Easing Anxiety

TESTING CAN BE STRESSFUL

You spend a lot of time preparing for your tests. A lot is at stake based on you successfully passing your test. Test Center staff want to make sure you succeed and want to provide the best service possible. In order to do this, we require all students to provide the following information:

- A current photo ID
- Your professor’s name and course title
- The name of the test you are taking
- Your Canvas username and password if your test is online

With so much on your mind, you may forget our hours of operation, to remind your professor you were going to test at the Test Center, or to let your professor know which accommodations you may need. All of these factors may result in increased anxiety and frustration when testing at the Test Center. There are a few things Test Center staff recommend to help ease your anxiety and make testing with us an enjoyable experience.

This newsletter will provide some helpful hints to take the stress out of testing.

TEST CENTER AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The most common accommodations offered at the Test Center are as follows:

- Extended time (maximum 4 hours)
- Use of computer for typing written responses
- Use of testing materials such as highlighters, colored pencils/pens, or rulers

If you require any of the accommodations below, you may have to make arrangements to test through Disability Support Services (DSS) and Individualized Proctoring Services (IPS).

- An individualized, quiet space
- Special seating requests
- Reader or writer
- Multiple breaks
- Assistive technology or software

Please note appointments are not needed to test at the Test Center, but ARE required for use of IPS. For more information refer to the student resource section on Page 3 of this newsletter.
COMMUNICATING WITH YOUR PROFESSOR

Professors send your test and administration instructions to the Test Center. They let us know which materials you are allowed to use, when the test is to be administered, and any accommodations you may require. The first step to successful testing at the Test Center is to establish good communication with your professor.

- At the beginning of the semester, give your accommodation memo to your professor. Follow this up with a discussion about your accommodations and decide with your professor if you should test at the Test Center or with a Reader/Writer/Proctor. 
- Make sure you know when your test will be available. Email your professor so you will have the dates in writing.
- If you are unable to make the testing date, make sure you let your professor know. The Test Center will only administer tests during the dates given by your professor.

“Make sure you are clear about when your test will be available. Communicate with your professor via email and print out the email so you will remember when to visit the Test Center. It will also serve as a reminder for your professor.”

WHERE AM I SUPPOSED TO GO?

When you come to the Test Center to take an exam for an HCC course, you want to go to RCF 359 first.

If this door is closed, follow the signs directing you to RCF 366.

Depending on staffing and test volume, we may be open on one side or both.

Our friendly staff are happy to point you in the right direction if you wander into the wrong side of the Test Center.

Remember:

Try RCF 359 first. If the door is closed follow the signs to RCF 366.

Good luck on your test!

WHAT TO EXPECT AT THE TEST CENTER

If you have ever been to the Test Center you may have heard one of our staff say something like “Here is a key to a locker, you will need to put everything—pen, pencils, watches, wallets, and phones away. Everything! Just come back with your photo ID and then sign in.” You will hear this each time you come to take a test at the Test Center. Below are some examples of what to expect when you visit us.

- You must have a current photo ID in order to test. If you do not have your current student ID, it is okay to use your driver’s license/state-issued ID or current passport.
- All items must be put into a locker—pens, pencils, wallets, phones, lip balm, etc. NOTHING goes into the testing room, but your ID, locker key and any professor-approved materials.
- We ask that you TURN OFF your phone before putting it in your locker.
- The Test Center will provide all materials you need to take your test, such as writing utensils, calculators, and scrap paper.
- You will need to sign in and will be required to enter your student ID number, professor’s name, and Course.
- The Test Center files all exams by your professor’s last name. You will be asked for this information. It is okay if you write your professor’s name down on a piece of paper as reference during the sign-in process.
- Since appointments are not required to test at the Test Center, students come in and out of the testing room; Test Center staff also monitor and walk the room frequently.
- All tests will be collected at the close of business regardless of the time allowed by professor, so plan to arrive early in order to receive the full amount of time allowed.
STUDY SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Many students may cram in last minute studying or may be struggling to balance school and work. If you find you need some help with time management, note taking, or need some new study techniques, the Learning Assistance Center (LAC) may have a workshop for you!

The LAC has some amazing resources to help you succeed. Test Center staff recommend visiting their website. From online resources for writing and math to skills workshops, the website provides a wealth of information. Tutoring services are available as well.

This year, the Test Center is excited to partner with the LAC to provide a workshop about test taking skills and how to ease your anxiety when testing at the Test Center. In addition to learning test taking strategies, you will have the chance to ask our Test Center staff any questions you might have.

For an updated schedule of study skills workshops visit the LAC webpage at http://www.howardcc.edu/services-support/academic-support/learning-assistance-tutoring/index.html or call 443-518-1320.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Learning Assistance Center (LAC)
- Study skills workshops
- Tutoring
- Retention Services

Contact Information:
learningcommons@howardcc.edu
443-518-1320

Disability Support Services (DSS)
- Meet with a counselor to review your disability documentation
- Discuss with a counselor which accommodations may be available for you

Contact Information:
443-518-1300

Individualized Proctoring Services (IPS)
- Contact Marie Hughes to set up appointments with a reader/writer/proctor
- Assistive technology or software

Contact Information:
mhughes@howardcc.edu
443-518-3266

Counseling
- Get personal assistance with managing your anxiety and stress

Contact Information:
443-518-1340
What is your learning style?

