**DAWN review of disabled students’ examination supports - Survey of Examinations Officer**

This report consists of responses from examination officers regarding the logistical challenges and impacts of accommodating disabled students during exams. Here are the key points derived from survey data:

1. **Logistical Challenges:** Respondents identified a range of logistical challenges, including:
   * A lack of designated spaces for disabled student support (DSS) accommodations.
   * Difficulty in finding appropriate venues.
   * Ensuring correct space allocation for student needs.
   * Late requests for accommodations affecting arrangements.
   * The primary concern of room availability for accommodations.
2. **Impact on Space Allocation:** Accommodations for disabled students significantly affect space allocation and exam room configurations. Key impacts noted include:
   * Growing numbers of students requiring supports, challenging existing space allocations.
   * Moderate impact depending on the exam session, with careful planning required.
   * Special accommodations often leading to the use of multiple rooms for what could have been a single exam setting.
   * Very limited space in some institutions, severely affecting the ability to accommodate students.
3. **Solutions and Improvements Suggested:** Suggestions to improve the situation include:
   * Making accommodation efforts a joint mission across departments.
   * Allocating more resources to manage accommodations.
   * Maintaining current processes that are working well.
   * Interest in exploring new suggestions for improvement.
   * Highlighting the need for more accommodating spaces, especially in a more dignified manner.
4. **Impact on Exam Calendar:** The growth in the number of disabled students has led to changes in the exam calendar for some, including:
   * Holding exams six days per week, including Saturdays.
   * Implementing three exam sessions per day (morning, afternoon, and early evening).
   * Some institutions have not seen a change in their exam calendar, while others note a reduction in written exams and an increase in continuous assessment to accommodate needs.

This data reflects the ongoing challenges and efforts in accommodating disabled students during examinations, highlighting the need for space, resources, and early planning to effectively support all students. Further analysis would involve a deeper dive into the quantitative and qualitative responses to identify trends, common issues, and potential solutions across institutions.

**DAWN Examination and Assessment Survey Feb 2024 – Disability Officers**

This survey data provides insights into the primary issues, effective practices, and suggestions for improvement in the administration of assessments and examinations for students requiring accommodations. The survey collected responses from various universities and colleges (n14). The responses offer a diverse perspective on the challenges and solutions in examination accommodations for disabled students. Here's a detailed overview based on the initial rows of data:

**Primary Issues Encountered:**

* **Administrative Burden:** Responses highlighted the significant administrative burden on Disability Support Services (DSS), especially regarding continuous assessment accommodations and late applications.
* **Late Disclosure:** Students not coming forward in time or at the last minute was identified as a challenge, affecting the ability to provide accommodations.
* **Expectations:** There are mismatched expectations from both staff and students regarding accommodations.
* **Differentiation of Roles:** Confusion over roles and responsibilities between academic departments and the DSS.
* **Increased Numbers:** The growing number of students requiring accommodations stresses existing systems and processes.

**Effective Practices or Solutions Implemented:**

* **Information Management:** Simplifying access to information required by exams officers, reducing complexity.
* **Venue Allocation:** Allocating specific types of exam venues and seating arrangements to cater to accommodations.
* **Technology Integration:** Introduction of c-pen readers and shared low distraction venues as technological aids.
* **Integrated Systems:** Implementing integrated systems through which information about accommodations is efficiently shared across relevant departments.

**Suggestions for Improvement:**

* **Early Engagement:** Encouraging students to come forward early with their accommodation needs.
* **Role Clarification:** Clearer differentiation of responsibilities between academic staff and DSS.
* **Technology Utilisation:** Greater use of technology to streamline processes and communication regarding accommodations.
* **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implementing mechanisms for feedback from students and staff to continually improve accommodation processes.

**Additional Comments:**

* Some respondents noted the challenges posed by the return to full in-person exams post-COVID, indicating a need for adaptable solutions that consider the diverse needs of students in changing contexts.

This survey reveals critical insights into the operational challenges and innovative solutions in managing examination accommodations for disabled students. The responses underscore the importance of early disclosure by students, clear communication between departments, and the integration of technology to enhance the accommodation process. Sharing best practices among institutions can foster improvements in providing equitable examination experiences for all students.