Examinations and assessment framework

Version history

Text updates are highlighted in green and deleted text is ~~strikethrough red~~

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Contents

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this document

This document details the University's policy relating to University Examinations and assessment practices for undergraduate and postgraduate taught courses. It aligns with and expands on the *Examination Regulations*. It also provides more detailed guidance in relation to specific processes, primarily through annexes. Cross references to the *Examination Regulations* are provided in the format '(*ER* x.x)'.

The policy and guidance are provided in the following format:

- 'Must' or 'should' or 'required' indicates that the requirement has to be complied with, with no exceptions, by all relevant bodies or individuals;
- 'Strongly encourage' or 'encourage' indicates that this is agreed to be best practice and is expected, but not required of all relevant bodies or individuals;
- 'Normally' indicates that in most circumstances the requirement should be complied with, but the relevant body or individual may choose to make exceptions on clear and consistent grounds; and
- 'May' or 'permitted' indicates that this is something that is permissible, but not required, and it is left to the discretion of the individual or body responsible to agree their position or practice.

1.2 Key terms

Academic fail	A failing mark (any mark from 0 to below the pass threshold) for a piece of assessed work which has been attempted.
Assessed work	An element of University Examination, this can take many forms including: in-person examinations, online examinations, oral examinations, submitted work, group work, dissertation or thesis, presentations, multiple choice examinations etc.
Assessment adjustments	Adjustments to examinations (see 7.1) and Adjustments to submitted work (see 7.2 and Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements)
Attempt/Attempted	Means: • attended an in-person examination, • accessed an online examination • submitted a file for a submission Phrased as 'appear' or 'submit' in Part 14 of the Examination Regulations
Assessment item	Where an Assessment unit/paper is made up of two or more pieces of assessment these are known as 'items of assessment' eg a presentation and a submission, or an exam, a submission and a piece of group work [ER 14.3(1)]
Assessment unit	See paper
Board of examiners/exam board	See 1.3.1
Candidate	A student entered for a University Examination

College	For matriculated students this is the college, for non-matriculated students any mention of college can be considered to refer to department.
Deferred first attempt	An assessment for which the student was previously entered, but which they did not take because they subsequently suspended (suspension for any reason) OR An assessment for which the student has previously been entered, but where they received a Proctors' excusal from the first sitting
Divisional Board	In relation to University Examinations and assessment the divisional boards have a general responsibility for various aspects of examinations and assessment arising out of their overall responsibility for the maintenance of educational quality and standards within the respective division. They have a specific responsibility for the consideration of the reports of examiners, including external examiners.
Examination	An in-person or online examination with a duration of up to 72 hours.
Examination Regulations	Contains both the 'Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations' and the specific regulations for a course. The latter, complemented by the course handbook and examination conventions form the definitive record of a course.
Exam response	The work produced by the candidate to be assessed for an online examination
Exam script	The work produced by a candidate to be assessed for an in-person examination
First Public Examination (FPE)	The first part of an undergraduate degree course, as defined in the Examination Regulations (Part 3 of the General Regulations for the First and Second Public Examination)
In-person examination	A handwritten, oral, or computer-based, invigilated or otherwise supervised formal examination that takes place in-person at a specific place and time and normally has a specified duration.
Mitigating Circumstances Notice to Examiners (MCE)	A submission made by a candidate directly or via their college to notify examiners about circumstances that may have had a serious impact on a student's performance in assessed work.
Nominating committee	A body with delegated authority from two (or more) supervisory bodies to act in their stead for joint courses.
Online examination	All exams where an exam paper is released and submitted online and taken within a time-limited window (typically three hours but up to 72 hours) with or without access to other resources; whether remotely invigilated closed-book or 'open book'/un-invigilated.
OSCE	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
Paper (or assessment unit)	Highest level unit of assessment, they may comprise one or more items (and types) of assessed work. [ER 14.3(1)]
SAT website	A shorthand term for the information on the administration and operation of assessment available at the Student Assessments staff website

Second Public Examination (SPE)	The second part of an undergraduate degree course, as defined in the Examination Regulations. Also known as the Final Honour School.
Standing orders	Set out the composition and terms of office of boards of examiners and any nominating committee
Submission	Any item of assessed work that is presented for marking to a specific deadline eg essay, project report, dissertation/thesis, fieldwork report. It has a minimum duration of five days between release of any materials by the department, and the deadline
Supervisory body	See 1.3.2 below
Technical fail	Award of a fail (mark of 0) due to non-attendance at an in-person examination, non-access of an online examination, or non-submission of an assessment which is not excused by the Proctors.
University Examination	The totality of assessment required to be successfully completed in order to meet the requirements of the relevant *Examination Regulations* for a given part or totality of a degree or other award ie the First Public Examination (FPE), Second Public Examination (SPE), totality of assessment for other undergraduate qualifications, and totality of assessment for a Postgraduate Taught award.

1.3 Key bodies involved in University Examinations

1.3.1 Boards of examiners

The board of examiners has collective responsibility for the operation and integrity of the University Examination for which they have charge (ER 2). 'Board of examiners' can be abbreviated to 'exam board'.

Every board of examiners has a chair. As well as performing specific duties laid down in regulation and in this policy, the chair is responsible for ensuring that the business of the board of examiners is properly conducted and that the requirements of the regulations and this policy are fulfilled by that board (ER 5).

1.3.2 Supervisory bodies

Boards of examiners operate under the oversight of a 'supervisory body', who has overall responsibility for a subject area or a group of subjects (ER 2). They set the general parameters within which boards of examiners operate: approving standing orders, examination conventions, appointing or nominating examiners etc. They also have overall responsibility for the content of University Examinations within their remit, as specified in the relevant *Examination Regulations* and examination conventions, and for keeping assessment under review, including the extent to which the assessment methods used:

- remain a valid, fair and reliable means of assessing student achievement
- provide appropriate evidence of the academic standards of the course being met by the majority of candidates
- are appropriate to the teaching methods employed and the intended learning outcomes of the course
- are appropriate in terms of volume and timing of assessment taking into account the consideration of student workload.

For subjects where there is a Faculty board, that acts as the supervisory body for all University Examinations for which the Faculty is responsible. For all other subjects the supervisory body is the relevant Divisional board (or equivalent for courses located in the Department for Continuing Education). Supervisory bodies may approve their own local policies, as long as these do not contradict this *Examinations and assessment framework*.

Supervisory bodies may delegate their authority to nominating committees for any University Examination which falls under two supervisory bodies (ER 2.7).

