Understanding your Additional Exam Recommendations (AERs)

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to set out the University's approach to Additional Exam Recommendations (AERs) to help you prepare, including:

- Where you can find your AERs.
- When AERs are applied and when they are not.
- Other types of AERs.
- Looking after your wellbeing.
- Frequently Asked Questions.

1. Where can I find my recommended Additional Exam Recommendations?

Your AERs are listed in your Student Support Recommendations document (SSR) sent to you by our team. If you are unsure of where to find these AERs, check your emails to look for an email from the Student Disability and Inclusion team. Try typing "Student Disability and Inclusion: Student Support Recommendations" into your email search.

If you still can't find your recommendations or you are concerned that your AERs are not what was agreed, please email studenthub@soton.ac.uk.

2. When Additional Exam Recommendations are applied…and when they are not

When looking at your AERs, it is important to check what types of assessment you have because AERs are not applied in all cases and some are applied in different ways. Typically, for short assessments (less than 24 hours), AERs are applied in the usual way. For example, those with extra time will have a longer period to sit their assessment. However, some assessments are considered 'inclusive by design', which means that recommendations such as extra time, are already built into the assessment.

Please refer to the table below to find out how Additional Exam Recommendations are applied to your assessments.

Assessment type	Study Expectations	Are AERs applied?	Example with AERs
Traditional on campus exam Typically 2 hours in duration; a closed book paper.	2 hours study in 'typical' examination conditions	Yes	For a 2 hour exam with AERs of 25% extra time, you will have a fixed duration of 2.5 hours for the exam. If applicable, other AERs such as stickered/flagged scripts, room alone and rest breaks will also apply.
Short duration online assessment An open book assessment of fixed duration up to (and including) 8 hours in length within a longer availability window. You can start the assessment at a time of your choosing within the availability window. However once you start, your official time commences. For example, a 3 hour short duration online assessment could start any time between 9am and 5pm, but once you start you would have 3 hours to complete it. Please note that in some cases, the availability window and the assessment duration may be the same in length.	3 hours study time	Yes	For a fixed duration online assessment of 3 hours with AERs of 25% extra time, you will have 3 hours and 45 minutes from when you start the assessment. Extra time is not applied to any upload or download allowances. If applicable, other AERs such as stickered/flagged scripts and rest breaks will also apply. If you are entitled to extra time or rest breaks your Admin and Assessment Team will ensure these are applied. If you are required to follow an alternative process this will be confirmed in advance of you taking your assessment.
Open book assessment where the study time is typically 2-4 hours within an 8 hour availability window.	This should be advised by your	Yes – applied to both the study time and	If you have AERs of 25% extra time, and you are completing an assessment with an

The start time and the duration of the assessment is not fixed and you can choose how you manage your time within the 8 hour availability window.	programme team – but as a general principle, there is no expectation to study for the full 8 hours.	the availability window	expected study time of 3 hours within an 8 hour availability window, availability window will be 10 hours and the expected study time will be 3 hours 45 minutes. If applicable, other AERs such as stickered/flagged scripts and rest breaks will also apply. If you are entitled to extra time or rest breaks your Admin and Assessment Team will ensure these are applied. If you are required to follow an alternative process this will be confirmed in advance of you taking your assessment.
Assessments of more than 24 hours An assessment of longer than 24 hours where you are free to manage your own time. You will be provided an expected study time within this window and are not expected to work for the entire duration.	This should be advised by your programme team – but there is no expectation to study for the full duration of the assessment.	No - this type of assessment is inclusive by design and AERs have already been built in. Stickered/flagged scripts **will** still apply.	
Coursework set within a formal assessment period	This should be advised by your programme team – but there is no expectation to study for the full duration of the assessment.	No - this type of assessment is inclusive by design and AERs have already been built in.	

		Stickered/flagged scripts **will not** apply to coursework.	

Please note that exceptions to any of these AER arrangements may apply in individual circumstances and by prior agreement with the Student Disability and Inclusion team. This will be determined by the needs of the individual student. This may include circumstances where a student was previously considered clinically extremely vulnerable and individual recommendations have been made to study online.

