

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN  
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

# Student focused Disability, Inclusion, Teaching and Assessment FAQs

**Note that unless otherwise stated, the term timed assessment includes exams and tests.**

## **How will I be able to access the materials for my lectures?**

You will be able to access materials such as a video recording of the lecture, PowerPoint slides and/or other notes, on your Virtual Learning Environment (MyAberdeen or for Medical and Dental students MyMBChB, MyBDS or MyPA). Captions should be available for pre-recorded video content (in Panopto on the CCicon). Where captions are not available for pre-recorded video content, accessible alternative materials will be provided. If you are having difficulty accessing the lecture materials, please contact the course coordinator.

You can create a transcript of a video that already has captions by copying the text into a Word document. See our [guide](#) for full instructions.

Some videos can be downloaded for viewing offline. If you choose to download the video, you can view video captions on either QuickTime or VLC Player (you can download and install VLC Player from [www.videolan.org](http://www.videolan.org)). Download the MP4 video file from Panopto, open the video file in QuickTime or VLC player and enable subtitles from the Subtitles menu.

Visual content such as diagrams should be accompanied with a text description of the information contained in the diagram. Where this is not available, please contact the course coordinator so that they can ensure this text description is made available.

If you feel that you will require support to take effective notes in lectures for disability-related reasons and you haven't already done so, please contact the

Student Advice & Support Team on 01224 273 935 or  
at [student.support@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@abdn.ac.uk).

### **How will I be supported in accessing reading materials?**

Course coordinators have worked closely with the library staff to make the appropriate reading materials available on your virtual learning environment (MyAberdeen, or for Medical and Dental students MyMBChB, MyBDS or MyPA) in a timely and accessible format.

### **I have provision for extra time for completing timed assessments, what does this mean?**

If you have a timed assessment (e.g., an online test or an exam) which has a fixed time duration, such as 2 hours, you will receive the amount of extra time detailed in your provisions.

In some cases, timed assessments have been replaced with other forms of assessment. For example, you may have an open-book assessment which would usually be available for completion over a period of a minimum of 48 hours (even if it is expected it will take around, say, 3 hours to complete the assessment). In these assessment situations, the extended period for completion is provided as an inclusive measure, as this provides the greatest flexibility for all students for planning and time allocation, irrespective of their circumstances (e.g., caring responsibilities, short-term illness, time zones, internet access, learning differences, protected characteristics). No additional time will be provided for students who would otherwise receive it.

Course coordinators will provide you with information about how you will be assessed, and they can be contacted for further information on the assessment process.

**I have more than one assessment for completion wholly or partly within the same period and I usually get extra time for timed assessments. Will I get more time?**

No. The time periods allowed for all assessments should allow you to plan your time and complete your assessments. It is important that you look at your assessment schedule and plan your time to manage any busy periods.

**I have a timed assessment and the period for completion has been doubled to make it inclusive. If I have provision for extra time for timed assessments, would I have additional extra time?**

There will only be additional extra time for students who have provision for 100% extra time. These students will receive an additional 30 minutes per hour of the original timed assessment period for completion. Note that this applies only to short, timed assessments, which in this context means assessments with an original (un-extended) period for completion of 2 hours or less. Note also that if the period has been extended by less than double, then students who have extra time for timed assessments should receive the relevant extra time allocation; this will be calculated based on the original (un-extended) period for completion.

**I have provision for a scribe in timed assessments, how will this work?**

If the timed assessment is held on campus, a scribe will be arranged from a pool of trained staff.

If the timed assessment is online you may be offered the opportunity to submit your answers verbally using Panopto or the 'dictate' function in Microsoft Office 365. Students who work in this way will not be penalised for poor punctuation and/or grammar (commas, semicolons, full stops etc. will be required to be dictated) if the meaning is clear. If you have access to voice recognition software, you may be able to use this to produce your answer if you are sitting the timed assessment online.

## **I receive the provision of a reader, how will this work?**

If you have a timed assessment (e.g., an exam) on campus, a reader will be arranged from a pool of trained staff.

If you are undertaking your timed assessment online, your School will contact you to discuss your individual support arrangements. You may work with a member of staff employed as a reader. When undertaking timed assessments online, papers will be accessible i.e. you will be able to adjust the type of font, font size and line spacing. When the papers are provided online in a Microsoft Word document, you will be able to use 'Text to Speech' functions built into Word. If the online timed assessment paper is in the form of a PDF document and you have text to speech software, please use this. On a Windows computer you can open many PDF files in the latest version of Microsoft Word to use the 'Text to Speech' function, and view text in a format that suits your needs. Please note this works best with files that are mostly text based; graphics and images may not convert properly and may stop the file opening from Word completely.

For some timed online assessments, [alternative formats](#) will be available on MyAberdeen, for you to download.

If you need any advice with regards to using text to speech software and/or how to access this, please email [atech@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:atech@abdn.ac.uk). If technology cannot be used to read the online assessments (e.g., the paper may include graphs), the School will explore alternative arrangements with you.

