

## **MTU DSS Cork campus Examination Supports (reasonable accommodations) in Timed Assessments/ Examinations for 2021/22 – version 4 November 2021**

### **Background:**

- Over 1000 DSS students are entitled to a range of examination supports (reasonable accommodations) for timed assessments/ examinations. These are listed in the student's DSS needs assessment document. Students may use some or all of their examination support entitlements listed, whereas others may only use extra time or no supports.
- The DSS have listed the different examination supports entitlements in the table below and mapped how these may be facilitated on campus and in an online assessment environment. These guidelines were based on the *DAWN recommendations for the application of Reasonable Accommodations in Remote Examinations 080920* and approved by the MTU Cork Campus Registrar. (*DAWN, the Disability Advisors Working Network, is a national group of Disability Officers who share practice and collaborate to develop national policy for HEI disability support services*).

### **Examination Supports**

- A student's examination support entitlements are listed under Exams Supports section of their DSS needs assessment document.
- The Examinations staff on the different Cork campuses (Bishopstown, CSM and NMCI) hold a list of DSS students' exam support entitlements for that campus. The new student lists are updated regularly during the first half of semester 1 as new students complete their DSS application for supports.
- The table below maps out the exam supports that are granted to DSS students – a description of them and how they are typically implemented on campus, how these supports may be available for online timed assessment/exams, a suggestion on how lecturers may implement these supports online where needed (following consultation with TEL and the Examinations Office), and how the student should request these supports for online and/or on campus test/exams.
- The table cannot not cover all assessment formats and the DSS and Examinations Office are happy to speak to lecturers and students around exam supports, alternative assessments etc. Any queries should be emailed to the DSS at [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie)

### **Requesting Supports:**

- For tests or exams facilitated by the lecturer/ run by their academic department DSS students have been informed to contact their lecturer directly to request exam supports such as extra time (where appropriate) well in advance of the timed assessment/ exam and include a copy of their needs assessment document. The DSS may also email the lecturer on request if a student is not comfortable sharing the details of their needs assessment document.
- Students who require supports requiring an additional person to facilitate the examination/assessment such as an invigilator, reader or scribe need to email the lecturer and Examinations staff on their campus to arrange this well in advance.
- For any tests or exams facilitated by Examinations staff, students should follow the instructions outlined by the staff and request supports by any deadlines stated.

### **Recommendations on remote examination supports:**

- The majority of DSS students may request extra time in online timed assessments/ exams, and this is usually straightforward to accommodate, once the person facilitating the exam is notified with advance notice (see table below).
- DSS students who require examination supports beyond extra time will be expected to use existing technologies available to them to access their timed assessments/ exams where possible. The [Accessibility Tools for Remote Learning document](#) (version 4.2 August 2021) with links for downloading relevant software and training videos have been developed by the DSS Assistive Technology Officer. For any queries email [mark.burleigh@mtu.ie](mailto:mark.burleigh@mtu.ie)
- Shane Falvey in the Examinations Office is available to support with arrangement of supports such as reader/scribes in conjunction with lecturing staff on the Bishopstown Campus, as there may be additional set up required for these supports: [ExamsdssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:ExamsdssCork@mtu.ie)
- Recommended contingency: Any DSS student who cannot access their supports for their remote timed assessment/ exam should alert their lecturer /DSS as soon as possible in advance of the timed assessment/exam. Academic staff are asked to consider providing an alternative method of assessment that meets the given module learning outcomes. Where the academic department deems an alternative method of assessment is not possible, a student should consult the IEC (individual extenuating circumstances) policy and complete the online IEC form if this is relevant. Students should ensure they are checking the most up to date information for IECs:  
[www.mycit.ie/extenuatingcircumstances](http://www.mycit.ie/extenuatingcircumstances)

