

Accommodated Testing – MU Disability Center

- A primary function of the Disability Center is to administer accommodated exams for students with disabilities, as we all know how difficult it would be for individual instructors to effectively implement accommodations such as providing a separate space, extended time, or a scribe, or a reader. With the growth in the number of students qualifying for test accommodations, we are finding it more and more difficult to secure the necessary space to meet the demand. As a consequence, it is becoming harder to implement the accommodations as they should be provided.
- Our paramount responsibilities in administering accommodated exams are: a) ensuring that students receive the accommodations to which they are entitled; and, b) ensuring that exam integrity is protected.
- During AY 2015 – 2016, we *administered 5772* exams (includes course-related, qualifying and comprehensive exams, and Mizzou Online) for students who qualified for, and made use of accommodated testing. That represented an increase of almost 3% from the previous year (notably we *scheduled 6,924* exams). We are on schedule to meet that number, if not exceed it this academic year.
- For students with disabilities who qualify, testing accommodations may include: quiet, separate space; distraction reduced environment; extended time; use of a scribe or reader; use of adaptive equipment, computer, Braille, large print; alternate testing time
- Depending on the type of accommodation, the Disability Center may need to provide space for a single student with a proctor (for separate space, use of scribe or reader), or space to accommodate students who need minimal distraction or extended time, but who could share the space with a small number of other students (e.g. using a cubicle, or widely spaced work stations).
- To schedule accommodated exams, the Disability Center routinely has access to:
 - 4G41 Ellis Library (with permission from MU Libraries) – accommodates up to 17 students at a time
 - N229 Memorial Union (with permission from Student Auxiliary Services) – accommodates up to 6 students at a time
- For the majority of scheduled accommodated exams, the Disability Center works with other departments/offices to use space as needed: centrally scheduled classrooms, the Student Success Center, MU Student Center, Memorial Union, the Black Culture Center, etc.
- Challenges:
 - Each exam is a *discrete* event, with a single start and end time. There are very few instances where multiple students are taking exams with the same start/end time, the same course/exam, or the same types of accommodations. Accommodations such as use of adaptive equipment, Braille, captioned media, computer, interpreter/captioning, reader, scribe and the need for separate space all require individual rooms and usually individual proctors.
 - At certain points in the semester we may schedule as many as 80 – 100 exams in a single day, with anywhere from 5 to 25 exams starting at the same time. Some of those can be scheduled in small groups, but many of them need to be scheduled and administered individually (for students requiring a separate space, or use of a scribe or reader).

- Thus, *scheduling accommodated exams requires the skills of a logistician* as it involves matching proctors, appropriate testing space, and the accommodation requirements of the student taking the test. On days with a high volume of scheduled tests, we often face both a shortage of space and proctors during peak times, when most classes are in session and space utilization across campus is at capacity (10:00 – 12:00 noon, and 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. in particular). This requires the exam coordinator to often make room assignment decisions at the last minute depending on “no-shows” and cancellations. At times, the exam coordinator must make the decision to fit more students into an available space. When this happens, the risk increases for compromising both the effective implementation of an accommodation, and academic integrity.
 - Using space provided through Central Scheduling can create liabilities as there are occasions when the space offered is insufficient to meet the accommodation (too much ambient noise, lack of privacy).
 - Also, using space provided through campus partners (e.g. Central Scheduling) means that students are reporting into the Disability Center first, and then traveling from there to the designated testing site, which could involve a 10 – 15 minute additional walk, adding significantly to the amount of time needed just to ensure the student can make use of the necessary accommodations. Imagine the frustration (and the ripple effect of needing to scramble to find alternatives) when, on arriving at the designated testing space, the student(s) and proctor discover that the space is locked, in use, or otherwise unavailable.
- It is easier for us to secure appropriate space for exam administration during evening hours (and it is often easier to secure proctors during that time, as well).
 - Notably, while we have seen a decline in overall enrollment, it has not meant that the number of students with disabilities is declining. Increased awareness of the office, more students with disabilities seeing college as a viable option, and the increase in specific diagnosed conditions (e.g. anxiety/depression, chronic health conditions, ADD/ADHD, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorders), is contributing to a consistently high number of students using testing accommodations.

What do we need? Your support to...

1. Allow alternate exam times. In future, our exam staff may *occasionally* contact an instructor to request permission to schedule a student’s accommodated test at an alternate time, either the evening before, or the evening following the scheduled time, *as long as it fits with the student’s schedule*. We understand that exam integrity is essential; thus, *an instructor’s agreement to such a change would depend entirely on assurance that it is protected*. We would take responsibility for the communication necessary to make the approved change happen.
2. Help us find space. If there is an area that is unknown to us or to Central Scheduling – specifically space that might be appropriate to use for test administration (conference rooms, small meeting rooms) – please let us know, and consider allowing us to use that space. It will help to know where the space is located, times of day when it is available, and who to contact to reserve the space when it is needed.