**Case Study: Implementing Non-Standard Reasonable Accommodations for a Student with Cerebral Palsy at a University**

**Introduction**

This case study analyses how a university tailored non-standard accommodations for a student with Cerebral Palsy, focusing on the interactions between the student, academic departments, and disability services. It highlights the bespoke strategies developed to overcome the limitations of traditional exam formats, thereby fostering an inclusive academic environment.

**Background**

The student, enrolled in the Management Science and Information Systems Studies (MSISS) program, has been proactive in engaging with the university's Disability Service since their enrolment. Due to their condition, Cerebral Palsy, the student is unable to write exams independently and requires a scribe. This need, coupled with the variable availability and expertise of scribes, has historically led to significant academic stress and underperformance in traditional exam settings.

**Challenges**

The student faced several critical challenges:

* **Inadequate Scribe Support**: Finding scribes capable of understanding and accurately recording responses involving specialized content like formulas and graphs proved difficult.
* **Physical and Mental Strain**: The intensity and scheduling of traditional exams significantly exacerbated the student's physical fatigue and mental stress, adversely affecting their exam performance.

**Identification of Needs**

The student and the Disability Service worked closely to document the specific barriers faced during examinations. Through regular meetings, they detailed the difficulties in communication with scribes and the physical toll of back-to-back exams. This comprehensive needs assessment was crucial for developing effective accommodations.

**Collaborative Solutions Development**

The Disability Service initiated a collaborative approach involving the student, faculty members from the MSISS program, and other academic departments. This interdisciplinary team aimed to create practical and equitable assessment alternatives that would align with the rigorous academic standards of the university while addressing the student's unique needs.

**Proposed Accommodations**

The non-standard accommodations proposed included:

1. **Algorithms and Data Structures II**:
	* Modification of the exam format to multiple-choice questions only, eliminating the need for extensive written answers and thereby the scribe.
2. **Applied Probability II**:
	* A switch to a take-home exam format, allowing the student to work in a controlled environment and reducing physical strain. This was supplemented by a virtual oral exam to verify understanding.
3. **Management Science Methods**:
	* A reduction in the number of required exam questions to decrease cognitive overload and exam duration.
4. **Introduction to Finance and Economy of Ireland II**:
	* For subjects with less technical content, take-home exams and traditional scribe-supported formats were retained or modified to minimise stress and fatigue.

**General Strategies**

* **Flexibility in Exam Scheduling**: Exams were scheduled with ample breaks to allow the student necessary rest and recovery periods.
* **Adaptive Exam Settings**: Adjustments were made to in-person settings to reduce the reliance on scribes and to better accommodate the student's physical requirements.
* **Continuous Evaluation and Feedback**: The university committed to ongoing monitoring and adjustment of accommodations in response to feedback from the student and academic performance data.

**Conclusion**

The university's adaptive and collaborative approach in designing non-standard accommodations demonstrates a strong commitment to inclusivity and academic integrity. By specifically tailoring assessment methods to meet the needs of students with disabilities, the institution not only supports the academic success of all students but also upholds equity in educational opportunities. This case exemplifies how higher education can adapt to diverse learning needs, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to showcase their true academic potential.