# 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)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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 timed synchronised exam between 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 by the HEI. |
| Online Quiz/MCQ | Add extra time of 10 minutes per hour to 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 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 times.
* **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.

* 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. For example, a student who previously used a scribe and who elects to type their exam script may require additional extra time to facilitate their independent completion of the exam.

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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. Please see Alison Doyle/Declan Treanor review for recommendations.

## 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.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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, as it is considered that students have adequate time allocation within the specified 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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| **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](file:///C:\Users\oconnoa\Downloads\DAWN%20Exam%20Guidelines%202019.docx) 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. |

**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

Anne O Connor, Dublin City University

Gerard Gallagher, Maynooth University, Chair

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Linda Doran, University College Cork

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# Appendix 2 DAWN and Ahead Reasonable Accommodations Guidelines, 2013

# Appendix 3 Review of Reasonable Accommodations in Remote Examinations, Dr. Alison Doyle, TCD, May 2020

# Appendix 4 A review of proctoring in online examinations for students with disabilities Dr. Alison Doyle, July 2020



**A review of proctoring in online examinations for students with disabilities**

**July 2020**

**Compiled by Dr Alison Doyle & Declan Treanor,**

**Trinity College Dublin Disability Service**

**on behalf of DAWN**

**Purpose**

This document is to provide guidance on proctored examinations to members of DAWN.

**Introduction**

The intention of proctoring online examinations is to replicate invigilation of face to face examinations in the physical university environment. Invigilation and proctoring are underpinned by the same philosophy of academic integrity, and with respect to remote examination, are concerned with the potential for academic dishonesty such as retrieving information form the Internet, using prohibited digital or technological assistance, or accessing academic material unobserved by the examiner. Proctoring is utilised to uphold the standards and reputation of the institution, and to ensure fairness in assessment of students. Academic dishonesty, or cheating, is believed to potentially increase with the use of online assessment (Mellar, Peytcheva-Forsyth, Kocdar et al., 2018).

The vignette below is adapted from an article by Monica Chin on exam anxiety published in *The Verge*, an online magazine which focuses on the effects of technology on mainstream audiences.

The student learned about proctoring shortly before the semester began in an item called “Examity Directions.” The syllabus instructed students to sign up for Examity, an online test-proctoring service.

To create his account, the student was required to upload a picture of his photo ID to Examity’s website and provide his full name, email, and phone number. At the end, he was required to type his name again so that Examity could store a biometric template of his keystrokes.

A month later, the student was preparing to take his first practice exam, with an Examity proctor monitoring him over Zoom. The proctor told the student to share his screen, and then to display both sides of his driver’s license in the webcam’s view, and to see his desk and workspace by rotating the webcam 360 degrees.

He was then required to answer some security questions, but Chrome thought one of the fields was for a credit card and auto filled this information. The student quickly unselected the box, but his card’s last four digits and expiration date had already been displayed. Finally, he was instructed to grant the proctor remote access to his computer. The proctor entered a password and the test — taken online through Examity’s portal — began. The proctor watched the student work, through his webcam, the entire time.

Proctored examination is principally managed by commercial proctoring companies and requires several steps:

1. Auto authentication: photo identification, security questions, biometric keystroke signature (typically the student’s first and last name).
2. Live authentication: a live proctor then completes a facial comparison.
3. Automatic proctoring: the student’s environment and behaviour is monitored via webcam and microphone.
4. Live proctoring: after completing authentication, the student and environment are monitored by a live proctor to identify potential infractions during the exam. OR,
5. Record-and-review proctoring: after completing authentication, the student is video recorded from the start to finish of the exam and the footage reviewed.

