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To: Members of Senate
CC: Elizabeth Croft, Vice-President Academic and Provost
UVic Accessibility Committee Co-Chairs
From: Helga Hallgrímsdóttir, Deputy Provost
Date: September 17, 2025
Subject: **Academic Accommodation Policy (AC1205) Annual Report**

Background

UVic has a moral and legal obligation under the BC Human Rights Code to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities unless it would constitute undue hardship to the university to do so. The revised Academic Accommodation Policy (AC1205), approved by Senate in June 2024 and effective September 2024, reinforces this responsibility as a shared one among students, instructors, academic leaders, the Centre for Accessible Learning (CAL), the Division of Learning and Teaching Innovation (LTI), and other units. AC1205 articulates the expectations and responsibilities of the institution, instructors and students in a manner that is consistent with UVic's educational mandate and legal obligations.

This report, submitted by the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost (VPAC), addresses issues relevant to the implementation and improvement of AC1205. It summarizes the university's progress and ongoing commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible learning environment for students with disabilities, as outlined in the policy.

AC1205 advances the work of the university's Accessibility Committee, established in 2022, and the priorities of the Accessibility Plan and Equity Action Plan.

Consultations

This inaugural report draws on consultations with a range of stakeholders, including academic leaders, instructors, students, and staff. In particular, input was gathered from Deans' Council, CAL, LTI, Associate Deans Academic, Senate, the Society for Students with Disability, and reports from the Ombudsperson. As part of the annual reporting process, VPAC will continue to consult and communicate with stakeholders on the implementation and ongoing improvement of this policy.

Context

UVic is committed to fostering an inclusive, supportive, accessible and welcoming learning environment for all students. We celebrate the diversity of our community and value the contributions of persons with disabilities. Currently, approximately 3,800 students—about 20% of UVic's student population—are



registered with CAL. This reflects a significant increase over time and is expected to grow as more students with disabilities transition successfully from the K-12 system to post-secondary education.

With the rise in both the number and complexity of accommodation needs, Canadian universities, including UVic, are facing significant challenges in meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Despite new and increased annual funding to both CAL and the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Management (OREM) to support accommodated assessments, demand continues to outpace investment in traditional support models.

Recognizing that existing accommodation approaches are resource-intensive, unsustainable, and not access-centred, universities are moving away from traditional support models to ensure quality outcomes for students, financial sustainability, and a positive environment for students, faculty and staff. The focus is shifting towards access-centred teaching and assessment practices, which adopt proactive strategies to eliminate or minimize the need for individual accommodations.

Barriers and challenges

Supporting students with disabilities requires us to challenge the structural barriers that create exclusion—and reimagine education as a space where everyone belongs.

During this transition period toward proactive, access-centred teaching and assessment practices that reduce the need for individual accommodations, the volume of accommodation requests, along with the associated workload concerns, continues to be a challenge.

Implementing academic accommodation is a shared responsibility for all members of the campus community and requires tools and education to support instructors and students in meeting their responsibilities. Instructors play a key role in fostering inclusive environments through course design and teaching strategies. To be successful, they need access to straightforward solutions, practical supports and clear guidance that make inclusive practices easier to implement.

Students also have responsibilities within an access-centred environment. These include meeting the essential requirements of a course, registering with CAL for academic accommodation when eligible, and understanding how their individual accommodations apply in practice. For example, when courses are designed to anticipate and support diverse needs, many accommodations are holistically built in, reducing the need for differential treatment.

During 2024/25 Senate meetings, Senators noted additional considerations including discipline specific requirements for accommodations, possible curriculum and academic regulation changes to support accessibility, and the importance of transparency during this transition period and onwards.

The Society for Students with a Disability (SSD) also shared suggestions for accessible learning, and though these will require a multi-pronged approach, some strategies are already being implemented. For example, SSD identified hybrid learning and online resources as a priority, and a working group on classroom recording has since submitted recommendations to support both instructors and students in

effectively using recorded lectures. SSD also raised concerns about barriers to physical attendance, and timetables now list course modality to help students better assess accessibility.

The most recent provincial Quarterly Report from the Office of the Ombudsperson (July 1–September 30, 2024) listed human rights and disability accommodation as one of the highest topics in the post-secondary sector, making up 19% of sector-specific complaints and illustrating the need for increased accessibility across the province.

Based on feedback from across consultations, consideration must also be given towards the use of technology, academic integrity, grade inflation and workload, as well as consistent and equitable treatment for students.

