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Disability Services: Frequently Asked Questions

Will I get the same accommodations at UC Merced as I did in high school?

It depends on many factors. Generally speaking, in high school, academic accommodation support services were based on a different federal law known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). That law required the formulation of an individual education plan (IEP) as part of determining support services that would be required to provide a student with a disability a free and appropriate public education (FAPE).

At the university level, academic accommodation services are based on an entirely different legal basis and requirements according to two major federal laws: Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. A major difference between IDEA and the ADA/504 regulations for example is the requirement under the ADA/Section 504 that a student who wants academic accommodations must self-disclose or identify themselves to the post-secondary institution they are planning on attending.

For an excellent overview students with disabilities rights and responsibilities and the significant differences between high school and the transition to a university, read this pamphlet published by the U.S. Department of Education/Office of Civil Rights entitled:

"Students with Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights and Responsibilities"

How do I get academic accommodations at UC Merced?

To receive academic accommodations at UC Merced, the Disability Services Coordinator (DSC) must first determine that you are an eligible student with a disability. The DSC will review documentation of your disability, including information about your current functional limitations, to determine whether you meet the definition of disability under state and federal law and the extent that your disability impacts your ability to equally access the academic program of instruction and/or other related campus programs.

Academic adjustments are planned in consultation with the student, faculty and other departmental staff as needed. Due to the fact that accommodation services are planned on a case-by-case basis, students deemed eligible to receive Disability Services must schedule an appointment and meet in person with the Disability Services Coordinator to discuss and properly plan service delivery logistics. All service requests inquiries must begin with an appointment with the Disability Services Coordinator. Email is not accepted as a communication mechanism as it does not meet the requirement for a collaborative and deliberative process.

When should I send in my documentation to Disability Services?

Once you have been admitted and have submitted your Statement of Intent to Register (SIR), contact Disability Services to arrange for submission of your disability documentation. The Disability Services Coordinator will review your documentation as part of the Disability Services program eligibility determination process.

What kind of documentation do I need?

The Disability Services Center has disability specific documentation guidelines that are provided to assist licensed professionals in providing documentation of disability to the DSC. Generally, the documentation should have comprehensive information about your current functional limitations and their specific impacts upon learning. For learning disabilities, testing 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. You can speak with the DSC regarding the 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 DSC has at the 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 Coordinator will need to contact your diagnosing professional for more information. Providing complete documentation will expedite the process.

After reviewing the Documentation of Disability FAQs, contact Disability Services for documentation of disability submission information by selecting the email link below:

Documentation of Disability Submission Request

Please specify the documentation of disability guidelines that you will need to assist you in the submission process.

How do I request academic accommodations for the placement exams during Orientation?

If you need accommodations for placement exams, please contact the DSC office for further information. The DSC will work with the departmental unit who is conducting the placement exam to facilitate your placement exam accommodation request. Documentation of disability may be required as part of the accommodation request process.

How do I get disability-related accommodations for housing?

Students requiring a disability housing accommodation must have their physician/clinician complete the Housing Accommodation request form. The Disability Housing Accommodation request form can be downloaded from the UC Merced Housing website.

Housing Office Contact Information:

Student Housing Office
Phone: (209) 228-4663 CAT-HOME
Fax: (209) 228-7640
Website: http://housing.ucmerced.edu
Email: housing@ucmerced.edu

University of California, Merced
Disability Services
5200 Lake Road, Kolligian Library, West Wing, Suite 109, Merced, CA 95343
P.O. Box 2039, Merced, CA 95344
Phone: 209.228.6996 - FAX: 209.228-4542
Email:disabilityservices@ucmerced.edu