3. Other types of AERs

Reader or scribe

If you have been recommended a scribe or a reader, you are eligible to take up this support for both online as well as in person assessments. Your school exam team will make a booking for a scribe or reader on your behalf. Many students find it helpful to have a practice session so that they are better prepared on the day. This can be particularly helpful if your assessment is online, as it can ensure that everyone knows how to interact with the software.

We recommend that you talk to your school team about your assessments so that you can decide whether you want to take up the recommendation for a reader and/or scribe and book in a practice session. Please contact studenthub@southampton.ac.uk for further advice around this at least 2 weeks before your exam so that arrangements can be put in place to support you.

Stickered/ flagged scripts

If you have an AER of 'stickered/flagged script', you will not be penalised for common punctuation, grammatical, and spelling errors. For in person assessments, this is managed by placing a yellow sticker onto your script. However as this is not possible with an online submission, you will need to ensure that the filename for any assessment file you may be asked to upload includes the term 'yellow_sticker':

- When using the 'save as' function you need to save your assessment in the following way: yellow_sticker _studentIDnumber
- For example, if your ID is 12345678 you should save your assessment file as follows: yellow_sticker _12345678

Please note that these instructions apply only to those assessments which require upload of your assessment script. Your school/department office will use alternative approaches for assessments which do not require document upload. All other instructions relating to your assessment upload remain the same.

Please also note that stickered/flagged scripts do not apply to coursework.

4. Looking after your wellbeing

We understand that the assessment period can be a stressful time. A reasonable amount of stress can be helpful as it motivates us to put effort in. However, when stress becomes unmanageable, it can affect both your wellbeing and your studies. It is important that you look after your wellbeing and you reach out for support when you need it.

The Student Wellbeing Team are available 24/7 to support you with your wellbeing. If you would like to speak to someone about your wellbeing you can contact us via:

- Telephone: 02380 599 599
- Email: studenthub@soton.ac.uk
- Visit us in person at Building 37
- Wellbeing Chat (online or in-person)

Self-help materials

Self-help materials can be helpful for tackling problems such as stress, anxiety, or poor sleep in your own time and at your own pace.

- Read through the NHS's self-help leaflets to learn some practical techniques that you can use to help you manage stress during the assessment period.
- You may like to watch our video on Coping with Exam Anxiety to understand more about our stress response to assessments, and some tips to help you look after your wellbeing.
- Visit our webpages on managing assessments in terms of your studies and wellbeing, before, during and after exams.
- Student Space have some helpful articles on studying and assessments.

5. Frequently Asked Questions

1. **I have a closed book assessment on campus in exam style conditions which lasts 2 hours, will I get the extra time recommended by the Student Disability and Inclusion team?**

   Yes. Extra time will be applied to closed book assessments that are completed in exam-style conditions on site. In this example, with 25% extra time, you will have 2 hours 30 minutes to complete the exam.

2. **I have a 2 hours 30 minute open book assessment online that must be completed within a fixed time in a specified period, will I get the extra time recommended by the Student Disability and Inclusion team?**

   Yes. Extra time will be applied to short duration online assessments with a fixed duration that must be completed within a specified availability window. For example, if you have an online assessment of fixed duration of 3 hours with 25% extra time, you will have 3 hours and 45 minutes from when you start to complete the assessment. However, you must start the assessment within the specified availability window. This is likely to be 9am-5pm but your faculty will advise you.

   Please note that extra time will not be applied to the upload/download time unless there are exceptional circumstances and with prior agreement.

3. **I have an assessment with a fixed start and a fixed finish time where the availability window and the exam duration are equal in length, will I get the extra time recommended by the Student Disability and Inclusion team?**

   Yes. Additional Exam Recommendations will be applied to assessments where the availability window and the exam duration are equal in length. For example if you had AERs of 25% extra time and your exam duration is 3 hours and the availability window is also 3 hours, you would have a availability window and an exam duration of 3 hours 45 minutes.

4. **I have an open book assessment that must be completed within an 8 hour availability window. Will I get the extra time recommended by the Student Disability and Inclusion team?**

   Yes. Extra time will be applied to open book assessments that must be completed within an 8 hour availability window. In practice this will mean that if you have AERs with 25% extra time, you will have a 10 hour window to complete your assessment.

