**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.

**Exams 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 nearby 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.

**Coping with feelings of isolation:**

* It can be isolating to go from an active college student on a busy campus to sitting at home and attending courses remotely. **Make it a priority to stay engaged with family and friends AND to the best of your ability, develop a flexible routine to maintain**
* Get outside for exercise and fresh air, if possible.
* The Bellarmine University counseling center is planning to be available for online appointments in the coming weeks.

**Adjusting to online learning:**

**Organization**

* **WEEKLY SCHEDULE:** Develop a new course schedule for yourself! Set days and times for when you will review material/posted lectures for each of your classes.
  + *This schedule takes the place of going to class. Make this schedule realistic and try to stick to it!*
  + Some of your professors will have live lectures that you can put into your schedules. For other classes, you will have to decide for yourself when you will learn the material
* **CENTRAL LIST:** Try creating a list of upcoming tasks for each course and put it all in one place, like a planner, piece of paper OR a mobile app for organization
  + As you get more information by email or Moodle, add the to-do items to your central list.
* **TRACKING WORK:** To stay on top of tasks….
  + Break down tasks into clear, manageable steps.
  + Be sure to add studying for exams to your list
  + Use dynamic prompting to remind you of things that need to be done so that you do not have to keep everything in your head (e.g. alarms with emojis in your phone or calendar reminders)
* Reminders/Apps: Some app options to help you stay organized:
  + [Habit List](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fhabitlist.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cjvoigt%40bellarmine.edu%7C6cebb15b6b08407be33e08d7cb6e0623%7C5290229cd9f145dca0d4263790f731fa%7C1%7C0%7C637201545723809673&sdata=VY%2Bqdq5vrjF5DrrIDI0POuyifXR3kR6Pka1V2XjHzkI%3D&reserved=0) reminds you daily of your goal and then tracks progress over time as you record it.
  + Evernote
  + Notability
  + One Note
* Reminders, continued: Take advantage of your digital calendars (syncing with phone reminders) and planners; set reminders for appointments, color coding of different types of events, task lists with due dates, and the ability to schedule recurring
* **BREAKS:** Be intentional about planning short breaks: Study breaks are strategic and used to energize and refocus a distracted student
  + Before your break identify what task you will work on at the end of your break
  + Set timer to alert you to return to work

**Communication**

* **Students should create email folders for each course and dump any communication into that folder, to manage the huge influx of digital information.**
* Communication may be lacking from some instructors who aren’t used to teaching online or may opt to check in less frequently.
* When emailing professors, try to phrase questions to require only a brief response. As faculty will now likely be receiving hundreds of emails…faculty members may be more likely to respond if they know they can answer quickly.
* Additionally, before emailing faculty, check your course Moodle page to see if they may have already addressed your question.

**“Going to class”:**

* **Engage in your courses EVERY day**. Start out your day by checking in on each class to see if there is any new communication or if you have any upcoming deadlines.
* Because the content may be delivered awkwardly, erratically, or not in the method you are used to, you will likely need to spend more time learning the material than usual.
* Spend more time reviewing notes, reading over material, and employing more active study methods to stay engaged while learning alone are important strategies.

**Using Bellarmine’s resources remotely:**

* **If you have a concerns about transitioning to online courses, the Office of Disability Services is offering transition support to ALL students registered with our office.** 
  + If you want assistance, simply schedule a consultation appointment, as you normally would via Accommodate and select ‘Digital/Phone’ as the location.
  + We will follow up with you about the method for meeting & meet with you virtually
* If you have ongoing appointments scheduled with our office, they will continue as scheduled virtually.
* **Use academic support remotely!** We are all still here to support you. Academic coaches, advisors, tutors, and writing center appointments are all still AVAILABLE.