Report on Disability Service
Exam Survey February 2011

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February 2011

Introduction
In February 2001 a survey was conducted to allow students registered with the College Disability Service to give feedback on their experience of taking examinations in College. 102 students completed the survey (99 undergraduates and 3 postgraduates).

This was a three-part survey, in which students were asked to

- Rate exam venues they had used according to their experience of them
• Comment further on their experience of taking exams
• Indicate a preference for an alternative method of examination

This report will outline the key findings and recommendations and a more detailed analysis of the issues raised by students in each section is included in appendix 1.

Key Findings

Part 1 - Rate exam venues they had used according to their experience of them

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good (minor problems)</th>
<th>Fair (could be better)</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts Building</td>
<td>46.0% (40)</td>
<td>41.4% (36)</td>
<td>11.5% (10)</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luce Hall</td>
<td>16.7% (6)</td>
<td>22.2% (8)</td>
<td>33.3% (12)</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMB</td>
<td>36.1% (13)</td>
<td>36.1% (13)</td>
<td>16.7% (5)</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Hall</td>
<td>23.7% (9)</td>
<td>42.1% (16)</td>
<td>15.8% (5)</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer room</td>
<td>37.5% (15)</td>
<td>32.5% (13)</td>
<td>20.0% (8)</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 87.3% rated the Arts building as ‘excellent’ or ‘good (minor problems)
- 69% felt that the Computer room was ‘excellent’ or ‘good (minor problems)
- A relatively high percentage of students felt that Luce Hall and Exam Hall were ‘unacceptable’ as a venue (8.3% and 7.9% respectively)

Part 2 - Comment further on their experience of taking exams

-
Difficulties experienced most frequently are

- Noise (within and without venue, notably at Arts building and GMB)
- Distractions (other students, overcrowding, exams ending at different times, invigilator announcements)
- Poor lighting and problems with comfort in Luce Hall
- Not enough space in Computer Room
- Temperature (very cold at Christmas, particularly in Arts Building)
- Accommodations/materials not always correctly supplied
- Invigilators sometimes felt to be unhelpful

- Students with ADHD expressed that the high level of people coming and going from the venue caused distraction
- There were problems related to access (particularly at Exam Hall and Luce Hall) expressed by students with a medical disability
- Students with Dyspraxia expressed sensory difficulty with noise, temperature and light
- Students with SLD expressed difficulty with overcrowding, noise and materials/accommodations not provided

**Part 3 - Indicate a preference for an alternative method of examination**

Students were asked to specify their preferred method of assessment and could choose more than one. 90 students answered this question.

The results are expressed as a percentage within each group (per disability) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ADHD</th>
<th>Dyspraxia</th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Mental Health</th>
<th>Sensory (H)</th>
<th>Sensory (V)</th>
<th>SLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay/assignment</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis/project</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral exam</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCQ</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This is expressed in a column chart as follows:

Recommendations

- A low distraction venue for students (typically with ADHD, AS or Dyspraxia) who have high levels of distractability.

- Training for invigilators on maintaining conducive examination conditions and dealing with student anxieties

- Better scheduling of exam timetables for a small number of students
Appendix 1: Detailed report on findings of this survey

Part 1

Students were asked to describe their experience of whichever venue they have used for exams and to rate their experience on a scale of excellent; good (minor problems); fair (could be better); poor; unacceptable. 97 students responded to this question. The results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good (minor problems)</th>
<th>Fair (could be better)</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts Building</td>
<td>46.0% (40)</td>
<td>41.4% (36)</td>
<td>11.5% (10)</td>
<td>3.4% (3)</td>
<td>2.3% (2)</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luce Hall</td>
<td>16.7% (6)</td>
<td>22.2% (8)</td>
<td>33.3% (12)</td>
<td>25.0% (8)</td>
<td>8.3% (3)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMB</td>
<td>36.1% (13)</td>
<td>36.1% (13)</td>
<td>16.7% (6)</td>
<td>8.3% (3)</td>
<td>2.0% (1)</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exam Hall</td>
<td>23.7% (8)</td>
<td>42.1% (16)</td>
<td>15.8% (6)</td>
<td>13.2% (5)</td>
<td>7.9% (3)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer room</td>
<td>37.5% (15)</td>
<td>32.5% (13)</td>
<td>20.0% (8)</td>
<td>10.0% (4)</td>
<td>2.5% (1)</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please describe any difficulties you have had.

