Student Accessibility Services

Faculty Overview

- The SAS website is the best starting point for information on students with disabilities.
- **Accommodations**: To receive services from SAS, students submit medical or other appropriate documentation. SAS staff determines if the documented impairment rises to the level of disability. If so, an accommodation plan will be developed. If a student does not have an approved accommodation plan, please refer them to SAS.
- **Accommodating students is a shared responsibility** between the student, faculty and SAS. Based upon the fundamental principles of the ADA, SAS endorses specific accommodations based upon the documentation submitted by the student, the student’s prior record of accommodations; the student’s expressed needs and the professional judgment of SAS staff.
- **Most common accommodations**: alternative testing (typically extended time and a distraction limited environment); note taking; interpreter/captionist; and print alternatives, such as Braille, large print or electronic text.
- **Maintain confidentiality**. Student accommodation plans are confidential. It's important to make sure no other students and/or staff can overhear conversations you are having with a student about his/her disability or accommodations. Students are not obligated to disclose their diagnosis, but you can ask for information about how their disability impacts class participation and meeting course expectations. In addition, when sending an email to multiple students of SAS, please use the blind copy function.
- **How to address questions from other students in your class, about why a student is receiving an accommodation**: Even if a disability is obvious (e.g., blindness), instructors need to keep that information confidential and can only share on a need to know basis with other staff of UC Merced. If an instructor is questioned by students as to why a classmate is receiving "different" treatment (e.g. being allowed to test longer in class), the instructor can point out that many school issues are personal, and that UC Merced's policy is to respect each individual's privacy.
- **Providing Accommodations**: You will be notified if any accommodations need specific actions to be taken.
- **When in doubt: ask**. Reasonable accommodations are provided to individuals with disabilities in order to ensure they have an equal opportunity to participate in all programs and activities. Civil rights laws protect individuals from discrimination but do not require special privileges or unreasonable accommodation. Accommodations should not fundamentally alter the nature of the academic task or activity. If you question the reasonableness of an accommodation request, please contact us so that we may collaboratively assess the situation.
• **Syllabus Statement:** SAS staff suggest the following statement be included in course syllabi:

University of California, Merced is committed to creating learning environments that are accessible to all. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on a disability, please feel welcome to contact me privately so we can discuss options. In addition, please contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) at (209) 228-6996 or disabilityservices@ucmerced.edu as soon as possible to explore reasonable accommodations. All accommodations must have prior approval from Student Accessibility Services on the basis of appropriate documentation.

If you anticipate or experience barriers due to pregnancy, temporary medical condition, or injury, please feel welcome to contact me so we can discuss options. You are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students for support and resources at (209) 228-3633 or https://studentaffairs.ucmerced.edu/dean-students.

• **Contact Information** –

  SAS Front Desk  
disabilityservices@ucmerced.edu  
209-228-6996

Drew Shelburne – Student Accessibility Services Coordinator  
dshelburne@ucmerced.edu  
209-228-7884

James Barnes – Associate Director, Learning Support and Engagement  
jbarnes@ucmerced.edu  
209-228-8585

Website – https://access.ucmerced.edu