



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MERCED
STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Welcome to UC Merced

The University of California, Merced is committed to ensuring equal academic access and inclusion for all students with disabilities based on promoting self-advocacy, universal design (physical and instructional) and diversity. An integral part of this commitment is the coordination of effective academic support services and other resources through Student Accessibility Services (SAS).

Our staff members are readily available to answer questions prospective students may have about services for students with disabilities. In addition, our staff members are ready to act as a campus resource and provide information to faculty on working with students with disabilities in pursuing and achieving their respective academic goals and other campus program opportunities.

At the Post-Secondary level, students have the right not to be identified as disabled. For this reason, students must take the initiative to contact SAS and request academic accommodations.

The student must provide written or digital documentation of a disability from a licensed diagnosing professional. Individuals are eligible to receive reasonable accommodations on the basis of disability if they have a physical or mental condition that limits a major life activity. Where the educational or other functional limitations related to the student's disability require it, reasonable academic accommodations will be provided to the student. SAS, in collaboration with other university personnel and the student, will determine the need for reasonable accommodations and what accommodations may be provided.

Academic Support Services are designed to provide equal access to all students. To be eligible for services, students must provide appropriate documentation upon request. Each service must be approved by the SAS Director and is generally tailored to the individual needs of each student. Services and programs include:

- **Services for Learning Disabilities:** On an individual basis, students who have a diagnosed learning disability will be provided with those academic adjustments needed to assure their full participation in the educational programs offered by the University. Examples of possible accommodations might include note-taking, recorded lectures, extended time for testing, or alternative text.
- **Mobility Assistance:** Students with disabilities who are in the possession of a California Department of Motor Vehicles Disabled Person Parking Plate or Placard and a UC Merced student parking permit are eligible to park in handicapped vehicle designated areas. In addition, SAS can assist in facilitating and communicating awareness of accessibility needs within a classroom, lab environment or campus life programs in coordination with appropriate UC Merced faculty and staff.
- **Interpreter and Other Services for Hearing Impaired Students:** In order to have access to classroom information, students who have a hearing limitation have traditionally used sign language interpreters, real

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time captioners, assistive listening devices and/or other assistive technology as well as note-taking services.

- **Note-Taking Services:** Students with disabilities, such as those with sensory, manual dexterity or auditory processing deficits, may require note-taking assistance to compensate for their specific disability. Note-takers are students enrolled in the same class who volunteer to provide copies of their notes.
- **Proctoring Services:** A student may need to utilize proctoring services or alternative test-taking conditions to accommodate a disability. Examples may include extended time to complete exams, a computer for essay writing formats, large print, Braille, or quiet testing areas. Proctoring services are coordinated by SAS in conjunction with the student and faculty. The alternative testing arrangement allows students to perform closer to their knowledge and ability and does not, in any way, compromise the testing process or academic integrity of the exam (exam content is not altered).
- **Transcription Services:** Transcription assistance is available to students whose disability-based needs cannot be met by their independent use of voice-activated computing. As necessary, SAS can fund a transcriber for students who need typing for assignments or exams.
- **Alternative Media Services:** Students may need alternative access to print or oral material. Students with learning disabilities, visual impairments, and/or hearing impairments may need required course textbooks in alternative media formats, such as Braille, audiotape, enlarged print, or audio/visual captioned media. Students are encouraged to obtain books and reading materials that are already available in alternative formats, such as Bookshare. In cases where required reading materials are unavailable from Bookshare, SAS will make arrangements to obtain and/or reproduce those materials in an alternative media format consistent with the student's identified educational needs.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I get academic accommodations at UC Merced?

- Students must take the initiative to contact the Disability Services Center and submit a request for academic accommodation services. The Disability Services Center must determine that you are an eligible student with a disability in order to receive academic accommodation services at UC Merced. The Disability Services Center will review documentation of your disability, including information about your current functional limitations, to determine whether you have a limitation in a major life activity (according to the ADA) that meets the eligibility service requirements of the Disability Services program.

When should I send in my documentation to the Disability Services Center?

- The Disability Services Center will review your documentation after you have submitted your Statement of Intent to Register (SIR). You should send in your documentation as soon as possible after that to expedite the determination of eligibility, particularly if you are requesting accommodations for the placement exams given prior to orientation.

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What kind of documentation do I need?

- The documentation should have comprehensive information about your current functional limitations. For learning disabilities, assessment testing documentation should typically have been completed within the last three years. For conditions that change quickly, the documentation may need to be from the last 6-12 months. If you have questions, you can speak with the Disability Services Center regarding elements that should be covered in your documentation.

How long does it take to review the documentation?

- The time it takes to review documentation and determine eligibility varies depending on a number of factors, such as the number of requests the Disability Services Center has at that time, the complexity of the documentation and whether it contains sufficient information. The process is most likely to be delayed if the documentation is not complete, because you or the Disability Services Center will need to contact your diagnosing professional for more information. Providing complete documentation as requested will expedite the process.

How do I get disability-related accommodations for housing?

- You can find the disability housing accommodation policy and request submission procedure information on the web at: <https://housing.ucmerced.edu/> You can also contact the Associate Director of Residence and Student Life for more information at: housing@ucmerced.edu.