You are strongly encouraged to note the guided study time expected during this availability window in order to look after your wellbeing. All programme teams are asked to provide students with a guided study time – if you have AERs, you can consider this to be slightly longer. For example, with an expected study time of 3 hours and AERs of 25%, the total time expected study time would be 3 hours and 45 minutes. This can be managed within the availability window with extra time i.e. 10 hours.

5. **I have an assessment that begins at 10am on a Tuesday that has to be submitted by 4pm on the Thursday of the same week. Will I get the extra time recommended by the Student Disability and Inclusion team?**

No. Assessments of 24 hours or more are considered 'inclusive by design'. This means that AERs such as extra time or rest breaks are pre-built into the assessment time. Most assessments will have an *expected study time* (and sometimes an expected word limit) and you should use this to guide you. For example, the expected study time for an assessment to be completed within a 48-hour period might be one day, or 7 hours. The 48-hour period allows for this time, but there is also an additional whole working day (or 7 hours) extra, available to you as extra time and/or for rest breaks. When you have a longer period of time during which to complete an assessment, there is no expectation that you work all of the hours. For example, if you have 48 hours to do an assignment, you are not expected to work for 48 hours.

6. **I have a specific learning difference. What does the flagged scripts AER mean?**

Flagged scripts are typically granted for students with a specific learning difference, such as dyslexia. If you have an AER of 'stickered/flagged script', it means that you will not be penalised for common punctuation, grammatical, and spelling errors.

For **in-person exams**, this is managed by placing a yellow sticker onto your script.

However, as this is not possible with an **online submission**, you will need to ensure that the filename for any assessment file you may be asked to upload includes the term 'yellow_sticker':

- When using the 'save as' function you need to save your assessment in the following way: yellow_sticker _studentIDnumber.

- For example, if your ID is 12345678 you should save your assessment file as follows: yellow_sticker _12345678.

Please note that these instructions apply only to those assessments which require upload of your assessment script. Your school/department office will use alternative approaches for assessments which do not require document upload. All other instructions relating to your assessment upload remain the same.

Please also note that stickered/flagged scripts do not apply to coursework.

7. **What is the difference between an AER room and a smaller room of up to 15 students?**

   Both an AER room and a smaller room of up to 15 students means that you will be in an exam room smaller than that of a main exam hall.

   If you have an AER room as a recommendation, this means you will be in a small room of up to approximately 25 students, whereas the smaller room will have up to approximately 15 students.

8. **How do rest breaks apply to online exams?**

   As there is no way to pause an online exam, rest breaks are given as additional time added onto the duration of the exam. When you feel you need to take a break, you do not need to notify anyone – simply take your break.

   However, be mindful that the additional time you are given for rest breaks equates to 10 minutes per hour. So for example, if you have a 2 hour exam you will have 2 hours and 20 minutes to complete this (x2 10 minute rest breaks).

9. **How do rest breaks work for in-person exams?**

   You are allowed a rest break of up to 10 minutes per each hour of your exam. When you take a rest break, this time will not affect the remaining duration of your exam.

   You will need to put your hand up to notify the invigilator that you are ready to take your break. This does not need to be the full 10 minutes per hour, however you can only have the one set break per hour. You are unable to split the 10 minutes up within each hour or add any unused rest-break time to the following hour.

   For example, you are unable to take a 5-minute break, followed by a further 5-minute break within the same hour. If you take a rest break for 7 minutes in one hour, you are unable to add the remaining 3 minutes onto a later rest break.

   This is time to rest away from any working, so cannot be used on the exam.

   As standard, you must remain in the room to take your break. If you require rest break arrangements outside of this standard, please get in touch with us via The Student Hub.

10. **How do I know I'm in an AER room from my timetable?**

    Your SUSSED exam timetable will have the location title listed as 'Z AER Room'. You can also check the assessment room plan document, which will

also confirm that the room is an AER room. You can find the assessment room plan document in the useful downloads section at the bottom of the [assessment timetables page](#).

11. How do I know I'm in a room with a computer from my timetable?

Your [SUSSED exam timetable](#) will have the location title listed as 'Z CAA AER Room'. You can also check the assessment room plan document, which will also confirm that the room is an AER room. You can find the assessment room plan document in the useful downloads section at the bottom of the [assessment timetables page](#).