- answered question 87
- skipped question 0
Please describe your experience of the following venues:
Part 2

Students were then asked to comment on specific issues experienced during their examinations and the results are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Please describe your experiences of the following during exams:</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good (minor problems)</th>
<th>Fair (could be better)</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Unacceptable</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invigilator</td>
<td>57.8% (48)</td>
<td>32.5% (27)</td>
<td>8.4% (7)</td>
<td>1.2% (1)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow students (in room)</td>
<td>50.6% (39)</td>
<td>33.8% (26)</td>
<td>9.1% (7)</td>
<td>5.2% (4)</td>
<td>2.6% (2)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellow students (outside)</td>
<td>38.3% (31)</td>
<td>32.1% (26)</td>
<td>19.8% (16)</td>
<td>8.6% (7)</td>
<td>1.2% (1)</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise level (room)</td>
<td>47.0% (39)</td>
<td>25.3% (21)</td>
<td>19.5% (16)</td>
<td>7.2% (6)</td>
<td>2.4% (2)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise level (outside room)</td>
<td>27.4% (23)</td>
<td>29.8% (25)</td>
<td>20.8% (25)</td>
<td>11.3% (10)</td>
<td>2.4% (2)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>56.0% (47)</td>
<td>27.4% (23)</td>
<td>10.7% (9)</td>
<td>7.1% (6)</td>
<td>0.0% (0)</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>44.0% (11)</td>
<td>24.0% (6)</td>
<td>20.0% (5)</td>
<td>8.0% (2)</td>
<td>4.0% (1)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comments were then analysed according to the venue in which the student took their examinations. Some responses selected more than one venue. In the analysis that follows, responses selected refer to one specific venue.

**Arts Building**

76 out of 87 students (87.3%) who responded specifically on their experience of the Arts building stated that it was good/excellent, 10 students (20.6%) stated that it was fair and 5 students (5.74%) felt that it was poor/unacceptable.
The following excerpts from the responses refer specifically to the Arts building. Note that the highest number of people to respond to the question specified the Arts building as their exam venue (87 out of 97).

*Please describe any difficulties you have had:*

**Noise**
- “noise from nassau st in arts block”
- “I have a room to myself, generally in the arts block, there have been occasions where there have been students outside, but that’s to be expected. There have also been occasions where there has been light construction work taking place which was a bit noisey.”
- “on one occasion there was people outside the room and it examiner had to ask over 10 times for them to move or be quite.. they never did. it didn’t bother me too much but one of my friends had major problems with it”
- “Noise coming from hall in Arts Block and interfering with ongoing lecture.”
- “There can also be a lot of noise outside r the room. [...] No major difficulties, some noise outside on occasions but it has always stopped after invigilator went out to have a word.”

**Light**
- “there was a light in the room that kept flashing on and off which got quite annoying”
- “Light is one thing in the hall ways of the arts block in the upper levels that seems to be a problem always I found (admittedly would not have thought of this if you had not put it in) but in the exam halls there was never a problem.”

**Temperature**
- “Over christmas exams the venue was very cold most likely because the building han not been in use over the holidays. I was really cold and uncomfortable I found it hard to concentrate in these conditions. Being away from the hamilton building has
it's disadvantages also because I never see my classmates during exam making it more difficult to discuss any issues I'm having or visa versa"

• "Arts block can be freezing!!"

Location/Materials/invigilator

• “Sometimes not all of the parts of the exam papers are provided ie. forgetting to provide an equations page or similar.”
• “The space in the exam area is a bit cluttered, and this makes it awkward for bath room breaks etc”
• “Once had an Invigilator you was not helpful. Given the wrong questions in the exam.”
• “On the day of the exam this obviously became apparent as my name was not on the list outside the exam room. [...] I felt the invigilator could have been a bit more understanding and helpful in the situation.”
• “finding the room and would be nice to have a window in the room”
• “One exam started earlier than it was meant to this year, and i was not informed beforehand I in an exam I have not been given the tables which are necessary for the exam and the glossary to the exam, containing the equations for the exam, was missing i and i did not receive these for about a half hour or more as they had to photocopy them.”
• “The room was overbooked on one occasion.”
• “My invigilator is also my scribe so I answered the question in both aspects. Sometimes the scribe has had diffiult in understanding what I am saying as english has not being their native langueage. But as a invigilator I have nevr had any problems. the second question is n/a.”

