

Suggestions for Taking Exams (Including Final Exams) Online

Fall 2020

Due to all of the changes brought about by COVID-19, you may be taking exams (including final exams) in an environment that is not the “distraction-reduced environment” you are provided while on campus. Here are some suggestions that might help you to create an exam and/or work space that is as conducive as possible to taking an exam.

General guidelines to keep in mind. (See the bullets below for more specifics):

1. Remind your professors about your extended time. (See below for more details.)
2. Arrange for a quiet space in which to take the exam.
3. Consider headphones, ear plugs or white noise to reduce distractions.
4. Prepare your computer: turn off notifications, check that you have adequate charge and internet connections.
5. Review due dates and plan accordingly, taking your extended time (if you have it) into consideration.

Specific suggestions:

- **If you have extended time for an exam, please remind your faculty.** Keep in mind that, if you are taking a **final** exam and have time-and-a-half (1.5) your final will be 4 ½ hours. If you have double time (2x) and are taking a final exam, your final will be 6 ½ hours. Both are long, extended periods of time! Create a schedule for this; inform others that you live with that you will be taking an exam and can't be interrupted. Alternatively, take the exam when you are less likely to be interrupted. ○ Remember, that, if you are taking a final exam, and you have extended time, you are permitted a short break to eat a snack/stretch. Do not use your electronics at this time. Instead, use this time to walk around; get away from the screen and take a short, mental break
 - If you have a medical condition that makes looking at a screen for 4 ½ - 6 ½ hours difficult, please notify your professor and the Director of Access Services. In some circumstances, it may be possible to break up a long exam into shorter chunks, but this must be worked out *well in advance* of the exam date
- You might want to consider purchasing noise-reduction/cancellation headphones and wear them while testing or doing work. For some of you, ear plugs may also work. Another option is a white noise machine (or phone app) which can help to reduce background noise and improve focus.
- Work in an area that minimizes both visual and auditory distractions. Try to find a space where you cannot see others moving around and is located in a quiet area. For some, this might mean clearing out an area in a closet. Or, position yourself so you are facing a wall/corner, instead of out into the room. Some students have found that the only way they can find privacy to do work is inside a car, where they can be alone.
- Remove electronic distractions. Turn your phone on silent and put it where you cannot see the screen. Turn off notifications on your laptop.

- Chewing gum is sometimes helpful for focus, and having a stress ball or other fidget can help when you start to feel restless.
- Make sure you hit the “save” button after answering *each* question. This is very important and will alleviate frustration and lost work, should your computer freeze or if you run into other technological issues during the test.
- Some students find it helpful to read questions out loud, especially if they are trying to take the test and there are some external distractions.
- Time management is important. **Do not wait until the last possible minute to start the test.** It is crucial to take the initiative to set aside time to take the test and to give yourself enough room to get the job done, should difficulties arise along the way. ◦ Be proactive! Plan for technology issues! Is your laptop fully charged? Are popup blockers disabled? Is your Wi-Fi stable?
- If you run into difficulties during the test, especially if those difficulties are related to technology, immediately reach out to your professor and “cc” your dean.

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