**Disability Related FAQ’s**

**For an Online Learning Environment**

**Students:**

**Is Student Disability Services (SDS) Open?**

* **Student Disability Services staff are available virtually Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. If on-campus services are needed please contact us for further information by calling 210-458-4157 or email us at** [**disability.services@utsa.edu**](mailto:disability.services@utsa.edu)
* SDS is currently providing phone appointments with students as needed.
* SDS encourages students to contact their assigned Disability Specialist via phone (210-458-4157 or email [disability.services@utsa.edu](mailto:disability.services@utsa.edu) as needed)

**What are the SDS protocols?**

As we remain open, SDS is implementing new office procedures to limit exposure to illness:

* **Students are asked not to come into the office without having contacted us so we can adhere to social distancing.**
* Phone appointments instead of in-person appointments
* Hand sanitizer, tissues, and disinfecting wipes available in every office and at front desk
* Avoid contact with infected persons (with any illness) by staying **6 feet** away or more
* Avoid touching your face, mouth or eyes
* Electronic (pdf) submission of paper documents, forms, and requests instead of paper to [disability.services@utsa.edu](mailto:disability.services@utsa.edu)
* Disinfecting wipes are used in the office for doorknobs, keyboards, and edge of desks after every visit.

**What if I experience access barriers to my online course?**

We understand that online courses may not automatically include all the access needs for every student. SDS is working with campus partners in Academic Innovations <https://provost.utsa.edu/academicinnovation/> to ensure Blackboard accessibility to your online courses. Although your instructors have already been informed about your accommodation needs through an accommodations notification email, the type of accommodations needed may differ than what is required in traditional, in-person classroom settings.

If you experience barriers to accessing your online classes, please reach out to your UTSA Instructor and SDS Disability Specialist immediately. Here is some additional recommendations:

* Take frequent breaks from the computer to reduce eyestrain and fatigue.
* If you need a free screen reader for support with a visual impairment, try [Non-Visual Desktop Assistant](https://www.nvaccess.org/download/) <https://www.nvaccess.org/download/> to assist in navigating your courses.

\*\*Students are encouraged to read these tips <https://www.northeastern.edu/graduate/blog/tips-for-taking-online-classes/> for a more optimal online learning experience. For more suggestions or additional support, please contact your UTSA Disability Specialist at [disability.services@utsa.edu](mailto:disability.services@utsa.edu) or call 210-458-4157.

**How will I receive my exam accommodations? Will the Adaptive Test Center be open?**

To support the practice of social distancing, the Adaptive Test Center **will not** be proctoring any exams for students in person. If a student has **extenuating** circumstance or needs additional accommodation support that cannot be provided from their residence (e.g. Assistive Technology Equipment, Reader, Scribe, etc.), Adaptive Test Center staff are prepared to problem solve with the student and their instructor to determine an alternate accommodations (see accommodation examples under “faculty” for further recommendations).

If students have the following accommodations with SDS, we encourage students to reach out to their Disability Specialist to discuss accommodations for online exams:

* Alternate format printed exams
* Scribe/Reader for exams
* Identifying assistive technology to use on personal computer
* Other exam accommodations which may limit access online
  + Exam and quiz time extensions can be implemented by instructors on Blackboard. Instructors are responsible for extending your time on Blackboard for quizzes/exams; please feel free to remind your instructors to do so.
  + Instructors are encouraged to contact Academic Innovations <https://provost.utsa.edu/academicinnovation/> for further Blackboard instructions.
  + Students are encouraged to reach out to your instructors to inquire about the format of any upcoming exams/quizzes.

With the transition to online exams, the following accommodations can be self-provided and will not qualify for on-campus proctoring through the Alternative Testing Center:

* Any Physical Classroom Accommodation (e.g. preferential seating, accessible furniture, etc.)
* Exam room with limited distraction environment
* Periodic Breaks as needed
* Snacks and water during exams
* Use of computer on exams
* Use of calculator on exams

**Faculty:**

**How do I make my online course accessible?**

As instructors begin considering how to migrate their classes online, it is important to remember that UTSA is still obligated to ensure that classes are accessible to students with disabilities. The good news is that many of the barriers that exist in face-to-face classes may no longer be present when classes are online, so fewer accommodations may be necessary. Instructors who need technical assistance or who have technical questions about moving courses online should contact Academic Innovations Accessibility Team <https://provost.utsa.edu/academicinnovation/>

