

## Mathematics Department Policy on Testing Accommodations

**Introduction.** This document presents some information about providing reasonable testing accommodations<sup>1</sup> to students with verified disabilities. In particular, it discusses:

- instructor responsibilities;
- student eligibility for accommodations;
- language that is required in your syllabus;
- LSA's Testing Accommodation Center; and
- suggestions for quiz accommodations.

A broader discussion of student disabilities and how instructors can make adjustments to accommodate them may be found in the Services for Students with Disabilities Faculty Handbook<sup>2</sup> or at the Services for Students with Disabilities web site.<sup>3</sup> If you have questions or concerns about anything in this document, please contact the Associate Chair for Education <math-acue@umich.edu> or the Undergraduate Program Director <math-updir@umich.edu>.

**Instructor responsibilities.** You must work with any student with a signed Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form to create appropriate accommodations, as described in the VISA form.<sup>4</sup> Note that information provided by the student is private and confidential and must be treated as such. Please be sure to discuss with the student all of the relevant components of the course (gateways, quizzes, homework, etc.) and not just the exams. If you are teaching in a coordinated course (i.e., 105, 115, 116, 215, 216), be sure to alert your course coordinator immediately; for these courses there are already established protocols for accommodating students with verified disabilities, and your coordinator will be setting up exam and gateway test accommodations.

**Eligibility.** Only students with a disability that has been verified by the office of Services for Students with Disabilities<sup>5</sup> (SSD) will be granted accommodations. Such students are to provide their instructor with a VISA form authorized by SSD detailing the expected accommodations. Except in emergency cases<sup>6</sup> or for assessments that occur within the first three weeks of the term, VISA requests for extended time are to be provided to the instructor at least *two weeks* prior to the scheduled assessment.

**Syllabus.** The syllabus for each course should include a statement requesting that students inform the instructor of any accommodations that may be needed. Moreover, when reviewing the syllabus during class, the instructor should read this request aloud. Since the SACUA (Senate Advisory Committee on University Affairs) approved syllabus statement is a bit wordy,<sup>7</sup> the Math Department recommends the following language:

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<sup>1</sup> For example, extended time on assessments or a distraction free testing environment.

<sup>2</sup> <https://umich.app.box.com/s/etjowjy1064s27mzbq5kh>

<sup>3</sup> <http://ssd.umich.edu/faculty>

<sup>4</sup> The accommodations described on the form are not meant to give the student an unfair advantage, but rather to provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of course content.

<sup>5</sup> <http://ssd.umich.edu/>

<sup>6</sup> Examples of emergency cases include broken wrists and concussions. The leading non-example of an emergency case is the failure of the paperwork to be available in time; students have plenty of time to visit the SSD office, but many choose to postpone the visit until exam time.

<sup>7</sup> The SACUA approved statement reads: "If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine

“If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible. In particular, a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form must be provided to me at least *two weeks* prior to the need for a test/quiz accommodation. The Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office (G664 Haven Hall; <http://ssd.umich.edu/>) issues VISA forms.”

**Testing Accommodation Center.** LSA has a Testing Accommodation Center (TAC). The TAC<sup>8</sup> provides reasonable testing accommodations to students with verified disabilities. Reserving the space and getting your exams/quizzes to the correct place do require that you plan ahead. Many instructors in the Math Department have been happy with their experiences with the TAC.

**Quizzes.** The logistics for providing testing accommodation on an in-class quiz can be challenging. Please work with the student to find a reasonable accommodation.

Here are some examples of approaches that have worked in the past. In all of these examples, suppose your class has exactly one student who requires testing accommodations, and that that student’s VISA form indicates that the student is to be given time-and-a-half on all timed assessments.

- (1) Design a twenty-minute quiz that will be given first thing in class. Have the extended-time student work on the quiz for ten minutes prior to class in your office and then complete the quiz with the rest of the class.
- (2) Design a twenty-minute quiz that will be given last thing in class. Have the extended-time student take the quiz in class and then work on the quiz for ten minutes in your office after class is over.
- (3) Have the extended-time student complete the entire quiz in office hours and work quietly on something else during the in-class quiz.
- (4) Have the extended-time student take the quiz in the TAC. Time things so the student will arrive at class just as the other students complete their quizzes.

Here are some examples of what is not acceptable (i.e., if you do any of them, you will likely be engaging in discrimination that violates federal law<sup>9</sup>). In all of these examples, suppose your class has exactly one student who requires testing accommodations, and that that student’s VISA form indicates that the student is to be given time-and-a-half on all timed assessments.

- (1) Design a twenty-minute quiz, and then give everyone in the class thirty minutes to complete it.
- (2) Design a quiz with 6 questions, but ask the time-and-a-half student to complete only 4 of the 6 questions.
- (3) Design a twenty-minute quiz, give everyone in the class 20 minutes to complete it, and then adjust the final score on the extended-time student’s quiz by a factor of 1.5.

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appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; <http://ssd.umich.edu/>) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.”

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.lsa.umich.edu/advising/academicsupport/tac>

<sup>9</sup> There can be a finding of discrimination even if there is no intent to discriminate.