University of California Merced

Handbook for Students with Disabilities

Revised: May 2010

Dear Student:

Welcome to the University of California, Merced (UCM)! We are pleased that you have decided to come to the newest campus of the University of California system and the first American Research university built in the 21st century.

Our mission is to promote an inclusive and positive learning environment that emphasizes education, empowerment, informed participation, and equal access to all academic and campus programs by and for students with disabilities. On behalf of the Disabilities Services (DS) staff, we look forward to working with you during your academic career at UCM.

Please utilize this handbook as an important resource for accessing services and accommodations. It is intended to be a brief introduction to our services and programs as well as related campus and community services. In order to provide the best program possible, DS periodically changes its policies, procedures, and services. We will alert you to those changes via UCM email to keep you up-to-date. Additionally, the DS website (http://disability.ucmerced.edu) will always offer the most current handbook available since we update the website as changes are made.

DS is here to ensure that you have equal access to all of UCM's incredible program and activities. Best wishes in your academic career at UCM!

Sincerely,

Fuji Collins, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice Chancellor – Student Health and Wellness

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Overview of Disability Services

Disability Services (DS) is committed to ensuring equal opportunity and inclusion for students with disabilities and assist them in achieving their academic goals and fully participate in campus life program opportunities. We work closely with faculty and staff to ensure that effective and appropriate academic accommodation services are delivered to students with disabilities.

We offer a wide range of services, accommodations, and auxiliary services for students with disabilities. We design these services individually, based on the specific needs of each student and individual academic requirements.

Our Philosophy

The DS philosophy is to assist students with disabilities to achieve their full learning potential and academic success by promoting equal educational access for all. This is achieved through the collaborative approach between the student, faculty, and DS. Students develop the necessary self-advocacy skills to confidently engage and participate in the academic and campus life opportunities at UCM.

We are dedicated to the principles of diversity and equal inclusion founded upon independent living values that support the social integration of all students, with and without disabilities, in the rich campus life opportunities provided at our University.

How to Find Our Office

Disability Services is located in the Kolligian Library (KL107 and KL109). The center can be entered from the Student First Access Door. There is a fully accessible walkway leading from the public parking lot, adjacent to Scholars Lane to the library. We are in the north corridor.

We can be reached by phone at 209-228-6996; 209-228-8890 (TTY); 209-228-4661 (FAX); disabilityservices@ucmerced.edu.

Code of Ethics

UC Merced is an Institutional Member of the Association of Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD). Disability Services Center staff adheres to the Code of Ethics established by AHEAD, as follows:

We agree that these principles are the Code of Ethics for postsecondary disability service providers. As professionals, we are responsible for upholding, supporting, and advancing these ideas whenever possible. Members of AHEAD agree to monitor themselves and their peers in accordance with the spirit and provisions of this code, as delineated by the following principles:

• Postsecondary disability service providers are committed to facilitating the highest levels of educational excellence and potential quality of life for postsecondary students with disabilities.

• Postsecondary disability service providers strive to achieve and maintain the highest levels of competence and integrity in all areas of assistance to adult students with disabilities. This support is guided by the consistent use of objective, professional judgment in all areas, especially when addressing the confidential nature of the student's disability.

• Postsecondary disability service providers continually participate in professional activities and educational opportunities designed to strengthen the personal, educational, and vocational quality of life for students with disabilities. This includes the on-going development of strategies, skills, research, and knowledge pertinent to the highest quality of disability service delivery whenever and wherever it occurs.

• Postsecondary disability service providers carry out their responsibilities in accordance with AHEAD professional standards and policy guidelines for adult students with disabilities. When certified, licensed, or affiliated with other professionals or organizations, they comply with those professional guidelines as well.

• Postsecondary service providers are actively engaged in supporting and clarifying institutional, state, provincial, and federal laws, policies, and procedures applicable to the service delivery to students with disabilities. Compliance implies that professionals will not condone or participate in any unethical or illegal acts discussed within these guidelines.

Confidentiality

Disability Services views all materials pertaining to a student's disability as confidential. This policy is based on governmental mandates regarding the confidential treatment of disability-related information.

Any written material regarding a student's disability obtained by DS is used to verify the disability and plan for appropriate services. DS is the authorized entity to verify that a student's disability requires reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access and opportunity. DS maintains appropriate confidential files verifying students' disabilities on behalf of the university; these records are protected in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations.

According to the Association on Higher Education and Disabilities (AHEAD), disability related records provided by a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, or other recognized professional are not subject to free access under FERPA. According to AHEAD, it is only necessary to share with the faculty the information that a student has a documented disability and the need for accommodation(s). Faculty members have no need to know the nature of the disability, only that it has been appropriately verified by the office assigned this responsibility on behalf of the institution.

DS will not release any information regarding a student's disability without his/her informed written consent. The information a student shares with faculty members regarding their disability is confidential and must be treated as such in accordance with university policy, and state and federal regulations governing student records and confidentiality.