**Faculty Tips for Providing Accommodations and Instructional Continuity**

Below are examples of how commonly approved accommodations may and may not apply in online classes. Please note that not all accommodations are listed below. Instructors should review students’ accommodations and discuss what accommodations may still be needed and how they can be provided with Student Disability Services by calling our number at 210-458-4157 or emailing us at [disability.services@utsa.edu](mailto:disability.services@utsa.edu)

***It is important for students and instructors to continue to communicate regarding accommodations and barriers they may experience. SDS staff are available to consult with students and instructors as needed.***

**Classroom accommodations**

**Notetaking Accommodations** (including volunteer note takers, copies of PowerPoints, using laptop for taking notes, and audio recording lectures) Depending on the structure of the online course, these accommodations may no longer be applicable. If course content is audio/video recorded and all material is posted online for use and review, then individualized accommodations may no longer be necessary. Students can also utilize free captioning services such as YouTube captions <http://bit.ly/3aLSPnK> ,which allows students to potentially create and download a transcript. If instructors are not sharing materials with all students, they may still need to share PowerPoints, handouts, etc. with students individually.

**Extended deadlines:** This accommodation is still applicable for online courses. Instructors will need to determine which assignment deadlines may be able to extend and what is a reasonable amount of extension based on the individual accommodation. SDS is able to offer guidance if needed. If online submission platforms close on the deadline, instructors will need to offer students alternate ways of submitting work (such as emailing completed assignments, etc.).

**Flexibility with attendance:** If online work can be done in a self-paced manner, this accommodation may no longer apply. However, if content is not recorded and available for viewing later or if there is an interactive component to the class instructors will need to work with students to discuss options for making up work or gaining access to material. The Absence Leniency Policy Tool (attached to the Accommodation Letter) may serve as a useful reference for guiding these discussions.

**Extended time:** If a student has extended time for testing, this may also apply to activities in class, such as timed modules. Discuss options with Academic Innovations and the Blackboard Team on how to adjust time limits in Blackboard. Instructors are responsible for extending test times for student who qualify on Blackboard for quizzes/exams. Please consult with Blackboard Learn Video Resources <https://www.utsa.edu/OIT/FacAndStaff/OnlineLearning/BlackboardResources.html> or consult with Academic Innovations on how to extend time on an exam.

**Captioning/Sign Language Interpreters/Captioning Videos:** SDS is actively working with campus partners to determine how to provide language access to Deaf/Hard of Hearing students in online classes. If faculty have videos as part of your online content, please ensure they are captioned or transcripts are available. Discuss options with Academic Innovations Department.

**Breaks/seating accommodations/access to food and drink:** These accommodations no longer apply since students will need to manage their own learning environment.

**Testing Accommodations**

SDS will **no longer proctor exams in our office for the remainder of the semester**. Instructors will need to provide relevant testing accommodations to students via the online testing platform.

**Reader for Exam:** The purpose of a **reader** is to ensure that the test-taker with a disability has the same opportunity as test-takers without disabilities to access the testing content. SDS recommends that instructors who has a student with a “test reader” as an accommodation could audio record the test questions. Adaptive Test Center staff can assist in this process, however, if the test content is technical (e.g. calculus, physics, anatomy, languages, etc.) SDS recommends that the instructor or an appropriate designee serve as the reader.

**Scribe for Exam:** For scribing, the process we recommend is for a student to respond verbally to the test question to a scribe over the phone or through a zoom meeting. If the test content is technical (e.g. calculus, physics, anatomy, languages, etc.) SDS recommends that the instructor or an appropriate designee serve as the scribe. The scribe writes the response on paper and then confirms the response. The student and scribe may want to review the response as typed on the screen, which is either emailed to the professor or completed in a real time, online format.

**Scribes for Scantron:** Does not apply if Scantrons are not being used

**Reduced distraction environment:** Does not apply if students are taking online quizzes/exams from with their own environments since they can choose their location and manage distractions themselves.

**Computer for essays:** Does not apply if students are taking online quizzes/exams using their own devices.

**Adaptive equipment for testing:** Does not apply if students are taking online quizzes/exams using their own devices. \*\*It is important to ensure the format of the exam is accessible. SDS staff are available to consult if needed.

**Breaks/Food and Drink:** Does not apply since students will need to manage their own testing environment

***This page does not address all approved accommodations. If students or instructors have questions about how to provide an approved accommodation within an online class, please contact*** [***disability.services@utsa.edu***](mailto:disability.services@utsa.edu) ***or call 210-458-4157. Instructors who need assistance with creating online content should contact Academic Innovations at 210-458-2700.***