# DAWN Recommendations for the application of Reasonable Accommodations in Remote Examinations.

In May 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, HEIs had to adapt the DAWN Reasonable Accommodation in Examinations Policy for remote assessments.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to ensure, as much as possible, that there is a consistent approach for the provision of reasonable accommodations in remote assessments across the HEIs.

A sub-committee of DAWN was formed to review exam supports for remote assessments and makes the following recommendations (see appendix 1 for membership):

**Specific:**

The table below details the type of assessment and extra time application. It is recognised that HEIs may have alternative language for the type of assessment so may need to amend the “type of assessment” accordingly.

Students whose examination performance is significantly impacted by a disability may require extra time in examinations. Extra time is set at 10 minutes per hour. In exceptional circumstances this extra time may be extended. (DAWN & AHEAD 2013)

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| **Type of assessment** | **Action to implement Extra time** |
| Written assignment | No extra time is applied. The usual procedure for extension on deadlines applies. |
| Take Home Exam (not Synchronised but submitted within a specific deadline) | No extra time is applied, but of course a student may spend extra time on the task itself within this period, example take home exams over 24 hours or more. |
| Synchronised Timed Exam | Extra time: Add extra time of 10 minutes per hour to the exam, for example a time synchronised exam over 1-5 hours or similar.  Rest Breaks: The student may require both Extra time and Rest Breaks and so both need to be considered and added to the time available to the student.  This could be applied by changing Rest Breaks to Extra time for the duration of Online Synchronised Time Exams but would need to be agreed locally but the HEI. |
| Online Quiz/MCQ | Add extra time of 10 minutes per hour of the exam. Consideration needs to be taken at a local level by each HEI to the Quiz/MCQ setup and how the extra time is applied. |

The extra time is based on the length of the exam which is determined by the HEI’s own local practices. Examples are above but is but it would be advisable for each HEI to put in examples of their own practices]

## **General:**

* DAWN recommend that the *Extra Time* for students with disabilities must be additional to the time added for all other students in synchronised timed exams.
* DAWN supports the HEIs recommendations that students are provided with the opportunity for a practice run of each exam mode to ensure student familiarity and troubleshooting of difficulties.
* Students need to be reminded of their responsibility to provide feedback to their Department/Disability Services as appropriate where issues arise.
* HEIs may need to implement local practices to ensure the administration of examinations, particularly regarding *Extra Time*. Where local practices are implemented, the HEI must ensure that the students’ reasonable accommodations are provided. For example, some colleges may choose to add extra time to the individual student on the VLE while others may choose to allow for later submission dates.
* **Hours of student effort/ typical word count -**For Take Home Exams students may be unsure of the expected time or hours of student effort required to complete the remote assessment. Where possible, placing a suggested timeframe or word count on the assessment is useful to improve clarity for all students completing the assessment.

## Alternative examination accommodations- In limited circumstances, due to the remote environment it may be necessary for the Disability Service to recommend additional accommodations which would be identified on a case by case basis.

## For example, where the impact of the disability is such that the student would be unable to complete the exam in the required timeframe independently, they may require additional time. If this support is necessary, it forms part of an updated needs assessment with the Disability Service. Generally, support is agreed in consultation with the Academic Department. An example of when this might be the case would include a student with a significant physical disability now choosing to type or write their exam independently rather than use a scribe.

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## Proctored Examinations- DAWN are recommending that a further piece of work in this area is required as a matter of urgency due to the complexities of these exams to ensure students can access reasonable accommodations.

## If examinations are recorded to ensure the academic integrity of the assessment, consideration must be given to the application of reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Appropriate arrangements might be agreed in consultation with the relevant academic department - this may be required for examinations with a clinical component.

* Viva Voice Exams (See Appendix 2 Cambridge Guidelines for support with this process)

## **Other Reasonable Accommodations**

Students registered with the Disability Service may have been approved for a range of additional RA’s. These are outlined below with guidance on how to implement these.

