

Accessible Education: Best Practices for Instructors for Final Assessments

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Who needs accommodation?

The vast majority of students with disabilities in your courses have already established accommodations. They are posted on the ExtraNet under the [Accessible Education \(blue wheelchair tab\)](#) under

[Accessible Education: View student's recommended accommodations](#)

Most students have access to any assistive technology that they may need during an assessment so in most cases there is no need for you to worry about that. Students who do need help will reach out to you or us.

Universal Design

If you are planning an assessment to take the place of a final exam, where possible employ principles of Universal Design for Learning by allowing all students ample time to complete the assessment. For example, if you anticipate it should take 3 hours, provide a 12 or 24 hour time bracket. Most students with disabilities will not need any accommodation in this type of situation. This will also accommodate those students with spotty internet access, noisy or crowded homes, different time zones, or other barriers.

Timed Assessments

In most cases the biggest issue will be anything that is tightly timed. Instructors may opt to mimic the typical timed final exam using an online tool (like Assignments in OWL) that has a time limit. In these cases, it is imperative that students who require test and exam accommodations receive the extra time and rest break opportunities. The extra time is displayed for each student on the ExtraNet, and you can also see if a student requires rest breaks (10 or 20 minutes per hour that they are writing).

Typically, students are provided extra time in OWL by creating a separate accommodated assessment with alternative time parameters. This is done by creating a group or groups of students requiring accommodation and showing them the alternate assessment. Some instructors opt to create just one “accommodated” version with the maximum amount of extra time a student could receive, and allow all accommodated students to complete that assessment. Others may opt to make more than one accommodated assessment (i.e. one for those who need 30 extra minutes per hour, one for those who need double time). This is up to you.

The ITRC has provided detailed instruction on how to do this under FAQ 2 and 3 at this link: <https://teaching.uwo.ca/elearning/FAQs.html>

Communication to Students with Disabilities

It is best practice to communicate your accommodation plan to your students. Otherwise, you will receive a barrage of inquiries from students, as will Accessible Education. You could post an announcement on OWL that provides details of the assessment and includes a statement that says something like: "Students receiving accommodation through Accessible Education will have their extra time and rest breaks accommodation available to them during the assessment." If you choose to email only the students with disabilities as a group, ensure you use bcc as you don't want to identify them to one another.

What is Accessible Education doing?

Our plan at Accessible Education is to wait until April 1st, when all instructors will have had to post their contingency for each course and students will have had a chance to review them. At that point we will email students who have needed exam accommodations this academic year to remind them to think about the new assessments they are being asked to complete and ask whether they are aware of how their accommodations will be put in place. The more information students have about the expectations and design of the assessment the better. **Our instructions at that point would be for the students to contact the instructors to inquire about accommodations if there is any confusion, so it would be best if you already have a plan in place.**

After April 1st, if any new requests for accommodation come to us from students we will post the information on the ExtraNet but also connect with faculty directly to let them know there is a last minute request and to see if some arrangements can be made.

Thanks for all your hard work. We are here to help students and faculty for the duration. Don't hesitate to get in touch. As much as possible, if we can prevent the need for accommodation in our design of the assessment, that works best for everyone.