A student may request to review the contents of his/her own file when the DS coordinator is present. All information in the file is the property of DS.

DS will retain all disability documentation for six years after the student leaves the university.

Rights and Responsibilities

Disability Services. DS is a student support services office. Our focus is on assisting students through collaboration and discussion involving the student, DS and faculty in devising academic accommodation solutions. This requires a teamwork approach based on positive and constructive professional relationships between DS staff, faculty, and student.

DS, faculty and the student each play an important role and have rights and responsibilities as part of ensuring academic accommodations are effective in meeting the individual needs of the student and thereby ensuring equal educational opportunities.

DS rights and responsibilities include:

• Determine the reasonable accommodations that will be provided to students with disabilities based on the essential functions, abilities, skills, knowledge and the standards required to effectively participate in a particular academic course, academic and/or campus life program, service, activity and facility.

• Request and receive current documentation of disability according to published UC disability documentation guidelines that supports requests for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services.

• While the preferred accommodation service choice as expressed by the eligible student with disability will be given careful consideration, the University reserves the right to select among equally effective accommodations, adjustments and/or auxiliary aids and services in meeting its institutional obligations to meet compliance with University, state and federal non-discrimination requirements.

• Deny a request for accommodations, academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services when the documentation demonstrates that the request is not warranted, or if the request is not submitted per established DSC policies and/or results in creating an undue administrative or financial burden.

• Review, analyze and determine appropriate academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids in courses, programs, services, activities and facilities for eligible students with disabilities who are eligible for reasonable accommodation by reason of disability per UC, state, federal non-discrimination policies.

• Cancel eligibility for accommodation services to student's who fail to abide by established DS program policies and procedures, especially related to DS communications and/or meeting requests to students regarding accommodation service coordination.

• Advocate that campus academic courses, programs, services, activities and facilities, when viewed in their entirety, are equally accessible to students with disabilities.

• Evaluate applicants to the University with no regard to disability status and maintain confidentiality of medical records and related information as required by law.

• Provide information to students with disabilities in accessible formats upon request.

Faculty. The faculty are valued as members in the accommodations process because of what they teach and how they teach it. DS welcomes faculty input on provision of accommodations in the classroom. Feedback from faculty informs the DS Coordinator on how well an accommodation is working for a student, and also lets the DS Coordinator know if there is an issue other than disability that is affecting student performance. By working together in this way, the academic integrity of a UC Merced education is ensured.

Faculty members' rights and responsibilities include:

- To be treated respectfully by all students.
- Determine the content of each course and how it is taught.
- To fail a student who does not perform to passing standards.
- Maintain the academic standards and integrity of their courses.
- Request verification of eligibility for accommodations from DS.
- To expect class attendance and timely submission of assignments.
- Award grades appropriate to the level of the student's mastery of the material.
- Expect students with disabilities to meet the same academic standards as their peers.
- Consult with DS about students as appropriate regarding academic accommodations.
- Provide academic accommodations as deemed eligible by DS.
- Provide an atmosphere in which all students can learn course material.
- Notify students that accommodations are available and are coordinated through DS.
- Refer students to DS that self-disclose or express concerns regarding having disability.
- Meet with students confidentially to discuss their specific academic accommodations.
- Consult with DS and the student to develop and implement appropriate accommodations.
- Assist students who need note takers by making an announcement at the start of the term.
- Use a syllabus statement and class announcements to invite students to disclose their disability.
- Maintain student confidentiality - treat and protect all disability-related information as confidential.
- Provide instructional materials and exams in an alternative format when documentation supports the request.

Student. *Student rights and responsibilities include*:

- Be treated in a courteous and professional manner by all University personnel, faculty and student staff.
- Equal programmatic access to academic and campus life programs and opportunities as offered to all qualified UCM students.
- Confidentiality of medical information regarding their disability.
- Access and utilize the informal and formal student grievance procedures to resolve complaints as provided for by University non-discrimination policies and procedures.
- Meet academic qualifications and essential institutional technical standards for courses, programs, services and activities.
- Self-identify as an individual with a disability when an accommodation is requested and to seek information, counsel and assistance as needed to effectively and responsibly self-advocate in communicating with non Disability Services staff (faculty and other campus department staff personnel) to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of disability services.
- Comply with the UC Merced Student Code of Conduct, especially as it relates to personal conduct and communications with Disability Services Center staff, faculty and other departmental unit staff in properly requesting and using eligible academic accommodation services as part of the overall UCM student services mission.
- As part of the Disability Services eligibility determination process, provide documentation of disability in the form of a written report that clearly documents the impact upon learning within a post-secondary academic environment in accordance with UC documentation of disability guidelines.
- Work collaboratively and cooperatively with DS staff, follow established DS administrative procedures and academic accommodation service delivery policies, DSC staff requests and communications regarding timely notice in requesting accommodation services, and other DSC planning and administrative logistical needs, especially those involving alternative media production or auxiliary aids and services.
- Meet with faculty at the beginning of each semester to discuss implementation of accommodations.
- Notify DS regarding any problems with implementing accommodations or needed changes.
- Follow DS guidelines and procedural requirements for using approved accommodations.