1.3.3 Proctors

The Proctors are required to ensure that examinations are properly conducted and in accordance with the statutes and regulations governing the examinations; and they may make such regulations concerning the conduct of examinations as they consider necessary. The Proctors are concerned with ensuring that regulations are applied justly and equally in all cases. They may consider aspects of policy and draw points of concern or areas for clarification to Education Committee's attention. They may also bring concerns about the conduct of examinations directly to the attention of boards of examiners or supervisory bodies.

Under the *Examination Regulations* (ER 14, ER 16), in relation to individual candidates the Proctors have powers to:

- Accept late submissions (see 8.2)
- Agree extensions to the deadline for submitted work (see 8.2)
- Excuse a candidate who did not take an examination (see 9.8)
- Adjudicate whether a candidate's script is illegible (see 11.5.1).

For late submissions and extensions in respect of students within the remit of the Board of the Department of Continuing Education, the Proctors have delegated their powers to the Board.

All queries regarding University Examinations from colleges or students must be directed through the Proctors. Examiners are not to be approached directly, and any examiner who receives such an approach must redirect it to the Proctors. Candidates may also make a formal academic appeal or complaint to the Proctors if they are dissatisfied with the conduct of a University Examination (see University Academic Appeals Procedure and the University Student Complaints Procedure).

1.3.4 Student Assessments Team

Working under delegated authority from the Registrar (ER 12), the Student Assessments Team can authorise and implement certain examination adjustments for candidates as a result of disability or other need (see 7.1).

2 Boards of examiners

2.1 Role of supervisory bodies in nominations

Supervisory bodies are required to:

- Agree standing orders for each board of examiners (including where responsibilities are divided between subject and classification boards). These must include terms of office for internal, external and chairs of examiners in line with the requirements of the *Examination Regulations* (ER 2.5)
- Appoint chairs of examiners for each board if individuals are qualified as internal examiners, if not nominate for approval of the Proctors (see 2.3)
- Appoint a sufficient number of internal examiners - if the individual is a full member of the Faculty or whose first appointment as an examiner has been previously approved by the Proctors, or if not qualified on these criteria nominate individuals for approval of the Proctors (ER 2.1; ER 3.1/2; see 2.4)
- Nominate external examiners (ER 6; see section 3)
- Keep under review their local processes for the nomination and appointment for all types of examiners and for ensuring their competence. This includes ensuring that nominees have relevant experience and qualifications, ensuring that appropriate support is provided to inexperienced examiners and the avoidance of conflicts of interest in relation to all examiners.

Apart from a small number of specialist examinations, the number of examiners and assessors appointed is for the supervisory body to determine in accordance with their standing orders.

Supervisory bodies may:

- Appoint assessors, as they see fit (see 2.5)
- Appoint external subject assessors, as they see fit (see 3.5).

Supervisory bodies should ensure that boards of examiners are aware of:

- requirements relating to declarations of personal interest
- requirements relating to attendance at examination board meetings (see 4.3)
- the minimum numbers of internal and external examiners who must be present for decisions to be valid as prescribed by the relevant standing orders (see 4.3)
- the requirement to keep appropriate records of meetings and the reasons for any specific decisions in relation to individual candidates (see 4.4).

2.2 Standing orders

Standing orders set the key parameters for the composition of each board of examiners including: number of examiners; terms of office for chairs of examiners, internal and external examiners; relationship with other exam boards (eg subject and classification boards) and composition and constitution of any nominating committee. These should be reviewed annually and provided to the Student Assessments Team by 1 October of the academic year for which the standing order is applicable (eg 1 October 2023 for 2023-24 academic year) (see SAT website).

2.3 Appointment of chair of examiners

A chair of examiners must be appointed or nominated (as necessary) by the supervisory body or nominating committee for each board of examiners within its remit (ER 5). The nomination should be provided to the Student Assessments Team no later than 1 October of the academic year for which the nomination is intended (eg 1 October 2023 for 2023-24 academic year) (see Examiner Appointments and Payments webpage). Any individual who does not meet the requirements for appointment as an internal examiner (see 2.4 below) will be nominated to the Proctors for approval.

Wherever possible, individuals who have been course or programme directors or their equivalent in the year of the examination concerned should not be appointed as the chair of the board of examiners.

Chairs are required to be contactable when the examinations for which they are responsible are taking place. Chairs should also ensure that an appropriate person is available to respond during investigation of examination complaints or academic appeals over the Long Vacation: this may be the chair, or a deputy (notified to the Proctors) if the chair will be away from Oxford for a long period.

2.4 Appointment of examiners

Supervisory bodies or nominating committees should approve the appointment of internal examiners who meet one of the following criteria:

- has faculty membership (or)
- has previously been appointed to act as an internal examiner and/or assessor at the University.

The nomination should be provided to the Student Assessments Team no later than 1 November of the academic year for which the nomination is intended (eg 1 November 2023 for 2023-24 academic year) (ER 3.4) (see SAT website).

The appointment of examiners who do not meet either of the criteria require approval by the Proctors (see SAT website). Examiners must be formally approved prior to acting in any capacity in a University Examination.

In some cases it may be appropriate that qualified clinicians, who are also PGR students, be appointed as examiners. In such cases applications will be judged on their clinical expertise, rather than their student status, and considered by the supervisory body or Proctors as required.

Examiners may be appointed for a term of up to four years, and may serve a maximum of two consecutive terms (ER 4.2). At least a one-year gap should be observed before any further appointment to meet this regulation.

2.5 Appointment of assessors

Assessors are appointed to complement the examiners and to assist in the setting and marking of papers (ER 7). Before a list of assessors is supplied, the chair is encouraged to consult the Senior Nominator for the subject. The nominators should keep a tally of how frequently individuals have acted as examiner and assessor and may recommend that someone should not act in a particular examination. The Chair should ensure that any

inexperienced assessors are paired with more senior assessors or examiners in their first term of appointment.

Assessors who meet the requirement to be an examiner (see 2.4), or who are exclusively to be involved in the assessment of OSCEs, can be appointed by the supervisory body or nominating committee. Individuals who are exclusively involved in the assessment of OSCEs and do not require direct payment for their services, do not need to be formally nominated as assessors.

Any individual not qualified, including **all** postgraduate research students (PGR) must be nominated for approval to the Proctors (see SAT website). Assessors must be formally approved prior to acting in any capacity in a University Examination.

