

## Memory Aid as an Accommodation

### What is a Memory Aid or “Cue Sheet?”

A memory aid, or cue sheet, is a testing accommodation used to support students who have documented challenges with memory. It is a tool used to trigger information that a student has studied but may have difficulty recalling due to cognitive processing deficits associated with memory and recall. The cue sheet allows the student to demonstrate knowledge of course material by helping prompt the student’s memory, not by providing the answer.

A cue sheet gives students an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of course material on a test/exam without taxing already compromised memory function. This accommodation is not intended to reduce academic requirements or alter the standards by which academic performance is assessed.

A proper cue sheet will not be useful to the student unless the student knows and understands how to use the information it refers to. If the student doesn’t understand the course material, a proper cue sheet will not help.

A cue sheet provides support to students with documented deficits in rote memory, sequencing memory, working memory, and /or long-term memory. It helps them recall information that would otherwise be inaccessible to them in a testing situation. **A student who requires a cue sheet will provide Student Accessibility Services with documentation supporting the need for this particular aid.**

Disabilities that may affect memory include (but are not limited to):

- Acquired Brain Injury
- Psychiatric disability
- Specific learning disability
- ADD/ADHD
- Medical Conditions

### How is an accommodation for cue sheet determined and approved?

A student who requires a cue sheet must present **documentation, from a qualified professional, which supports the need for this aid** to SAS. The SAS Counselor will review the documentation and discuss the request for a cue sheet in depth with the student. As part of the SAS review process, the student’s request will also be reviewed by the SAS Departmental Review Committee prior to approval. Students are responsible for learning course material, for discerning which material may require cues or triggers, for developing the cues that will appear on the aid, and for securing the instructor’s approval.

### What does a memory aid / cue sheet look like?

Styles of cue sheets may vary. Generally they can be hand written or typed on a large index card and up to *one side* of a letter-size page (8 ½ x 11”). Typically the cue sheet should be written or typed in a standard font size (i.e. 12 point font) and double spaced.

At the discretion of the instructor, a cue sheet may or may not include the use of:

acronyms	short phrases	pictures	schematic diagrams	formulas
names	definitions	tables	sample questions	key terms/words charts

A cue sheet accommodation is not intended to reduce academic requirements or alter the standards by which academic performance is assessed.

### What a Cue Sheet Is Not

A cue sheet is not meant to record all the facts, concepts or processes being tested. This means that a cue sheet should **NOT**:

- Exceed one page (single sided)
- Include specific examples of how formulas are used
- Include “answer sheets” or complete terms and definitions
- Include full course notes or all information from the course which is being evaluated
- Include open textbooks
- Serve as a substitute of studying—because a cue sheet will not help if a student has not studied the material

### Instructor Considerations

The contents of a cue sheet are at the instructor’s discretion and should not run contrary to the essential requirements of the course. Only the professor can determine whether a cue sheet compromises the integrity of the course.

A cue sheet should not contain a synopsis of course material, but rather mnemonics (a device such as a pattern of letters, ideas, or associations that assists in recalling information) and formulas that would enable the student to solve the problem. If the purpose of a test is to determine whether or not the student knows specific definitions, having those words or definitions on a cue sheet would make it an answer sheet and therefore, not acceptable. If the definitions were written but not connected to the terms to be defined in any way, this may be allowable, since it will trigger the student’s memory of the correct term. The ideal cue sheet would most likely make little sense to anyone but that specific student.

**If remembering the information on the cue sheet is deemed to be an essential learning objective or outcome of the course, it should not be allowed.** For example, if the learning objective or outcome of the course is to know the formula, it should not be allowed on the cue sheet; however, if the learning objective or outcome of the course is to demonstrate the ability to apply the formula, then it could be allowed on the cue sheet.

**Cue sheets must be reviewed and approved by the instructor** since the instructor decides the learning objectives or essential requirements of the course. Instructors can choose to remove memory triggers that are deemed to be essential learning objectives for the course. Note: It is understood that some courses do not lend themselves to the use of cue sheets.

### PROCEDURES:

1. Once a student has been approved for a cue sheet by SAS, the accommodation will be included on the student’s accommodation letter.
  - a. Instructors: Please ensure that the letter is current (i.e. the letter will note the current semester). *Accommodation letters from previous semesters are not valid.* Please review the student’s semester accommodation letter. Contact the SAS Counselor if you have concerns regarding the use of the cue sheet and the essential requirements of the course.
  - b. Students: SAS recommends that you discuss your accommodations with each of your instructors.
2. For each exam requiring a cue sheet, the student will complete a SAS Test Request form according to SAS guidelines: [http://www.utrgv.edu/\\_files/documents/student-experience/procedural-guidelines-sas.pdf](http://www.utrgv.edu/_files/documents/student-experience/procedural-guidelines-sas.pdf)

3. **Instructors:** Please indicate approval of a cue sheet on the SAS Test Request Form.
4. For each exam, the student prepares a cue sheet that is no larger than one page, single-sided, 8" x 11.5" page, written by hand or 12 size font type, double spaced. An index card may be used instead, at the discretion of the instructor. **Please note:** A student with a visual impairment may need a larger cue sheet with the same number of characters in a larger font.
5. The student provides the cue sheet for editing and final approval, at least 5 business days prior to the test/exam, to the instructor. *This means that the student will contact the instructor well in advance of the exam to confirm the due date for the cue sheet.*
6. At least *two business days prior to the test/exam*, the instructor reviews the student's cue sheet and chooses one of the following options:
  - a. Approve the cue sheet "as is"
  - b. Remove (if handwritten: delete, scratch out, or black out with a marker; if in a Word document: delete) information that the instructor has deemed inappropriate. If an item on the cue sheets provides a complete answer, rather than a trigger for an answer, the item must be removed.
  - c. Disallow the cue sheet entirely because the memory triggers on the cue sheet are deemed to be essential criteria or learning objectives for the course.
7. If the cue sheet is approved by the instructor, the instructor signs the cue sheet and submits it along with the student's test directly to the Student Accessibility Services prior to the date of the test/exam.
8. Only the mutually agreed upon cue sheet will be allowed in the test/exam at SAS. Students cannot bring other course materials into the SAS testing room unless previously approved by the instructor (as noted on the SAS Test Request Form).
9. If the student arrives at SAS to test with a cue sheet not approved by the instructor, the cue sheet is not allowed. SAS staff will not contact the instructor on behalf of the student to request approval for a cue sheet. This is the responsibility of the student.
10. Once the student completes the exam at SAS, the test and the cue sheet will be returned to the instructor.

**Additional resources:**

Supporting Students with Working Memory Difficulties

[http://canlearnsociety.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LC\\_Working-Memory\\_N2.pdf](http://canlearnsociety.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/LC_Working-Memory_N2.pdf)