



Hello Marina,

Welcome to UC Merced!

As you begin to prepare for the transition to graduate studies at UC Merced, please review the information below. Please note that all future communications will be sent to your UC Merced email address.

Graduate Orientation Week

Graduate Orientation Week (GROW) encompasses a number of workshops, programs and events held at the beginning of each academic year to provide new incoming students with an opportunity to take care of important pre-enrollment tasks and learn about UC Merced and the Merced community. All incoming UC Merced graduate students are expected to participate in GROW, and all workshops and sessions are required unless otherwise noted in the official schedule.

Held in mid-August, typically GROW is an in-person campus event, but we expect we will hold the event virtually this year due to COVID-19 safety restrictions. Our team is working on finalizing GROW dates and plans and we look forward to sharing this information with you soon. We encourage you to check the [GROW website](#) for the most up-to-date information, including dates and registration when they are available.

****Note that each school/graduate group may have additional required orientations/trainings that are required for their department. Please refer to your school for your graduate group specific requirements.**

Campus Update and COVID-19

We understand that you may have many questions and concerns related to campus and the COVID-19 pandemic. In these unprecedented times, we would like to assure you of UC Merced's commitment to our graduate students and to excellence in graduate education and innovation in research. We are working diligently to determine a plan on how to safely deliver instruction for Fall 2020 and appreciate your patience as we work through the concerns and state guidelines. As we move forward, we will keep you updated via email. You can also keep informed of the latest from University of California public health officials, governmental entities and others by visiting the [campus resources page for COVID-19](#).

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions from Incoming Students

Q. What is instruction expected to look like for Fall 2020?

A. Please be assured that faculty and staff are actively planning for multiple scenarios — from modified in-person instruction to hybrid course delivery to a continuation of remote learning — with, of course, the goal being a return to in-person coursework as soon as it is safe to do so. We are rigorously examining what the “new normal” should be for classrooms, labs and residence halls, based on projections from state, federal and UC scientists. While our mission remains teaching, research and public service, our priority will always be the safety of our campus community. We will update you via email as soon as the campus determines the best way to deliver safe instruction for Fall 2020.

Q. When is Fall 2020 expected to begin? Is the initial start date expected to be pushed back?

A. The Fall 2020 semester will begin Wednesday, August 19, 2020. You can expect GROW to begin several days before this date. View the academic calendar [here](#).

Q. How can we defer our admissions to Spring 2021?

A. Deferrals are reviewed on a case by case basis. All deferrals will need to be approved by your graduate program chair.

Q. My prior university is currently closed. When are official transcripts/ degree certificates due?

A. At the end of your first semester at UC Merced, December 2020.

Q. I am an international student. Who do I contact for assistance with my visa?

A. Please contact UC Merced's Office of International Affairs (OIA) for any visa related questions. OIA is available remotely, Monday through Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm PST, to answer questions, and provide remote advising and other services.

- Student (F-1, J-1) visas: [Lacey Long-Vejar](mailto:llongvejar@ucmerced.edu) (llongvejar@ucmerced.edu; 209-259-8913)
- International Student & Scholars (ISS) related emergencies: [Becky Mirza](mailto:bmirza@ucmerced.edu) (bmirza@ucmerced.edu; 209-355-0913)

Visit the Graduate Division's website for additional [grad admissions](#) and [grad funding](#) FAQs.

Be sure to check your UC Merced email regularly as we will be sending information on housing, transportation, funding opportunities and more general information related to GROW 2020.

Please don't hesitate to contact the [UC Merced Graduate Resource Center](#) with any questions or concerns. We also invite you to join us for an **Incoming Grad Student Webinar + Live Chat on Tuesday, June 2nd at 1pm**. Our Graduate Dean and Graduate Division support staff will be available to answer all your questions, access the chat [here](#). We look forward to welcoming you to campus this fall!

Sincerely,

UC Merced Graduate Division and the GROW Committee

2020 Grow Committee

Graduate Division
Center for Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETL)
English Language Institute (ELI)
Graduate Student Association (GSA)
Human Resources Payroll Center (HRPC)
Office of International Affairs (OIA)
Office of Research and Economic Development
School of Engineering
School of Natural Sciences
School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts



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