How to Qualify for and Access DS Services

To be considered eligible for academic accommodation services, students have the responsibility to self- disclose by contacting DS and request to become registered with Disability Services. This will entail a 5-step process as outlined below:

1) Submit documentation of disability (per general and disability type specific guidelines) to DS
2) Disability Services student intake appointment
3) Eligibility Determination for Disability Services
4) Accommodation Services Plan (ASP) appointment with the DSC
5) A Student and Faculty appointment meeting

The following step-by-step process provides additional information related to each DS registration step.

Step 1. Submit Documentation of Disability to DS

A student with a disability who is seeking academic accommodation from Disability Services is required to provide medical documentation supporting the provision of reasonable accommodations. Each disability type requires different forms of documentation. Documentation guidelines are provided for common disability types. For documentation guidelines that are specific to your needs, please review the documentation of disability general requirements as noted on the DS web-page.

The purpose of documentation of disability is to verify that a diagnosed disability meets the definition of disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and that the disability requires academic accommodations to equally access a post-secondary, University-learning environment.

Documentation of disability must have been prepared within the last 3 years and provide enough information to assist the Disability Services Coordinator in determining fair and reasonable accommodations. Recommendations from qualified practitioners are considered a significant part of the process, but are not a guarantee that all recommendations will be implemented or assigned.

Step 2. Disability Services Intake Appointment

Make an appointment with DS to determine your eligibility and to establish accommodations and/or auxiliary services.

Step 3. Eligibility Determination for Disability Services

The Disability Services Coordinator (DSC) will review submitted documentation of disability to determine eligibility for Disability Services If necessary, the DS coordinator will seek clarification and, if necessary, more information. The final determination for eligibility for accommodation services rests with the coordinator.

After reviewing submitted documentation and verifying eligibility for accommodation services, DS will notify the student to make an Accommodation Services plan appointment to meet with the DS coordinator and discuss approved accommodation services and related DS procedures.

If the coordinator makes an eligibility determination decision that a students is not eligible for a requested academic accommodation service, the coordinator will discuss with the student what further action the student can take for reconsideration of the request (such as to provide more detailed current medical documentation).

Provisional Status. Once you have completed the steps for eligibility, it is possible that your documentation may not be sufficient for full eligibility. In some cases, a provisional status is allowed which enables students to receive disability services for one semester while he/she pursues obtaining current and complete documentation.

Step 4. Accommodation Services Plan Appointment

At the Accommodation Services Plan (ASP) appointment, the student and the DS coordinator will review and discuss eligible accommodation services and request policies. Approved accommodations will be stated in an "Academic Accommodation Services Eligibility" (AASE) notification letter and emailed to the student and each faculty member. As part of this comprehensive assessment and evaluation process, your coordinator will determine which services are necessary to assure your full participation in your academic program at UCM.

Auxiliary services, aids and accommodations vary from student to student and are based on each student's individual assessment, the type of disability and the academic environment. Students with different disabilities may have different academic problems and sometimes two people with the same disability are affected in different ways. Some students may require many accommodations, while other students require few. In determining what type of services and accommodations are necessary, DS gives primary consideration to the student's requests.

DS approves auxiliary services, aids and accommodations for which a student has disability related academic needs. Auxiliary services, aids and accommodations are not intended to give students with disabilities an unfair advantage, but to remove

barriers that could prevent students with disabilities from learning and from demonstrating what they have learned.

The ASN letter serves to verify and notify faculty that a student has been deemed eligible to receive academic accommodations and specifies those academic accommodations. It will provide a summary description of the eligible academic accommodations the student may utilize within a course for that semester.

Step 5. Student - Faculty Meeting Appointment

The student is responsible to meet with their respective faculty members to review approved accommodations and to discuss implementation strategies with faculty. Most faculty are able to directly provide appropriate accommodation such as exam testing accommodations (proctoring); while some, such as sign language interpreting, are coordinated with and through Disability Services.

The student and faculty both sign the Academic Accommodations Services Eligibility notification letter verifying that a meeting and discussion had been held. The AASE is returned to Disability Services by the student and placed in the student's file.

The AASE letter is considered a confidential student record under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The student has the right not to disclose the nature of their disability if they so choose.

Continuing Students

Continuing students must re-register with Disability Services in order to maintain eligibility for academic accommodations for each academic year they are enrolled at UC Merced. This is a UC system-wide and UCM DS program and policy requirement.

Students will be notified by email when their annual DS accommodation service planning appointments can be made for the upcoming year following the close of the Priority Registration period which occurs at the end of the spring semester.

Students who fail to make an appointment and meet with the DS coordinator will be placed in "Inactive Status" and will no longer be eligible for accommodation services until they have met with the coordinator. A student who has been placed in "Inactive Status" for less than 3 years can re-register with DS by making an appointment and meeting with the DS coordinator according to Step 4 of DS Registration Steps as noted in the previous section.

