

E-EXAMINATIONS PROTOCOL

NB: These regulations do not apply to students or staff of the Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Education

FOR ASSESSMENTS HELD IN DECEMBER 2021

The University can now confirm that there will be no in-person examinations held on campus at the end of the Autumn Term. The majority of examinations will still take place as open-book e-examinations that will be made available to students via Moodle.

A small number of practical and/or professional body-accredited examinations may be delayed until it is possible to hold them in person or another solution is identified. Students whose examinations are to be delayed will be contacted with alternative arrangements.

PRE-EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Examination Timetables

In line with the University's usual process, students will receive their personalised examination timetable by the end of week 4 (as normal); examinations will be spread over two weeks.

Emails to students will also include covering text with instructions and information pertinent to the examinations as well as hyperlinks to this Protocol, FAQs and <https://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>.

Student Access

All students with a University of Buckingham e-mail address will have access to Moodle and any required MS Office software as part of their Office 365 subscription.

Students must notify their departmental administrator of any potential access difficulties – e.g: unsuitable home environments, lack of IT equipment etc. by Friday 19th November. Where there are unusual and unforeseen circumstances that prevent students from accessing Moodle on the day of exam release, alternative submission arrangements will be made.

Marking Guidance

The format of questions and marking criteria for e-examinations remains as that for unseen examinations. Following release of this Protocol, Schools may issue subject-specific marking guidance to students and staff; all local marking guidance documents will be posted to the *e-examinations Teams group*.

Coursework Extensions

Extension procedures will operate in the normal way with decision-makers taking a pragmatic rather than principles-based approach to individual circumstances and evidence requirements. The involvement of the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity department and Registry in Mitigating Circumstances Panels and Boards of Examiners respectively will assist in this regard.

Deferral

Students may defer one or more examinations if they wish, but this must be requested no later than 7 days before the commencement of the examination/s in question and be approved by the Dean. Deferral of examinations may affect progression as these regulations are unchanged. Deans considering requests for deferral must also take into account total assessment load for the student at the next examination diet.

EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Students will have a 24-hour window for completion of each examination (unless otherwise specified); however, e-examinations will be formulated to the usual length: in other words, the length of time required to complete the examination by the average student should not exceed the duration indicated on the examination coversheet. Suggested word lengths and timings will also be provided on examination papers¹.

The 24-hour period is for the examination completion **and** upload of work. Students are asked to set aside an hour in this period to check and format their final work, rename files, upload to TurnItIn and double-check the correct files have been submitted. Late submissions are not allowed.

E-Examination Format

E-examination papers will be set and uploaded as Word documents so that students will be able to insert answers into the question document prior to submission. This will avoid the need for students to tab between multiple documents. Other formats may be arranged with Registry.

Examination answers must be typed unless agreed in advance. Where hand-written calculations or workings are required as part of the examination, or where answers are to be typed but are not text based, this will be indicated on the examination coversheet. In these cases, students will be required to submit a scanned copy of any handwritten work; and follow other specific instructions on the coversheet for the completion and upload of non-text files.

Invigilation

There will be no invigilation process for e-examinations; however, the following support will be available:

Academic Support

Students will be provided with the name and contact email of their departmental administrator and exam-related queries should be directed to them in the first instance. Departmental administrators will answer directly where possible or forward to academic staff for responses where not. Accordingly, departmental administrators and academic staff will be available during each 24-hour exam paper period.

For reasons of maintaining academic standards, the ASK Team will not be available to provide support during the 'live' examination period.

IT Support

Students will be provided with the contact email of the IT Helpdesk and technical queries should be directed to them in the first instance; IT Support will be available 9am-5pm GMT on all examination days.

Support from the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity department

Students will be provided with the contact email of the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity department and mentoring and mental-health support queries should be directed to them in the first instance. The Disability Office will also be operating; however, any need for disability-related adjustments in examinations will need to have been approved some weeks ahead of the examinations period. It is not, therefore, anticipated that the Disability Office will be assessing for reasonable adjustments once the exams are underway.

Mitigating Circumstances

The University's usual Mitigating Circumstances Policy (<https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/3.7a-Mitigating-Circumstances-Policy-and-Procedure.pdf>) will operate in the normal way with decision-makers taking a pragmatic rather than principles-based approach to individual circumstances and evidence requirements. Localised power, ISP or equipment failure during the window of examination will be added as allowable circumstances.