### **Additional Resources**

- A list of resources is included at the end of the document to support students and staff including creating online accessible content and how to use assistive technologies. The DSS has also listed relevant information and resources at: [www.mycit.ie/exam-supports-online](http://www.mycit.ie/exam-supports-online)
- Systems like Canvas\* have been developed and tested to ensure compliance with the latest digital and web accessibility standards and guidelines. Individual lecturing staff, however, should still try to familiarise themselves with the ways in which the needs of students with disability can be taken into consideration in designing and developing approaches to remote teaching and learning. For more details and direction please make contact with MTU Disability Support Service Cork campus: [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie) or see their website at [www.my.cit.ie/dss](http://www.my.cit.ie/dss) and [www.mycit.ie/staff-faqs](http://www.mycit.ie/staff-faqs)
- Some staff may also find it useful to review or implement the framework of Universal Design for Learning which involves planning flexibility into curricular design from the outset and recognising that learners are varied in their learning preferences and capabilities. For more details please see [www.ahead.ie/udl](http://www.ahead.ie/udl) and <https://tlu.cit.ie/universal-design-for-learning>

**\*Canvas is compliant with W3C standards and US section 508 guidelines and that there is screen reader support (for JAWS and on Firefox and Safari and NVDA on Firefox).**

For queries please email [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie)

Exam Support	Exam Supports On Campus	Exam Supports for Online timed assessments/exams	Suggestions for lecturers to implement in Online timed assessments/ examinations	Instructions for Student to request support
<p><b>Extra time</b> allows the student additional time to work on the test/exam and is granted at the end of the exam.</p> <p><b>The standard allocation of extra time is 10 minutes per hour,</b> but individual students may have more than 10 minutes.</p> <p>Extra time allowance is stated under Exams Supports on the student's needs assessment document.</p>	<p>Students requiring extra time only would usually request them from their lecturers with advance notice, or from the exam invigilator in the exam venue using their needs assessment document.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>In a synchronised timed exam of 1-5 hours,</b> an additional time allowance should be allowed, e.g. 10 minutes per hour = 10 minutes for one hour, 20 minutes for two hours, etc.</li> <li>• <b>In a short online test or MCQ</b> an additional time allowance should be allowed, e.g. 5 minutes per 30 minutes.</li> <li>• In a <b>take home or open book exam of a longer duration</b> (not synchronised but submitted within a specific deadline), outlining the suggested number of hours of effort or word count for the exam would indicate that the student is not expected to spend the entire amount of time allocated to the exam. No extra time is applied to this these assessments, but a student may spend extra time on the task itself within this period.</li> <li>• For <b>Written assignments or reports</b> – no extra time is applied. Students need to contact their lecturer if an extension is required.</li> </ul>	<p>The Moderate option in <b>Canvas New Quizzes</b> allows lecturers to allocate time allowance for individual students.</p> <p><b>Canvas Assignments</b> allows a lecturer to run the same timed assessment/ exam for a different time period for a student or group of students, e.g. a later submission time.</p> <p><b>See TEL Help Pages on how to implement:</b>  <a href="https://telhelp.eu.helpdocs.com/">https://telhelp.eu.helpdocs.com/</a></p> <p>Practice exams are useful for the student to become familiar with the format of any assessment.</p>	<p>For any timed test or exam <b>online or on campus that the lecturer /or academic department is facilitating, students should request extra time directly from the lecturer for each timed assessment/ exam well in advance</b> before the test/exam and include a copy of their needs assessment PDF in the email.</p> <p><b>For any tests/ exams on campus,</b> students should bring their needs assessment to request extra time from the invigilators in their exam venue, or inform their lecturer in advance of wishing to request extra time.</p>

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<p><b>Rest breaks</b> are pauses where the exam time is stopped for a student to take a break without being penalised; the student is not allowed to work on the timed assessment/ exam during this time. These are typically 5 or 10 minutes per hour.</p> <p>They are typically granted to students who may not physically be able to sit, write, type or concentrate for long periods of time.</p> <p>Rest breaks are stated under Exams Supports on the student's needs assessment document / or in the extra time letter</p>	<p>Students requiring rest breaks would usually request them from their lecturers with advance notice, or from the exam invigilators in the exam venue using their needs assessment.</p>	<p>Canvas does not have the facility to allow for rest breaks - only extra time.</p> <p>Allowing extra time instead of rest breaks might be suitable in individual student cases. (See <i>Extra time</i> above)</p>	<p>See suggestions for implementing <i>Extra time</i> above.</p>	<p>Students should request rest breaks and/or extra time directly from lecturers for each <b>online</b> timed assessment/ exam in advance (see <i>Extra time</i> above)</p> <p>For <b>any tests/ exams on campus</b>, students should bring their needs assessment to request rest breaks from the invigilators in their exam venue, or inform their lecturer in advance of wishing to request rest breaks.</p>

