Student Accessibility Center (SAC) FAQs for Faculty

With the request to move instruction and class activities to remote/virtual instruction due to the heightened health concern presented by the COVID-19 virus, it is important that we together continue to meet the requirements of students with disabilities who request to use their accommodations. The information below is intended to provide guidance for working with your students with disabilities.

Q: As I am adapting my course materials for remote/virtual instruction, what should I be considering with regard to disability access? How do I best support my students?

We acknowledge the significant effort required to quickly adapt your courses to online instruction. We want to collaborate with you to ensure that access for students with disabilities is maintained through this transition. Some students may encounter disability-related barriers with online instruction or assessment (e.g. students who use assistive technology, students with medical limitations on screen usage). The Student Accessibility Center (SAC) is available for consultation regarding best practices and accessibility. Phone: 419-289-5904; email: au-sac@ashland.edu or email Silvia Henriss, Director at shenriss@ashland.edu.

Below are some tips to keep in mind as you are creating virtual course content (adapted from DO-IT):

- **Use clear, consistent layouts and organization schemes** for presenting content, and make instructions and expectations clear for activities, projects, and assigned reading.
- **Offer outlines, scaffolding tools, and adequate opportunities for practice** to help students learn.
- **When selecting new materials, try to find videos that are already captioned, and articles that are available in a text-searchable format** (meaning you can highlight and search the text within the document).
- **Images can be made accessible to blind and low-vision students by providing captions in Blackboard.** Use large, bold fonts on uncluttered pages with plain backgrounds and color combinations that are high contrast.
- **Provide flexibility and understanding as this experience may cause disruption to the student’s home life and available resources** – which may negatively impact a student’s disability symptoms.

For additional tips, go to: https://www.washington.edu/doit/20-tips-teaching-accessible-online-course

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Q: How will exam accommodations work? Will SAC proctor online exams?

Extended time on exams as an accommodation generally only applies to traditional, time-limited exams. If you decide to offer alternative means of assessment (e.g. essays, non-timed exams, project work), then a student’s extended exam time may no longer be applicable. We encourage communicating with your students if that is the case.
SAC will not be proctoring exams while the University’s instruction remains online only. All exams should be administered online or through other remote assessment methods by faculty. Academic departments are responsible for setting up extended testing time in Blackboard or other remote access software.

Please communicate with your students to discuss their exam accommodations in your courses. SAC is available to professors and students for consult.

Q: How will I know how much extended time to give students for online quizzes/exams?

Students who are eligible for accommodations should have provided you with an Accommodation Letter for spring semester 2020. This letter lists all of their accommodations, including the amount of extended time for which they are eligible.

If a student requests extended time, and you do not have an accommodation letter, please ask for one, or contact Silvia to verify eligibility.

Q: Does this affect Attendance and Assignment Deadline Flexibility accommodations?

Attendance and assignment deadline flexibility accommodations should be honored, though reasonable modifications to the structure of the accommodation may be needed with the shift to online instruction. Students with these accommodations should be contacting you to discuss any additional barriers presented by changes to the course format. SAC is available to instructors and students for consult.

If you have any additional questions, please contact:

Silvia – 419-289-5904, or email: shenriss@ashland.edu

Justin – jbeeman@ashland.edu – if you have questions regarding testing and exam accommodations