Repeat the following each academic year.

Plan your schedule for the semester and register for classes. Make use of the priority registration if you are eligible.

If appropriate, submit a Request for Alternative Format for Textbooks or a Request for Note-takers with DS as soon as you have registered, and no later than four weeks before classes begin. You will receive an electronic copy of your Letter of Accommodations to your student email. (DS will only use your student email.)

Deliver your Letter of Accommodations to each professor during the first week of classes. You must deliver a letter to your professor in order to receive accommodations for that class. DS services are only effective once the letter has been delivered. Accommodations cannot be arranged retroactively.

Meet with your professors during their office hours early in the semester, preferably in the first week of classes. It is a good idea to have them sign the Letter of Accommodations at this time. Discuss with your professors how you can work together to ensure that you receive the appropriate accommodations. This is also an excellent time to discuss testing accommodations, if you are eligible and using them, and fill out the Proctoring Service Request form. Contact DS if you need assistance in obtaining appropriate accommodations, or if you would like changes to your accommodations.

Disability Verification Requirements

Applicants/students are required to provide the following disability documentation to DS in order to determine eligibility for DS services. Please ensure all disability documentation has been signed and dated by the individual filling out the form.

Legal Blindness or Visual Impairment

A copy of your most recent eye examination results from your ophthalmologist or optometrist verifying your legal blindness or other visual impairment. In general, applicants utilizing conductive lenses must have a corrected vision on not less than 20/200 to be eligible for DS services.

If you do not meet this requirement but have a visual impairment that significantly impacts your academic performance, you may still be eligible for services.

Deafness or Hard of Hearing

A copy of an audiogram, administered within the last two years by your physician, audiometrist or audiologist, verifying the extent of your hearing loss.

Learning Disabilities and Attention Deficit Disorder

For learning disabilities, records of a psycho-educational evaluation performed by a qualified professional.

For Attention Deficit Disorder, please have a psychiatrist or other qualified professional fill out the AD/HD Certification Form.

Mobility Impairment, Speech Impairment, Acquired Brain Injury, Chronic Illness, or other disabilities not listed above.

Please have your physician or other appropriate professional complete the Mobility Impairments and Other Functional Impairments Due to Medical Conditions documentation form.

All relevant questions must be answered or the submission will be considered incomplete.

Where can I get more information? For more information on the Disability Services at UCM, including relevant university policies and practices, please explore this website (disability.ucmerced.edu).

DS Support Services

The support services provided by DS are listed and described below. Eligibility for a specific service is determined by a review of the documentation provided during your meeting with the DS coordinator.

Notetaking. Provided for students with a wide variety of disabilities. This will be determined on verified need after meeting with our DS coordinator.

Proctoring. Provided for student with a variety of disabilities. Test-taking accommodations are determined based on verified need after meeting the DS coordinator. Accommodations are tailored to the student's specific disability-based need. Professors are notified of the accommodation request through a letter from DS, the student meeting with the professor/TA and an email from DS proctoring service.

Transcription. Provided primarily for students with learning disabilities, visual impairments or disabilities impacting manual dexterity. This service involves the conversion of information from any format into another (e.g., tape to transcript, text to Braille, handwriting to typed, etc.).

Alternative Format. Provided mainly for students with visual or learning disabilities. Reading may be done live or onto a tape. Scanning involves using a computer to scan the material and convert it to a word processing program, which can, in turn, convert to Braille, large print, or a speech synthesized reading program. DS has an institutional membership with Bookshare and Reading for the Blind & Dyslexic to assist a student in the acquisition of alternative media materials.

Interpreting/Captioning. Provided almost exclusively for hearing impaired and deaf students but occasionally for other disabilities as well. Interpreters translate or interpret what the professor or classmates are saying into the sign language system preferred by the student receiving the service. Captioning provides a verbatim transcript of a lecture which can be reviewed by the student or converted into Braille, large print, or scanned for a speech synthesized reading program. Real-time captioning is the contemporaneous transcription of spoken English into text onto a computer screen. The stenocaptioner will type words spoken in class on his/her stenotype machine, and those words will appear simultaneously on the laptop screen that is provided to the student. Students who are receiving RTC services have the option of receiving transcripts of real-time captioning. The typed words that the student sees on its computer monitor during class will be printed out and made available to the student. Transcripts are not a substitute for attendance at classes.

Assisted Listening Devices (ALD). Some classrooms have ALDs that are permanently installed. DS will work with those students requiring this service to ensure effective utilization.

Back-up Services and Accommodations. If a previously scheduled sign language interpreter or captioner cannot show up for their assignment (e.g., calls in sick), DS will use its best efforts to arrange for a substitute communications service provider to cover the assignment. If the same type of communication service is not available, DS will attempt to secure the services of an alternative type of service provider. For example, if a substitute interpreter is not available, DS will attempt to arrange for RTC services. DS also will provide a hand-held tape recorder for use in class to any deaf or hard-of-hearing student who requests one.