Elaine Ott – Don’t wait until the last minute to take your test. Lines tend to be longer on Friday afternoons. You want the full amount of time you are allowed and don’t want to run out of time.

Christi Ewing – If you want to know if your test is at the Test Center it is best to contact the professor. Call or email your professor at least one day before you wish to test to ensure your test is processed and ready for you.

Irma Rosado – When Test Center staff go over the instructions from your professor, don’t be afraid to ask us to repeat the information or ask questions. We are here to help!

Jenna Fletcher – If something goes wrong or you need help, take a deep breath and remain calm. We are here to help and will be happy to contact your professor if necessary. We want you to succeed and we want to help. We want to help you “get there from here.”

BEATING TEST ANXIETY – LEARNING STYLE

Studying is an important part of preparing for your test, but did you ever think about how you learn?

This may seem like a silly question, but knowing how you learn can help you in the classroom, taking notes, and implementing study strategies.

There are three types of learning styles – auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. An auditory learner learns best when they hear information. A visual learner needs to see the information to process and understand it. A kinesthetic learner is often called a “hands on” learner and needs to do activities to process the information. It is also possible to have a combination of these learning styles.

Once you identify your learning style you can use study strategies that will help you prepare for your test. For example, an auditory learner may benefit from small study groups where there is discussion of the study material. A visual learner may wish to use graphs, or tables to organize the information. Likewise, visual learners may use highlighting to draw attention to important facts. Kinesthetic learners may need benefit from using notecards where they can physically manipulate the study material.

BEATING TEST ANXIETY – BEFORE YOU TEST

In addition to being well prepared for your test, there are a few strategies you can use to ease your anxiety.

- Try not to cram; spacing out when you study and how long you study may help you not feel overwhelmed by the amount of information you need to cover.
- Eat and Sleep. Your brain and body need the fuel to help you succeed. Make sure you get enough sleep the night before your test and make sure to eat a healthy meal. Avoid caffeine and sugar as this may make your anxiety worse.
- Arrive early. Feeling rushed and frazzled because you were trying to find parking can impact your performance on your test.

BEATING TEST ANXIETY – DURING YOUR TEST

- Take a deep break before you begin.
- Read the directions carefully.
- Look over the full test before you begin.
- Use the margins or scrap paper to jot down any notes/formulas/thoughts you do not want to forget.
- Pace yourself. Answer easy questions first leaving more time to answer more difficult questions. Also consider the worth of the questions. If your easy is worth 50 points you may want to spend more time on your essay then the 10 points for matching.
POST-TEST SUGGESTIONS

Take a deep breath. You have completed the hard part, but before you hand in your test to the Test Center staff member, consider the following suggestions:

- If time allows, review your test. Make sure you followed the instructions and answered all questions. Make sure your answers are clear.
- Make sure you write your name on your test. You would hate for your test to be returned and receive no credit because your professor cannot determine whose test s/he is correcting.
- Contact your professor if you have any questions about your exam.

Professors give review questions or study guides for a reason. Take the time to really use these valuable study tools.

CONFESSIONS OF A FORMER PROFESSOR

Despite what some students believe, professors really want you to succeed. They want you to learn the information covered, develop your writing, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. Would you believe that many professors actually TELL you what is going to be on the exam? A former professor provides some of the cues students should look for when trying to determine what material may be on an upcoming test.

- **Three times, Three times, Three times**
  If a professor repeats something multiple times, write it down or pay attention.

- **Written on the whiteboard**
  You will cover a lot of information in your class. If it is worthy of being written on the board, you may want to make sure you review that information.

- **Study guides or review questions**
  “There were times when I actually gave the essay questions that were going to be on a test to the students as review. The students who took the time to answer these questions, were pleasantly surprised on the day of the test.” Professors give review questions or study guides for a reason. Take the time to really use these valuable study tools.

  - **“This is important...”**
    This verbal cue should automatically have you writing down whatever follows these three words.

  - **Listing**
    “If I stated the three main causes of ......, that was usually a cue to my students to write down these main causes. On their test they may see a short answer or essay question asking to discuss the 3 main causes of......”

While all professors are not the same, many have ways to indicate what is important. Learn those cues and you will be better prepared for your upcoming test.
FINAL THOUGHTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Test Center Staff want to help you succeed. Consider these final thoughts and recommendations from our staff members.

- Always check the Test Center website for our hours of operation, school holidays or any closings.
- Arrive at the Test Center early in order to have enough time to sign in and begin testing. By arriving early you can ensure you receive the full amount of time allowed by your professor.
- If your test is not here or if there is an issue, take a deep breath and remain calm. Test Center staff will assist you the best they can. Also know the Test Center has a record of your visit and can provide this information to your professor if there are any issues, questions, or concerns.