How to Manage Your Visual Impairment at UCD

Managing any disability effectively at third level involves the utilisation of a number of available services and tools. It is also vital that each individual student takes responsibility for their own academic career at UCD. The aim of the UCD Access & Lifelong Learning (ALL) is to allow all students registered with Disability Support to become independent learners so they can develop the skills expected of successful graduates and take these skills into the workplace. The following guidelines are designed to help you to reach that goal.

Communication

It is important that you communicate with UCD about your visual impairment in order to overcome any disadvantages resulting from your disability.

1. You should register with ALL as soon as possible after you enter UCD/receive a diagnosis. Attending a needs assessment will ensure that you receive the appropriate supports.
2. You will receive a letter of registration from ALL following your needs assessment. This confirms that you are registered with ALL and outlines the supports you receive. You must provide this letter to your lecturers/tutors in order to inform staff about your support needs and request alternative exam arrangements for mid-semester exams, class tests or locally arranged exams.

Supports available to all UCD students

- Writing Support Centre
    - UCD Writing Centre provides free, one-to-one tuition and a range of workshops on all aspects of the writing process. You can find this service in Link Space 2 of the James Joyce Library See http://www.ucd.ie/writingcentre/ for more details.
- Maths Support Centre
    - The Maths Support Centre (MSC) offers free support in mathematics to students from all programmes in UCD. Support is given through one-on-one and small group tuition on a drop in basis during semesters. There is no need to make an appointment in advance. See www.ucd.ie/msc for more details.
- Student Counselling Service
    - UCD provide a free and confidential service staffed by professionally qualified psychologists and counsellors. UCD aim to provide easily accessible support for students when personal issues arise that affect their happiness, well-being, capacity to cope, relationships or learning. For more information and to arrange an appointment see: http://www.ucd.ie/studentcounselling/

Exam Accommodations

- A number of exam accommodations are available to help students to overcome any disadvantage they may experience because of their disability. Based on your diagnosis and needs assessment ALL will grant you the supports necessary for you. Exam accommodations may include use of the alternative exam centre, extra time (10 minutes extra per hour in exams) or use of a computer. It is important to note that these supports are granted based on national guidelines. Therefore these supports may not be appropriate for every student who is blind or visually impaired.
- ALL organises alternative exam arrangements for end of semester exams only. If you wish to use an exam accommodation for any mid-semester exam or class test it is your responsibility to contact the module co-ordinator at the beginning of the semester. Failure to do this may result in you not receiving your exam accommodations as they can take some time to arrange.

<h1 style="text-align:center">How to Manage Your Visual Impairment at UCD</h1>

Assistive Technology

There is a range of Assistive Technology resources available for students in UCD. These consist of software and devices which can help students with their day-to-day tasks in UCD. Assistive Technology of particular interest to students who are blind or visually impaired includes:

- Magnification Software: Students with low-vision can use screen magnification software to enlarge material on the screen.
- Screenreader: Students who are blind or have low-vision can use a screenreader such as JAWS, which reads out the content on the screen. All actions are performed with keyboard shortcuts.

Learning Support

- ALL provides learning support primarily through group workshops. These workshops are run numerous times over both semesters and are advertised to students via email. These workshops are designed to help you learn the skills you need to succeed at university. Topics include:
  - Note taking & Study skills
  - Time management, Organisation, Presentations and group work
  - Academic writing & Research skills
  - Avoiding Plagiarism & Exam Preparation
- All material used in workshops is made available via Blackboard. These materials include slides, handouts, exercises and an audio version of all workshops. All first year students registering with ALL are given access to this Blackboard module. If you would like to request access please email disability@ucd.ie.

Alternative Format Course Readings

ALL can provide required course readings in alternate format for those students who are unable to use printed materials. It is vital that you inform ALL as early as possible if you require material in alternate format. We can also provide students with scanning software so that they can produce material in accessible format themselves.

Use of a Personal Assistant

If deemed appropriate by both the student and ALL at the needs assessment the support of a Personal Assistant (PA) may be allocated. The PA is there to assist the student with academic life only. They will not contribute to the class unless they are assisting the student to make their contribution. The PA may take notes for the student and assist them in travelling between classes.

Campus accommodation for students with physical or sensory disabilities

UCD Residences make a limited number of accessible rooms available for students who have a significant physical and/or sensory disability. All CAO applicants wishing to book accommodation must place their name on the priority waiting list by the beginning of May before the September in which they hope to attend UCD. Spaces are allocated on a first come first served basis. See www.ucd.ie/residences for further details. If you require accessible accommodation you must also contact ALL so we can ensure that you are offered an accessible room.

Useful Online Resources

- www.ncbi.ie

  If you find that you are having any difficulties in UCD please contact us as soon as possible!