Criteria for the appointment of PGR students as assessors are as follows:

- Only students who have successfully completed transfer of status are eligible for appointment, though exceptions may be made in certain circumstances;
- PGR students should not be responsible for the setting of questions/papers;
- Students should only be appointed to mark postgraduate examinations in exceptional circumstances. In these exceptional cases, they are required to have passed Confirmation of Status;
- Students must have relevant expertise or experience. They should normally have teaching experience of the relevant paper;
- It is preferable that nominees are employed either as Graduate Teaching Assistants / Teaching Associates etc. or as college tutors;
- PGR students should only be nominated with the consent of the paper setter and the convenor of the subject teaching group;
- They should have attended appropriate training or received individual instruction from an experienced examiner;
- They should have access to information about the paper, examination conventions, marking procedures and general expectations of candidates;
- Provision should be made for the supervision and monitoring of their performance;
- Their marking should be subject to additional sampling and consistency checks; and
- Students who would be qualified to be assessors except that they lack teaching experience should be confined to marking questions for which there is a precise model solution and an approved marking scheme.

Appointment of PGR students as assessors is subject to the approval of the Proctors in each case and will only be given for a term at a time.

2.6 Role of secretary

One member of the board of examiners, or an academic administrator, should be identified to act as secretary. Their role is to record the names of those present at meetings, details of how the meeting was conducted (eg via MS Teams), any issues that arose with attendance, and the decisions which were taken. Other roles (eg of communication with candidates) may be delegated to the secretary by the chair.

3 External examiners and external subject assessors

3.1 External examiners – appointment

Individuals are nominated to serve as external examiner in order to act as an external arbiter of standards. All nominations are subject to approval by the Proctors (see SAT website). There must be at least one external examiner appointed to the board of examiners for each University Examination (except the First Public Examination) (ER 6). Courses with large cohorts should have more than one external examiner to cover the full breadth of the examination. Courses combining more than one subject (eg joint schools) should include at least one external examiner for each subject. have more than one external examiner to cover the full breadth of the examination. Courses combining more than one subject (eg joint schools) should include at least one external examiner for each subject.

The term of office for external examiners may be either three or four years, as designated in the standing orders. An appointment can be extended by one year in exceptional circumstances. Reappointment of an individual who has previously served as external examiner may only take place after a period of five years or more since the last appointment.

External examiners must meet the following criteria in order to be appointed:

- have academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience if appropriate
- be familiar with the standard expected of students to achieve the award being assessed
- have relevant experience in the fields covered by the programme of study
- be fluent in English and the relevant language for the programme being assessed, if necessary
- meet any applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

Appointees should also have appropriate sector-level knowledge regarding the maintenance of academic standards and enhancement of quality, experience relating to the design and operation of different assessment types and procedures, an awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula, and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience. All external examiners should be of sufficient standing and credibility within the appropriate discipline so as to be able to command the respect of academic and, where appropriate, professional peers.

In some cases, proposed appointments may not fulfil all the criteria. This may occur, for example, when a proposed appointee has significant professional experience in a relevant field of business or industry, but lacks the formal qualifications anticipated, or in disciplines which are very small and specialist and where the pool of potential external examiners is therefore restricted. In cases such as these, full details should be included on the nomination form in order that the Proctors can determine whether a legitimate case exists for making an exception. In cases where exceptions are approved, supervisory bodies should ensure that appropriate additional training and support for the external examiner are implemented.

To avoid any potential conflict of interest external examiners should not be appointed if they fall into any of the follow categories:

- a member of a governing body or committee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners, or a current employee of the appointing institution or one of its collaborative partners
- anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study
- anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study
- anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study
- anyone significantly involved in recent or current substantive collaborative research activities with a member of staff closely involved in the delivery, management or assessment of the programme(s) or modules in question
- former staff or students of the institution unless a period of five years has elapsed and all students taught by or with the external examiner have completed their programme(s)
- a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution
- the succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner's home department and institution
- the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution.

3.2 External examiners – support

Supervisory bodies should ensure that external examiners have sufficient and appropriate information for their role, ie organisational procedures, practices, and academic regulations, including a written statement on the nature and scope of the external examiner's role, and responsibilities and powers within the examination process. This information from the supervisory body should be passed on by the secretary to the nominating committee **at the time of invitation**. External examiners should be supplied with all the course information needed to carry out their task in time for the commencement of their duties (the course handbook and examination conventions being the minimum requirement). External examiners should be sent the timetable for meetings of the board at the earliest opportunity.

3.3 External examiners – duties

Boards of examiners will work with their external examiner(s) in a variety of ways, but the University expects external examiners to have sufficient evidence to enable them to discharge their responsibility to act as an external arbiter of standards, ie to:

- have opportunity to comment on all summative assessment in draft form (they are not expected to approve individual assessments);
- have access to all assessment material submitted by candidates;
- see a sample of examination material including work at the borderlines of classes or Fail/Pass/Distinction;
- see a sufficient sample of dissertations, extended essays and course work to be able to comment on the marks awarded;
- be in a position to comment on the fairness of any procedures for the reconciliation of marks, moderation, scaling and adjustments arising out of medical or other evidence;

- be provided with sufficient evidence to endorse the outcomes of the assessment processes concerned.

External examiners must not act as a first or second marker. In addition, the University does not expect external examiners routinely to be asked to make decisions on the reconciliation of marks (ie to act as third markers) in cases which can be resolved internally, but rather to be in a position to report on the soundness of the procedures used to reach final agreed marks, in their role as arbiter of standards. Similarly the University does not expect external examiners to make individual decisions relating to medical or other mitigating circumstances affecting performance but it does expect external examiners to be in a position to endorse the overall fairness of the procedures followed. External examiners understandably attach considerable importance to having sufficient time to undertake the tasks in above; the timetabling of arrangements should take account of this.

3.4 External examiners – reports

The University requires external examiners to ~~prepare~~ submit a report ~~addressed to the Vice-Chancellor~~ via the online survey platform (Jisc) at the end of each year of their period of office following the final meeting of the board of examiners. ~~Reports should be submitted on the provided form, c/o Education Policy Support, via external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk, with a copy to the relevant division.~~ External examiners have the right to raise any matter of serious concern with the head of the institution, if necessary by a separate confidential written report.

External examiners are asked to report on the aspects listed below.

In relation to academic standards:

- whether or not the academic standards and the achievements of students are comparable with those in other UK higher education institutions of which the external examiners have experience;
- whether or not the threshold academic standards set for the University's awards appropriately reflect the Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications and applicable subject benchmark statements; and
- whether or not the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the course(s);

In relation to process:

- whether the assessment process was conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations;
- whether sufficient information and evidence was received in a timely manner to enable the role to be fulfilled effectively; and
- whether issues raised in any previous reports were responded to and have been, or are being, properly considered, and where applicable, acted upon.