## **What options are available if I am experiencing financial hardship?**

The following link provides information about the financial assistance available at the University: [Money Matters | Students | The University of Aberdeen \(abdn.ac.uk\)](#).

**Can you tell me a bit more? I am worried about the whole assessment process.**

Your School or course coordinator will be able to provide you with more information on the assessment process, timing, the marking criteria, and their expectations. For example, there may be a word limit for the course in question to help guide you as to how much you should be doing, or guidance on the expected completion time for an open book assessment that is available for 48 hours.

**I have the provision of ‘agreed extensions to deadlines’, what does this mean and how does this work?**

If you need more time for coursework, such as assignments, reports, or essays, please request this by contacting the relevant [School Office](#). You shouldn’t need to provide evidence each time you request an extension; please advise the School Office that the Student Advice & Support Team has implemented the provision of ‘agreed extensions to deadlines’ to support you in your studies. It is at the Schools’ discretion as to whether extensions can be granted and if so, the length of extension that can be offered. The provision does not guarantee a set time for extensions; it is advised that extension requests are approved where practically possible for the Schools to administer. Extension requests can only be considered for coursework, not for timed assessments.

**I am unwell, or I have experienced extenuating circumstances which have affected my performance in an assessment or have led me to miss an assessment, what should I do?**

If you feel that your performance in an assessment has been affected by extenuating circumstances, or you have been unable to complete an assessment, you should report this through the [Absence Reporting system](#) and make your course coordinator aware.

Note that this will not lead to an adjustment of individual marks and the relevant Codes of Practice for Assessment will apply.

**I have disability support provisions however I am concerned about completing my studies and I do not think that the information provided so far addresses my situation.**

Please contact the Student Advice & Support Team at [student.support@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@abdn.ac.uk) or on 01224 273 935 and a member of the team will discuss your circumstances with you.

**I am concerned about completing my assessments and I think I would benefit from additional support.**

Please contact the Student Advice & Support Team at [student.support@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@abdn.ac.uk) or on 01224 273 935 and a member of the team will discuss your circumstances with you.

## Disability, Inclusion, Teaching and Assessment FAQs

**Note that unless otherwise stated, the term timed assessment includes exams and tests.**

**Has an Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment on the changes to teaching, learning and assessment taken place?**

Yes. These EQIAs are regularly reviewed to reflect the changing situation. For further information please contact the Dean for Student Support.

**How can I ensure that my teaching materials are accessible and inclusive?**

An [Inclusivity and Accessibility](#) checklist, and details of available training, can be found on the [Inclusivity and Accessibility in Education Framework webpages](#) and the Delivery of Education in 22/3 Principle 5 (“[ensure accessibility and inclusion](#)”) webpages.

**A student requires the support of a note-taker. How can this be supported?**

The School Disability Coordinators will be advised if a student requires the provision of a note-taker through the Disability Database and/or Student Records system. The provision of a Note-taker is arranged as a reasonable adjustment for students who require a typed transcript of the information discussed, for disability-related reasons.

The provision may be funded by the Government via Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA). The note-takers should be given access to the classes/class material (such as PowerPoint slides and video recordings) so that they can provide students with a typed transcript of the information discussed.

The notes will not be available to colleagues. If there are concerns about how to facilitate a student's reasonable adjustments, please contact the Student Advice & Support Team on 01224 273 935 or at [student.support@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@abdn.ac.uk).

**A student requires captions for a live session which is being delivered online. How do I go about this?**

Automatic [live captions are available](#) for Blackboard Collaborate by using the Google Chrome web browser. Likewise, Microsoft Teams has an option for automatic live captions.

If technology is deemed insufficient for a student for disability-related reasons, please contact the Student Advice & Support Team on 01224 273 935 or at [student.support@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@abdn.ac.uk) so that individual reasonable adjustments, such as the provision of quality assured captioning can be explored.

**What alternatives can I offer to a closed book, timed and invigilated exam?**

Please refer to the guidance on the Delivery of Education in 22/3 Principle 3 ("[Assessment should be authentic, building in integrity, and be efficient](#)") webpages. You can also contact the Dean for Educational Innovation to discuss possible alternatives.

## **What arrangements should be put in place for students who have the provision of extra time in timed assessments?**

The appropriate extra time provision detailed in the student's record and the disability database, should be applied to the actual period for completion (say, 2 hours). This applies to both on campus and online timed assessments. For online assessments, there is additional guidance on [MyAberdeen Assignment and Test Workflows](#).

Alternatively, colleagues might consider replacing timed assessments with other forms of assessments which are more inclusive. For example, having an open-book assessment with an extended period for completion (for an assessment that typically takes 3 hours to do, an inclusive extended period for completion would be 48 hours or more). In these situations, the extended period for completion is an inclusive measure, as this provides the greatest flexibility for all students for planning and time allocation, irrespective of their circumstances (e.g., caring responsibilities, short-term illness, time zones, internet access, learning differences, protected characteristics). No additional time will be provided for students who have the provision of extra time in timed assessments.