Strategies and key initiatives

Advancing an access-centred approach requires a combination of discipline-specific approaches and strategic central supports as there is no single method that meets all needs. To maximize impact in a resource-constrained environment, targeted central resources are being maintained or implemented to support units.

The strategies outlined below highlight proposed, new and ongoing efforts to reduce barriers, provide practical support for instructors and students, and strengthen inclusive teaching and learning. Together, these initiatives illustrate UVic’s commitment to addressing current challenges while supporting the transition to more access-centred practices.

CAL and OREM

CAL remains focused on its mandate of supporting students and instructors with complex accommodations. Initiatives undertaken by CAL in 2024/25 include a streamlined exam request process, simplified deadlines, new faculty-based accommodation workshops, and a pilot project to enhance accommodation summaries in the 200 largest courses. This project will be expanded to all courses in the next academic year. As well, work has been done to ease instructor access to Clockwork and accommodation letters, aiming to improve the management of academic accommodations and accessibility of their courses.

Centralized exam supports in OREM remain in place, including dedicated in-person service and revised exam scheduling that minimizes overlaps and distractions.

Pedagogical supports

Faculty are encouraged to create flexible and inclusive learning environments, subject to disciplinary and pedagogical requirements. LTI offers regular workshops, consultations and online resources to support instructors. New one-time funding in 2024/25 allowed the hiring of specialists in accessible curriculum development.

TA funding

A major initiative for 2025/26 is VPAC's allocation of one-time central funding for Teaching Assistants (TAs) to provide invigilation and assessment support. This funding relieves instructor workload, giving faculty more time to adapt teaching and assessment practices, while also providing employment opportunities for graduate students. LTI training resources are available for these TAs. Faculties are asked to direct TA resourcing toward high-enrolment courses and those most reliant on CAL and OREM services, with flexibility to align allocations with unit-level accessibility strategies. Increased TA support is expected to reduce demand for CAL and OREM services in the targeted courses. Service use will continue to be tracked, with Deans receiving data to guide decisions and assess impact.

Communities of practice

Good work is happening in faculties and units across campus to adopt access-centred approaches, and peer-to-peer learning creates opportunities for instructors to see how existing approaches to inclusive pedagogy can be applied in different teaching contexts. This exchange of ideas not only reduces duplication of effort but also builds collective capacity for creating more inclusive classrooms.

The Faculties of Social Sciences and Education, together with LTI, co-hosted the Pathways to Belonging Conference in August 2025. This collaborative event brought together experts, researchers, educators, and mental health professionals to examine research on accommodation demand in post-secondary, affirming practices, and approaches to building student resiliency. Over three days, keynote speakers and panelists challenged thinking and deepened understanding, exploring how to transform our systems and create new pathways to belonging. Themes that emerged from these conversations included systemic inclusion, Indigenous perspectives on belonging, connections with K–12 education systems, and student voice and agency. When possible, creating future opportunities could further support communities in learning from experts and developing shared solutions.

In 2024/25, LTI launched the UVic Accessible Teaching and Learning Community of Practice to support faculty and instructors in enhancing accessible pedagogy and expanding accessibility and inclusive learning approaches in courses. LTI also recently launched the Let's Talk About Teaching podcast dedicated to exploring innovative teaching practices that has examined strengths-based strategies and universal extended time in assessments.

Faculty-level strategies

In December 2024, Deans began working with their leadership teams to draft unit-level accessibility strategies with measurable goals, for implementation beginning fall term 2025. As part of these strategies, Deans were welcome to submit resourcing requests for cost-effective strategies to help Faculties achieve their accessible education goals. Deans' Council and Academic Leadership reviewed and discussed these accessibility strategies in February 2025 and the strategies were subsequently shared with representatives from VPAC, OREM, CAL and LTI.

Both Deans' Council and the representatives identified several overlapping themes and discussed opportunities for advancing the strategies. Based on those and other consultations, including the instructors of large first-year courses, VPAC identified additional and directed TA resourcing as an effective way to help shift our collective approach to assessments across campus.

Several additional strategies were identified across faculties during this process, including:

- Implement UDL principles, such as flexible deadlines for assessments, when possible to reduce the number of individual accommodations.
- Faculties with large classes indicated an interest in scheduling assessments during evenings and weekends to accommodate extra time.
- Offer discipline-specific training including workshops with LTI, sessions with CAL and connect experienced faculty with those new to accessibility strategies.
- Develop accessible assessment strategies such as creating a repository of successful alternative assessments specific to disciplines/class types, revising grading policies and ensuring the use of accessibility features in all foundation courses.
- Explore strategies and update definitions for distraction reduced environments to re-integrate students with non-specialized needs into classrooms.