**Issues with online proctoring and student performance**

Alessio, Malay, Maurer, Bailer, & Rubin (2018) investigated the effects of proctoring on test performance for 97 Health Sciences students within one college, finding that use of proctoring software resulted in lower quiz scores, shorter quiz taking times, and less variation in quiz performance across exams, implying greater compliance with academic integrity compared with quizzes taken without proctoring. However, there are also negative effects on student wellbeing as exemplified in the vignette. Milone, Cortese, Balestrieri, & Pittenger (2017) find that students who were dissatisfied with the proctoring of examinations expressed this as taking too long to setup, technical difficulties, and interpersonal issues such as “proctors being unable to find passwords or being rude” (p. 110). Important issues are proctor reliability and professionalism, and practical difficulties such as finding an appropriate environment to take the examination and appropriate computer equipment.

Another important point is the sense of intrusion (being supervised in a personal space by an unknown individual), also noted by Beust, Duchatelle, & Cauchard (2018) who emphasise the requirement for “significant human support for the students, even if the monitoring itself is entrusted to a quality provider” (p. 5). Allowing an unknown person to virtually ‘look around’ a personal environment, and to have this recorded, is an invasion of privacy but one that students are required to sanction as part of the examination process.

Cramp, Medlin, Lake, & Sharp (2019) outline key challenges of remotely invigilated online exams having examined nine fully online business courses in the University of South Australia. They point out that students should be provided with the opportunity to practice exam procedures and have access to technical support for any issues arising during the exam, to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by any lack of technical proficiency (citing Boitshwarelo, Reedy & Billany, 2017).

All of these factors place additional stress on students in an already stressful scenario, particularly for students who experience exam anxiety. As a consequence, Flaherty (2020) reports that some US colleges have noted complaints of academic unfairness from undergraduate students who are obliged to sit proctored online examinations, whilst their peers are allowed to take open-book tests.

**Challenges for students with disabilities**

Specific features of commercial proctoring technology may also impact on exam performance. Features that measure facial movement and which sound an alert when students look away, are a potential distraction where students are working on more than one document or making adjustments to equipment. Software measurement or human observation of suspicious behaviour is imperfect. For students with mental health conditions, motor agitation is an indicator of test anxiety, for example, head scratching, shifting or squirming in chair, and rapid changes in directional gaze (Kolski & Weible, 2018). This also has the potential to negatively impact students with physical disabilities such as tremors, and autistic students who need to engage in self-stimulatory behaviour or “stimming” and may require them to disclose sensitive information to an unknown or unfamiliar person.

The multiple steps involved in security and authentication can pose difficulties for students with physical and sensory disabilities, anxiety, and processing disorders. There is a significant burden of preparation required of students in terms of downloading and activating specialist software and learning to manage the operating system, in addition to engaging with an unknown invigilator via webcam.

Taking rest breaks or toilet breaks during a recorded examination usually necessitates pre-authorization. Some HEIs define exam ‘fraud’ where “the student is no longer in view of the webcam while taking the exam, insofar as this takes place outside the (possible) authorized breaks” (University of Amsterdam, 2020, p. 23). Pre-identification of an exact time when a rest or toilet break is required, and specificity as to how long that break will need to be, is rarely possible for students with significant medical conditions.

**Evaluating proctoring practices**

ProctorExam is a European online proctoring company, offering a web-based infrastructure for remote exams. They are working with the European Online Exam Consortium on an Erasmus+ KA2 project on academic integrity and the pedagogical effects of digital exams. Research partners include Dublin City University, Institute of Technology Sligo, University of Roehampton, and the Association for Learning Technology (UK). The research hopes to review security and fraud prevention, off campus examination best practices, student experiences with a focus on test anxiety, and privacy issues. This project was launched in 2016 but no output has been published as yet.

However, a comprehensive pan-EU assessment of online proctoring has been conducted by the Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership project Online Proctoring for Remote Examination (OP4RE). This report from 2017 investigates online proctoring across Europe <https://research.vu.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/39908260/StartReportOP4RE_extended.pdf>. They identify differences in current online proctoring practices between those HEIs who have a well-established and dedicated online / distance learning presence, and those who provide face to face teaching, in terms of best practice approaches and efficiencies. There are also inter-country differences depending on national developments in digital learning, but most importantly, they highlight aspects of privacy and security which have received insufficient attention to date. Finally, they note that problems with online proctoring hinder students in completing exams, potentially introducing inherent test unfairness.