External examiners are also invited to:

- comment on good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment they have observed;
- comment on opportunities to enhance the quality of learning opportunities provided to students; and

- give an overview of their term of office (when concluded).

Divisions should take steps to ensure that all external examiners receive feedback. The University is responsible for the standard of its awards, and is under no compulsion to implement particular recommendations made by external examiners, but the supervisory body must always be in a position to explain why it did or did not adopt a particular proposal.

The annual reports of external examiners are an important part of the University's quality assurance framework, as set out in the *Procedures for the annual monitoring of courses*.

External examiners' reports must also be made available to students. They will also be retained in local academic committee papers, according to any retention policy for those committee papers.

3.5 External subject assessors

External subject assessors are appointed to provide expertise otherwise unavailable in the University. All appointments are subject to approval by the Proctors (see SAT website), unless they are to be exclusively involved in the assessment of OSCEs, in which case they can be appointed by the supervisory body or nominating committee. They may undertake tasks as required of them by the board, including involvement in the setting and marking of papers. They are not required to submit any formal report.

The term of office for external subject assessors is no more than four years, at which point individuals are able to be reappointed for a further term with no restrictions.

3.6 External practitioner assessors

External practitioner assessors are appointed to provide expertise otherwise unavailable in the University by practitioners in specialist fields. All appointments are subject to approval by the Proctors (see SAT website). They may undertake tasks as required of them by the board, including involvement in the setting and marking of papers. They are not required to submit any formal report.

The term of office for external practitioner assessors is no more than four years, at which point individuals are able to be reappointed for a further term with no restrictions.

In some cases, it may be appropriate that current DPhil students be appointed as external practitioner assessors. In such cases, applications for appointment will be judged on the basis of their specialist expertise, rather than their student status.

4 Meetings of boards of examiners

4.1 Meeting schedule

A timetable of meetings for the board of examiners should be drawn up and provided to all examiners and external examiners as early as possible to facilitate attendance. Education Services should be notified of examination board meeting dates as soon as they are set (see SAT website), normally within 10 days of the examiner nomination deadline (ie 10 November), and by Friday, 8th week of Michaelmas term at the very latest. Education

Services needs to be notified of any changes to the schedule as soon as a change has been made.

4.2 Initial meeting

At the initial meeting, the examiners:

i. should be reminded of the importance of the confidentiality of the examination process;

ii. are made aware of the marking scheme and examination conventions previously approved by the supervisory body (see 6.1)

iii. agree on the form of marks sheets to be used and arrange for their production (see also 11.7 for policy on the use of comment sheets);

iv. check that submission dates, and content of the syllabus to be examined are set out consistently in the *Examination Regulations*, course handbooks, examination conventions and any materials made available on the web. Any serious inconsistencies or problems in these areas should be reported to the Proctors;

v. inform themselves of any changes in syllabuses or course handbooks that override the precedents offered by past examination papers (also see xii below);

vi. identify papers shared with other examinations and establish responsibilities for setting as well as ensuring clarity in examination conventions to be applied;

vii. identify chairs for joint schools, and responsibilities for setting of shared papers;

viii. arrange for the appointment of assessors to complete the range of expertise available to (or reduce the burdens upon) the examiners;

ix. allocate individual duties for setting papers and producing print-ready copy in accordance with dates determined by the examiners;

x. determine whether any papers have special requirements (materials to be provided or permitted; reading time) or shared content with other papers;

xi. consider, if appropriate, the compilation of a list of acceptable calculators;

xii. consider what information should be communicated to candidates and subject tutors ahead of the examination (see section 5 and consider iv and v above);

xiii. consider the most effective ways for the external examiner(s) to carry out their role and provide them with any appropriate course information in addition to the briefing statement approved by the division/faculty and provided on appointment (see section 3 above);

xiv. establish a schedule for the examination process, covering meetings to scrutinise question papers, proof-read print-ready copy, enter marks, examine candidates viva voce, if necessary, determine the date by which the chair will finalise the timetable for publication; and the date of specific key meetings: any pre-meeting to consider mitigating circumstances notices to examiners, the final meeting to adjudicate on the merits of candidates and resit examination boards (where relevant). Examination boards for nine-month PGT courses should also provisionally schedule an additional meeting after the final meeting to deal with any late submissions (eg approved as a result of disability or ill health). This meeting may be held by teleconference if necessary and may confirm the results of more than one candidate.

External examiners may wish to attend this initial meeting of examiners but are not required to do so.

After its initial planning meeting the board may follow up with further meetings to address particular aspects of the preparation of the examination for which it is responsible. At the chair's discretion it may be sufficient for different sub-sets of the examiners to be present on such occasions (without needing to obtain Proctors' permission).

4.3 Meetings at which marks are considered

Examination board meetings at which marks are considered may take three different forms, each of which has different requirements for attendance and different powers to confirm marks and awards. Attendance of all examiners (either in person or remotely), as well as the taking of full minutes, is required at all exam board meetings where marks are considered. For exam board meetings which include individuals attending remotely the remote attendance protocol must be followed.

Exam boards are encouraged to support physical attendance of external examiners on at least an annual basis to support working relationships and allow the external to meet with students in-person as appropriate. This is likely to be particularly beneficial in the first year of an external examiner's appointment.

Meeting type	**Attendance required**	**Powers**
Internal	All internal examiners	Cannot finalise marks or awards. Can consider and approve the release of unconfirmed marks to students by the department accompanied by the wording '*the marks provided are provisional and may be reviewed and amended at the final meeting of the Board of Examiners'*. Unconfirmed marks should not be submitted to ARO and will not appear on Student Self-Service.
Interim	All internal examiners All external examiner(s) (unless a reduced board has been approved in the standing orders see section 4.3.1)	Can finalise marks, including the outcome of PGT qualifying examinations. All final marks must be submitted to ARO. Cannot finalise awards (except any milestone outcome which means a candidate cannot progress on the course having had a re-sit opportunity). In circumstances where final marks cannot be confirmed, eg where the examiners consider that scaling may be required, the board may, exceptionally, release unconfirmed marks, following the guidance above for their release. Interim boards for PGT courses should follow the direction of the Supervisory Body regarding the provision of feedback to students.
Final	All internal examiners All external examiner(s)	Must receive the minutes of all interim boards. Can finalise marks and awards (including re-sit outcomes and any outcome which means that a student cannot progress on the course).

		Finalised marks and results must be submitted to ARO.

4.3.1 Reduced interim boards

Boards with responsibility for multiple University Examinations may meet as a reduced interim board, where a sub-set of University Examinations (normally only one or two) have an item or unit of assessment where release of final marks is desirable but there is no other business for the board to consider, making a meeting of the full board unnecessary.