Academic leaders are encouraged to continue exploring and advancing discipline-specific solutions.

Ad-hoc Senate Committee

The Vice-President Academic and Provost is bringing a draft proposal to the October Senate meeting to discuss forming an Ad-hoc Senate Committee on Accessible Education and Accommodations to advance proactive and inclusive approaches to education. If formed, the Committee would develop strategies to address barriers and challenges, including those identified by Senators, and complete its work within 12–36 months.

Looking ahead

The transition to an access-centred campus is a significant cultural and operational shift that requires ongoing collaboration across the university. Addressing workload concerns for faculty remains an important priority, supported through enhanced central resources and the development of discipline-specific strategies. As part of the implementation of AC1205, UVic will continue to monitor the impact of these initiatives, adapt approaches as needs evolve and invest in practices that foster inclusive teaching and learning. We are grateful for the continued efforts of our community in advancing this important work with a student-centred focus.

Appendices

Appendix A: Resources

- [Definitions \(UVic Accessibility Plan\)](#)
- [Distraction-reduced environment for assessments – guidelines \(CAL\)](#)
- [Accommodated assessments and inclusive course design \(VPAC\)](#)
- [Universal Design for Learning – principles and guides \(LTSI\)](#)

Appendix B: Data

We are encouraged by the growing number of students with disabilities transitioning successfully from the K-12 system. CAL continues to play an important role in helping students access supports and serving students with complex and specific needs. Rather than reduce funding to CAL, our aim is to reduce over-reliance on CAL by building more accessible learning environments systemically, allowing CAL to focus on their core mission.

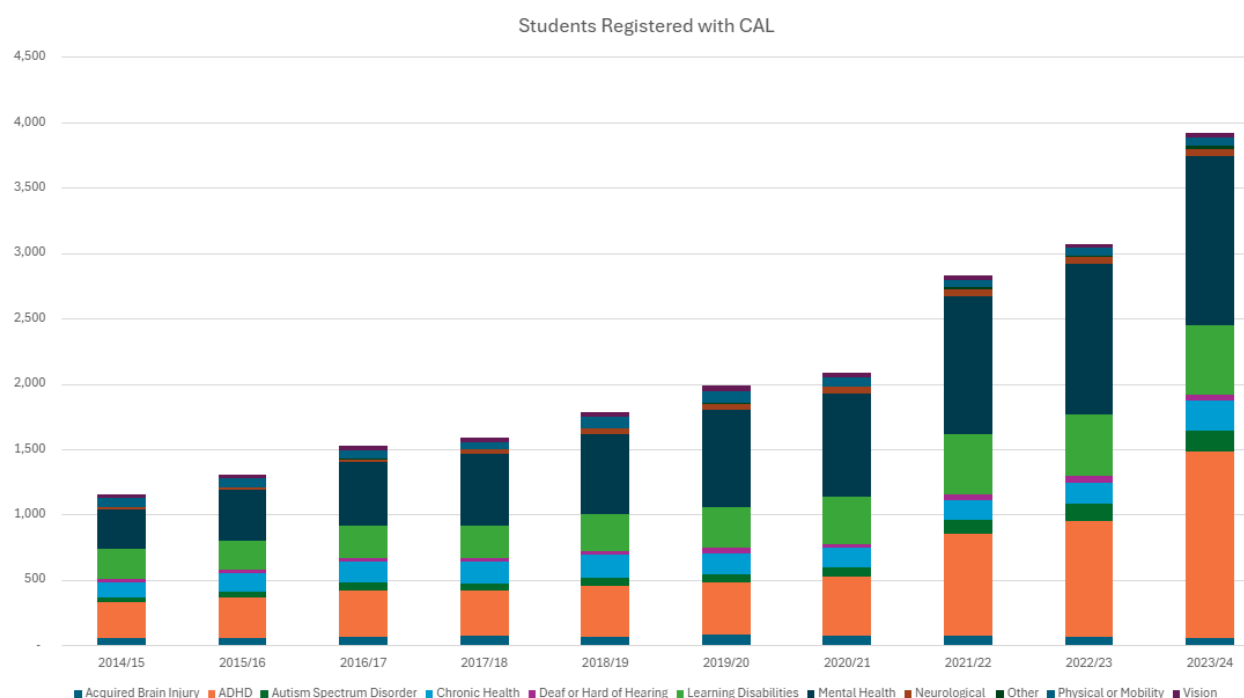


Figure 1: Students registered with CAL over a 10-year period. In 2023/24, ADHD was the most commonly documented accommodation category, followed by Mental Health and then Learning Disabilities. Students may have more than one disability, and not all students with disabilities register with CAL.

