FAQs about reasonable adjustments in online exams, and advice for studying at home

End of semester exams:

Q: I usually have extra time in exams. Do I get extra time for the online exams?

A: If an exam or piece of coursework assessment is time limited with the expectation that this time limit be the full duration of the exam or assessment effort, you are entitled to the full time adjustments as in any traditional exam/assessment. This would usually apply to time limited coursework or exams in the 1–3-hour duration, not including the added upload time.

However, if, despite the additional time given, you feel that you have been disadvantaged in any way, please complete a mitigating circumstances (MC) application: Guidance on MC is published here: Mitigating circumstances - Heriot-Watt University (hw.ac.uk).

Q. I usually have a disregard spelling and grammar errors adjustment. Can I still use a sticker?

A: A disregard spelling and grammar errors sticker is only applicable to timed, handwritten exams. If you type your answers, you will have access to a spell checker.

Q: I usually have access to a Scribe, Reader, or Prompter. Is there an alternative?

A: The Disability Service have contacted all students who are eligible to receive this support and have outlined what alternative support is available.

If you feel that you have been disadvantaged in any way, please complete a mitigating circumstances application. Guidance on MC is here: Mitigating circumstances - Heriot-Watt University (hw.ac.uk).

Q: I usually have access to a separate room or quiet room for my exams and this is not possible in my shared home?

A: Let those you share a home with know in advance that you will need IT equipment and quiet surroundings on the day of an exam. Have a timetable for working and share this with those you live with.
If you identify that you will be unable to access a suitable space to sit any or all of your Take Home Open Book Exams and you need to come onto campus, you will be able to book a seat on the required date and time by going to the Book a Room/Resource tile located on your Student Portal;

Please do not book this space for studying, there are other options available for booking study space on-campus.

Your seat will be in an allocated room on-campus which will be monitored to ensure exam conditions throughout the duration of your Take Home Open Book Exam.

You will be asked to show your Student ID upon arrival.

A booking should only be made if you intend to use it.

Note that Mitigating Circumstances will be rejected for not having a suitable space or equipment unless you are able to provide strong evidence of unforeseen and unavoidable events.

Let us know if you have any questions or feel that you will need further support: Disability@hw.ac.uk.

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Studying at home - Preparing for online assessments/exams

Ensure that you understand how you will be assessed for each course and prepare as fully as possible.

Study smartly tips:

• The following study advice may be helpful: Take-home-open-book exams: Revision and time management (sharepoint.com)

• Revise and study in advance for all types of assessments, prepare well in advance.

• Find a place to work where you are comfortable and productive.

• Be organised. Make sure that you know what you need to study, then prepare and follow a study plan. Ensure that you include time to sleep, eat and take breaks. You may find useful advice on getting a good night’s sleep at The Sleep Scotland Website.
• Make sure you have gathered all the resources you need, e.g. VLE resources, coursework information, notes, reading lists, past papers, etc., well in advance of your exam dates.

• Think about how you will organise your time. There are many effective methods available. Map your time to your study plan and include eating, sleeping, taking breaks, and revising and preparing for assessments and exams.

• Make sure you divide your revision time appropriately and effectively across all your exam subjects.

• Use a range of tools and strategies that suit your learning style.

• Summarise and sort your notes and other resources.

• Save your references.

• Try to be selective and learn what you really need to learn.

The following technology advice may be helpful: Download PDF: Home Study Support Technology Suggestions. Make sure you access this well in advance of your exams to allow you to trial any of the recommendations.

If anything does go wrong on the day of an online assessment, try to evidence this, and complete a mitigating circumstances application. Guidance on MC is here: Mitigating circumstances - Heriot-Watt University (hw.ac.uk). Please take the time to familiarise yourself with this so that you know what to do should problems arise on the day of your exam.

This video shows you how to access campus networked assistive and course software via ‘key Server’.

Contact Disability@hw.ac.uk if you’d like to discuss exam adjustments.