# Online “Accommodations” Position Statement

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SDS recognizes that student accommodations are different for online courses. This document outlines how Dr. Rick Jerz satisfies all accommodations requests in his asynchronously delivered online courses. A distinction in Rick’s online course design is that there are no “synchronous” components that might require a student’s physical presence at an exact point in time. It is “synchronous” course components that often create accommodation needs. Rick has been involved in online education for many years, has taken a proactive and inclusive perspective, and has designed his courses to meet DOE, Quality Matters, and universal design standards.

SDS also recognizes that student accommodation requests are general. The course instructor should review the requests to determine if they are appropriate for a specific course. No one can expect SDS to know what goes on in every course.

Two important online education principles are:

1. Online education maintains university educational standards.
This seems obvious; however, during COVID-19, for example, some educational standards might have been relaxed.
2. Online education is not correspondence, guided, or independent-study education.
DOE is specific about this. *“Firm deadlines are given to students for work submission. Online courses must be completed in one semester.”* Students who need guided-study, or who will be absent for a significant portion of a semester, should not be enrolled into online courses.

Notable for online education:

* Online courses require students to be “independent learners.”
* Online courses require students to take responsibility for learning on their own with printed (e.g., textbooks, lecture notes) and online resources.
* Online courses require students to have good time-management skills.
* Online courses require students to have some troubleshooting skills, and not become easily flustered. Interactions with ITS might be needed more frequently (e.g., my computer has a virus, my computer won’t turn on, my browser isn’t working, Microsoft Office is complaining.) Additionally, students should be comfortable searching the Internet for troubleshooting help.

## Rick’s Common SDS Accommodation Methods

Below is how Rick addresses various accommodation requests from students. The primary solution is delivering “***asynchronously online”*** courses and building in accommodations for all students.

* **Adaptive furniture in classroom.** Students select their furniture.
* **Allow audio recording of class.** Students are provided carefully edited lecture videos that replace “class,” which are always available, asynchronously.
* **Allow short breaks during class or exams.** Students control when they study and when they take breaks. “Double-time” is provided for exams, which gives adequate time for breaks
* **Alternatives for in-class presentations.** Asynchronous video presentation assignments replace in-class “live” presentations that students can view at their own time.
* **Class Notes.** Lecture notes are provided for every topic. Video transcripts are provided. Students are still encouraged to take notes so that they put content into their own context.
* **Deadline Modification**. Students are provided two weeks flexibility, instead of the common SDS 24 to 48 hours flexibility recommendation. The extra second week is added to the front end of a topic. Students can do assignments at any time throughout this two-week period.
* **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Accommodations.** All videos are carefully recorded and edited. The instructor’s “voice” is very clear. All videos are captioned. Video transcripts are also provided.
* **Disability-Related Absence and Deadline Modification (DRADM).** Students are provided two weeks for every topic, which they can begin and complete at any time during these two weeks. The extra second week is added to the front end of a topic. Students can set their own deadline anytime within the two weeks. Given this flexibility, the only problem seems to stem from students with poor time-management skills; students who choose to wait until the last day. (Online principle #2.)
* **E-text for required textbooks.** Selected textbooks have e-texts available.
* **Extended time for exams and quizzes (and no evening exams**.) Double-time is provided for all exams, and to all students. This purposely designed and built-in accommodation, meaning an extra hour for a one-hour exam, recognizes SDS typical exam accommodation requests and other non-official student situations that arise. Exams are timed, but available to the student for at least five to seven days. Students choose their best place and time to take exams within the five-to-seven-day period, hopefully at a time and place where they are most relaxed and ready. Students can use any course materials, for example, any notes and computer, while taking their exam, which reduces exam “anxieties.” Relative to quizzes, “quizzes” are not timed, and they are available for two weeks and can even be repeated by the student.
* **Grammar/Spelling**. Students can use Grammar/Spelling checkers on their computer
* **Large print.** Course materials are all “digital.” Students can control size by learning how to use their computer’s “zoom” features, magnifying anything displayed on the screen.
* **Memory Aid.** Students can use notes, textbooks, and other course materials for exams and assignments.
* **Preferential Seating.** Students control where they sit. For exams, students are told that they cannot have anyone sitting next to them that might make it look like they are cheating.
* **Priority Registration.** This is not the instructor’s issue.
* **Reduced distraction environment for exams and quizzes**. Students are encouraged to choose and control their own environment for exams, quizzes, and learning. The university “test center” is not used.
* **Scribe for Essay Exams**. Essay exams are not used.
* **Scribe for Scantron**. A Scranton is not used.
* **Use of a calculator.** The College of Business recommends Microsoft Excel.
* **Use of a computer or other adaptive equipment for exams.** Students in online courses are expected to have access to a computer.
* **World Language Substitution Courses.** Does not apply.
* **Religious Holiday Accommodations.** I am unaware of any religious holiday that is longer than two weeks long, and prevents someone from studying.