The need for, timing and membership of a reduced interim board should be recorded in the board's standing orders and approved by the supervisory body. The reduced interim board should include all internal and external examiners that are relevant to the papers in question along with the Chair and must meet the minimum expectations for attendance specified in section 4.3.3)

These meetings must be included in the formal schedule of meetings for the board, and their business reported to the next full interim or final board meeting.

4.3.2 Resit boards

For resits where only a subset of papers are taken, the chair may nominate a subset of the original examiners to assist, provided that the Head of Student Assessments is notified before the start of the examination (who will notify the Proctors). An external examiner must be included in this subset where they formed part of the original exam board.

4.3.3 Problems with attendance

Where **exceptional circumstances** will prevent an examiner or external examiner from attending a meeting, the meeting should be normally be rescheduled or an alternative examiner should be nominated through the normal process (see SAT website). Where, at short notice, it is not possible to reschedule or find an alternate, the examiner or external examiner may participate via confidential correspondence.

If an external examiner cannot attend all efforts should be made to ensure their input is captured. For example, papers may be sent to the external examiner before the meeting for them to provide comments to be fed into the meeting, with the minutes sent to the external examiner after the meeting; or where an external examiner is unable to participate in the full meeting, for example as a result of IT difficulties, they may be sent the minutes of the meeting to provide comments to be recorded alongside the minutes. If the only external examiner is unable to attend an interim exam board, that meeting could go ahead as an internal board releasing unconfirmed marks only, with final marks ratified at a later meeting.

If an examiner or external examiner is, at short notice, unexpectedly unable to engage in a meeting at all (eg due to sick leave) then the board meeting can take place as long as there is at least one internal examiner who may, if necessary, assume the role of the Chair and one external examiner in attendance.

Any changes to attendance MUST be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

4.3.4 Meetings by confidential correspondence

In certain limited circumstances, where the results of an individual or small number of candidates need to be considered outside of the normal timetable for meetings, chairs of examiners may consider results by confidential correspondence. Such circumstances may include:

- the consideration of marks for candidates who have been granted extensions to submission deadlines or deferred first attempts due to exam excusal which fall after the relevant Final board meeting (but within the same academic year)
- for re-sit candidates (if such results cannot be considered by a scheduled exam board within a reasonable time)
- for candidates whose outcome to a complaint or appeal to the Proctors has necessitated that a board reconvene.
- for candidates who have submitted a late mitigating circumstances notice to examiners (MCE)

Education Committee may also give permission for a meeting to take place by confidential correspondence if necessitated through the granting of a dispensation.

Consideration of results by confidential correspondence is a formal process and exam boards must ensure that the following is clearly recorded in the exchange:

- All information necessary to make the decision is provided to examiners, this may require that information previously considered is re-provided. This should be shared in a secure way (see section 11.10)
- The decisions to be made and the potential options available to the exam board are explained
- The formal agreement of all examiners is given to the final decided outcome.

A brief remote meeting may be preferable where there are matters that require discussion, or there are more than one candidate's results to consider.

Care should be taken when using e-mail as a method of communicating between examiners about examination matters. The condensed style of e-mail communication is open to ambiguity and can give rise to errors. Examiners should note that e-mail communications about individual students would be disclosable under ~~the General Data Protection Regulation/Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR/DPA 2018)~~ UK Data Protection legislation.

4.4 Minutes of examiners' meetings

Minutes should be kept of examiners' meetings (and retained in accordance with the retention schedule). These should include names of those present at meetings, details of how the meeting was conducted (eg via MS Teams), any issues that arose with attendance, and the decisions which were taken. Information contained in the minutes about individual candidates should be restricted to a note recording their final marks, and how authorised information about medical or other mitigating circumstances was taken into account (see Annex E: Consideration of mitigating circumstances by examiners).

4.5 Examiners' reports

The University regards the reports made on behalf of all the examiners as an important element of its quality assurance arrangements, demonstrating that they have adhered to University regulations, policy and procedures, and met expectations regarding academic standards.

The examiners must prepare a report on the examination using the approved template (see SAT website) which should be sent to the Secretary of the appropriate divisional or faculty board.

The points on which examiners are particularly asked to comment in their reports are:

- any changes which the examination process might have suggested in relation to the existing content of the course
- any changes which the examination process might have suggested in relation to the existing methods of assessment
- any need to review specific papers or areas of the curriculum indicated by student performance
- the overall standard of performance in the examination, including any trends in results
- any possible changes in examination conventions, procedures or regulations suggested by the examiners' experience of the examination process including in relation to any errors on papers identified after submission for bulk printing.

Examiners must not make comments that might enable individual students to be identified in any part of the report other than Section E of Part II. To assist examiners, a Tableau report is available presenting number of students by classification (please contact sdma@admin.ox.ac.uk).

4.5.1 Sharing reports with students

All parts of the report, with the exception of Section E of Part II (where information on identifiable individuals is recorded), should be shared as a matter of course with joint consultative committees (or equivalent) and made available to students directly, as should the external examiner's report.

The *Policy and Guidance on course information* requires course handbooks to provide a link to where students can access examiners' reports. It also suggests that information in course handbooks on the opportunities offered for feedback on summative assessment might include an explanation of the role of generic feedback on cohort performance through examiners' reports.

In order to enhance the role of examiners' reports in providing feedback to students and in aiding examination preparation, the following is encouraged:

- Communicating clearly to students both the availability of examiners' reports and their role in providing feedback on summative assessment, including an explanation of their role both in providing feedback on past cohort performance and in aiding examination preparation for future cohorts
- Reminding students of the availability of examiners' reports at appropriate times of the year, for example when students are revising for examinations
- Using examiners' reports where appropriate in revision/examination preparation lectures/classes/tutorials. This might include encouraging students to read the relevant examiners' reports in conjunction with past examination papers.

Supervisory bodies should note that they are permitted to publish an **interim examiners' report for students**, including Section D of Part II (comments on papers and individual questions), as soon as this material is available, and before the final report can be published. This interim report could be published at the same time or very soon after the release of results to students.

Supervisory bodies are strongly encouraged to consider the publication of such an interim report following the First Public Examination, as this may aid students in understanding their results and in preparing for the rest of their course, or for resit examinations. Students should be informed as soon as any interim report is available.

4.5.2 Retention of reports

Section E of Part II should be retained for **one year** following the final exam board meeting. The remainder of the report will be retained in local committee papers according to any retention policy for those committee papers.

