for students with disabilities. The determination is based on disability documentation from a qualified professional provided by the student and a collaborative assessment of the student's needs. Students must provide DS with appropriate documentation before services are initiated.

How will I know I have to provide an accommodation?

Students have the responsibility for making their accommodation needs known to you in a timely fashion. They are required to provide you with an ACCOMMODATION LETTER from DS enumerating identified accommodations, and to discuss privately with you their accommodation needs. They are not, however, required to discuss their disabilities.

How do I provide test accommodations?

Students who are eligible for testing accommodations (e.g., extended test time, quiet room, reader, scribe, etc.) will provide you with an ACCOMMODATION LETTER. You are responsible for providing the extended time, etc. If you have questions with how to provide accommodations, contact DS.



What is my role in providing students with course materials?

Students with disabilities need access to course materials and information presented in your classroom at the same time as all other students. As an instructor, you play a vital role in ensuring that DS provides course materials in alternative formats in a timely manner. Converting print materials to alternate formats—whether to Braille, audiotapes, elec-



tronic format or enlargements—is both labor and time intensive. **Therefore, it is critical you inform DS about the textbooks you plan to use as soon as you are requested to do so either by a student or DS.**

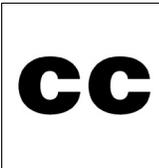
Syllabus Statement?

Students have the responsibility for making their disability-related accommodation needs known to you in a timely fashion. You can facilitate this process by including a statement on your syllabus that invites students with disabilities to meet with you to discuss their needs. Here is an example of a syllabus statement:

“Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss his or her specific needs. Also contact the Disability Services Office at (209) 228-6996 as soon as possible to better ensure accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.”

How is confidentiality maintained?

Students with disabilities have the right to meet with you privately regarding disability matters and their confidentiality must be maintained. Treat all disability related information as confidential medical information. It is important to refrain from making direct reference to the accommodation letter or to your knowledge of the student's disability in class. Please contact DS to arrange a three-way meeting between you, DS, and the student to work out any issues and to collaborate on the best instructional strategies for the student.



Do accommodations vary from student to student?

Individual accommodation needs may vary from student to student because a disability, even the same disability, may result in different functional limitations. Compensation skills and strategies vary from one student to another, just as instructional methods vary from one instructor to another.

Do I need to alter my course or evaluation criteria?

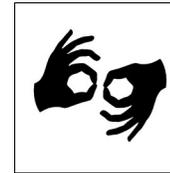
When providing accommodations, institutions of higher education are not required to lower admissions and academic standards or compromise the academic integrity of the school,

department or program. According to federal law, you are not required to provide an accommodation that “fundamentally alters” the course itself, nor are you expected to alter your grading scale or evaluation criteria. Although students with disabilities may receive accommodations, they should be expected to perform at a level commensurate with their peers.



Am I obligated to accommodate all students with disabilities?

If a student with a disability has not secured appropriate verification from DS, you are under no obligation to provide accommodations to that student. It is important to note that a student with a documented disability has the right not to use an accommodation if he/she so desires.



What are some teaching strategies I might use?

Try universal design for learning: an approach to designing course instruction, materials, and content to benefit students with all learning styles without adaptation or retrofitting. Some examples include: course notes and study guides on the web; comprehensive syllabus with clearly delineated statements about course expectations and timelines; etc.

What about inappropriate student behavior?

Students with disabilities are subject to the same Code of Conduct required of all students at UC Merced. If there are incidences of inappropriate behavior that prevent you from effectively teaching your course, contact the Student Judicial Affairs Office at (209) 228-5433. You are always welcome to consult with DS as well.

What if I disagree with the DS accommodations?

If you disagree with DS accommodations or are aware of course-specific factors that have bearing on the accommodation, please contact the DS Office at (209) 228-6996 to arrange a time to meet to discuss the accommodations in question.