



CALIFORNIA POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY - DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTER

## **FAQ on Test Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Condensed from our online **Test Accommodations FAQ**:

<http://www.drc.calpoly.edu/resources/testAccommodations.htm>

### **1. How do students receive a recommendation for a test accommodation?**

- Students choosing to work with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) provide documentation from a professional specialist (e.g., physician, clinical psychologist) that is reviewed by DRC staff.
- If the documentation meets guidelines establishing a disability, a DRC Access Specialist develops recommendations for reasonable accommodations and records them on a student's VISA (Verified Instructional Services and Accommodation) plan.
- Students should provide faculty with a copy of their VISA.

### **2. May I accommodate a student myself ?**

- Yes. Faculty may accommodate students directly. Generally, the DRC administers exams because faculty prefers the DRC to arrange accommodations.
- Since the most common accommodations are extended time and an environment somewhat free from frequent distractions, faculty often make arrangements themselves.
- Advantages of accommodating students directly are that the instructor maintains control over the exam and students have direct access to the instructor during the exam.
- As long as a student receives the appropriate accommodations, faculty is free to arrange for accommodations. DRC staff is available to consult with faculty regarding the requested accommodations.

### **3. Can I just call the DRC and schedule an exam for a student?**

- No. The secure On-Line Request Form is the method for scheduling accommodated exams.
- Spontaneous, unstructured and informal requests can result in miscommunication, lack of details and mishandled exams.
- In order to ensure the security and integrity of every exam, the DRC needs a reliable and consistent process to track and monitor every request.

### **4. When do exams need to be at the DRC?**

- No later than 2 PM the day prior to the exam. The DRC will attempt to administer exams arriving after 2 PM the day before; however, in order to ensure safe, secure and effective handling of exams, the DRC needs sufficient advance delivery to successfully record receipt of exam, convert exam to an alternative format, if needed (i.e., Word document for use in Zoomtext, Kurzweil software apps, audio, large print), print the exam, match exam with proctor envelope, and get the exam to proctor and location.
- Over 800 instructors each year have students with disabilities using accommodated testing in their courses. Each test is unique. Every faculty member expects his/her test to be handled with care and attention and the terms of the exam agreement to be meticulously followed. Receiving exams at the last minute significantly increases the potential for mistakes to be made.

### **5. How do I make changes to an exam after I have approved it?**

- The On-Line Request Form system cannot accommodate changes after a request has been approved. Please call the Testing Coordinator at 756-6087 to discuss options.

## **6. Does the DRC thoroughly scrutinize the exam for errors or oddities prior to administering the exam?**

- No. The DRC does not scrutinize exams after they arrive. We administer exams in the form in which they arrive. Please ensure the exam is formatted properly and that all necessary materials are included.

## **7. Will students take the exam at the same time as the class?**

- It depends. Students indicate the time they are requesting to take the exam on the On-Line Request Form.
- Faculty may modify, deny or approve requests. If an instructor disagrees with the time requested by the student, we strongly encourage direct communication with the student before a decision is made to modify the request. Faculty can also add comments into the On-Line Request Form.
- Sometimes students cannot take exams at the same time as the class due to a conflict between their other scheduled classes and the accommodation of extended time for your exam.

## **8. Can faculty make changes to a student's request prior to approving it?**

- Yes. The On-Line Request Form is a tool that is used to facilitate the process and the student's request is the starting point.
- Constant, clear communication is key to successful implementation. Talking with the student prior to making changes or informing the student that changes have been made help minimize surprises.
- Additionally, adding comments in the "Comment Section" is an effective way to ensure that clear communication occurs.
- If an instructor wants to alter accommodations recommended by the DRC, a conversation with the student's Access Specialist should precede modifications to accommodations.

## **9. How are accommodations determined, particularly additional time such as time-and-a-half and double-time?**

- Decisions are made based upon the clinical documentation submitted by the student; the student's expressed needs and prior history, and the Access Specialist's professional judgment. For additional information, please refer to FAQ #21 at <http://www.drc.calpoly.edu/resources/testAccommodations.htm>

## **10. What happens when students shows up late to take an exam?**

- Unless otherwise instructed, the DRC will allow students to begin the exam up until the end time indicated on the approved request form. Faculty requiring students to begin the exam at a specified time need to indicate that in the comment section of the request form.

## **11. Where can faculty direct questions about alternative testing?**

- STUDENT: Faculty members are encouraged to first ask their questions of the student. Students receive orientation at the DRC on the alternative testing service and may be able to answer questions or concerns.
- DRC: Questions about the impact of the disability or the appropriateness of a requested accommodation can be directed to the DRC Access Specialist identified on the VISA at 756-1395.
- DRC WEBSITE: The DRC website provides information regarding DRC issues, confidentiality, campus policies and procedures and relevant DRC links. <http://drc.calpoly.edu/>