

- Do not be afraid to ask the Writer to cross something out and make a correction.
- Under no circumstances are you to ask the Writer for factual help. This is not part of their role. If you continue to ask for factual help, you will be reported to the Chief Supervisor of Examinations, as this is unfair practice and against the University of Canterbury examination policy.
- The Writer will not explain questions or words.
- The Writer will not tell you if they think you have made a mistake.
- They will not tell you in which order to answer questions or when to move on to the next question.
- The Writer should indicate when they have finished writing what you have just dictated. They might say 'okay' or 'yes' or nod at you. Agree the preferred method at your pre-exam meeting.
- **Writers need a break – don't expect them to write non-stop.**
- If you need the toilet during the exam, the Supervisor will go with you and wait outside.

### Some tips for dictation

- Adopt a normal tone of voice.
- Speaking slowly and distinctly assists the Writer to distinguish words and reduces interruptions.
- If numbers need to be dictated, tell the Writer before you begin and say zero for '0' for example, to avoid any confusion.
- If you lose your train of thought, you can ask the Writer to read back what has been written, or you can read it back yourself.
- Spell all words that you want to ensure are correctly spelt e.g. references, otherwise wait until the Writer seeks clarification.
- You will need to decide on how to do headings, if this is part of the test/exam style of your subject.
- You will need to dictate punctuation as it is not up to the Writer to determine this. Some tips are provided.
- It is almost always easier for you to draw your own diagrams than to try to instruct the Writer to do so. This is due to of the level of accuracy in specific instruction required in order that the diagrams reflect the information you wish to convey.

### The role of the Reader or Reader/Writer

- The role of a Reader is to read the test questions and instructions.
- It does not include giving any explanations of questions or definitions of words.
- A Reader/Writer combines the roles of both Reader and Writer.
- You can ask the Reader/Writer to read back what they have written.
- You can ask the Reader or Reader/Writer to re-read things on multiple occasions.

### Some punctuation tips

If you want to:	Then say:
End a sentence	Full stop
End a paragraph	Full stop paragraph
End a direct question	Question mark
Short pause	Comma
Open parentheses	Open brackets
Close parentheses	Close brackets
Start a quotation	Quote
End a quotation	Unquote
Introduce a list of items	Colon
Break off a sentence	Dash
To end a topic	Full stop, new paragraph

### Disability Resource Service

Room 214  
 Puaka-James Hight Building  
 University of Canterbury  
 Private Bag 4800  
 Christchurch 8140, New Zealand  
 Phone: +64 3 369 3334  
 Email: [disabilities@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:disabilities@canterbury.ac.nz)  
 Website: [www.canterbury.ac.nz/disability](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/disability)

Using a Reader/Writer:  
 Guidelines for Students  
 Disability Resource Service



# Writers.



[www.canterbury.ac.nz/disability](http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/disability)

## Departmental Tests

Once the Disability Resource Service has approved your special arrangements, academic departments are then responsible for providing these arrangements for tests (and other internal assessments if required). It is your responsibility to inform the relevant department administrator of any upcoming tests you require your special arrangements at least 10 working days prior to the test date. When making contact it is important to give your test details and include your specific arrangements required for the test.

If you contact the department after this time there is no guarantee that a special arrangement will be made. Contact details can be found on the department's website or will have been provided to you by your Disability Resource Advisor.

## Formal Mid-Year and End-of-Year Examinations

Implementation of exam special arrangements for formal exams, held in the formal exam periods at the end of each semester are automatically arranged for you by the Records, Examinations and Graduations office. You will receive an email approximately two weeks prior to your exam confirming the venues, times and contact people during the exam period.

Tests and examinations for Summer School have the same process as for Departmental Tests.

Please note: Exam special arrangements are noted on your internal transcript but do not appear on your external transcript.

## The role of the Writer

Having a Writer for an exam is not the same as having a Notetaker in a lecture.

### Essential differences

- Writers must accurately record ONLY the spoken word – what is dictated to them by you.
- Notetakers may (and usually have to) paraphrase.
- When writing for an exam there is no existing structure.
- When taking lecture notes, the structure and plan are already developed by the lecturer.
- A Writer must not structure, analyse or plan, as this is the student's responsibility.
- Clear dictation is needed to support Writers who are under pressure to 'get it right' the first time.

## Test/Examination procedures

- You will be assigned a Writer for your exams.
- A room Supervisor will also be assigned for your examination. This person will be responsible for the administration of the examination, leaving you and your Writer free to concentrate on the content.
- We aim to allocate you a Writer who is familiar with your subject, unless you request otherwise. Bear in mind that you may have to spell some specialist subject related words.
- Tests/exams under these conditions will take place in a separate room.
- If there is no clock in the exam room the Supervisor will write the time on the board at intervals. It is your responsibility to keep an eye on the time, unless of course your individual needs prevent this, in which case the Supervisor will inform you of the time every half hour and they will tell you when you have 15 minutes left.
- If you are not used to dictating, you will need to practise. Try practising answering specimen exam papers with a voice recorder.

The Writer will meet you outside the test/examination room 10 minutes before the examination begins. You need to discuss with the Writer:

- What seating arrangements you want, opposite you or beside you.
- How the Writer will indicate that they have finished writing and are ready for more dictation.
- Whether you want to write some of the test/examination yourself and use the Writer only some of the time e.g.: when you tire or for essay based questions; or whether you will dictate the whole examination.
- Whether there are instructions other than straight dictation and how diagrams are to be tackled.
- Whether you will make a brief outline or notes prior to dictating your final answers.
- Whether you want the Writer to ask you to spell technical words as you dictate or whether the Writer should check spelling at the end.

## Unable to attend

- If you are unable to attend a test you have special arrangements for, please inform the relevant departmental administrator by midday, one working day before the test. Failure to do this will result in a fine of \$60.00 per test for each Supervisor and Reader/Writer (should you have one), towards the cost of setting up your accommodations.
- If you are unable to attend an exam you have special arrangements for, please inform the Exam Special Arrangements Coordinator by midday, one working day before the exam. Failure to do this will result in a fine of \$60.00 per test for each Supervisor and Reader/Writer (should you have one), towards the cost of setting up your accommodations.

## Before the examination

- Arrive in plenty of time – at least 15 minutes before the test/exam starts – know where and when the test/exam is taking place or where you are meeting your Writer for formal exams.
- Make sure you have a selection of blue or black pens, a pencil and an eraser (in case you have to draw diagrams).
- The test/exam papers will usually be delivered to and collected from the test/exam room by the room Supervisor.
- The room Supervisor will ask you to switch off mobile phones.
- They will ask you to leave your bag at the front or back of the test/exam room.
- It is advisable to take a bottle of water into the test/exam, as dictating can be thirsty work.
- Know the duration of the test/exam particularly if you have been approved extra time.

## During the test/examination

- The Writer will only write **exactly** what you dictate to them and will make no interpretation of your verbal delivery. For science or maths, you should dictate formulae exactly as you want them written.
- The Writer has been instructed not to engage in small talk and will only speak when spoken to. However, there are exceptions, for example, to ask you to repeat a word or if there is a problem with the speed of dictation.
- Do not be afraid to have long periods of silence. You may need time to gather and construct your thoughts.
- You are advised, at intervals to check over the paper or get the Writer to read aloud what you have dictated.