

Prep4Success/UCA Self-Advocacy Policy

Prep4Success Program and Undergraduate Cohort Advising provide an educational environment modeling the U.S. higher education system. Self-advocacy is a significant part of this educational system, and encourages participants to speak out about their educational and communication needs and expectations, and voice their concerns in a professional manner, in order to eliminate barriers on a way to academic success.

What is Self-Advocacy?

The term *Self-Advocacy* represents the ideas and provides tools necessary for students to appropriately express their needs and concerns regarding the academic learning process. This may include awareness of a participant's personal and educational strengths, talents, needs and rights. It also involves assertive attitude and appropriate delivery of those concerns to inform others who are involved in communication, for example peers, staff or an adviser ("Self-Advocacy", 1-4).

Why is Self-Advocacy important for Prep4Success and UCA Participants, Advisers and Administrators?

Self-advocacy helps **participants** both academically and socially to understand their needs, and share those needs properly. This process may improve learning outcomes and social interaction. It may also contribute to participants' self-esteem, as they can safely speak for themselves, be heard and respected.

It helps **advisers** to appreciate participants' academic needs and take necessary steps to assist participants to fulfil their academic goals.

It helps **program administrators** to evaluate the quality of advising and learning process of participants, as well as improve the academic environment and student to advisor communication.

What language is used for Self-Advocacy?

Turkmen culture supports and promotes respect toward any kind of adviser or elder. This may create a challenge for participants in expressing their concerns about the quality of the learning environment, as they fear it being looked upon as disrespectful toward adviser. For this reason, P4S and UCA staff developed the special list of phrases participants may use to communicate their needs and concerns (please see attachment).

When to Self-Advocate?

Participant does not fully understand subject content.
Participant does not feel comfortable while communicating with peers or advisers.
Participant experiences high pressure because of serious family/health issues/etc.
Participant cannot handle study challenges.

Recommendations to Participants:

Part 1:

1. Know yourself as a learner. What kind of learner are you? Are you a visual/auditory/tactile learner? Take an on-line assessment test and share the results with your advisers and peers.
2. Identify your strengths/needs/difficulties in each subject area (TOEFL/SAT/ARW). For example,
"My learning strengths are _____:"
"My learning weaknesses are _____."
"I sometimes have a short fuse, and I often react impulsively"
"I have a difficult time taking notes"
"Tests/assignments are very hard for me" ("Self-Advocacy", 1-4).
3. Model your vocabulary needed to describe your strengths and needs.

Part 2:

1. Know what support you need to be successful: individual consultations/peer study groups/self-study/additional materials/something else.
2. Identify what exactly could help you to succeed in each subject/each section of TOEFL/SAT/ARW. For example,
"I learn best when _____."

Part 3:

1. You need to meet with an adviser and ask for an appointment to discuss each issue.
2. Communicate your needs appropriately. This means when you explain your issue, other people (peers/advisers/program administrators) understand you. Please, use confident tone to express your concerns clearly.
3. Please, refer to the attachment to see examples which may help you to express your needs and share your concerns.
4. It is completely acceptable if you and your adviser, program staff or peers' point of view differs from your point of view. The goal is to find an agreement or a solution which will contribute to your academic development.
5. If you are not satisfied with outcomes of an appointment, you are welcome to talk to P4S Program Director or P4S Program Associate.

I, _____
(print your name and surname here)

have read, understood and agreed to follow the Self-Advocacy Policy.

Signature _____

Date _____