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To: Members of Senate
CC: UVic Accessibility Committee Co-Chairs
From: Helga Hallgrímsdóttir, Acting Vice-President Academic and Provost
Date: September 16, 2026
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 Academic Accommodation Policy (AC1205) 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.

As per AC1205, "the Office of the Vice-President Academic and Provost (or designate) will produce an annual report to Senate that will address issues relevant to the implementation and improvement of this policy." Last year, the VPAC Office submitted the inaugural AC1205 Annual Report following Senate-approved policy revisions in 2024 and welcomed feedback from Senate to inform future reports. Senate's feedback has been incorporated into this year's report to the best of our ability while maintaining the integrity of the report, process and requirements of AC1205.

We also consulted CAL and the Office of the Registrar and Enrolment Management (OREM)—the units supporting central academic accommodation and accommodated assessment processes—as well as LTI, which provides resources to faculty, staff and students to enhance the practice of teaching and student academic success.

Context

Demand for academic accommodations is increasing across Canadian post-secondary institutions, driven in part by growing participation of students with disabilities and increasingly complex accommodation needs. While there is no comprehensive national dataset tracking accommodation registrations across Canadian universities, evidence from individual institutions points to significant growth. National data from Statistics Canada further demonstrate the significant prevalence of accommodation needs among students with disabilities.

According to Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA), the best source of institutional data is the Canadian Undergraduate Survey Consortium (CUSC). Page 11 of HESA's State of Postsecondary Education in Canada (2025) report states the following:

Between 2001 and 2013, the percentage of students reporting disabilities increased from 5 to 9%. It is impossible to determine whether this increase is the result of more students with disabilities were accessing education or because of a reduced stigma in disclosing disabilities (or both). In 2016, the wording of this question changed to explicitly include mental health issues and the proportion of self-reporting students shot up to 22%. By 2025, students reporting disabilities had reached 33%, with 14% of students saying they were neurodivergent and another 17% saying they had mental health issues (respondents were able to indicate more than one disability).

Institutional information provided to UVic from CUSC suggests that UVic is a university of choice for students with disabilities or diverse abilities. UVic's CUSC information is provided below and indicates a higher percentage than the average in our category.

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%

Table 1: In CUSC's 2025 survey of first-year students, post-secondary students in Canada self-reported "disabilities and impairments." UVic is part of Group 2, which includes mid-sized and large universities.

This is consistent with available data from the Student Transitions Project provided by the BC Government, which shows that UVic has a higher transition rate for students with disabilities than does SFU, UBC, TRU and UNBC.

With the rise in both the number and complexity of accommodation needs, Canadian universities, including UVic, continue to increase funding and implement changes to structures, systems and pedagogy to better meet the needs of students with disabilities.

In BC, the provincial government provides dedicated funding to K–12 school districts to support students with disabilities and diverse learning needs through base funding and supplementary per-student funding for students with higher-cost support needs. This funding recognizes that some students require additional educational resources and enables school districts to provide inclusive education, accommodations and specialized services. Research universities in BC do not receive specialized funding to support students with disabilities and universities do so primarily through their general operating budgets, supplemented by limited targeted grants and student financial assistance programs.