4.5.3 Review of examiners' reports

Detailed information on supervisory bodies' review of examiners' reports and examination procedures is available in the *Procedures for the annual monitoring of courses*.

5 Information for and communication with candidates prior to assessment

Supervisory bodies should ensure that full and appropriate information is made available in good time for all students and academic staff involved in the assessment process and should follow the requirements set out in section 6.1 and in *Annex A: Examination conventions* in the preparation of examination conventions.

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they enter themselves for the correct assessments and should check their Student Self Service once entries are complete, and their personal timetable as soon as they receive it, so that any errors can be resolved as soon as possible.

If a candidate wishes to change their options they may be able to make a change of options request through their college who in turn will submit any requests to the Academic Records Office (ARO). Changes will not always be possible, so candidates are urged to inform their college of any need to change as early as possible, and before the relevant assessment dates have passed, as below. Requests submitted to the ARO less than five working days before the relevant assessment deadlines will not be considered.

If the date or deadline of the '**original'** assessment has already passed, or is in less than five working days, then it will **not** be possible to change options. [ER 9.8(2).]

The candidate will receive a fail mark of zero if they:

- attended the 'original' assessment but did not write anything or otherwise participate in the assessment (academic fail)
- did not attend the 'original' assessment (technical fail)
- did not submit anything by the 'original' submission deadline or, if they had an approved extended deadline, did not submit anything by their extended submission deadline (technical fail).

If the date or deadline of the proposed **new** assessment has already passed, or is in less than five working days, then it will **not** be possible to change options. If the candidate attempted the 'original' assessment then their written work or other participation will be marked by the examiners under the requirements for the option for which they were formally entered.

If the dates or deadlines of **both** the 'original' assessment and the proposed new assessment are at least five working days away, then it **may** be possible to make a late change of options but this is **not** guaranteed.

In the case of multi-component assessments it is the assessment deadline of the earliest component that should be considered for any change requests.

Examiners should not mark work for assessments for which the student has not formally been entered.

Where it is not possible for the candidate to make a change of options, and the candidate attempted the original assessment, the only mitigation available to the candidate is to submit an MCE (Annex E) for the exam board to consider. If the board determines that the candidate must re-sit any failed assessment, the next opportunity to do so may not be until the following academic year. If the student wishes to sit the 'new' paper for the re-sit, this requires an application from the student's college to Education Committee.

There should be no direct communication between those setting assessment and individual candidates.

Chairs and examiners must not receive or accept gifts from candidates.

Any circulars to candidates concerning the fine detail of arrangements must be clear, accurate and timely. Should there be any discrepancy between the *Examination Regulations* and any other published course material, the *Examination Regulations* take precedence. The wording of any circular should be composed with great care as candidates may be entitled to rely on it, any discrepancy between information provided in advance and the process actually followed could give rise to a complaint or academic appeal.

Candidates should be provided with a copy (normally via email) of any communications from the chair directed to all candidates, they should also be accessible online via the department VLE or website alongside course handbooks and examination conventions.

Such circulars should include or link to examination conventions and the dates reserved for *viva voce* examinations (as appropriate). There may be a standard set of instructions to candidates, for example, in the course handbook, but a circular may be needed to emphasise additional information, for example, changes to the syllabus or rubric.

Equivalent information must be provided in advance of any resit assessment.

Departments are strongly encouraged to include the following information as standard:

- Information on the use of script booklets for rough working and the restrictions on which items they may bring with them into the examination room for in-person examinations
- Information on how to practise for an online examination including use of Inspera and scanning and converting handwritten work to pdf where applicable
- Detailed instructions as to how and where work is to be submitted (ensuring this matches the information in the *Examination Regulations* or course handbook) (see section 8 below), including the consequences for submitting work late or non-submission (referencing the scale of late penalties in the examination conventions)

- Referring candidates to the assessment material in the *Student Handbook* and on the Oxford Students Website including the material on plagiarism and to the regulations regarding the use of calculators and computers in examinations (ER 10)
- The requirement to take University Cards to in-person examination as a means of identification
- Referring candidates to the guidance on open-book and in-person examinations on the Oxford Students Website and any other local guidance for these formats
- Setting clear expectations in relation to responses for online open-book examinations (if used) in relation to the re-use of formative assessed work or pre-prepared material, group work and the expected approach to referencing sources.

6 Preparing a University Examination

6.1 Examination conventions

Examination conventions are the University's formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses. They are a student-facing document and should be written in a clear and comprehensible manner. The same version of the examination conventions should be used by examiners, with more detailed local operational guidance appended if necessary. Examination conventions should be prepared in accordance with *Annex A: Examination conventions*. The examination conventions should be published on departmental/faculty websites or on the VLE, alongside or as part of the relevant course handbook(s)

Examination conventions must be published to prospective candidates not less than one whole term before the first element of the University Examination takes place or, where assessment takes place in the first term of a course, at the beginning of that term (ER 8).

6.1.1 Responsibility of supervisory bodies

Supervisory bodies are responsible for approving examination conventions (ER 8) and ensuring they have been prepared in accordance with Annex A: Examination conventions.

6.1.2 Responsibility of examiners

At their first meeting, the examiners should satisfy themselves, eg in the light of comments from the previous year's board, that their examination conventions are comprehensive and unambiguous. If this is not the case, they may suggest amendments and formalise interpretations: any such modifications must be approved by the supervisory body responsible for the course and the examination, subject to the right of a board of examiners to make minor adjustments to the examination conventions during any particular University Examination if required by exceptional circumstances, without reference to the supervisory body.

If the examiners find it necessary to make major and immediate changes to examination conventions *after approval by the supervisory body*, the chair should seek the approval of the supervisory body **and** the Proctors. The Proctors will need to be satisfied that such changes will not have an adverse or discriminatory effect on candidates. In considering any major changes, examiners should be aware of policy on vested interests, as detailed in *Policy and Guidance on new courses and major changes to courses*.

No changes should be made to examination conventions *after marks are known* (except when a particular run of marks reveals unsuspected ambiguities or omissions that have to be resolved). If, at the end of the examination process, the examiners wish to propose major changes to the examination conventions they will pass on to their successors, they should include the proposals in their examiners' report for consideration by the supervisory body.

6.2 Setting of assessed work

Examiners are obliged to set assessed work in accordance with the prevailing regulations and examination conventions for the course, and in line with any current course handbook. Precedent represented by past papers should also be taken into account.