Campus Orientation. Students with visual impairments or learning disabilities may request a campus orientation with the DS coordinator. The student will learn to traverse the campus as they would during a regular day – going from classrooms to labs, lecture halls, or bus stops.

Priority Enrollment/Registration. Undergraduate students with disability-based needs that impact their ability to get from class to class quickly, students who need to arrange for service providers, students who must take a reduced load, students who cannot attend classes during certain parts of the day, etc. may be entitled to priority enrollment. Again, this service is based on disability need as described in the verification of disability.

Assistive Technology. DS maintains adaptive computer equipment/software. A student must have a documented need and training to use this equipment. DS currently has available the following assistive software programs: JAWS (screen reader); MAGic (screen magnification), and Kurzweil 3000 (alternative media reader). Additional assistive technologies can include digital and cassette tape recorders and the use of a laptop in class.

Mediation. DS staff are available to assist a student in advocacy when his/her attempts have not been as successful as they would have liked. We welcome meeting students to discuss strategies to make their interactions with faculty and staff more successful. We are also available to meet with students with faculty/staff as a means of facilitating communication and understanding.

Disability Student Association. The DSA is a student-recognized organization at UCM. Membership is open to any UCM student. Membership can be rewarding for both the student with disability and the student who is interested in advocating for individuals with disabilities. The mission of the association is to provide education, support and friendship through meeting, programs, workshops, and socials. The association, in conjunction with DS, provides education for the campus.

Other Services. Other services offered by DS including housing appeals, tutorial referrals, disability management counseling and information and referrals among others. If you want or need information about support services, please contact DS.

Co-curricular, Extracurricular, and Nonacademic Accommodations

Your experiences outside of the classroom are an important part of your UCM education. If you wish to attend events, lectures, registered group meetings, and the like that are not part of your academic program, the campus sponsor of the event – department, office, or student group – is responsible for providing the appropriate accommodations with advance notice.

Guidelines for Accommodations

DS is mandated by Federal and State Law and University policy to provide academic support services to regularly enrolled students with documented permanent and temporary disabilities.

The following information is designed to provide you with specific guidelines for requesting accommodation services at UCM.

Accommodation Service Request. The following DS accommodation service request (ASR) procedures are provided to assist students in submitting timely requests for approved accommodation services.

Accommodations can be time and logistically intensive and require close planning between the student, DS staff, faculty and other UCM departmental unit staff personnel as needed.

Students with disabilities who need staff or time intensive accommodations (e.g. reader services, interpreter services, alternative media (e-Text) conversion of required course textbooks, etc.) are urged to contact DS as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements for these accommodation services.

Student Responsibilities Include:

1. Submit properly completed ASR forms in a reasonable and timely manner according to the specific DS policy and form submission procedures.
2. Work collaboratively with DS staff, faculty, and other UC staff as requested.
3. Promptly respond to DS accommodation service inquiries and/or meeting requests.
4. Cancellation: Promptly inform DS at least 24 hours prior to an accommodation service delivery date and/or event if the student cannot attend so that all parties are adequately informed.

DS Responsibilities Include:

1. Promptly respond to student submitted ASR forms and begin service delivery.
2. Work collaboratively with student, faculty and/or other staff to meet student's accommodation needs.
3. Provide timely status updates information to student regarding submitted ASR.
4. Promptly respond to student accommodation service inquiries and/or meeting requests.

Overview of Procedures for Requesting Accommodations

1. Student obtains from DS the appropriate accommodation request form and submits the form to DS.

2. DS processes the request in coordination with student, faculty and/or staff as required to accomplish the accommodation request.

3. Cancellation: Students are responsible for informing DS as soon as possible if the accommodation service is no longer required or requires modification.

Student Guidelines for Requesting Alternative Media

The following steps are designed to assist DS in providing you with timely and effective Alternative Media Services through cooperation, good communication, and advance notice. Failure to follow these steps may result in a delay in receiving alternative media materials.

1. Utilize priority enrollment to sign up for classes. As a DS student, you receive priority enrollment so that you are able to predict your course schedule in advance and are able to provide DS with advance notification of your alternative media needs. Don't miss this opportunity to inform DS as soon as possible about the course materials you'll need.
2. Contact the course instructor/department in advance for reading lists. Contact them as soon as you are enrolled in the course to find out what books and/or instructional materials are required. Attach your class syllabi if possible.
3. Check availability of the textbook in an alternative format. Check to see if the textbook or instructional material is available in an alternative format through DS. If you are a client of the Department of Rehabilitation or other state equivalent, and have an RFG&D account established as part of your educational plan, you may order your books-on-tape directly from RFB&D. Student must check and document whether required course textbooks are already available in alternative media format (Amazon.com, Bookshare.org, RFBD, etc.) PRIOR TO submitting an alternative media request form and having DS perform alternative media conversion on required course

textbooks. Students must purchase required course textbooks that are available in alternative format (e-Books).

