

**Utilizing Disability Resources
at UC San Diego:
A Guide for Students, Faculty, and Staff**



Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)
disabilities.ucsd.edu

What is the OSD?

The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) works with undergraduate, graduate and professional school students at UC San Diego to review medical documentation and, through the interactive process with the student, determine reasonable academic and non-academic accommodations. Our specialists are knowledgeable in disability law and have expertise in the breadth and depth of the wide variety of environments our university has to offer. We work closely with faculty and staff across colleges, divisions, and programs, collaborating in an effort to insure accommodations are provided in a timely manner.

What is a disability?

A disability may be temporary or permanent in nature, can occur at any time during a student's college career and may impact a student's ability to complete day to day activities such as hearing, seeing, standing, sitting, writing, thinking, or interacting with others. This is also known as a current functional limitation. Disabilities can occur in the following areas: psychological, psychiatric, learning, attention, chronic health, physical, vision, hearing, and acquired brain injury.

What doesn't the OSD do?

The OSD is not an advocacy agency, academic advising center, or counseling center. Instead, our focus is on determining reasonable accommodations for mitigating the current limitations of a student's disability in a particular academic or non-academic environment.

By working closely with faculty and departments, we seek to gain a clear understanding of the objectives of the class or lab to insure that potential accommodations will not fundamentally alter or modify the nature of the academic environment.

What about confidentiality?

Information about students who inquire about services or who register with our office generally will be kept confidential, unless the student provides written consent to the contrary. Even with written consent, the OSD will discuss only the limitations, how an accommodation can mitigate that limitation and how the accommodation may be implemented.

Students who receive an accommodation letter must understand that the faculty for that course and the department OSD liaison will have access to a list for that quarter which identifies the student as needing a particular accommodation. This information is provided to faculty and department liaisons for resource planning purposes only and is not part of any permanent academic record. Students who wish to receive an AFA letter but not have their names available to the faculty and OSD liaison must inform their disability specialist at the time of receiving an AFA letter.

Students are still responsible for presenting AFA letters to faculty and liaisons in a timely manner and requesting accommodation arrangements.



Differences between accommodations in different environments

In the K-12 environment, accommodations are determined differently than in the University environment.

At UC San Diego, documentation needs to identify the student's current functional limitations, particularly in an academic environment. While a diagnosis is often helpful, disability specialists in the OSD need to understand the student's current functional limitations to determine reasonable accommodations. This information comes both from the student's medical care providers AND the student, through the interactive process.

In addition, universities may set non-discriminatory standards and policies regarding documentation and its review that are applied consistently and uniformly to all students requesting accommodations. For example, this may explain why some students may have received accommodations at another institution such as a community college, private university, school outside of California, or school outside of the United States, but are not eligible currently to receive the same accommodations at UC San Diego.



What does the OSD have to do with?

- Classroom and lab accommodations: once the OSD has clarified a student's current functional limitations, we will look at each classroom and lab environment to determine reasonable accommodations. Because limitations may change from quarter to quarter and academic environments may change from quarter to quarter, students must obtain an Authorization for Accommodation (AFA) letter for each class each quarter. These quarterly meetings with a disability specialist also allow the student and specialist to assess and discuss how accommodations may or may not be working in specific environments and explore adjustments accordingly. This process for classroom and lab accommodations applies to ALL undergraduate, graduate, and professional school students.
- Graduate education: accommodation requests relating to more time to complete a graduate program are reviewed on a case by case basis with input from the department's graduate coordinator, and the student's graduate advisor and committee. If graduate students need accommodations for work or functions related to their role as a teaching assistant, they must contact the Disability Counseling and Consulting Office: <http://blink.ucsd.edu/sponsor/hr/org-chart/disability-counseling-and-consulting.html>
- Transportation on campus: for students with mobility impairments, the OSD can arrange for assistance through Triton Mobility which provides rides via golf cart.

- Housing: for students who already have access to university housing, other accommodations can be made to mitigate limitations; i.e., wheelchair accessible units. Access to university housing as an accommodation will be considered if the documentation establishes that access to university housing mitigates limitations of a disability that otherwise cannot be mitigated by non-university housing.
- Dining: for documented food allergies, students will work directly with the campus Dietician to modify their meal plans accordingly, once students have obtained their AFA letters from the OSD.
- Commencement: For any accommodations needed for this event, undergraduate students need to contact their college, graduate students need to contact the graduate coordinator in their department, and professional school students need to contact their Dean of Student Affairs.

Options for concerns and appeals may be found on the OSD website: <http://disabilities.ucsd.edu/students/appealprocess.html>



Common reasons why you might not get what you want

You may not get what you want because:

- 1) Your documentation does not clearly outline your current functional limitations and/or you are unable to articulate your current functional limitations when engaging in the interactive process with a disability specialist;
- 2) Your accommodation request is not appropriate given your current functional limitations;
- 3) Your accommodation request would fundamentally alter or modify the nature of the class, lab, or academic environment;
- 4) Your accommodation request would violate applicable laws.

I'm a parent; what's my role?

The OSD understands that, as a parent of a student with a disability, you may have spent a lot of time and energy advocating for accommodations and services. However, we generally recommend that you support your child in developing self-advocacy skills. For example, encourage them to have an understanding of how their disability impacts them in various environments and help them to be able to articulate this clearly and concisely without revealing too much information. Be a sounding board for them and support them as they take responsibility for asking for assistance from others, following processes and procedures, and meeting deadlines.

I'm a veteran; can the OSD help me?

Yes, the OSD works with veterans, who may or may not have service connected disabilities. If you have a service connected disability, please bring your paperwork from your Compensation and Pension Examination (Comp and Pen).

I'm an Extension student or Concurrently enrolled student, how do I get accommodations?

Contact the Services for Students with Disabilities department at the Extension office at (858) 822-1366 or unex-ssd@ucsd.edu.

I'm a faculty or staff member, what do I do when.....

.....a student presents me with an AFA letter and I have questions about the accommodations?

Contact the Disability Specialist who signed the AFA letter via phone or email.

.....I have general questions about OSD policies and procedures?

Contact Joanna Boval, OSD Director, via phone (47685) or email jboval@ucsd.edu.

.....I have a disability myself and need assistance?

Contact Disability Counseling and Consulting: <http://blink.ucsd.edu/sponsor/hr/org-chart/disability-counseling-and-consulting.html>

How do I get more information and/or register with the OSD?

Visit our website at disabilities.ucsd.edu, call the OSD at 858.534.4382 to schedule an in-person or phone appointment with a disability specialist, or email us at osd@ucsd.edu. Our office is located in University Center 202, behind Center Hall, and we are open Monday – Friday from 8 am – 4:30 pm.

Please note that this question/answer guide is intended for general information/guidance only, and should not be construed as making any promises or guarantees about individual situations.