**Recommendations**

Online proctoring influences the educational experience of students and thus must be taken into consideration when designing examinations. Appendix 1 contains some international examples of online or remote human proctoring solutions for students with disabilities, and these might be usefully reviewed by DAWN for possible adaptation and inclusion in exam guidelines. The literature reviewed thus far suggests several recommendations which are set out below and expanded in Appendix 2 as proposed additional guidelines to DAWN examination policy.

* Disability Services should prepare evidence-based guidelines for contexts where individual students may not be able to engage with online proctoring services.
* Disability Services should develop an approved human proctor policy where an online proctoring service is not appropriate.
* Issues with privacy, security and disclosure need to be identified and resolved.
* Students require practice in proctoring procedures well in advance of examination dates.
* Some students may need to be avail of additional human support in the exam context to manage technical aspects.
* Issues with the requirement to pre-authorize rest or toilet breaks where these are not easily pre-determined due to medical conditions, need to be resolved.
* Develop guides for proctors / invigilators for supporting students with disabilities during a proctored exam.
* Take steps to determine how online proctoring is likely to be provided i.e. through a commercial proctoring service, or in-house invigilation.

## References

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**APPENDIX 1**

**International test proctoring examples for students with disabilities**

**University of Minnesota, USA**

* Review this resource with [considerations for whether online monitoring or proctoring is needed](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NXlbEyove7imAYs836-MOKKuCtA5QBNDF1jogvWeZ3A/edit#heading=h.3o8vtua1rfhr).
* Create a practice exam for all students to try out the process.
* Consider whether other forms of proctoring could be implemented. For example:
  + A TA or departmental staff member could proctor through Zoom or Google Hangouts / Meet.
  + The exam could be proctored using the screen share function in Zoom or Hangouts / Meet.
  + The exam could be proctored with the camera off but the audio on in either Zoom or Hangouts / Meet.
  + The student could complete the exam without any proctoring and perhaps digitally sign an academic integrity form.
  + Consider using [breakout rooms](https://it.umn.edu/zoom-manage-breakout-rooms) in Zoom to proctor a small number of students or individual students.

**University of Florida, USA**

Reasonable accommodations must be entered into proctor guidelines within the proctoring software provider to avoid interrupting the student(s) during their exam if they are observed participating in one of the pre‐established accommodations which would not normally be allowed e.g.



**Edinboro University, PA, USA**

For off-campus testing, the student will be responsible for identifying a proctor that can accommodate their special testing needs. The student may consult the Office for Students with Disabilities or the Office of the Dean for assistance in this regard.

Acceptable proctor options are specified below; a student’s friend or relative may not serve as a proctor.

* A member of the faculty at any regionally accredited college or university
* An educational administrator at any regionally accredited college, university, or high school
* A full-time teacher at a regionally accredited high school
* A librarian at a public or high school library
* An employee at a learning center or private testing center; in this case, the proctor should be the center’s director
* An administrator at a Pennsylvania Community Education Council facility
* For a student in the military, an officer of higher rank than the student
* For an incarcerated student, the institution’s education officer, librarian, or chaplain

**Charles Sturt University, Australia**

Charles Sturt to no longer use Examity for proctoring.

We have had some system problems emerge with online proctored exams using Examity. We recognise the stress this caused students. We want to ensure all exams go smoothly so students can focus on working through the exam content.

Due to this, we’re changing the format of our online proctored exams. Exams will now be invigilated by Charles Sturt staff using Zoom. We still need to invigilate exams to meet the course accreditation requirements and ensure that all students are showing academic integrity during exams.