4. If the student is a client of the Department of Rehabilitation (DR), and requires reader services, the student must complete the DR reader form prior to initiation of reader services. The student or the reader is responsible for turning in the reader forms to DR for payment.
5. Students must be enrolled in the courses and provide proof of purchase of course textbooks to DS before receiving the alternative media equivalents.
6. Material provided to the UCM Disability Services for the purpose of conversion to alternative format may be disassembled and returned to the student in its altered condition.
7. The UCM Disability Services will not be held responsible for any damage to the materials that occur as a result of conversion to alternative format.
8. The student is responsible for informing the UCM DS Alternative Media Services Coordinator at (209) 228- 6996, KL 109, whenever changes occur that affect the student's need for alternate media services.
9. All alternative media materials will be used solely for the eligible student's own educational purposes and will not be copied or duplicated for use by others. In many cases you may be required to sign a copyright letter that satisfies the publisher's legal requirements for the use of the product, whether in e-text or other format, e.g., Braille.
10. All eTexts materials (alternative formatted textbooks) or other delivery media such as CD/DVD/Tape must be returned to UC Merced Disability Services by the last day of the academic semester.

All students are required to establish an ucmerced.edu email address. Students are responsible for keeping the address current and for regularly monitoring their email for official communications from the University. Be sure to keep your information up-to-date.

Whenever alternative media has been requested, immediately notify DS of any changes in your reading requirements, or course enrollment status. Promptly inform DS of any problems with the alternative media that is provided to you. We will promptly investigate the reported problem and take appropriate steps to resolve the problem.

The turn-around time for alternative media materials is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Communication Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students

DS is committed to ensuring that deaf and hard-of-hearing students are able to participate in all of the programs, services and activities offered on this campus and to ensuring that their communication assistance needs are met. DS is available so that you may be able to obtain auxiliary services, aids, or accommodations to University programs, services and activities.

DS provides communications services for: regularly scheduled academic activities (e.g., lectures, seminars, examinations, discussion sections, laboratory sections, and meeting with faculty, teaching assistants and academic advisors); meetings with academic advisors; specially scheduled academic events and activities (e.g., one-time examination review sessions, tutoring sessions, and meeting with faculty and other campus personnel); and extracurricular activities and events. These communications services may include a combination of one or more of the following:

Sign Language Interpreting and Transliteration. The term sign language interpreting is often used to refer to sign language transliteration as well as sign language interpretation. Interpreting is the interpretation of spoken English into American Sign Language and American Sign Language into spoken English. Transliterating is the transliteration of spoken English into a manual representation of English, and from a manual representation of English into spoken English. DS also provides oral interpreting serviced and signed English.

Real-Time Captioning (RTC). Real-time captioning is the contemporaneous transcription of spoken English into text onto a computer screen. The stenocaptioner will type words spoken in class on his/her own stenotype machine, and those words appear simultaneously on the laptop screen that is provided to the student. Students who are receiving RTC services have the option of receiving transcripts of RTC. The typed words that the student sees in class will be printed out and made available to the student.

Active Listening Devices. Some classrooms have ALDs that are installed. Please consult with DS to obtain information on location, etc. for this service.

Notetaking Service Guidelines

Notetaking includes recording the main points of what is stated, highlighting important main topics or themes that are emphasized by the faculty, defining new or difficult vocabulary, and organizing the material to best present the class information. Notes are not a word-for-word record of what happens in class. Notetaking is not a substitute for attending classes.

UCM currently utilizes a volunteer note-taking option. Students have an option of requesting that DS secure a note taker when they sign up for notetaking services.

Properly submit your request for notetaking services as soon as you enroll in a course. The DS coordinator will review and discuss your request. As part of this request, faculty will contacted by DS to make a Volunteer Class Notes Provider Service Request announcement in class and will post it on the UCM CROPS course site. Interested students will be requested to contact DS and an overview will be provided on note taking services procedures. If and when a student has been selected, you will be contacted by email that class notes have been submitted and available for your review and you will be able to select the note taker for whom the notes best work for you. After the selection has been made, the note taking student will be notified by DS to begin delivery of class notes to DS or be directed to you. If you decide that the notes are to come to DS, you will be assigned a box for your retrieval. If you decide to work directly with the note taking student, that is your option as well.

Confidentiality is extended to all students receiving services and DS staff are required to keep all student- and assignment-related information strictly confidential. If you chose to work directly with your note taking student or having them send them to you via email then they may learn who you are.

Even though you have a notetaker, you are still expected to attend class on a regular basis. In accordance to DS policy, if you fail to attend class for any reason not related to your disability, your notetaking may be interrupted or withdrawn. To restore service, you will need to meet with the DS coordinator to reassess your need for service. Communication between you and your notetaker is critical to the success of your notetaking service. Student's who have developed a relationship with their notetaker by making arrangements to meet on the phone or in person, have reported greater satisfaction with the notetaking service. They have also identified that solidifying arrangements for receiving the notes is essential to a successful term.