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<p><b>Reading Software</b> is usually a separate piece of software or an application embedded on a computer that reads out the screen or text e.g. exam questions, to the student.</p>	<p>The majority of DSS students who are entitled to reading support would use reading software (TextHelp Read Write Gold) in end-of semester exams on campus in computer labs facilitated by the Examinations Office.</p> <p>For shorter tests, some DSS students may choose to only avail of extra time instead of reading software.</p>	<p><b>If students require reading support for online timed assessments/ exams the DSS recommends students use Read Write Gold (RWG) software</b> (or alternatives listed in the DSS <a href="#">Accessibility Tools for Learning document</a>).</p> <p>Information on how to download reading software and training videos is at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://tinyurl.com/CITReadingsoftwareOnline">https://tinyurl.com/CITReadingsoftwareOnline</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/AccessATS">https://www.youtube.com/user/AccessATS</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.mycit.ie/exam-supports-online">www.mycit.ie/exam-supports-online</a></li> </ul>	<p><b>Lecturers do not need to provide access to reading software in Canvas for timed assessments/ exams.</b></p> <p>See “Creating accessible online content and documents FAQs” below.</p>	<p>For <b>online tests/exams</b> students should familiarise themselves with the software, training videos and use with any practice tests and Canvas* content available before using with any timed assessments/ exams. Students should inform their lecturer of their intention to use the software.</p> <p>For <b>any tests/ exams on campus</b>, students should request the support from the Examinations staff by any deadlines stated/well in advance of the test/exam.</p>

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<p><b>Reader</b> is a person who reads out the exam/ assessment paper aloud.</p>	<p>A small number of DSS students are entitled to a reader in exams and/or time bound assessments.</p> <p>Students would request a reader from the Examinations staff with advance notice and this would be arranged in a separate room.</p>	<p><b>Students should use the <i>Reading software</i> solution (above) where possible.</b></p> <p>Reading pens may be another option for use at home dependent on availability.</p> <p>If none of the options above are feasible due to a student’s disability, they should contact the Examinations Office and their academic department <b>to facilitate a remote reader if the above options are not suitable.</b></p>	<p>See <i>Reading Software</i> above.</p> <p>The lecturer may need to work with the Examinations Office to facilitate a remote reader for the student.</p>	<p>Students who require a reader for <b>online tests/ exams</b> should notify their lecturer and Examinations staff <b>well in advance</b> to request this support.</p> <p><b>For any tests/ exams on campus</b>, students should request the support from the Examinations staff by any deadlines stated/well in advance of the test/exam.</p>
<p><b>Entitlement to type (was Use of a computer to type in 2020/21)</b></p> <p>Students whose ability to write is significantly impacted by a disability are allowed to type their timed assessments/ exams rather than handwrite.</p>	<p>Students would request the entitlement to type their exams (using a computer) from the Examinations staff with advance notice.</p> <p>Use of Spellcheck would be allowed.</p> <p>Students may choose to handwrite some of their exam depending on the subject and type longer answers, or type all.</p>	<p>Students should be allowed to type their timed assessments/ exams on their own devices instead of handwriting where possible.</p> <p>Use of Spellcheck should be allowed.</p>	<p>If there is a requirement for handwriting an exam, students should be allowed to type their timed assessments/ exams.</p>	<p><b>For online tests/exams</b> students are recommended to improve their typing skills if needed. Free Typing training is available here: <a href="http://typing.com">http://typing.com</a></p> <p><b>For any tests/ exams on campus</b>, students should request the support from the Examinations staff by any deadlines stated/well in advance of the test/exam.</p>