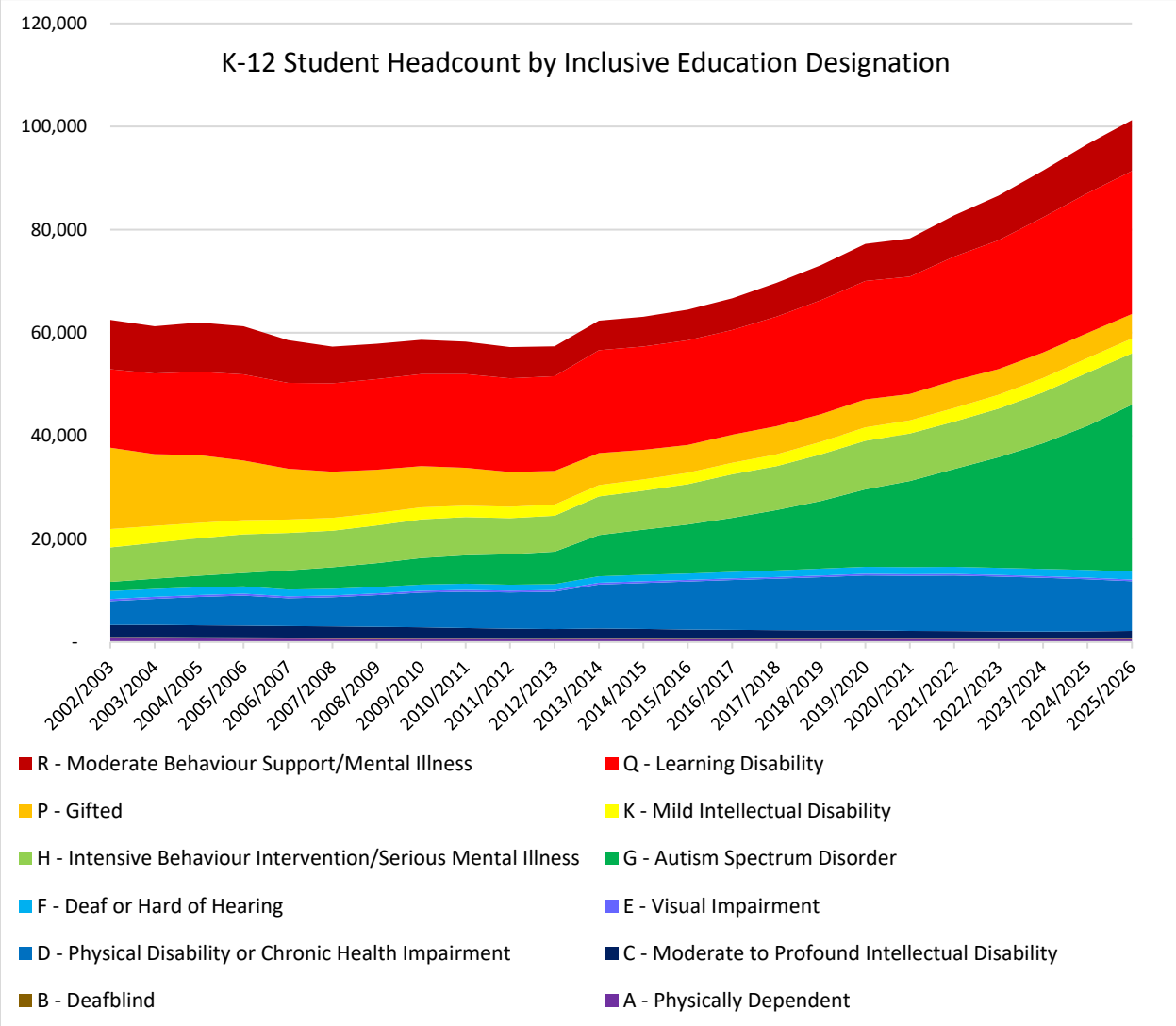

Figure 2: Students in K-12 with designations grew 42% since records began in 2002/03. Excluding Autism Spectrum Disorder, it grew 3%. Source: Education Analytics Office, Ministry of Education.

Alongside the increase in the number of students with an accommodation plan, UVic has increased funding to CAL every year to support academic accommodations. Additionally, in 2023/24, UVic invested new funding to OREM to offer centralized accommodated assessment services. OREM's services mainly focus on supporting students who require extra time and distraction-reduced environments, allowing CAL to focus on their mandate of supporting students with more complex accommodation needs.

Required investments to meet demand have increased from $807,000 in 2015/16 to $3.3 million in 2025/26 and have increased every year. Total investments for academic accommodations in 2025/26 was approximately $3.8 million, allocated from UVic's general operating fund, which included one-time funding for Teaching Assistants to help implement faculty accessibility strategies.