* Only Charles Sturt students and staff will be able to join the online exam in Zoom, and only Charles Sturt staff that will conduct the invigilation will be present in the room.
* You will still sit your exam at the same time scheduled for your original online proctored exam. Though due to the online invigilation component of your exam in Zoom, we will start the invigilation component of your exam 10 minutes before your scheduled exam time.
* Students will be broken up into groups of 20 for the Zoom invigilated exam. Each student will have an individual link to Zoom.
* Due to this being the first time Charles Sturt students have had online exams, there will be technology time allowances given to most time-limited exams. If you receive technology time allowances, this will be added to your exam timetable in the coming weeks. The initial timetable release on Wednesday 29 April will not display these technology allowances.
* You will be allowed to have a single blank A4 page in a proctored exam to plan answers and work through questions. You'll use the page as a note or scribble pad. At the start of the exam, you will need to show both sides of the paper on the webcam to prove that the page is blank.
* There will be real-time technical support for online exams. The online exams technical support page will be updated prior to your exams with how you can access a dedicated helpline.

**APPENDIX 2 Guidelines for online / remote proctored examinations**

Proctored tests or examinations are managed by a person or service other than college examiners, who administers and monitors assessments. A proctor or proctoring service has the responsibility of verifying the identity of the test taker, ensuring appropriate test conditions are met, and monitoring the actual tests or exams. Whenever possible, reasonable accommodations for proctored online examinations must be provided by Departments or School. Students must have relevant reasonable accommodations for proctored examinations specified in the disability needs assessment report.

**General procedures**

1. All students should be provided with an opportunity to practice proctoring procedures well in advance of examination dates, as exemplified in remote practice tests provided through college Information Services. This is particularly relevant to those students who experience anxiety with being monitored/recorded during examinations.
2. Some students may need to avail of additional human support in the exam context to manage technical aspects of the proctoring procedure. This should be incorporated into the disability needs assessment report.
3. Students who are unable to attend group or cohort proctored examinations may be reasonably accommodated with an individual, off campus proctored examination arrangement as indicated in their disability needs assessment report.
4. Individual proctors should be identified and agreed with the Department / School at least two weeks prior to the examination.
5. Proctors and invigilators must be provided with a copy of the disability needs assessment report where individual students require rest or toilet breaks, and where individual proctoring has been granted.

**Student responsibilities in online proctored examinations**

1. Students must identify the RA supports that they require e.g. rest breaks and toilet breaks and ensure these are identified and approved by the Disability Service, and included in the disability needs assessment report, well in advance of examination periods.
2. Students must have the correct and valid ID available on the day and should take steps to check this at least 24 hours prior to the examination.
3. Students must ensure that the technology to be used for the exam is in working order and should check this several days in advance including the internet connectivity, system requirements, camera and microphone. If using a MAC computer, students must ensure that the appropriate settings are working
4. Identify a suitable room in which to sit the exam and ensure that this is prepared: lighting, noise reduction, clear desk, no writing material within arm’s reach, clear glass of water,
5. Ensure that other members of the household (family/partners/flatmates) are aware that an examination is taking place, and request their co-operation to avoid all interruptions for the duration of the exam
6. Read the examination and proctoring instructions provided in advance.
7. Be present and online at least 20 minutes prior to the beginning of the examination.
8. Sign an academic integrity declaration prior to the beginning of the examination.

**Proctor / invigilator responsibilities**

1. Understand the Reasonable Accommodations that may be provided to students when undertaking proctored examinations and how to implement them by consulting Disability Service information at College examination website.
2. Understand what disability accommodations, if any, are allowed. If you have questions about any testing accommodations, please use the contact information listed on the student’s accommodation form to get your questions answered before the student arrives to take the exam.
3. Check individual requirements for rest and toilet breaks prior to the beginning of the examination.
4. Maintain confidentiality of information provided on individual requirements.
5. Strictly enforce all requirements and conditions associated with the exam.
6. Be available during the whole exam period. All exams must be monitored during the duration of the exam. At no time can the student be out of the proctor’s view other than during sanctioned rest and toilet breaks.
7. Ensure that other individuals do not enter the examination, unless they are approved in advance as part of a disability accommodation such as a scribe, personal assistant, or technology helper.
8. For online exams, monitor the student’s screen for the duration of the exam; students are not allowed to open any programs or websites unless indicated in the exam notes.