¹Approximately 1000 – 1500 words per 90 minute question as a guide for staff setting questions

Academic Integrity

Students will be informed when they are sent their timetable that: “By completing and submitting your exam answers, you are agreeing that you have read the University of Buckingham’s **Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures** and that your submitted work complies with these regulations, does not contain any plagiarised material, and is entirely your own work.” See <https://fb77c667c4d6e21c1e06.b-cdn.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf> .

Simple in-text author/date referencing should be used and spell check will remain enabled. Footnotes and bibliographies are not required. All e-examinations will be put through *TurnItIn* unless specified otherwise on the examination coversheet or non-text files.

The coursework element of the University’s Academic Integrity Policy will apply to e-examinations; however, given that the Central Academic Integrity Advocate (CAIA) is likely to have a large case load (including coursework cases from the Autumn term), the following variations will apply:

1. For e-examinations only, the judgement of Poor Academic Practice (PAP) will be suspended (as it is not applicable to the exam context) although relevant formative feedback may still be given.
2. First markers will refer their case reports to School Academic Integrity Advocates for investigation if they suspect academic misconduct (e.g.: plagiarism or collusion) in e-examinations; the process of investigation will then continue as normal.

Every effort will be made by your Faculty to emphasise the importance of academic integrity and fairness in the conduct of these e-examinations and their assessment, and we look forward to working with you to achieve this. Should you have any queries or uncertainties about how to proceed, please contact your Personal Tutor, or the Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity department.

Reasonable Adjustments

The e-examination format has been designed to be as inclusive as possible. By providing a standard assessment method that already accommodates the unique needs of most students, the need for individual reasonable adjustment is minimised.

Rather than disabled students having to rely on individual adjustments, 24 hours will be allowed for all students (unless otherwise specified). This ensures that dyslexic students, for example, are no longer disadvantaged by the short time limit associated with a traditional exam. As an inclusive assessment method is already being provided, individual additional adjustments for disabled students are unlikely to be needed. The Wellbeing, Skills and Diversity department will offer guidance to students who have queries or concerns about Reasonable Adjustments for e-examinations.

POST-EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Marking

First and second marking will be undertaken anonymously through Moodle.

Green Flag Policy

A ‘GF Candidate Number’ will be provided to students whose work should be marked in adherence with the Green Flag Policy. These students will be asked to paste their ‘GF Candidate Number’ at the top left of the first page of their work.

External Examination

The University’s external examining requirements will remain in force. External Examiners will be provided with Moodle access to view e-examinations; however, the volume of scripts selected for external examination will be restricted to a maximum of 10% or 12 scripts (whichever is the higher) of the total across the spectrum of marks.

Marks Release

Results will be released on 11th January 2022. Following the completion of marking and external examination, the majority of module marks will automatically be transferred into eVision directly from Moodle. For a small number of modules (e.g resits or combined exams), provisional marks will be made available to departmental administrators for the purpose of entering directly into eVision grids for ratification

at Boards of Examiners. Students will be able to review their marks at this point; however, they are reminded that marks are subject to change until confirmed by the Board of Examiners.

Boards of Examiners

Examination Boards will be virtual with External Examiners joining by tele- or video conference where possible. Where this is not possible, externals will submit a written paper to the Chair of the Exam Board by the date of the Board.

Progression and Award

The University's progression, credit accumulation and classification algorithm procedures will remain in force; however, Examination Boards will take a pragmatic view of individual circumstances where necessary.

Mark Profiling

Registry and IT Services will support the provision of exceptional profile-reporting as follows:

- Exam grids will show a yellow marker if the current exam mark diet has moved plus or minus 10% compared to the previous diet.
- Exam grids will show an orange marker if the current exam diet mark has moved plus or minus 20% compared to the average of ALL the previous exam diets.
- Exam grids will show a red marker if the current exam diet mark has moved plus or minus 10% compared to the previous diet AND plus or minus 20% compared to the average of ALL the previous exam diets.

In their absolute discretion, the Board of Examiners may look more closely at the grids of students so-identified to determine whether to allow the latest marks to stand, to moderate the marks in accordance with the student's profile or require further assessment in the form of a *viva-voce* examination.

Examination Boards may also avail themselves of the University's *aegrotat* award regulations where they feel that a student's final performance has been sufficiently adversely affected by circumstances pertaining to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Professor James Tooley, Vice-Chancellor
Mr Christopher Payne, Registrar and Director of Professional Services
September 6th 2021