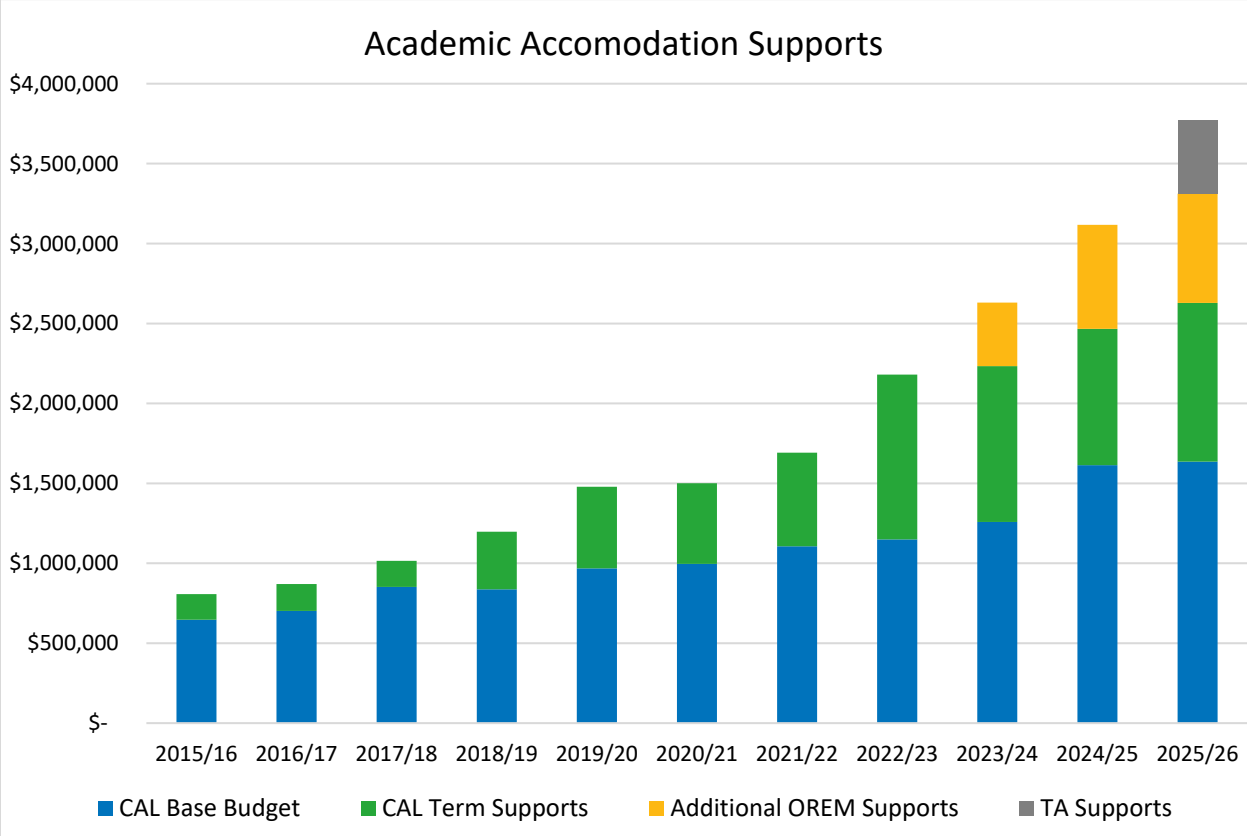

Figure 3: Funding for academic accommodation supports an 11-year timeframe. In 2025/26, one-time funding of $458,000 was provided to Deans to support their faculty accessibility strategies, which was mostly allocated to TA supports.

While funding is outside the scope of this report, it is important context for understanding the implementation and continuous improvement of AC1205. The university works closely with the units providing centralized accommodation services to ensure they have the resources needed to meet demand, while also investing in more sustainable teaching, learning and pedagogical supports that strengthen our capacity to meet the evolving needs of faculty, staff and students.

Summary of academic accommodations for 2025/26

UVic is committed to fostering an inclusive, supportive and welcoming learning environment for all students. We celebrate the diversity of our community and value the contributions of students with disabilities and diverse learning needs.

In 2025/26, CAL directly supported over 4,700 students. Of those students, 4,441 were eligible for academic accommodations—an increase from 4,299 students in 2024/25 and representing approximately 20% of UVic students. Approximately 75% of registered students released an accommodation plan, as shown in the chart below. 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.

