Common Questions

Who qualifies for services?

Students of UC Merced who are enrolled and have a documented disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are eligible for services through the SAS office. An individual with a disability shall refer to:

1. Any person who has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual;
2. Any person who has a record of such an impairment;
3. Any person who is regarded as having such an impairment.

What services are available?

Services are based on student's disability and functional limitation within the academic setting. There are a wide variety of services for students with disabilities. See "Academic Support Services" tab on our web page for more information.

How do I apply for services?

UC Merced students who have fully enrolled in the university and have a verified disability are eligible for services through the SAS office. To receive services please fill out the Accommodation Inquiry and Request Form on our website. The SAS office will help you set up an appointment to meet with a staff member and register. At this appointment, you will need to provide documentation verifying your disability and the functional impacts. This initial meeting provides the opportunity to discuss the experiences of the student with the disability, while also allowing SAS staff to identify potential strategies and accommodations geared towards providing academic access. Documentation can include medical records, psychoeducational testing and school records (e.g. IEP or 504 Program) provided by a qualified professional.
Who is a qualified professional?

A student shall provide appropriate documentation from a verifying professional qualified to assess the nature and extent of the disability. Verification may require documentation from:

- A professional qualified to assess the nature and extent of the disability;
- A recognized and reliable source that provides appropriate standards in the applicable field.

Documentation may be provided by a licensed physician, psychologist, audiologist, or a speech pathologist. Documentation may also be accepted from a licensed marriage and family therapist, rehabilitation counselor, licensed clinical social worker, learning disability specialist, or other appropriate certified/licensed professional.

How do I apply for parking?

Parking on campus requires either a semester parking permit or a day permit.

UC Merced parking lots have clearly designated parking spaces for the disabled. A valid DMV Placard or disabled license plate, as well as some form of paid parking (semester, annual, summer, or daily parking permit), is required to be displayed. Vehicles parked illegally in disabled spaces are subject to citation. Disabled parking spaces are enforced 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Are institutions obligated to identify students with disabilities?

No. Institutions do not have a duty to identify students with disabilities. Students in institutions of postsecondary education are responsible for notifying institutions staff of their disability should they need academic adjustments. High schools, in contrast, have an obligation to identify students within their jurisdiction who have a disability and who may be entitled to services.
Who is responsible for obtaining necessary testing to document the existence of a disability?

The student is responsible. Institutions of postsecondary educations are not required to conduct or pay for an evaluation to document a student's disability and need for an academic adjustment, although some institutions have programs to do so. If a student with a disability is eligible for services through the California Department of Rehabilitation (www.dor.ca.gov/), he or she may qualify for an evaluation at no cost. If students with disabilities are unable to find other funding sources to pay for necessary evaluation or testing for postsecondary education, they are responsible for paying for it themselves.

At the elementary and secondary school levels, a school district's duty to provide a free appropriate public education encompasses the responsibility to provide, at no cost to the parents, and evaluation of suspected areas of disability for any of the district's students who is believed to be in need of special education or related aids and services.

Is a student's most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan sufficient documentation to support for the existence of a disability and the need an academic adjustment in a postsecondary setting?

Generally no. Although an IEP or Section 504 plan may help identify services that have been used by the student in the past, they generally are not sufficient documentation to support the existence of a current disability and need for an academic adjustment from an institution of postsecondary education. Assessment information and other material used to develop an IEP of Section 504 plan may be helpful to documentation current disability or the need for an academic adjustment or auxiliary aids and services.

Will a medical diagnosis from a treating physician help to document disability?

A diagnosis of impairment alone does not establish that an individual has a disability within the meaning of Section 504 or Title II. Rather, the impairments must substantially limit a major life activity, or the individual must have a record of such impairment or be regarded as having such impairment. A diagnosis from a treating physician, along with information about how the disability affects the student, may suffice. As noted above, institutions of postsecondary education may set their own requirements for documentation so long as they are reasonable and comply with Section 504 and Title II.