**Guidelines for Low-Distraction Venues**

**1. Purpose and Definition**

**Objective:**

* To establish controlled environments that significantly reduce sensory and environmental distractions, thereby supporting the academic success and well-being of students requiring specific accommodations.

**2. Eligibility and Documentation**

**Criteria for Use:**

* Students must submit documentation confirming the necessity for accommodations such as low-distraction settings, use of headphones, and ergonomic seating.

**Verification Process:**

* This documentation is reviewed by the university's disability support service team to verify needs and customise accommodations.

**3. Physical Environment Setup**

**Location and Acoustics:**

* **Quiet Areas:** Designate rooms in low-traffic areas to avoid external disturbances.
* **Soundproofing:** Implement sound-absorbing materials within rooms to dampen any intrusive noise.

**Seating and Furniture:**

* **Ergonomic Furniture:** Provide adjustable seating solutions to accommodate diverse physical needs, enhancing comfort and concentration.
* **Flexible Layout:** Organise furniture to facilitate both individual focus and necessary breaks within the same space.

**Lighting and Temperature:**

* **Natural Light:** Utilize natural lighting where possible, complemented with adjustable blinds to manage glare.
* **Artificial Lighting:** Employ adjustable, non-flickering LED lighting to prevent eye strain.
* **Climate Control:** Maintain a consistent and comfortable temperature, supported by effective ventilation systems.

**4. Specific Accommodations**

**Headphones and Fidget Tools:**

* **Headphones:** Permit the use of noise-cancelling headphones to block external noise, subject to compliance with exam integrity standards.
* **Fidget Tools:** Allow non-disruptive fidget tools that aid concentration without affecting others.

**5. Access and Scheduling**

**Testing Conditions:**

* Schedule assessments in these venues during times that coincide with minimal campus activity to further reduce disturbances.
* Offer flexible scheduling to align with the optimal functioning times for neurodivergent students.

**Continuous Access:**

* Enable access to these spaces not only during exams but for regular study periods to foster a familiar and consistent learning environment.

**6. Staff Training and Awareness**

**Education and Training:**

* Conduct mandatory training sessions for all faculty and support staff on the unique needs of disabled and neurodivergent students and the proper management of low-distraction accommodations.
* Emphasise the importance of confidentiality and respectful interaction with students utilizing these facilities.

**7. Monitoring and Feedback**

**Continuous Improvement:**

* Implement a structured feedback system allowing students to evaluate their experiences and suggest improvements.
* Regularly review and adjust the accommodations based on student feedback and emerging research in educational support and neurodiversity.

**8. Communication and Visibility**

**Awareness:**

* Ensure comprehensive visibility of the availability and procedures for accessing low-distraction venues through university platforms, including websites and student portals.

**9. Maintenance and Accessibility**

**Regular Inspections:**

* Perform routine checks to ensure the environment remains conducive to the intended purpose and make adjustments based on wear and maintenance needs.

**Accessibility:**

* Guarantee that all venues comply with universal design principles to accommodate all students, regardless of physical ability.

By adhering to these guidelines, Irish universities can provide effective and supportive low-distraction venues. This approach not only enhances the learning and examination conditions for disabled and neurodivergent students but also aligns with broader inclusivity and equity objectives within the academic community.