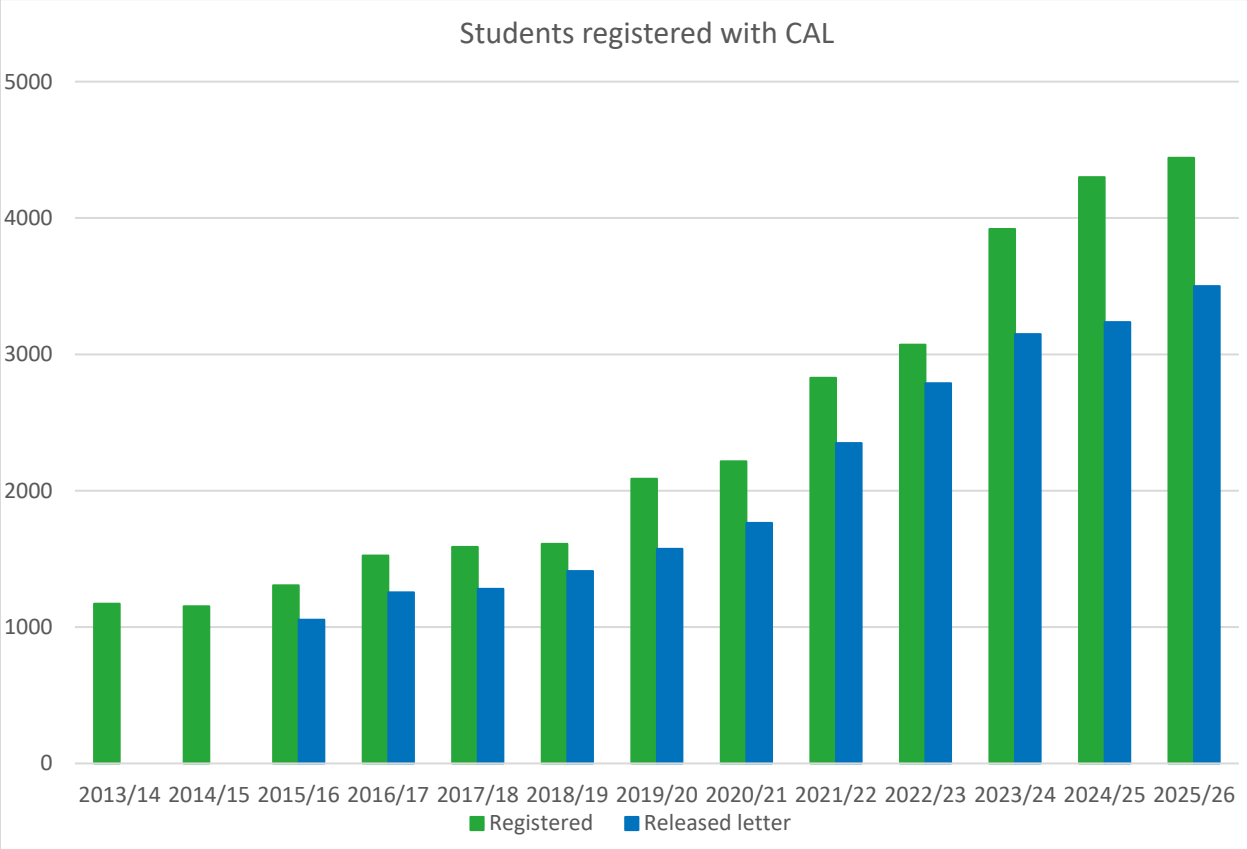

Figure 4: Students registered with CAL and students who have had accommodation plan released over a 13-year timeframe. UVic's overall student population has remained steady during this timeframe, at approximately 22,000. Over 20% of UVic students are registered with CAL, up from approximately 6% ten years ago.

More than 90% of students registered with CAL have a non-apparent disability, and 33% have multiple disabilities. Students most commonly report ADHD, mental health and learning disabilities as diagnoses supporting their academic accommodations.

Disagnosis type	2024/25	2025/26
ADHD	52%	54%
Mental health	47%	47%
Learning disability	17%	18%
Chronic health	8%	9%
Autism	5%	7%
Neurological	3%	2%
Acquired brain injury	2%	1%
Hearing	2%	1%
Physical	3%	2%
Vision	1%	1%

While the percentage fluctates slightly depending on the Faculty, 90% of typical undergraduate courses include at least one student who releases an accommodation plan. This excludes directed studies, thesis, individual tuition, and other courses in which instructors and students often handle academic accommodations differently. The Faculties of Education and Fine Arts have the lowest at 84% and Engineering and Computer Science has the highest at 96%.

Requests for formal review

As per the Procedures for Academic Accommodation accompanying Policy AC1205, if the issues surrounding the implementation of an academic accommodation are not resolved informally, the

student may submit a request to the Deputy Provost for formal review. In 2025/26, the Deputy Provost (or delegate) received and responded to three requests from undergraduate students. Two were resolved following a review of documentation and consultations. The other did not meet the requirements for a review under section 61 of the Procedures.

The Deputy Provost did not receive any written requests from graduate students or deans to initiate a formal review.

Roles and responsibilities

Policy AC1205, establishes academic accommodation as a shared institutional responsibility across the university. It outlines roles and responsibilities for the university, support and service units, instructors, students and administrative heads of academic units.

The university has the overarching responsibility to ensure students with disabilities have equitable access to academic programs and services, consistent with its obligations under the BC Human Rights Code. The university is responsible for coordinating and supporting academic accommodations, providing expertise and resources, ensuring approved accommodations are implemented, and meeting its legal obligations while preserving essential academic requirements.

Support and service units

CAL serves as UVic's central coordinating and advisory body for academic accommodations. CAL assesses accommodation requests, determines appropriate accommodations, supports implementation, provides expert guidance, and helps resolve accommodation-related issues.