As shown in the graph below, funding for CAL has increased every year, and was protected and prioritized during two years of cross-campus budget reductions in 2023/24 and 2024/25.

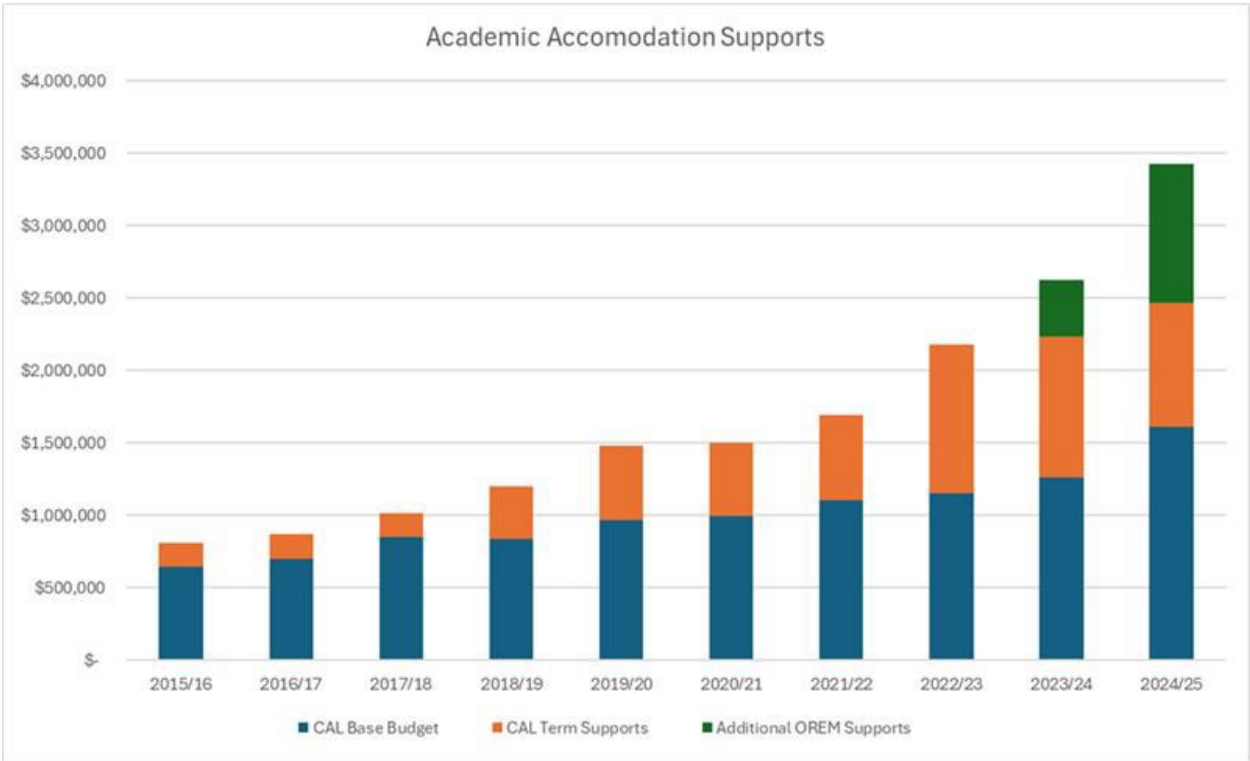


Figure 2: Funding for CAL over a 10-year period. In 2023/24, new one-time funding was provided to OREM to help address the increase in academic accommodations, which will continue into the 2025/26 academic year.

We recognize the complex and evolving challenges related to academic accommodations facing the post-secondary sector. As recent national coverage in [CBC](#) and [The Globe and Mail](#) has highlighted, these are issues that many institutions are navigating.

UVic is a university of choice for students with disabilities, as shown in the table and graph below comparing transition rates for research universities.

