



## **What measures for on-site exams to compensate for disadvantages can be applied to take-home exams (THE)? —information for examinations boards, teaching staff, and Academic Offices**

**(last updated: 20 January 2021)**

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, on-site exams will be partially replaced by take-home exams (THE) or digital exams. Individual recommendations from the student disability coordinators / student disability representatives pursuant to Section 88 of the Hamburg higher education act (Hamburgisches Hochschulgesetz, HmbHG) have so far only been issued to cover the completion of coursework and on-site examinations. These recommendations partially refer to different examination formats such as written and oral examinations, term papers, or final theses.

Common measures to compensate for disadvantage during on-site examinations are listed in the table (pages 3–4). The list outlines if and how each measure can be applied to take-home examinations (THE). Detailed information on both variants is listed in the table under the following link:

<https://www.uni-hamburg.de/elearning/methoden/online-pruefen/take-home-exams.html>

Instructions for THE variant 1 (completion period plus technical buffer=examination duration) also apply to distance examinations, i.e., examinations as defined in the examination regulations that are completed remotely.

Note that all content of digital take-home exams must comply with accessibility rules and standards. Frequently, not all functions offered by digital learning platforms and tools can be used by all students. Examiners will not be able to change this in the short term. These and other disadvantages must be compensated by individual measures. All documents the examination participants receive—especially the assignments—must meet accessibility requirements. This is particularly relevant for students with visual impairments or blind students and for students with sensory or reading disabilities as well.

Follow the recommendations below:

- Students with visual impairments or blind students should be offered an additional way of receiving and submitting (completed) examination assignments, e.g., sending assignments to students and completed assignments to examiners or the Academic Office via email. This is recommended as difficulties may arise during downloading, uploading, or other procedures due to disability-specific obstacles in the system. Students with other disabilities who have comparable difficulties should also be offered an email delivery option.

- Students with hearing impairments or deafness must be provided alternative communication channels where assignments include any verbal instructions or offer room for questions.

Conducting THE in groups may cause obstacles for individual students with autism spectrum disorders, certain mental impairments, sensory impairments, or who need assistance. This option must therefore be carefully considered, as it may also interfere with the examination process for the entire group, e.g., if required communication or exchange of documents is not or only partially possible. In addition, compensation for disadvantages in the form of individually extended completion periods cannot be considered or considered appropriately for an examination group. In these cases students should be given individual assignments which compensate for disadvantages.

Do not hesitate to contact me, also on short notice where necessary, if you have any questions or comments regarding compensating for disadvantage for take-home exams. You can best reach me directly at:

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<b>Compensation for disadvantages in on-site written examinations</b>	<b>Alternative compensation for disadvantages measures for THE variant 1*: Completion period plus technical buffer=examination duration</b>	<b>Alternative compensation for disadvantages measures for THE variant 2*: Significantly extended completion period</b>
Extending the completion period	As for on-site written exams	As for on-site written exams, but regarding completion period and total examination duration
Break regulations stipulating a total break time for all added breaks	<u>Exception:</u> If break regulations are not feasible, the completion period may be extended instead**	Measure can be waived if the test can be interrupted at any time; in particular if the total duration of the examination is more than one day. Otherwise proceed as described for variant 1.
Break regulations without a maximum total period for breaks.	<u>Exception:</u> If break regulations are not feasible, the completion period may be extended by 20%**	Measure can be waived if the test can be interrupted at any time; in particular if the total duration of the examination is more than one day. Otherwise proceed as described for variant 1.
Earlier or later start of the examination, but always with time frame overlapping with the regular examination time	<u>Exception:</u> If not feasible, the measure can be waived.	Measure can be waived in general.
Provision of a special room for examinations, which can be used alone or shared with a small number of other written exam participants	Measure can be waived.	Measure can be waived.
Provision of height-adjustable table, height- and tilt-adjustable chair or similar	Measure can be waived.	Measure can be waived.
Provision of adapted assignments, e.g., as regards font, font size, and line spacing	As for on-site written exams	As for on-site written exams
Provision and approval for use of a notebook as a writing device	Provision can be waived. Approval can be waived if the THE may be prepared on a PC, otherwise approval of PC as a writing device is required.	Provision can be waived. Approval can be waived if the THE may be prepared on a PC, otherwise approval of PC as a writing device is required.

Approval of auxiliary aids such as magnifying glasses or coping skills used to manage stressful situations	As for on-site written exams	As for on-site written exams; may be waived if all students are permitted use of any aids.
Approval of reading or writing assistance or sign language interpreters	As for on-site written exams, if necessary clarify precise implementation with students.	As for on-site written exams

**Comments on the table:**

In the case of on-site written examinations, break regulations are granted, particularly

- if impairments of examination-relevant activities are only temporary or possible, and
- if impairments lead to additional difficulties, e.g., occurrence of pain, when working without a break.

If break regulations for THE cannot be implemented, breaks should exceptionally (i.e. only due to coronavirus-related changes) be replaced with an extended completion period. I consider this to be justifiable in the current situation— not least as in school education and, frequently, also in higher education, less precision is applied when it comes to temporal measures than we apply here at Universität Hamburg. As soon as written exams can be held on-site again, you must meet our previous requirements.