



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

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Appendix 2: Guidelines for students and staff on the modification of examination and assessment arrangements for students with disabilities

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1. General Principles

- 1.1 These guidelines should be read in conjunction with The University of Dublin Calendar (General Regulations and Information Section H: Examinations).
- 1.2 Calendar: General Principles and Regulations (Section H § 15) states: Trinity is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in education and to ensuring that students with a disability have as complete and equitable access to all facets of Trinity life as can reasonably be provided. Trinity has adopted a code of practice which is applicable to all students with disabilities. This is in accordance with the Disability Act 2005, the Equal Status Acts 2000 (as amended) the University Act 1997 and the HEA Act 2022. Students with a disability are encouraged to register with the Disability Service to seek supports where the disability could affect their ability to participate fully in all aspects of the course. (H4 § 15)
- 1.3 For the purpose of this document reasonable accommodations are defined as those actions that enable students to demonstrate their true knowledge and ability in examinations without changing the demands of the examination. The intention behind the provision of such accommodations is to alleviate a substantial disadvantage without affecting the integrity of the assessment.
- 1.4 The granting of reasonable accommodations will not put the integrity or status of the examination or assessment at risk and will ensure fairness to all students.
- 1.5 Ultimate responsibility for ensuring equality of access in examinations and assessments lies with College, although a number of administrative units and academic departments may be involved in coordinating reasonable accommodations.
- 1.6 For the purpose of this document the definition of disability is that encompassed by the Equal Status Acts 2000 (as amended).
- 1.7 This document is applicable only to those students with a permanent or long-term disability, that is, a disability that is likely to last longer than one year.
- 1.8 Wherever possible, students with disabilities should undertake the same assessments as others undertaking the course. The usual way of taking

disability into account will be to vary the assessment conditions. For example, the time allowed for the examination may be extended, or the examination paper may be presented in an alternative form.

- 1.9 It is the student's responsibility to ensure that Trinity is aware of their disability and to apply for any variation in assessment conditions, which they may wish to claim. Such an application for reasonable accommodation should be requested within the exam accommodation deadline stated in 2.3.6 below. Any such claim must also be supported by acceptable evidence of disability.
- 1.10 Please refer to the Trinity College Dublin Reasonable Accommodation Policy & for students with disabilities for further information: [Reasonable Accommodation Policy \(tcd.ie\)](#).

2. Policy on Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations

2.1 Provision of Reasonable Accommodations

These guidelines have been aligned with a national exam policy agreed by the Disability Advisors Working Network (DAWN) in developing standardised assessment procedures for students with disabilities in Higher Education in Ireland. The national exam policy agreed by DAWN represents those staff of all Universities, NCAD, NCI and M.I.E., with responsibility for the provision of support to students with disabilities. The national Policy, Guidelines and Procedures for the Granting of Reasonable Accommodations in Examinations to Students with Disabilities (DAWN, June 2019) is available on the Disability Service website at: [DAWN-Exam-Guidelines-2019.docx \(live.com\)](#)

- 2.1.1 A Needs Assessment is carried out with all students with disabilities to determine the level of support required in college, including reasonable accommodations for examinations.
- 2.1.2 This document provides guidelines for determining when reasonable accommodations may be appropriate in examinations. The actual need for a particular accommodation is determined through the need assessment process, taking account of the student's individual needs and the impact of the disability in an examination setting.
- 2.1.3 Students with disabilities who received reasonable accommodations in Irish state examinations, other institutions and/ or jurisdictions will only be granted reasonable accommodations on completion of a Needs Assessment within Trinity.
- 2.1.4 Reasonable accommodations should not be provided without prior consultation with the Disability Service.
- 2.1.5 Reasonable accommodations may be reviewed with each student annually. Students who fail to use a reasonable accommodation that has been granted will have that accommodation reviewed.

2.1.6 Complaints relating to the implementation (or failure thereof) of these guidelines are to be made using the University's Student Complaints Procedure.

2.2 **Availing of Reasonable Accommodations**

2.2.1 Students with disabilities must register with the Disability Service and complete a Needs Assessment to avail of reasonable accommodations in examinations.

2.2.2 Students with disabilities must provide acceptable evidence of disability.

2.2.3 It is the student's responsibility to inform the Disability Service of any changes to their disability which may require new or revised accommodations. Changes to examination accommodations are only approved following an updated Needs Assessment with the Disability Service.

2.2.4 Assistive technology is the preferred accommodation for examinations unless the student is unable to use the recommended technology due to the nature of their disability.

2.2.5 Students with disabilities who require specialist examination supports such as assistive technology or a reader/ scribe must attend training in the use of such accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to be proficient in the use of technology for examinations.

2.3 **Notification of Reasonable Accommodations**

2.3.1 On completion of the Needs Assessment students with disabilities will be notified of the support that will be provided in college, including reasonable accommodations that have been granted for examinations.

2.3.2 The Assessment, Progression and Graduation Team are responsible for coordinating reasonable accommodations in all Trinity examinations.