Other Distraction

• “The room i was in had aprox 80 people in it and was very very intimidating. Very large room on the 3rd floor.” [...] Too many people and too many distractions.”
• “Due to the nature of so many students from different courses sitting exams in the one venue there can be frequent disruptions from the amount of lecturers coming in to check papers. Particularly if you are at the top of the room.”
• “concentration: I find it difficult to concentrate in larger venues with large groups of people.”
• “distracting as people leave before me and I then can’t concentrate”

Summary (Arts Building)

Noise
- Outside building (1)
- Within building (4)

Temperature
- Too cold (2)

Light
- Flickering (1)
- Unspecified (1)

Location/Materials/invigilator
- Difficulty finding venue (1)
- Problem re. comfort of venue (3)
- Materials/accommodations incorrect (4)
- Problem involving Invigilator (2)

Other distraction
- Number of people at venue (2)
- People coming and going (2)

Luce Hall
19 out of 42 (45.2%) of students who responded on their experience of Luce Hall stated that it was good/excellent, 12 students (28.5%) that it was fair and 13 (30.95%) of students stated that it was poor/unacceptable. The following excerpts from the responses refer specifically to the Luce building.

Please describe any difficulties you have had:
• “Luce Hall” (problem not specified)

Noise
• “Distractions with noise/other students.”
• “Noise levels and other students can be distracting.”

Light
• “the lighting in luce hall is very bad - no natural light”
• “The light can be strange”
• “The light in Luce Hall is very hard on the eyes.”

Temperature
• “Luce Hall- too cold, too much echo”

Location/Materials/invigilator
• “there's Not the space to stretch legs and move limbs which ache without taking up other students space.”
• “Failed to direct me to correct place. There was a contradiction in where the sheet assigned me to and where I was suppose to go for exam accommodations (extra time). Luce Hall”
• “Some invigilators can be kind of rude but over all they are fairly good
• “Did not get extra time and stickers.”
• Luce hall is a large room and can be uncomfortable. Other distraction
• I get far too distracted by other students.
• it can be hard to get in and out of as everyone enters and leaves at the same time.

Summary (Luce Hall)

Noise
- Unspecified (2)

Light
- No natural light (2)

Temperature
- Too cold (1)
Location/Materials/invigilator
- Difficulty finding venue (1)
- Problem re. comfort of venue (2)
- Materials/accommodations incorrect (1)
- Problem involving Invigilator (1)

Other distraction
- Other students (2)

GMB
26 out of 38 (68.4%) who responded on their experience of the GMB stated that it was good/excellent, 7 students (18.4%) that it was fair and 5 students (13.1%) stated that it was poor/unacceptable. Further comments specific to the GMB follow.
*Please describe any difficulties you have had:*
Noise
- “I sat an exam in the GMB last year, it was very noisy and quiet distracting - people playing football outside”

Exam Hall
10 out of 42 students (23.8%) who responded on their experience of the Exam Hall stated that it was good/excellent, 7 (16.6%) that it was fair and 8 (19%) that it was poor/unacceptable. Further comments specific to the Exam Hall follow.
*Please describe any difficulties you have had:*
Location/Materials/invigilator
- “Stairs getting into th exam hall, and stuffy airless rooms.”
- “Step and stairs into exam hall mad arts block can be difficult.”

Computer Room
29 out of 42 students (69%) who responded on their experience of the Computer Room stated that it was good/excellent, 9 (21.4%) stated that it was fair and 5 stated that it was poor/unacceptable (11.9%). Further comments specific to the Exam Hall are as follows:
*Please describe any difficulties you have had:***
Temperature
- “Heating in computer rooms far too high!”

Location/Materials/invigilator
- “The computer room didn’t have enough table space for extra rough work writing.”
- “There was a couple of times where I was assigned the computer room where I should have been given a room in the arts block because it’s next to impossible for me to access the IS Services computer room easily.”

The difficulties described are now categorized according to disability. Students with Asperger’s Syndrome, Mental Heath and Sensory (Hearing) disabilities did not provide comments on this part of the survey.

The number of responses are stated but those deemed irrelevant (e.g. lack of computers in disability area) have been excluded. Some responses included more than one comment and these have been separated into separate columns.

**ADHD (10 responses)**

![Bar chart showing responses for ADHD]

Dyspraxia (4 responses)
Medical (14 responses)
Sensory (visual) (4 responses)

Specific Learning Difficulty (37 responses)

Students expressed preference for a wider range of assessment, notably essay/assignment (68.9%), multiple choice questions (32.2%), oral/spoken examination (31.1%), thesis/project (31.1%)
The results are expressed as a percentage within each group (per disability) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>ADHD</th>
<th>Dyspraxia</th>
<th>Medical</th>
<th>Mental health</th>
<th>Sensory (H)</th>
<th>Sensory (V)</th>
<th>SLD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay/assignment</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thesis/project</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral exam</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCQ</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group presentation/project</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is expressed in a column chart as follows:
Note that students with AS who partook in the survey did not respond to this question.