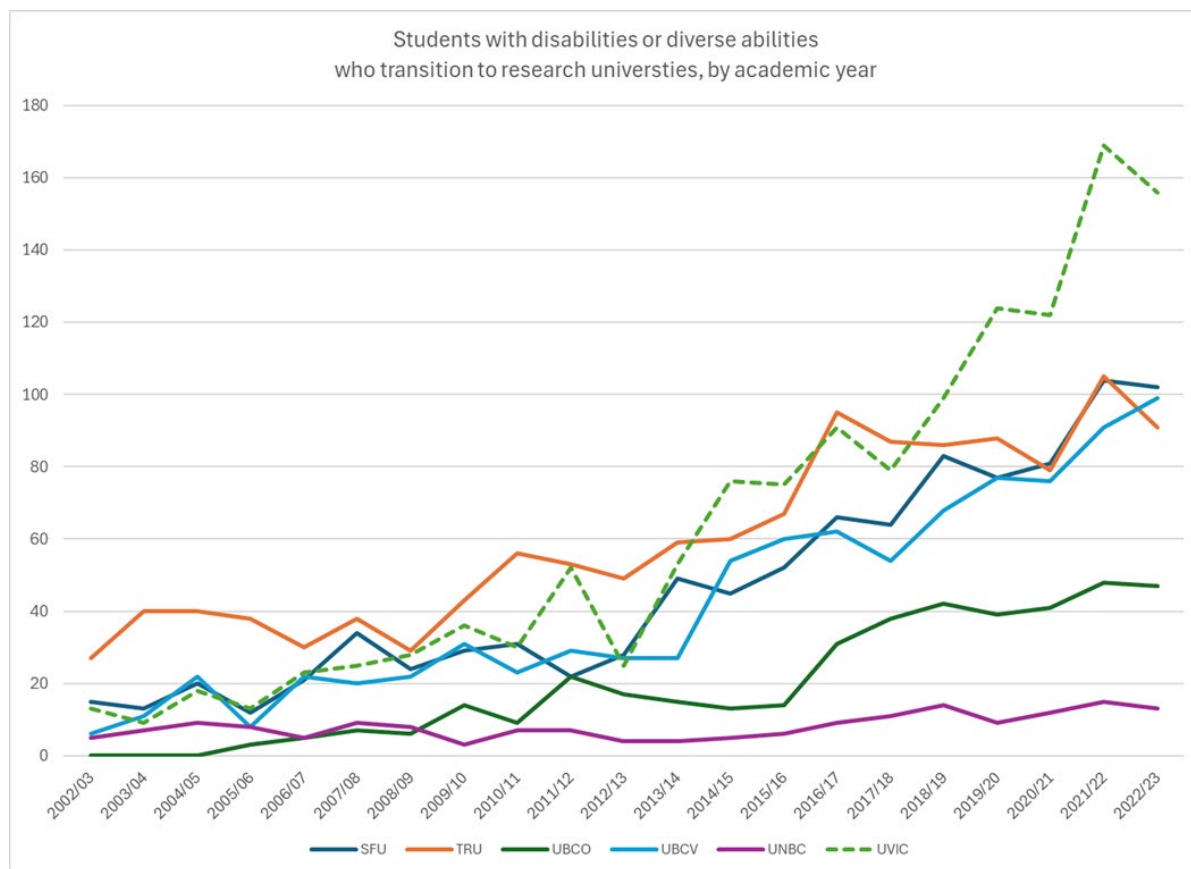


Figure 3: Students with disabilities at BC research universities (SFU, TRU, UBCO, UBC, UNBC and UVic). Source: *Student Transitions Project (2023-24)*, Government of British Columbia (information is not yet available for 2023/24 or 2024/25, as the survey is undertaken every other year).

Table 7: Disabilities and impairments					
	All students (n=11,901)	Group 1 (n=4,977)	Group 2 (n=4,904)	Group 3 (n=2,020)	University of Victoria (n=230)
Most commonly reported disability/impairment (DIS1-12)					
Total self-identified	33%	40%	29%	31%	35%
- Mental health	17%	22%	14%	16%	18%
- Neurodivergence	14%	19%	11%	14%	17%
- Learning/memory	6%	8%	5%	6%	6%
- Vision	4%	5%	4%	4%	3%
- Chronic conditions	4%	5%	3%	4%	6%
Daily activities always limited by disability/impairment (DISF1-12)					
Yes	11%	15%	9%	10%	12%
- Mental health	5%	7%	4%	5%	6%
- Neurodivergence	6%	8%	4%	5%	8%
- Learning/memory	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%
- Vision	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
- Chronic conditions	1%	2%	<1%	<1%	2%

Figure 4: UVic participates in the national *Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium*. The 2025 survey of first-year students self-report the following levels of “disabilities and impairments.” UVic is part of Group 2, which include mid-sized and large universities.