**Guidelines for Oral Exams**

**1. Purpose**

To provide a suitable alternative for students whose disabilities affect their ability to write or type, or who can more effectively demonstrate their knowledge and comprehension verbally.

**2. Scope**

**Eligibility:**

* Students with physical disabilities that impact writing or typing abilities.
* Students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia that impair their written communication.
* Students with anxiety disorders or other mental health conditions that inhibit performance in written exams.

**Application Process:**

* Students must complete an application form available from the Disability Services office.
* Applications should include:
	+ Comprehensive documentation from a qualified professional detailing the disability.
	+ A personal statement from the student explaining their preference for an oral exam and how their disability impacts their exam performance.
	+ Recommendations from academic advisors or faculty who can attest to the student's academic needs and capabilities.

**Approval:**

* A multidisciplinary panel including Disability Services staff, faculty members from relevant departments, and a student representative (where possible) will review applications.
* Decisions will be made considering the student’s documented needs, the nature of the course content, and the essential competencies being assessed.
* Students will be notified of the decision in writing, and a meeting will be arranged to discuss the outcome and any further steps.

**Conducting the Exam:**

* **Preparation:**
	+ Schedule the oral exam at a time that considers the student's best performance times (e.g., accounting for medication effects or peak cognitive periods).
	+ Ensure the exam location is accessible, quiet, and free from distractions.
	+ Provide the student with the exam questions or topics at least 24 hours in advance if this accommodation is included in their approved adjustments.
* **During the Exam:**
	+ Examiners should use clear and straightforward language and avoid ambiguous or double-barreled questions.
	+ Record the exam using audio or video equipment to ensure that there is a reliable record for transparency and for review in case of disputes.
	+ Allow the student breaks if needed, as agreed in the accommodations plan.
* **Examiner Training:**
	+ Provide specific training for examiners on how to conduct oral exams with disabled students.
	+ Cover aspects such as appropriate questioning techniques, sensitivity to non-verbal cues indicating anxiety or misunderstanding, and strategies to ensure unbiased and equitable evaluation.
	+ Train examiners on the use of any necessary technology and on maintaining confidentiality and integrity during the recording process.
* **Feedback and Evaluation:**
	+ Provide immediate, constructive feedback during the exam to guide the student.
	+ Use a detailed rubric that outlines the criteria for evaluation to ensure consistency across different examiners and exams.
	+ Offer the student an opportunity to reflect on their performance and discuss it with the examiner at the end of the session.

**3. Post-Exam Review**

* Students can request a review of the oral examination process and its outcomes if they feel their accommodations were not properly implemented or they were unfairly assessed.
* A formal process should be in place for handling such reviews, which can include listening to the recordings, reassessing the student's performance by a different panel, and ensuring that all accommodations were indeed provided.

By implementing these expanded guidelines, universities can better accommodate students who require alternative examination formats due to disabilities. These comprehensive measures ensure that the examination process is fair, transparent, and adaptive to individual needs, thereby supporting the academic success of all students.