When setting assessed work examiners should take the following into account:

- any substantial changes in the rubric or format of a question paper should be notified to candidates and tutors at an early date
- straightforward English should be used, ensuring clear and unambiguous expression
- material for examination papers should not be taken from the Internet. In the case of foreign language sources this is particularly important because of the transcription problems that can arise
- where a piece of assessed work, particularly an examination, is to be shared with another University Examination, or where an examination has shared content with another paper, this information should be notified to the Student Assessments Team (exams@admin.ox.ac.uk) at an early stage in order to ensure that the timetable takes this into account and examination integrity is maintained.

The setting of assessed work, particularly for examinations, should be completed according to a systematic schedule overseen by the chair involving setting, scrutiny and proof-reading. Further guidance on the production of question papers for in-person examinations is available from the SAT website.

Question papers should be subject to careful scrutiny by the whole board of examiners. In particular, a draft paper must be scrutinised by at least one established member of staff who is not the paper setter. The external examiner should have the opportunity to comment on draft examination papers or the equivalent such as set essay titles for submitted work, group work specifications etc.

When the content of all in-person examination papers has been agreed, final versions should be prepared as print-ready copy under secure conditions. Full details are given in the SAT website.

7 Arrangements for individual candidates

7.1 Adjustments to examinations

Candidates apply through their college to the Student Assessments Team (working under delegated authority from the Registrar) to request approval for any adjustments to examinations as a result of a disability or other need (eg use of a computer, papers to be taken in college or with extra time) (ER 12). In most circumstances, a Student Support Plan (SSP) or medical certificate will be required. Details of the process and relevant deadlines are available in the SAT website.

Chairs will be notified of adjustments and should make particular note of cases when examinations will be sat at different times from those timetabled for the main cohort, as this may affect planning for marking.

When, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate has been allowed to sit an in-person examination in their college, the college is required to provide a suitable room and an invigilator (ER 15). See the SAT website for guidance for colleges and examiners.

Detailed policy and guidance in relation to examination adjustments are provided in *Annex I: Examination adjustments.*

7.1.1 For in-person examinations

Candidates entitled to extra ~~writing and/or rest~~ time will have allowances made in accordance with their approved exam adjustments. Candidates whose adjustments lead to an exam duration of over four hours and 30 mins will have their exam duration extended to eight hours. Where the exam is scheduled for an afternoon sitting the college should apply for the candidate to start their exam earlier as a further exam adjustment.

7.1.2 For open-book online examinations

Candidates entitled to extra ~~writing and/or rest~~ time will have the allowances made accordance with their approved exam adjustments for online open-book exams up to and including total exam durations of four hours and 30 mins. Candidates whose adjustments lead to an exam duration of over four hours and 30 mins will have their exam duration extended to eight hours. Where the exam is scheduled for an afternoon sitting the college should apply for the candidate to start their exam earlier as a further exam adjustment.

7.1.3 For closed book remotely invigilated exams (individual)

For candidates sitting a closed book remotely invigilated exam under the provisions of section 9.4.1 the normal personalised adjustments as for in-person exams will apply.

7.1.4 For whole cohort closed book remotely invigilated exams (whole cohort)

For candidates entitled to extra ~~writing and/or rest~~ time sitting a closed-book remotely invigilated exam as part of whole cohort arrangements under section 0, the following allowances apply:

- An additional 30 mins for all candidates entitled to up to 25% extra ~~writing and/or rest~~ time for exam durations up to two hours
- An additional hour for all candidates entitled to up to 25% extra ~~writing and/or rest~~ time for exam durations over two hours
- Normal personalised adjustments for all candidates entitled to more than 25% extra ~~writing and/or rest~~ time.

7.2 Major adjustments for disability not covered by 7.1

Any adjustments needed for an individual candidate to the schedule of examinations that cannot be accommodated within the normal exam timetable are considered a major adjustment, and are normally considered on the grounds of disability or complex mitigating circumstances. The adjustments that could be applied for include:

- to sit partial papers, eg answering three questions instead of the required four
- additional time in which to sit an open-book exam

- adjusted submission deadlines
- an alternative mode of assessment.

Full guidance is given in *Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements.*

7.3 Taking a University Examination under a previous syllabus (old regulations)

Candidates are entitled to sit their examination according to the regulations/syllabus in force at the time they were taught within the following time limits:

- For FHS candidates, within six terms of the original assessment date
- For FPE candidates, within three terms of the original assessment date
- For taught postgraduate students, as laid out in the Regulations Concerning the Status of Graduate Taught Students.

Outside of these time limits, students will usually be examined under current regulations.

Notification that a student needs to be examined according to a previous set of regulations or syllabus within these limits should be made to Education Policy Support. Requests to be examined under a previous syllabus which are outside these limits may be made by applying to Education Committee via Education Policy Support for a dispensation from the regulations.

7.4 Withdrawal from a University Examination

A candidate may withdraw from any University Examination before any summative assessment is attempted or up to the point when the last assessment element is attempted or submitted (ie the date of the last submission, or prior to the last examination, whichever is the latest) (ER 14). Candidates are not permitted to withdraw after all parts of the examination have been attempted. Withdrawal from a University Examination voids any marks for already completed assessed work, unless a dispensation is approved for it to count.

7.5 Suspension of a University Examination

If a candidate suspends their studies after the start of the examination process, the examination process for that University Examination is also suspended (ER 14).

For students who suspend during a vacation or by the start of term, the regulations suspend the examination process for the duration of the suspension period. For students who suspend mid-term, the examination process may be suspended from the start of the term in which they suspend until the start of the term in which they return. Assessments cannot be submitted nor written papers sat when the examination process is suspended. Any assessment submitted or written papers sat during a period for which a candidate is later considered suspended will be considered void unless a dispensation is requested from Education Committee via Education Policy Support.

Where students are permitted to suspend for periods other than terms, ie months, the suspension of the examination would be concurrent with that period.

Students may not suspend the University Examination after the last normal course deadline or examination (whichever is later), where that deadline or examination falls at the end of the course, even if they have been granted an extension for submitted work or exam excusal.

No University Examination can be suspended after results have been released.

7.5.1 Impact of suspension on completed assessment

Candidates who suspend their studies should have all assessments which were completed before the start of the suspension 'carried forward' to their return to studies within the following limits (ER 14):

- for candidates suspending during Full Term, the candidate will be withdrawn from all assessments that are due to be submitted or sat from Monday of week 1 of that Full Term until Friday of week 0 of the Full Term in which the candidate resumes their studies;
- for candidates suspending outside Full Term, the candidate will be withdrawn from all assessments that are due to be submitted or sat during the approved suspension period;
- where candidates are permitted to suspend for periods other than terms, candidates will be withdrawn from all assessments that are due to be submitted or sat during the approved suspension period.