Based on your disability, arrangement can be made by the DS coordinator to obtain class notes in an alternative format. Your notetaker is to make notes available to you within 24 hours. They should not be asked to perform any other duties. Should

you need other kinds of assistance, please contact DS. If another student, registered with DS is in your class, your notetaker may be providing notes to them as well. If your notetaker cannot attend class, it is still your notetaker's responsibility to provide you with notes.

Proctor/Test-taking Guidelines

Depending upon the student's documentation, appropriate test accommodations may include the exam printed in large print or Braille; additional time for the exam; one-on-one assistance such as the proctor reading the test questions and recording the student's answers. Students taking exams will be held to the same standards as that of their classmates.

It is the student's responsibility to request service at least 10 business days in advance to ensure that a proctor and a room for an examination can be obtained. Students are required to complete a Proctor Service Request (PSR) form for all quizzes, midterms and final exams. The request form also requires the student to contact his/her professor/TA to discuss their accommodations and to determine whether the professor/TA or the DS will administer the exam. The student will receive a confirmation email from DS when all arrangements have been completed. This email will confirm the reserved room location, the assigned proctor, allotted time for the exam, and the time you need to arrive at the DS office.

The required exam arrangements can be made by the faculty or by DS. The faculty is encouraged to administer the exams. When faculty administers exams, there are distinct advantages to the student and to the faculty; exams are retained in the department; the student has an easier opportunity to hear announcements and ask questions if necessary; and the regular classroom may be used if extended time is all that is needed.

As a DS student, you must be aware that the proctor is responsible to maintain the integrity of the testing environment and to provide a disability-based accommodation. Before the student is given the exam, the proctor will ask you to remove all books and bags from the immediate testing area. The proctor will monitor you throughout the exam. If the proctor sees or senses any problem or irregularity in the testing session, he/she is required to inform DS immediately.

Note: In normal circumstances, DS generally does not support pop quizzes due to the shortness of notification and the potential lack of office space. However, If your course has quizzes, you will need to inform your faculty/TA that they must contact DS in the event of a pop quiz as soon as it is planned. The faculty should deliver the quiz immediately to DS for administration and enclose instructions for administering the quiz (e.g., time allotment and authorized materials). We will also work directly with faculty to assist in this accommodation.

How to Resolve Service Delivery Problems

It is fair to say that despite all efforts to provide you with outstanding service, a problem may occur. If this should happen, we strongly encourage you to let us know so that we can work together to solve the problem as quickly as possible. Experience has shown that many times a problem arises because of a misunderstanding or miscommunication; clarification can be a quick and effective solution. We can help with suggestions on how to resolve problems you may have with your service providers, professors, TA's or departments. It is best to discuss the issue with the individual involved first, and if you have not arrived at a satisfactory resolution, then go to the person's supervisor or department chair. If DS is part of the problem, we want to know that too. Should DS be unable to assist you in resolving the problem, we can refer you to another on-campus resource.

We recommend the following progression as the most efficient way of dealing with issues:

1. Start by discussing the problem with the individual involved.
2. If the matter is unresolved, communicate with the person in charge of the services or program in question.
3. If the matter is still unresolved, call and make an appointment with the DS coordinator.
4. If the matter is still unresolved, please contact the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Health and Services.

The University is available to assist you in resolving conflicts by informal means. Throughout any of these procedures you may expect to be treated with respect, receive a timely response, and have your issues dealt with in a confidential manner (if so requested). Retaliation in any form against persons who file complaints is prohibited by disability-related law and University policy. The University expects from you that you bring up any problems early, give clear and detailed information and be respectful of those who are working with you. If you wish to know more about your rights as a disabled person under Federal and State law and University policy, DS can refer you to the appropriate entity.

When a student believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of disability, he or she may file, in writing a formal grievance with the Disability Services Coordinator, Office of Disability Services, who is the University's compliance officer for ADA Title II/Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The statement should be as specific as possible regarding the actions(s) or inaction(s) that precipitated the grievance: date, place, persons involved, efforts made to settle the matter informally, and the remedy sought.

If a student with a grievance alleging disability discrimination is also employed by the University, and the grievance arises out of the student's employment, the grievance may be filed under the University's Complaint Procedures in Cases of Alleged Unlawful Discrimination or Harassment. If the Disability Services Coordinator receives a grievance which appears to allege disability discrimination arising out of a student's employment, the grievance may be referred to the appropriate office to be handled under the policy applicable to employees.

