

Compensation for disadvantages in respect of examinations

Any disadvantages faced by students or students with a chronic illness that may affect their academic performance or examination results should be compensated wherever possible. The Chemnitz University of Technology provides special examination arrangements for students with long-term disabilities if they are not able to participate under normal examination conditions. A disadvantage compensation (in German: Nachteilsausgleich) aims to ensure that all students have the opportunity to demonstrate academic achievement in examinations without any unfair disadvantages as a result of a disability. However, please note that it is not possible to apply for a disadvantage compensation if the performance deficit relates to the skills that are being tested in the examinations. This is associated with equal opportunities for all students. These individual arrangements are only designed to ensure that equitable examination conditions are provided in order to enable students to demonstrate their knowledge and competence notwithstanding their disability.

Legal basis

An alternative examination arrangement, however, is not a privilege, but rather a legal right valid for all disabled and impaired students:

- Article 3 Paragraph 3, 2nd Sentence Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (Grundgesetz)
- § 34 Paragraph 3 Saxon Law on Universities (Sächsisches Hochschulfreiheitsgesetz)
- a general obligation contained in each examination regulation of Chemnitz University of Technology (**see § 5 Paragraph 2**):

„If candidates produce a medical certificate stating that, owing to chronic illness or disability, they are not able to sit assessment components wholly or partially in the form stipulated in the module description, then upon request, the Examination Committee should permit candidates to complete equivalent assessment components in a different form.“

Who can apply for disadvantage compensation and individual arrangements in examinations?

- **Students with a disability** (in German: Behinderung; e.g. visual, hearing or mobility impairments), **longer-term illnesses or health conditions** (in German: chronische Krankheiten; e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, asthma) and/or **mental health difficulties** (in German: psychische Krankheiten) are eligible to apply for disadvantage compensation.

- It does not matter whether the disability is officially recognized or not (disabled pass/disability card, in German: Schwerbehindertenausweis).
- Students with partial performance dysfunctions such as dyslexia (difficulties with reading and writing), dyscalculia (difficulties with learning and comprehending maths) or attention disorders (AD(H)S) are also entitled to apply for a disadvantage compensation.

How to apply for compensation for disadvantages?

- Any examination arrangements required should be made known as soon as possible to enable the necessary adjustments to be implemented.
- The deadline for applying for examination arrangements **is approximately 6 weeks prior to the exam period**. Ideally, specific arrangements would be identified **with registration for the examination** (in German: Prüfungsanmeldung), usually submitted **in June** for the summer semester examinations and **in December** for the winter semester examinations.
- However, it is in the student's own interest to submit the application in good time. Please note that the university will **not** normally grant special examination arrangements for any applications, which are made after the published deadline unless circumstances are unexpected and could reasonably have been anticipated. In such a case, you will **not** have arrangements in place for the upcoming set of examinations.
- Students should make an **appointment with the academic disability support** (in German: Beratung für Studierende mit Beeinträchtigung) **before the published deadlines** (usually during May for the summer semester examinations and during November for the winter semester examinations).

Please use the electronic **PDF form "Antrag auf Nachteilsausgleich für Studierende mit Beeinträchtigung"**. You will find the appropriate PDF form on the website of the **Central Examination Office** (in German: Zentrales Prüfungsamt):

<https://www.tu-chemnitz.de/studentenservice/zpa/formulare/index.php.en>

- For each examination an own application for disadvantage compensation is necessary (in the case of several examinations in the current semester, one application must be submitted in each case).
- Applications are only possible for examinations offered in the current semester.
- The university will not accept handwritten or incomplete applications.
- Edit the pages 1 to 2 of the form, print it out and sign on page 2.

- The complete four-page application with supporting documents (in German: Attest) must be submitted directly to the **Central Examination Office** (Chemnitz University of Technology, ZPA, 09107 Chemnitz) or via the mailbox of the Central Examination Office (Reichenhainer Str. 70 or Straße der Nationen 62/“Prüfungsamt”).
- A **medical certificate** must be enclosed (usually not more than one year old). The evidence should explain why alternative examination arrangements are needed.
- All applications for alternative examination arrangements should be supported by current acceptable evidence of a disability or long-term medical condition such as written report from a registered medical practitioner (in German: Attest eines Allgemein- oder Facharztes), an educational psychologist or a psychiatrist or any other diagnostic reports. The university requires a statement from a physician or medical specialist, describing the student's symptoms and their corresponding effect on examinations.

The (chairperson of the) **Examination Board** (in German: Prüfungsausschuss, Prüfungsausschussvorsitzender) will make a decision about the application and will determine appropriate alternative examination arrangements (processing pages 3 and 4 of the form). Students will receive information on the decision of the Examination Board by the Central Examination Office. You will receive a reply email for your information.

Examiners are informed by the Examination Board about compensation for disadvantages (copy of pages 3 and 4, without diagnostics on page 1) and are obliged to implement them.

For organizational reasons (e.g. separate room, individual appointment) a clarifying conversation with the examiner is recommended.

Case-by-case decision

Any compensatory examination arrangement may not alter the academic requirements of the study program, which is why the necessary measures must be determined on an individual basis. Such disadvantage compensations are not about making studying “easier”, they are there to ensure that studying is fair and that everyone has an equal chance of success.

The subject-specific and content-based requirements remain unaffected.

However, there should not be "overcompensation", and therefore the modified examination must be an equivalent substitute, which tests the same learning objectives as described in the study and exam regulation (in German: Studien- und Prüfungsordnung).

Adaptations vary considerably depending on the illness and individual conditions of the examination. It must be emphasized once more that disadvantage compensations do not modify the subject-specific requirements of the study and examination regulations.

Examples of compensations for disadvantage

All disadvantage compensation measures are based on individual decisions to fit the student's needs. Consequently, no generally valid statements can be made about specific examination arrangements. Therefore, the following overview provides some examples and is not intended to be exhaustive.

- admission of technical aids, personal assistance or additional work tools (laptop, speech-to-text interpreter, enlarged font papers for those with a visual impairment, written instructions for those with a hearing impairment)
- modification of examinations such as added/extra time, interruption (splitting) of an examination or scheduling of exams at a specific time of day
- modification of an oral examination into a written one (for example for the hearing impaired) and vice versa (oral instead of written examination for example for the visually impaired)
- examinations can be held in a separate room (severe concentration disturbances)
- ergonomic or other seating arrangements
- special breaks can be permitted during the examination time
- time extensions for the handling of term papers, bachelor thesis etc.

Advisory service

If you have any questions about disadvantage compensation, please contact: <https://www.tu-chemnitz.de/tu/inklusion/kontakt.html>

In advance of such requests, you are invited to arrange a counseling session with the adviser for students with disabilities or chronic illnesses to discuss the possibilities and your individual needs for academic adjustment. Please note that the disability service only makes recommendations, the Examination Board is responsible for ensuring that the necessary arrangements are made.

Data privacy

Both the Central Examination Office and the Examination Board are strongly committed to protecting personal data. An application for disadvantage compensation is treated as confidential.