

Instructor FAQ

ADA Accommodations and Online Learning

Q: As I am adapting my course materials for virtual instruction, what should I be considering with regards 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). Resources are available online through our [Teaching and Learning center](#). The Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) has a resource dedicated to [considering accessibility in online teaching emergencies](#). Consultation appointments can be scheduled with Accessibility Services Coordinator, Michelle Patrick at <https://www.shawnee.edu/campus-life/accessibility-services>

Below are some guidelines for universal design:

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; [click here for an example](#)).
- **Images can be made accessible to blind and low-vision students by providing captions or inserting alt text into the image.** 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.

Pro tip—Use Blackboard Ally to assist with accessible layout and design.

Q: Are the expectations for Instructor compliance different for online classes?

- **All certified accommodations must be provided, whether in seated or online courses.** If you have notice of accommodation/s for a student those must be honored regardless of how the course is delivered. However, accommodations may look very different in online course.
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Q: How will exam accommodations work? Will Accessibility Services 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 time may no longer be applicable. We encourage to speak with registered students if that is the case.

Accessibility Services 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 within the software platform they use. Blackboard allows instructors to set time and extended time for exams. Maybe link here to Peggy's instructions for how to set extended time on exams in Blackboard?

Please communicate with your students to discuss their exam accommodations in your courses.

Q: What if a student who is not currently receiving Accessibility Services asks me for an accommodation?

The procedure for all accommodations remains the same. Only students with letters from SSU's ADA Services office may request accommodations. Instructors already know who these students are and what accommodations they require. However, students can learn more and apply for services on the Accessibility Services [webpage](#). While courses are online, intake appointments will be conducted through encrypted video conferencing.

Q: How do I give students their extended time for online quizzes/exams?

Students with extended time accommodations should be provided double time.

Guidance for extended time in Blackboard is available in the Blackboard Users Group (BUG) and on the Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) SSU webpage under Help for Transitioning Courses Online . Instructors using an alternate testing platform should work with their departments or software point-of-contact to apply extended time.

Q: Does online instruction affect attendance?

- **Asynchronous courses may present less of an issue with attendance.** Regardless of the delivery format, all students should be active participants in the course. For online courses this means logging in regularly and progressing toward completion of course work.
- **Courses delivered synchronously** may encounter similar needs for accommodation of student movement, restroom breaks, etc. as seated courses. Review individual accommodations provided by the student's certification letter for specifics.