## **A timed assessment is needed for a course. The period for completion has been doubled to make the period for completion inclusive. Should students who have the provision of extra time receive this?**

There will only be additional extra time for students who have provision for 100% extra time. These students will receive an additional 30 minutes per hour of the original timed assessment period for completion. Note that this applies only to short, timed assessments, which in this context means assessments with an original (un-extended) period for completion of 2 hours or less. Note also that if the period has been extended by less than double, then students who have the provision of extra time should receive this, with the amount calculated on the basis of the original (un-extended) period for completion.

## **What other information should I give students who are worried about assessment?**

Clear guidance needs to be provided to students in relation to the expectation of assessments, including how much time they should spend on completing the assessments, and detailed guidelines such as expected word limits. It is recommended that Schools consider providing students with an opportunity to complete a practice assessment well in advance of the assessment period. Schools should also make clear the criteria by which the work will be graded.

Colleagues should bear in mind that if they are delivering a timed assessment online, it is recommended that students are provided with a practice opportunity.

For disabled students, if they have the provision of “no penalty” for poor spelling and/or grammar where meaning is clear, this should still be taken into consideration in the marking process. Please refer to guidance on [MyAberdeen Assignment and Test Workflows](#).

Students can also be encouraged to contact the Student Advice & Support Team at [student.support@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:student.support@abdn.ac.uk) to discuss support and how they are engaging with their studies and their University experience.

Note that for disabled students, existing provisions continue for assessments which take place during the course (such as assignments, essays, reports). You may find it useful to liaise with School Disability Coordinators and the Student Advice & Support Team. Disabled students can check the provisions that have been implemented to support them via the personal details section of the Student Hub. Information is available in the Student Hub about how to arrange provisions (if a student does not have these in place) and how to arrange provisions review.

## **How do I know which students in my course have Disability Provisions?**

Please contact your [School Disability Coordinator](#) or School Administrative Manager. The School Disability Coordinators can obtain this information for you from the Disability database and/or from Student Records. You can run a report listing students with provisions on Student Records.

**A student has more than one assessment for completion wholly or partly within the same 48 hour or more period. Should the student have more time?**

In most cases, no. For assessments to be completed in 48 hours or more, then no additional time will be available (to that 48 hours). The longer period has already been framed to be inclusive and to allow all students to plan their time and complete their assessments. It is essential that students are made aware of the assessment time frames and deadlines far enough in advance to allow them to manage their time appropriately.

If a student has a relevant provision, such as that they should not complete assessments on consecutive days, then colleagues should contact the Student Support & Advice Team to explore solutions.

**A student requires the support of a scribe. How can this be supported?**

If the exam is on campus, the Registry Exam Team will arrange a scribe from a pool of trained staff.

If the exam is online, Schools should contact students who require a scribe to discuss their individual support arrangements for assessments. The student may have access to their own voice recognition software which may be suitable for answering essay-based questions. Another available option is for students to use the 'dictate' function within Microsoft Office 365.

Students could also audio record their verbal answers via [Panopto](#). Students who use these approaches should not be penalised for poor spelling and/or grammar where meaning is clear. If students do not have suitable software, then an alternative arrangement can be made. Please contact the Student Support & Advice Team to explore solutions.

**A student requires the support of a reader. How can this be supported?**

If the exam is on campus, the Registry Exam Team will arrange a reader from a pool of trained staff.

If the exam is online, Schools should contact students who require a reader to discuss their individual support arrangements. Where applicable, please provide the students with details of the assessment as a Word document with [style headings](#).

This will enable students to use the 'read aloud' function within Word. If the alternative assessment is a PDF, students may have their own 'read aloud' software which they can use. On a Windows computer you can open many PDF files in Microsoft Word to use the 'Text to Speech' function, and view text in a format that suits your needs. Please note this works best with files that are mostly text based; graphics and images may not convert properly and may stop the file opening from Word completely. If students do not have their own 'read aloud' software, then support can be provided via the Assistive Technology Team [atech@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:atech@abdn.ac.uk).

**What do I do if a student is unwell, or has experienced extenuating circumstances which they consider have affected their performance in an assessment or have led them to miss an assessment?**

If a student feels that their performance in an assessment has been affected by extenuating circumstances, or they have been unable to complete an assessment, they should report this through the [Absence Reporting system](#) and the course coordinator should be made aware.

Note that this will not lead to an adjustment of individual marks and the relevant Codes of Practice for Assessment will apply.

**The student has limited access to the internet and no personal computer. How can this be supported?**

There are opportunities for students to access computers and effective broadband on campus.

Students may be eligible to apply for financial assistance; the following link provides further information: [Money Matters | Students | The University of Aberdeen \(abdn.ac.uk\)](#). For details of information provided to students

regarding IT equipment, see <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/it/student/it-essentials.php>.

**Students who do not currently have relevant disability provisions in place have been in contact to say they are concerned about completing their studies and that this may be related to a disability. What should I do?**

Please advise the students to [contact the Student Advice & Support Team](#). They will be able to speak with a member of the team about their experience of studying and the support available at the University.

**An issue has arisen which has not been dealt with here. What should I do?**

Please contact your School Disability Coordinator in the first instance, who will raise points with the University Inclusion team.