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<p><b>Scribe</b> is a person who writes or types the exam answers as the student speaks them out loud.</p>	<p>A small number of DSS students are entitled to a scribe in an exam/time-bound assessment on campus.</p> <p>They would request a scribe from the Examinations staff with advance notice.</p>	<p><b>Students should establish if they can type</b> instead of using a scribe (see <i>Entitlement to type</i> above).</p> <p>Alternatively, <b>students who already regularly use and are familiar with dictation/ speech-to-text software</b> (e.g. Dragon or Windows MS Dictate) <b>may find this is suitable for the online timed assessment/ exam.</b> Students should familiarise themselves with the training advice on <a href="http://www.mycit.ie/exam-supports-online">www.mycit.ie/exam-supports-online</a>. They should use the dictation software with any practice tests and Canvas* content available before using with any timed assessments/ exams.</p> <p>If none of the options above are feasible due to a student’s disability, they should contact the Examinations Office and their academic department <b>to facilitate a remote scribe if the above options are not suitable.</b></p>	<p>If there is a requirement for handwriting an exam, students should be allowed to type their timed assessments/ exams. See <i>Entitlement to type</i> above.</p> <p>There may be a need for increased flexibility around extra time to allow students to access their assistive technology software or to take a slower typing speed into account (see <i>Extra time</i> above).</p>	<p><b>For online tests/exams</b> students are recommended to improve their typing skills if needed. Free Typing training is available here: <a href="http://typing.com">http://typing.com</a></p> <p>Students should contact the lecturer /DSS to inform them if they are planning to use this software.</p> <p><b>For any tests/ exams on campus,</b> students should request the support from the Examinations staff by any deadlines stated/well in advance of the test/exam.</p>

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<p><b>Shared separate centre or individual separate centre</b> is an alternative venue for exams to the main exam venue but run under the same Exam procedures.</p>	<p>Students can have the entitlement of either a smaller shared or separate (not shared) centre.</p> <p>Students would request this from the Examinations staff with advance notice.</p>	<p>Students may not require this support in their current circumstances while studying at home.</p> <p>Tips on creating a low distraction exam venue at home is on the DSS website: <a href="http://www.mycit.ie/exam-supports-online">www.mycit.ie/exam-supports-online</a></p>	<p>Flexibility around the timings of timed assessments/exams could be considered in individual cases to allow a student to access a quieter space in their home environment where possible.</p>	<p>Students should alert their lecturer to any difficulties with taking an <b>online test/ exam</b> in advance.</p> <p>For <b>any tests/ exams on campus</b>, students should request the support from the Examinations staff by any deadlines stated/well in advance of the test/exam.</p>
<p><b>Marking guidelines</b> are granted for students with reading, writing or spelling difficulties to give guidance to lecturers in marking their exams.</p>	<p>DSS students with reading, writing or spelling difficulties can refer their lecturers to the marking guidelines for timed assessments/ exams. This is stated on their needs assessment under Exams Supports.</p> <p>The guidelines are available here: <a href="http://www.mycit.ie/access_disability/disability-support-service/exams1">www.mycit.ie/access_disability/disability-support-service/exams1</a></p>	<p>Marking guidelines can apply to a synchronised timed exam or online test.</p>	<p>Marking guidelines can be used when correcting online exams.</p>	<p>Students should send their needs assessment to their lecturer to make them aware of their spelling and grammar difficulties.</p>