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| **Reasonable Accommodation** | **Implementation for remote written assignment/take home exams/timed exams/VLE quiz** |
| **Use of a computer to type** | Students whose ability to write is significantly impacted by a disability may require a computer to type in examinations.  Students should use their own devices. |
| **Reader** | Students should use a screen-reading software on their own computer or use the read aloud accessibility features in Office 365.  Students whose assessment materials cannot be read by software (e.g. where there is mathematical notation or where the paper is in a language other than English) should contact the Disability Service who will liaise with them and their Department to consider how best to implement this. |
| **Speech to text software** | A student who is eligible for a scribe may use voice recognition software.  Students have access to dictation software on their devices. |
| **Enlarged Papers** | Students should use magnification features as required. |
| **Scribe** | As assessments will be delivered and submitted in an electronic format, scribes may now not be required but in some cases additional extra time may be necessary. However students who are unable to use keyboards/handwrite their submission should contact the Disability Service who will liaise with them and their Department to consider how best to implement this.  If a scribe is required it might be provided by Zoom or MS Teams, depending on the preferred technology in the institution. For some subject material it may not be possible to provide a scribe remotely. |
| **Smaller Shared Venue or Separate Venue** | This does not apply in the remote environment. TCD have a video on setting up a low distraction exam venue at home: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqJfPMBLbgs&feature=youtu.be> |
| **Marking Guidelines** | [Marking Guidelines](C:\\Users\\oconnoa\\Downloads\\DAWN Exam Guidelines 2019.docx" \t "_blank) for Examiners should be applied as usual when correcting scripts from students with a [Specific Learning Difficulty](https://www.nuim.ie/access-office/staff-support/inclusive-teaching/SLD) or students who are [Deaf or Hard of Hearing](https://www.nuim.ie/access-office/staff-support/inclusive-teaching/HOH) in Synchronised Timed Exams. |
| **ISL Interpreter/ Speedtext** | Students who require an ISL interpreter/Speedtext for Synchronised Timed Exams should contact the Disability Service who will liaise with them and their Department to consider how best to implement this. Typically, it may be provided by Zoom or MS Teams, depending on the preferred technology in the institution.  For some subject material it may not be possible to provide an ISL interpreter/Speedtext remotely. |

# *Suggested* Frequently Asked Questions

**I am registered with the Disability Service. Will I have access to examination accommodations for remote exams?**

**Yes,** the examination accommodations that were agreed by the Disability Service apply to the remote assessment. Departments are administering these assessments and will apply the exam accommodations. You may find that your needs have changed or that the examination accommodations are not as relevant while alternative arrangements are in place.  If you have any queries about your examination accommodations, please contact your Disability Advisor.

**What exam supports do I get for in-class assessments?**

The examination accommodations that were agreed by the Disability Service also apply to the in-class assessments. Generally, students are required to provide 2 weeks’ notice to their Department and lecturer if they require exam accommodations for the in-class assessment. Please be sure to contact your Departments and/or lecturer as soon as possible. Departments are administering these assessments and will apply the exam accommodations.

**Do I still get extra time for examinations if I was approved for it previously?**

Yes.  All students registered with the Disability Service and who have been approved for a reasonable accommodation will now get extra time of 10 minutes per hour for timed synchronised exams and VLE quizzes.

This is not necessary in longer assessments such as Take Home Exams, as it is assumed that students are not working on the assessment for all the time.

**I have a 2-hour exam that has now been scheduled for a 3 hour period, how much extra time do I get?**

A timed exam may be given a longer duration to allow for the possibility that some students may have difficulty in accessing the material or uploading responses.

The extra time for students registered with the Disability Service will only be applied to the original exam time, e.g. a student registered with the Disability Service who is sitting an exam scheduled for 2 hours, but which has now been given a 3 hour window, would only be eligible for a total of 20 minutes of extra time (i.e. extra time of 10 minutes per hour of the exam).

**How will my other Reasonable Accommodations be applied in examinations now?**

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**If I use an electronic reader, will it read equations and diagrams or languages other than English?**

Please note that as with previous exams the screen reader WILL NOT read equations or diagrams or languages other than English.

**Do Marking Guidelines apply to online/remote assessments?**

Yes, Marking Guidelines apply to all synchronised timed exams.

**I have a significant disability and am unsure if the exam accommodations previously approved are relevant for remote/online examinations?**

You should contact your Disability Advisor or the Disability Service at [HEI](mailto:Disability.Office@mu.ie) Email  to discuss.

The Disability Service will also be contacting high need students directly to discuss their exam accommodations and will liaise with relevant Departments in this regard to consider the options available to implement their Reasonable Accommodations.

# Appendix 1 Subgroup Membership

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