2.3.3 Academic Departments/Schools are responsible for coordinating reasonable accommodations outlined in the students' [Learning Educational Needs Summary](#) (LENS) report in in-class assessments.

- 2.3.4 Examiners have responsibility to ensure that all announcements or amendments are conveyed to all students with disabilities sitting examinations in separate examination venues.
- 2.3.5 The Assessment, Progression and Graduation Team are responsible for posting details of exam venues online. The onus lies on each student to check their particular examination details (e.g. venue, time and date) by consulting their timetable online. Any discrepancies should be brought to the attention of the course office and the Assessment, Progression and Graduation Team immediately.
- 2.3.6 Students should make requests as early as possible in the academic year. To ensure the Assessment, Progression and Graduation Team can set disabled student accommodations for examination purposes the following deadlines are applied or as may be changed from time to time by the Assessment, Progression and Graduation Team:
- Semester 1 examinations – last Friday in October annually
 - Semester 2 examinations – last Friday in February annually
 - Foundation Scholarship – last Friday in October annually
 - Supplemental Examinations – last Friday in June annually

Students registering with the Disability Service after these deadlines will be accommodated in subsequent examination sessions.

2.4 **Disclosure of Reasonable Accommodations**

- 2.4.1 The provision of reasonable accommodations in examinations will be made known to the relevant academic, administrative and examination staff. Reasonable Accommodations and Learning Educational Needs Summary (LENS) reports are available on the student's record in SITS.
- 2.4.2 Trinity has a policy of anonymous marking for all students in examinations. Students with disabilities are as far as possible, marked anonymously unless, they request otherwise. The Trinity Council adopted this measure (see 41/B – 08/12/1999) to allow students with disabilities to be identified to the examiner.

2.4.3 [Inclusive Marking Guidelines](#) apply to students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty. The Assessment, Progression and Graduation Team will ensure that stickers referring examiners to marking guidelines are made available in relevant exam venues. The onus is on each student to request sufficient stickers from the invigilators for insertion on the front cover of their examination booklets prior to their submission. For further details see section 3.4 below.

3. Guidelines for Granting of Reasonable Accommodations

3.1 Alternative Venues

Students with disabilities receiving reasonable accommodations normally sit their examinations in a different venue to their peer group. These venues are normally shared with other students. Only in exceptional circumstances will a student with a disability sit an examination in a room of their own.

3.2 Time Allowance

Students whose examination performance is significantly impacted by a disability may require extra time in examinations. Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing, or spelling difficulty are provided in the [DAWN exam guidelines](#). Extra time is set at 10 minutes per hour. In exceptional circumstances this extra time may be extended.

3.3 Rest Breaks

Students who may require a rest break in examinations include students whose ability to complete the examination within the required time is significantly impacted by a medical, sensory, psychological or physical disability.

3.4 Guidelines for Examiners when Marking Scripts

Even with the provision of additional supports in examinations, some students with disabilities may not demonstrate their full potential in an examination.

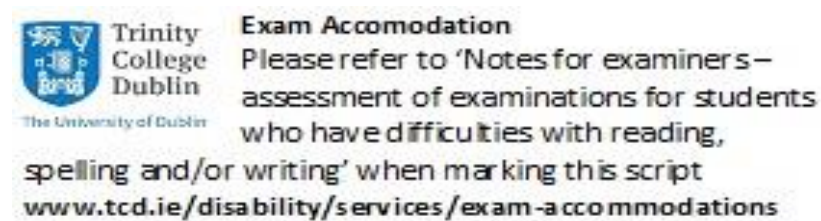
[Inclusive Marking Guidelines](#) inform the examiner that the student, due to the nature of their disability, has a particular difficulty with spelling, grammar and written expression, and provide a framework for marking the scripts of such students. The guidelines **do not** ask examiners to compensate these candidates by giving them additional marks because they have a disability. Marking Guidelines apply to timed examinations only.

Where spelling, grammar and written expression are included in learning outcomes and are included in the assessment criteria it is not possible to disregard these elements (for example, languages, journalism).

Students may apply a Disclosure of Disability sticker (see image below) to their exam script, which refers examiners to the Inclusive Marking Guidelines for Trinity Examiners.

Students may request one or more stickers for their answer booklets, which refer examiners to inclusive marking guidelines for students with disabilities. **The onus is on the students to request sufficient stickers for insertion on the front cover of their examination booklets prior to their submission.**

Students should request stickers at the start of their examinations so they may be included on their booklets while they are completing the other required details and waiting for their exam to commence. Invigilators provide students only with sufficient stickers for their booklets.



3.5 Use of a Computer

Students whose ability to write is significantly impacted by a disability may require a computer in examinations. Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are provided in the [DAWN exam guidelines](#).

3.6 Scribe

In exceptional circumstance where technology solutions or alternative assessments cannot be provided Scribes may be granted for students who cannot handwrite or use a computer due to the nature of their disability. When a scribe is used, a recording of the examination session will be made so that it can be shown that the writing skills demonstrated are those of the student being examined. Additional time of ten minutes per hour and an individual venue will be provided when using a scribe. Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are provided in the [DAWN exam guidelines](#).