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<p><b>Enlarged Paper</b></p> <p>Students with visual impairments may be entitled to enlarged exam/ assessment papers. The font and size of the text and paper may be listed in their needs assessment.</p>	<p>Typically the Examinations staff would enlarge the exams paper for the student with advance notice.</p>	<p>Students who already <u>regularly use</u> and are familiar with magnification software should be able to use this in their online timed assessments /exams.</p>	<p>Lecturers do not need to provide access to magnification software in Canvas for timed assessments/ exams. There may be a need for increased flexibility around extra time to allow additional time in addition to extra time to allow students to access their assistive technology software. (see <i>Extra time</i> above)</p> <p>See “Creating accessible online content and documents FAQs” below.</p>	<p><b>For online tests/exams</b> students should practice using the software with any practice tests and Canvas* content available before using with any timed assessments/ exams.</p> <p><b>For any tests/ exams on campus</b>, students should request the support from the Examinations staff by any deadlines stated/well in advance of the test/exam.</p>
<p><b>Coloured Paper</b></p> <p>Some students with visual or scotopic sensitivity may require their exam paper printed on a particular colour paper.</p>	<p>The MTU Examinations Office Cork campus prints exam papers on cream paper for end of semester exams on Bishopstown campus.</p> <p>Examination papers for some DSS students are printed on specific coloured paper by the Examinations Office with advance notice.</p>	<p>Students can change the colour of their screens either through the accessibility features on their own computer or browser.</p>	<p>See “Creating accessible online content and documents FAQs” below.</p>	<p><b>For online tests/exams</b> students should check that any changes in screen colour works with any practice tests and Canvas content before using with any online timed assessments/ exams.</p> <p><b>For any tests/ exams on campus</b>, students should request the support from the Examinations staff by any deadlines stated/well in advance of the test/exam.</p>

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<p><b>ISL Interpreter/ Speedtext</b></p> <p>A hearing impaired or deaf student may use an Irish Sign Language (ISL) interpreter and/or Speedtext (who transcribes the answers) in an exam. Students would typically have additional extra time using these supports stated on their needs assessment.</p>	<p>Students would request these supports from the Examinations staff with advance notice.</p>	<p><b>Accessing ISL or Speedtext for online tests/exams is possible remotely.</b></p> <p>Students who require ISL and Speedtext simultaneously in a remote assessment should note that this option may not be feasible. The student should contact the DSS and their academic department well in advance of any timed assessment/exam to look at any options.</p>	<p>Some flexibility may be needed to allow for the availability of the ISL interpreter.</p>	<p><b>For online tests/exams</b> students should practice with the support in advance the communication software being used before using with any timed assessments/ exams.</p> <p><b>For any tests/ exams on campus,</b> students should request the support from the Examinations staff by any deadlines stated/well in advance of the test/exam.</p>
<p><b>Equipment</b></p>	<p>Students sitting exams on campus can access equipment such as Height Adjustable Desks; Special Chairs; Back Supports; Soft Keyboards, etc., which is provided by the Examinations Office.</p>	<p>Students may already have access to these supports at home. <b>Facilitating such equipment by MTU for remote use is not currently feasible</b> for online timed assessments/ exams.</p>	<p>There may be a need for increased flexibility around extra time to allow students to take this into account. (See <i>Extra time</i> above)</p>	<p><b>For online tests/exams</b> students should practice with the support in advance the communication software being used before using with any timed assessments/ exams.</p> <p><b>For any tests/ exams on campus,</b> students should request the support from the Examinations staff by any deadlines stated/well in advance of the test/exam.</p>

## Recommended Resources

### STUDENT

- MTU TEL [student guides to learning online](#) (using Canvas)
- [MTU Access Service Cork campus Tips](#) for online studying/preparing for online exams
- MTU DSS Reading software in online exams [installation guide](#) and [installation/training videos](#)
- [Accessing Accessibility tools for Home Study](#) from MTU DSS Assistive Technology Officer.
- **Typing training:** <http://typing.com>
- Using [Dictation software](#) in online MTU exams
- [Using assistive technology on your phone](#) YouTube videos
- **Setting up quiet exam space** [tips](#) and [TCD video guide](#)
- Current MTU students can [download Microsoft Office ProPlus](#) for free.
- MTU DSS **Assistive Technology** [YouTube channel](#)

### STAFF

- MTU - [TEL \(Technology Enhanced Learning\)](#)
- CANVAS TEL Help Centre - [MTU staff guides to remote teaching online](#)
- MTU TLU (Teaching and Learning Unit) - [Keep Teaching Toolkit](#)
- MTU TLU - [Tacit Guides](#)
- MTU [Guidelines for Examiners when Marking Scripts](#) from Students with a Disability who have a Reading, Writing or Spelling Difficulty
- [10 Ways to Ensure Online Assessment is Accessible and Inclusive](#), National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education/ AHEAD, published March 24, 2020.
- [10 Points to Consider in Choosing Alternative Assessment Methods for the Online Environment](#), National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, published March 12, 2020.
- [Selecting Online Alternatives to Common Assessment Methods](#), National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, published March 26, 2020.
- Gordon, D. (2020) [The Hitchhikers guide to Alternative Assessments](#) (DIT lecturer)
- QQI (2020) [Guiding Principles for Alternative Assessments](#) (Devised In Response To The Covid-19 Emergency Restrictions),
- AHEAD (2020) [Universal Design for Learning](#) (UDL)
- MTU UDL project and resources: <https://tlu.cit.ie/universal-design-for-learning>