While not specifically identified in AC1205, OREM plays a key operational role in enabling and administering academic accommodations for assessments. Both CAL and OREM support face-to-face, timed and supervised assessments with accommodations. OREM supports accommodated assessments feasible in a typical classroom, such as a distraction-reduced environment, additional time, supervised breaks, additional materials, or a word processor, while CAL supports accommodated assessments that require specialized spaces, equipment or training, such as private rooms, assistive software and access to medical devices.

LTI complements these services by providing expertise on teaching, curriculum and assessment design to support faculty and instructors with inclusive education.

Faculty and instructors

Faculty and instructors are responsible for identifying the essential academic requirements of their courses, collaborating with CAL and students to implement approved accommodations, maintaining academic standards, and raising concerns through the prescribed process when implementation challenges arise.

In designing courses and assessments, instructors are expected to consider accessible and inclusive teaching practices while ensuring students can demonstrate the essential academic requirements of the course. LTI is available to support instructors in doing so.

Students

Students are responsible for requesting accommodation, providing required information, actively participating in the accommodation process, communicating with CAL and instructors, following accommodation procedures, and meeting the essential academic requirements of their courses and programs.

Students are expected and required to participate fully in the process of determining and implementing reasonable academic accommodation. This includes actively engaging with instructors and others as necessary to explore options and, where appropriate, taking reasonable measures to address their own individual needs and personal requirements.

Strategies and key initiatives

In support of AC1205 implementation, UVic combines discipline-specific approaches and strategic central services, as there is no single method that meets all needs. Centrally funded resources are allocated to maximize impact in a resource-constrained environment, and both CAL and OREM have taken steps to strengthen their accommodation operations, supports and services in recent years.

The strategies outlined below highlight proposed, new and ongoing efforts to reduce barriers, provide support for instructors and students, and strengthen inclusive teaching and learning.

Central accommodation and assessment supports

Recent initiatives undertaken by CAL include streamlining the exam request process, simplifying deadlines, offering faculty-based accommodation workshops, and enhancing accommodation summaries for instructors. As well, work has been done to ease instructor access to Clockwork and accommodation plans, 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 scheduling that minimizes overlaps and distractions. OREM coordinates the use of temporary, distraction-reduced spaces in the Clearihue Building and Human and Social Development Building for accommodated assessments. Work is underway to move and regularize these services into a dedicated Centre for Accommodated Assessments located in the McPherson Library.

Central pedagogical supports

Across campus, faculties and units are exploring or adopting access-centred approaches. Several disciplines and instructors are moving away from traditional support models towards more inclusive, sustainable teaching and assessment practices. This includes adopting proactive strategies to eliminate or minimize the need for individual accommodations. For example, when courses are designed to anticipate and support diverse needs, many accommodations are holistically built in, reducing the need for differential treatment.

LTI supports instructors in implementing accessible course and assessment design, with dedicated curriculum specialists, educational technology specialists, learning design consultations, workshops, online resources, podcasts, and an Accessible Teaching and Learning Community of Practice. Peer-to-

peer learning creates opportunities for instructors to see how existing approaches to inclusive pedagogy can be applied in different teaching contexts, while sharing experiences and ideas builds collective capacity for creating more inclusive classrooms.

Additionally, LTI has also partnered with University Systems on a new Course Outline Management Tool that helps academic units and instructors manage course outlines, reducing workload and ensuring accessibility guidelines are communicated and met. LTI has also updated their website, which includes a new resource that connects frequently needed academic accommodations with accessible teaching strategies to create better access for all learners.

Faculty strategies

Adoption of access-centred practices varies across campus and is often discipline-specific, and there will continue to be a need for traditional accommodation supports and services in the foreseeable future. Complicating approaches is the emergence of generative artificial intelligence tools and related academic integrity concerns. This is likely to be an increasing area of focus for universities, with respect to both challenges and opportunities in our teaching and learning environments.

In 2025, Deans worked with their leadership teams to draft accessibility strategies appropriate for their disciplines. Faculties reported on their progress in early 2026. Several faculties expanded instructor supports through discipline-specific workshops, consultations and accessibility sessions with CAL and LTI. Leaders also reported progress in redesigning teaching and assessment practices, exploring more flexible assessment approaches, developing discipline-specific resources to support accessible course design, and implementing the new Course Outlines Management Tool. Together, these efforts are advancing faculty-led approaches to embedding accessibility within discipline-specific learning environments and assessment contexts.

Finally, the second Pathways to Belonging Conference is being planned for 2027. The Conference will build on the success of the inaugural conference co-hosted in August 2025 by the Faculties of Social Sciences and Education, together with LTI. This collaborative event brought together experts, researchers, educators, and mental health professionals to examine research, affirm practices and discuss approaches.

Looking ahead

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 systems and 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.