

TU CASA

The TU CASA model is designed to allow students with intellectual disabilities to receive a true university experience while gaining the skills and knowledge needed to transition to independent adult lives. TU CASA addresses the critical needs in the community by establishing a sustainable program that: (a) provides 18 months fully inclusive PSE opportunities with access to typical and specialized A&M-SA services and supports; (b) offers a meaningful credential upon completion that addresses academic, employment, and independent living domains; (c) utilizes a person-centered approach to meet unique student needs and enhance their quality of life; (d) employs comprehensive program evaluation; and (e) includes a plan for replication on regional and state levels.

TU CASA is based on pre-established partnerships between A&M-SA, local educational agencies (LEAs), and other organizations in the community to address educational and service needs and focus on decreasing the gaps in services for individuals with intellectual disabilities across south Bexar County and south San Antonio. TU CASA is currently working with local partners to continue the students' pathway into A&M-SA, building on the post high-school knowledge and skills gained at LEAs and expanding the skills through the integration of inclusive academic, non-academic, work-based experiences. The close relationship between LEAs and A&M-SA allows the TU CASA program to build on foundational life skills training, enhance career preparation through training and internship activities, introduce students with ID to college courses and enhance overall social skills. TU CASA accepts applications from young adults with intellectual disabilities from the San Antonio, Bexar county, and adjacent areas, as well as other states.

Mission

TU CASA mission is to offer a fully inclusive university experience for students with intellectual disabilities by providing them with access and opportunity to the same services, programs, and courses as other Texas A&M University students. Each TU CASA student's university experience will be individually designed to reflect their interests, preferences, and future goals. This individualized approach will support inclusive academic, employment, and independent living experiences leading to meaningful, integrated employment and overall improved adulthood outcomes. Participation in TU CASA will lead to a 1.5 year-long University and Career Experience Certificate (UCEC) and a career pathway for integrated employment and the development of independent living skills through a person-centered approach.

Our Values

TU CASA values are to support all students in academic achievement, integrated and gainful employment, and inclusive lives in the community.

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Admission Requirements

A documented intellectual disability is required. Intellectual disability is defined by AAIDD as significant limitations in both intellectual functioning

and adaptive behavior. The diagnosis should be identified by one or more of the following documents:

- IEP
- Cumulative File
- Physician's Documentation
- Social Security Administration Files
- Psychological or Neuropsychological Exam within past 3 years
- Comprehensive Evaluation within past 3 years
- Vocational Rehabilitation Documentation
- Age 18-26
- Completed high school and no longer receiving support from the school – high school transcript required.
- Serve as their own full legal guardian

Defining and Documenting Intellectual Disability Document (<https://www.tamusa.edu/academics/TU-CASA/documents/Define-Docment-ID.pdf>)

- Evidence of level of unsupervised independence (2-4 hours) using appropriate supports with potential to increase independence over time.
- Evidence required: 3 or more letters of support from individuals working with the individual on a weekly/daily basis (e.g., school or work settings). Sources may include case managers, lead teachers/instructors, and/or supervisors.
- These letters should describe the level of independence and/or assistance the applicant requires, on a weekly/daily basis, to complete school, work, social, and/or mobility tasks.
- Demonstrate ability to communicate (not limited to verbal speech) reliably with staff, faculty, and mentors.
- Demonstrate ability to live independently and take care of daily functioning and basic support needs (e.g., toileting, hygiene, feeding, etc.)
- Demonstrate at least 5th grade reading level in comprehension and fluency.
- Demonstrate ability to function independently for a sustained period of time (e.g., able to sit through 90-minute courses and function independently for 1-hour blocks of time, including navigating campus independently)
- Demonstrate basic mathematics understanding and ability to use a calculator.
- Express desire and motivation to complete a postsecondary education program.
- Express desire to attain a job in an inclusive employment setting upon completing the program.
- Demonstrate active participation throughout the application and interview process.
- Demonstrate sufficient emotional and independent stability to participate in all aspects of the TU CASA coursework and campus environment.
- Be able to handle and adapt to change; not overly stressed when schedules or people change.
- Have proof of health insurance (Medicaid, Medicare, private).
- Must be able to independently self-administer and manage medication and specialized dietary needs.
- Demonstrate the ability to navigate campus safely (e.g., crossing streets and parking lots independently).

- Skills in navigating community and school environments with a willingness to learn new modes of transportation
- Desire integrated, paid employment upon completion of the TU CASA program.
- Has previous experience with work-based learning (e.g., in-school, volunteering, and/or paid employment).