When the use of a Scribe has been granted it is necessary for the student and scribe to meet in advance of any exams to complete a training module and practice session. Following this training session both the student and scribe must confirm in writing that they are happy to proceed with these arrangements for the exam(s). The Disability Service must be made aware of any issues identified by the student or scribe during the practice sessions.

The Scribe training video and training forms are available on the [Scribe in Examinations webpage](#). Given the time it takes to recruit and assign a scribe, and the necessity to complete the training and practice sessions outlined above, the accommodation of exam scribe will not be granted less than 2 weeks prior to the date of a student's first exam in an assessment period.

3.7 Voice Recognition Software

A student who is eligible for a computer or a scribe may use voice recognition software. The use of a computer with voice recognition software requires a separate examination venue and invigilator. The student is required to meet in advance of using voice recognition software to test and agree to the performance of software. Student who do not meet in advance are not permitted to use this accommodation

3.8 Reader

Students whose ability to read is significantly impacted by a disability may require a reader in examinations. Most students will be accommodated together in the same venue with a shared reader (the invigilator). In exceptional cases only, an individual reader may be required. In most cases students will use assistive technology (for example, text to speech software) to read the examination paper. Where the student is using assistive technology, an electronic paper will be required. If the examination is assessing competence in reading and reading comprehension the provision of a reader may not be appropriate.

Guidelines for determining reasonable accommodations for students with a disability who have a reading, writing or spelling difficulty are provided in the [DAWN exam guidelines](#).

3.9 Sign Language Interpreters

Where a student's first language is Irish Sign Language (ISL) an interpreter may, if requested, be made available to translate the examination paper into ISL and to facilitate communication with examiners and an invigilator. An interpreter may also be made available to facilitate a student whose first language is ISL answering the examination questions in ISL.

In exceptional circumstances where learning outcomes cannot be assessed by any other mode, the student may wish to sign their assignments or examination in ISL and have them recorded on video. If a student signs the examination to video, additional time, a separate examination venue and appropriate invigilation will be provided.

3.10 Furniture in Examination Venues

Students with disabilities may require alternative furniture (i.e., chair support, writing board, footstool etc.) in examination venues.

3.11 Personal Assistants

Students who have a Personal Assistant may require the Personal Assistant to be in attendance at the examination venue.

3.12 Examination Papers in Alternative Formats

Students who are visually impaired may require examination papers in enlarged print.

Students who have a visual impairment may require graphs, diagrams, maps or other visual elements of the examination paper presented in a tactile format.

Students who are blind or vision impaired and fluent Braille readers may require a Braille version of the examination paper.

Students who have difficulty reading the examination paper may require coloured overlays.

3.13 Flexible Examination Arrangements

In exceptional circumstances, if a student is unable, due to the nature of their disability, to be examined by the usual methods prescribed for the course the Disability Officer may discuss and recommend alternative assessments for the student. The Senior Lecturer or the Dean of Graduates Studies will have responsibility for agreeing to these recommendations bearing in mind the objectives of the programme and the need to assess the student on equal terms with other students. Flexible examination arrangements refer to any alteration in the standard form of assessment in order to accommodate a student's disability. This might include:

- Provision of an oral examination instead of a written test.
- Some flexibility around the scheduling of examinations, such as, allowing more time between examinations for a student with a physical disability who experiences fatigue.
- Examinations split into more than one session.

It should be noted that flexible examination arrangements are granted in exceptional circumstances as outlined in the Trinity Calendar (H4 § 35 38 & 40):

35 The nature of special examination accommodations, and their appropriateness for individual students, will be determined by the Senior Lecturer who may request a report from the officer in charge of the College's Disability Service, Health Service or Student Counselling Service. Such reports will be strictly confidential. The Senior Lecturer may in exceptional circumstances allow a student to take his/her annual examinations in more than one session. Any application for an

accommodation in respect of examinations should normally made no later than the seventh teaching week of Hilary term. (H4 § 35)

38 Where the effects of a disability prevents a student from taking the prescribed examination, so that they cannot rise into the next class, the Senior Lecturer may permit the student to withdraw from Trinity for a period of time provided that appropriate evidence has been submitted to the Disability Service. If they return to Trinity in the succeeding academic year and take advantage of any academic instruction or facilities, they must complete the requirements of their class and pay the full fee prescribed for their course. Students who qualify for the fee remission scheme should refer to TRINITY CHARGES, section II. Alternatively, with the Senior Lecturer's consent, they may present themselves at the next annual examination for their class on payment of an examination fee of €382. (H4 § 38)

40 Students who are prevented by their disability from writing the whole or part of the moderatorship examination in their final year may apply to the Senior Lecturer, through their tutor, for permission to present for the examination at the next annual examination for their class. In such cases the Senior Lecturer will consider the views of the student's Disability Officer. (H4 § 40).