Where the grievance arises out of a decision made by the Office of Disability Services regarding a student's eligibility for academic or other accommodations, the grievance will be forwarded for investigation to the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Health & Wellness. Grievances otherwise involving academic matters, for example, cases in which grades are disputed, will also be forwarded to the Provost, who will determine which office(s) should conduct the investigation. Otherwise, the Director of Disability Services shall investigate the matters set forth in the written grievance. In conducting this investigation, the investigator may forward a copy of the grievance statement to the persons whose actions (or inactions) are the subject of the grievance, and may request a written response from appropriate individuals in the University. The investigator may also choose to interview witnesses, to meet with concerned parties, to receive oral or written statements, and to make other appropriate inquiries.

After completing the investigation, the investigator will forward a copy of a report and recommendation to the appropriate University official. If the complaint arises out of an academic unit, the report will be forwarded to the dean of the appropriate school or college, unless he is the subject of the grievance. In such cases, the report will be sent to the Provost. If the complaint arises from a nonacademic unit, the report will be forwarded to the administrative head of the unit, unless he is the subject of the grievance. In such cases, the report will be forwarded to the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Student Health and Wellness, who will forward it to the Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs, who in turn will forward it to the appropriate officer of the University.

Within forty-five (45) days of the filing of the grievance, the Provost, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Health & Wellness (AVC – HW), or administrative head will render a decision on the merits of the student's complaint. If resolution is not possible within forty-five (45) days, the Provost, AVC - HW, or administrative head shall inform the student of the status of the investigation.

Copies of the decision by the Provost, AVC - HW, or administrative head will be sent to the student, the Provost (when not issued by him), and the Director of Disability Services. A copy may also be sent to the department and/or the persons whose actions (or inactions) are the subject of the grievance, as appropriate.

UCM developed this information in accordance with these references: Public Law 1001-336, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; and the University of California Policies Applying to Campus Activities, Organizations and Students, Section 140.00.

Emergency Procedures for Students with Disabilities

As a student with a disability, it is important to take responsibility for your own safety. In order to ensure your safety, develop an emergency plan or a strategy in advance. How you respond to an emergency depends on the type of emergency, your specific disability, the location of your classes, and where you work or live on campus.

For any emergency and for students with any type of disability, the first step is to contact 9-911. When reporting the emergency, it is important to indicate your specific evacuation needs (e.g., you use a wheelchair, a respirator, or have breathing or stamina difficulties).

Students with Mobility Impairments. Elevators provide access for students with mobility impairments to classrooms throughout campus. However, during an emergency such as a fire, elevators can be very dangerous and often cease working. Furthermore, some elevators automatically go to the first floor and would leave people with mobility impairments stranded on upper floors. As a result, it is unlikely that you will be able to evacuate without the assistance of others. The evacuation of a person who uses a wheelchair is best left to emergency personnel with extensive training in evacuation procedures and the proper equipment. Asking untrained individuals to assist in evacuation could lead to injury to yourself or the person assisting you.

The following steps can help to ensure your safety in an emergency:

1. Make a Plan. For every building in which you have class, work, or live on campus, locate an area or refuge, which could include a stairway or an adjacent classroom/room with a fire rated door and walls, where you will await rescue during a fire. A stairway must be large enough for you to sit without obstructing the flow of traffic as people exit the building via the stairway. Obstructing the flow of traffic could place you and others in danger. If using a stairway for an area of rescue is not feasible, locate a room that is in close proximity to the stairway that has smoke and fire rated protection from the doors and walls. Also note any difficulty you might have opening the door and ask for assistance if necessary.
2. Inform others of your plan. In most instances, this should be the instructor of your class, your resident advisor, or your supervisor. Let him or her know the location (i.e. classroom in the Northwest corner of this floor) you have selected to await rescue personnel in the case of an emergency. This person should be responsible for the following: Ensuring that you reach and access the area of refuge; alerting emergency personnel of your whereabouts in the building in addition to

making them aware of the nature of your disability. Information such as whether you use a respirator or a powered wheelchair is crucial information as firemen plan to evacuate you.

3. When an elevator becomes inoperable, students with mobility impairments should alert someone (faculty or staff) to the situation. The Police Department Dispatcher, available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, should be contacted immediately at 228-8273. They will ensure that Facilities Management are contacted and the elevator repaired.

4. If you are a student who uses a respirator, elevator stoppage could be an emergency situation if your oxygen is in short supply. In this instance, 9-911 should be contacted and emergency personnel dispatched immediately for evacuation or medical assistance.

Students with Visual Impairments. As a student with a visual impairment, you should develop a plan of action for emergency situations as well. An ideal time to develop this plan is at the start of each semester as you work with DS to locate your classrooms. You should follow these steps: Identify the emergency exit(s) that is closest to your classroom, dorm, or workspace; determine if you will need assistance in the event of emergency. If you will require assistance, discuss your specific needs with your instructor, resident advisor, or supervisor.

Students with Seizure Disorders. If you have a seizure disorder that is not controlled by medication and have seizures often, it is wise to alert your professor to your condition and how you wish for them to respond. Let them know what to expect if you were to have a seizure during class and under what circumstances it would be necessary to call for an ambulance. For additional information, you should refer your professor to DS so they can provide some brief instructions on how to react to a seizure.