

Shifting to Taking Exams Online

Exam Environment

Students are used to coming to our office for a more controlled environment to minimize distractions. To create a similar setting, students need to prepare their space before starting an exam online.

- Set up your space before taking your exam to minimize distractions. Make the environment feel like a testing environment (in other words, don't decide to eat your lunch while you are taking your exam or have your television on in the background).
- Turn off phones. If you have a landline, set the ringer to silent or low.
- Place a "do not disturb" or "testing in progress" sign on your door.
- Inform family members (who might also be home) that you will be taking an exam for a specific span of time to minimize interruptions.
- You might want to use a lock down browser if you're prone to surfing the internet.
- Have all allowed materials available and organized before starting the exam.
- At least 15 minutes before the exam, set up your environment to make sure you do not have any computer or internet access issues.
- If fidgets or music/sound help you, make sure you have these items available.

In General

- Know the rules and expectations of taking the exam online. Is it open book/ note or are students held to the honor system? Are you being proctored remotely by your professor or a computer program?
- Can you start the exam at any time or is the exam only available during a certain time frame?
- If your accommodations allow for breaks during exam, is there a way to pause the exam?
- Before starting the exam, make sure you know how many questions are on the exam and how much time you have so you can plan accordingly. Since we won't be there to give a warning, you might want to set a timer to go off 10 minutes before your time is up.
- Have a clock or timer near by so you can track how much time you have.
- Have scrap paper so that you can note questions you want to revisit.
- Questions may be presented one at a time. It may be more difficult to navigate an exam and go back to review questions. Jot down question numbers and note any questions you may have.
- If you have clarification questions for your professor, will you be able to reach the professor? How will you do this? Find out before you take your exam.
- You may have finally gotten used to the format of your teacher's in-class exams and suddenly that format might be different as it shifts to an online platform.

- Reach out to your teachers and ask if the exams will be different. The more prepared you are with what to expect, the better.
- If you are suddenly allowed to use notes or access your books during an exam, be careful not to use up all of your time and rely too heavily on these materials. It is better to put an answer down that you think is correct and then return to that question later if you have time at the end to double check than to spend time searching for each of the answers.

Migraines and Eye strain

Prolonged computer usage can cause a strain on your eyes. If you are prone to migraines or have other visual issues, you will want to take extra steps to minimize the impact as much as possible by adding some adjustments to your computer monitor and workstation.

- Your desk setup can trigger a migraine. Make sure your monitor is placed directly in front of your face to reduce neck strain. Your monitor should be 20 to 40 inches away from your face at eye level.
- Adjust the refresh rate of your monitor to its highest rating.
- Adjust the display settings of your computer to help reduce eye strain and fatigue.
 - Brightness: Adjust the brightness of the display so it's approximately the same as the brightness of your surrounding workstation. As a test, look at the white background of this page. If it looks like a light source, it's too bright. If it seems dull and gray, it may be too dark.
 - Text size and contrast: Adjust the text size (enlarge) and contrast for comfort. Usually, black print on a white background is the best combination for comfort.
 - Color temperature: This is a technical term used to describe the spectrum of visible light emitted by a color display. Blue light is short-wavelength visible light that is associated with more eye strain than longer wavelength hues, such as orange and red. Reducing the color temperature of your display lowers the amount of blue light emitted by a color display for better long-term viewing comfort.
- To reduce your risk of tiring your eyes by constantly focusing on your screen, use the "20-20-20 rule". Look away from your computer at least every 20 minutes and gaze at a distant object (at least 20 feet away) for at least 20 seconds.