## Creating accessible online content and documents FAQs (sourced from [Trinity College Dublin Disability Service](#))

### What are the Quick Fixes to make online academic content accessible?

- Structure documents using the inbuilt styles e.g. headings, bulleted lists.
- Use plain English and short sentences.
- Use sans serif fonts such as Arial, Calibri and Verdana.
- Avoid using italic text as it can be harder to read and use **bold** to emphasise words instead.
- Use left align and avoid justified text as this can create large uneven spaces between letters and words.
- Make web links descriptive so it is obvious what you are linking to e.g. 'contact us' instead of 'click here'.
- Add alternative text (or Alt text) to images to describe them for screen readers. If the image is purely decorative then alt text is not required as it doesn't provide important information.
- Use a good colour contrast.
- Add captions to videos and text descriptions for infographics.
- Avoid using merged cells in tables.
- Add page numbers.
- More guidelines on making information accessible can be found at the [Trinity Inclusive Curriculum webpages](#).

### How do I create Accessible Documents?

When creating content, you can follow a few basic steps to ensure that your content is accessible. The core steps needed for accessibility are the same regardless of whether your document is in HTML, Microsoft Word, Adobe PDF, or another document format:

- Use headings
- Use lists
- Use meaningful hyperlinks
- Add alternate text to images
- Identify document language
- Use tables wisely
- Understand how to export from one format to another

The [Trinity Inclusive Curriculum webpages](#) offer clear and concise guidelines on how to ensure your documents are accessible.

See these links for more information:

- [Creating accessible documents in Microsoft Word](#)
- [Creating accessible presentations in Microsoft PowerPoint](#)
- [Creating accessible PDFs](#)

For queries please email [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie)

## How do I make my online content accessible?

### Social Media:

- Social Media posts - include Alt text (alternative text) for images to allow screen readers to interpret graphics.
- Use 'CamelCase' for hashtags and capitalise the first letter of every word (for example #ThisIsAccessible whereas #thisisnotaccessible).
- Sharing videos through YouTube allows for automatically generated closed captions.
- Visit the TIC [Social Media Accessibility](#) webpage for further guidance.

**Media/video/audio:** Videos should be produced and delivered in ways that ensure that all members of the audience can access their content.

**An accessible video should include captions and a transcript. Captions are text versions of the audio content, synchronized with the video.**

They are essential for ensuring your video is accessible to students, employees, and members of the public who are deaf or hard of hearing.

- [Adding captions to You Tube videos](#)
- [Adding captions to videos in Canvas](#)
- [Adding captions to videos in MS Teams](#)
- [Adding captions to videos in Facebook](#)

## How do I create High Quality Scanned Documents?

In order to be fully accessible, follow these steps (It may be necessary to consult the manufacturer's instructions for your scanner):

1. **Check your results:** Checking your scanned documents to see if it is legible etc.
2. **Increase your default resolution:** Check the scanner's default resolution and increase to a minimum of 300dpi. Your final file size will be larger, but the resulting documents will be much better quality.
3. **The image is distorted or blurred:** Make sure the document or photo lies on a flat stable surface on the document table. Also make sure it is not wrinkled or warped. Make sure you do not move the document or your scanner while scanning.
4. **The scanned image is too dark:** It may be necessary to change the display setting to match the output device. Check the brightness and contrast settings of your computer monitor.
5. **An image on the back of your original appears in your scanned image:** If your original is printed on thin paper, images on the back may be visible to the scanner and appear in your scanned image. Try scanning the original with a piece of black paper placed on the back of it. Also make sure the document type and image type settings are correct for your original.