

## Suggestions for Taking Exams (Including Final Exams) Online

Spring 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 pop-up 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.