Candidates who repeat a term or terms of study are expected to repeat any assessment that is due in the repeated term(s) of study.

The 'carrying forward' of assessment is not an automated process and requires that a form is sent to the Academic Records Office. The forms and further information on the process are available from the Academic Support website.

Requests to 'carry forward' work outside the above limits and requests *not* to repeat assessment in a repeated term may be made by applying to Education Committee via Education Policy Support for a dispensation from the regulations. Such requests will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

8 Submitted work

8.1 Date, time and format of submission

The published regulations and/or course handbook should stipulate when, where and in what format work must be submitted. It is strongly encouraged that deadlines for submitted work should always be:

- During normal UK working hours (to allow candidates to notify of problems with electronic submission)
- On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (to avoid Bank Holidays and disproportionate late penalties due to late submission after a Friday deadline)
- At noon (to allow for late submission on the day for students experiencing difficulties submitting thereby minimising late penalties)

All summative assessments which are submissions must be submitted via a University approved online assessment platform unless permission has been given for hardcopy submission for a specific assessment unit (ER 11).

If there is a failure of the approved online assessment platform an alternative mechanism for submission shall be agreed between the relevant department and the Student Assessments Team.

8.2 Extensions and late submission

For provisions for late upload of open-book examinations, see section 9 below.

Part 14 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations within the Examination Regulations makes provisions for candidates to be able to seek from the Proctors:

- extensions to deadlines for submitted work
- excusal for work that has been submitted after the deadline
- excusal for being unable to attend an examination (see section 9 below)

The regulations allow candidates to make applications under Part 14 for an extended deadline or for a late submission to be excused due to *'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable'*. All requests are considered on a case-by-case basis and applications will be considered on the basis of the evidence provided to support the additional time sought, taking into account the study time lost. Candidates may self-certify for extensions and late submission in limited circumstances. Detailed guidance is provided in *Annex J: Grounds and supporting evidence for applications under Part 14.*

Neither college nor candidate is permitted to approach the examiners directly to request an extension of time and candidates must **not** be offered extensions informally by tutors, supervisors, or departmental staff.

The provisions under Part 14 are for acute circumstances (including acute flare ups of chronic conditions). Candidates with disabilities, chronic ill health or complex personal circumstances may require more substantial adjustments to teaching and assessment than can be accommodated through Part 14. Requests for adjustments that fall outside the remit of Part 14 should be submitted to Education Committee for consideration (edcapplications@admin.ox.ac.uk) – further details can be found in *Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements*.

Candidates may apply directly to the Proctors on the basis of self-certification using Student Self Service if it is the first extension request for an assessment, otherwise applications must be submitted via their college or department.

The Department of Continuing Education (OUDCE) has delegated permission from the Proctors to consider extension and late submission requests under Part 14. Students in OUDCE must submit their requests via an online form – further details are available from the Department website.

Departments have delegated permission from the Proctors to consider excusal and extension requests under Part 14 where there are a large number of the same type of assessment sub-elements under a single assessment code ie practical classes. Self-certified requests can be made for extensions, but not excusals, with a maximum of two permitted per academic year which do not count towards the self-certification requests detailed in 8.2.2.

8.2.1 Timeframe for applications

Candidates may request an extension up to 4 weeks before and up to 14 'calendar' days after the submission deadline (ie including non-working days, with the 14 days running from the time of the deadline; so deadline of 12 noon 1 September, application must be received before 12 noon 15 September). Unless on the basis of self-certification when they can only be made up to 2 weeks before and up to 24 hours after the deadline. Self-certification cannot otherwise be used in applications requesting waiver of a late submission penalty beyond 24 hours.

Extensions cannot be granted where the candidate has submitted the assessment *and* the normal submission deadline has passed.

Candidates may request that any late penalties applied to work submitted after the deadline be excused up to 14 days after the submission deadline. The work must have already been submitted at the time the request is made, otherwise an extension should be requested instead.

If an extension request is received later than 14 days after the submission deadline, the Proctors cannot consider the request. An application can be made to Education Committee requesting dispensation from the requirement to make the application within 14 days of the deadline, but evidence must be provided as to why it was not possible for the candidate to make the request within 14 days. Late applications will only be considered where the reason for the delay is entirely outside of the candidate's control (eg delay in passing on the application). If a dispensation is granted, the original request for an extension will then be considered as a separate matter by Education Committee.

Work submitted beyond 14 calendar days after the original deadline (or any previously agreed extension) is considered a non-submission and results in a technical fail (see section 8.2.6).

8.2.2 Length of extensions and number of applications

The maximum total length of extensions for the same piece of work is 12 weeks. This may be a result of single or multiple applications. Unless on the basis of self-certification when the request may only be up to a maximum of seven days, further applications up to the maximum of 12 weeks must be supported by independent evidence.

Further applications may be made for the same piece of work if an extension has previously been granted provided that the candidate's circumstances have not resolved and additional time is required. Additional evidence will be required even if the underlying grounds are the same.

If an extension request has been approved by the Proctors on the basis of independent supporting evidence, but the candidate then experiences acute illness (which would normally fall under the criteria for applying for a self-certification extension), they may apply for an extension at the end of the original extension. The extension will count as a self-certification extension, but it must be supported by a brief statement from the candidate to confirm the reason for the extension, and the application must be submitted via the college (or department for candidates who do not have a college). The self-certification extension will only be granted if:

- it is up to a maximum of seven calendar days;
- the candidate has not already had a self-certification extension for the same assignment;

- the extension request meets all other requirements for a self-certification extension; and
- the grant does not take the total length of extensions for the same assignment over 12 weeks.
- the assessment has not already been submitted

Self-certified extensions are granted under the proviso that the work has not already been submitted. If the work has already been submitted the self-cert extension will be void and the candidate is not be permitted to withdraw and resubmit their work unless the deadline for submission has not yet passed or there is identification by the examiners that the file is unreadable.

A student is limited to two applications on the basis of self-certification per academic year (normally this will be from the Sunday of 1st week Michaelmas term to the last day of Trinity term (including the Long Vacation); for courses with non-standard academic years the limit will apply to their locally defined academic year. An application may cover more than one submission if deadlines fall within the same calendar week (Monday to Sunday) – with an extension of seven days applied to each deadline in that working week.

If an extension request is rejected by the Proctors, candidates cannot submit further evidence in a new application asking for the same period of extension.

If as a result of an extension the candidate has bunched deadlines this is not a valid ground for an extension for other submissions. Students are expected to manage their workload and take into account other assessment when applying for extensions.

If the extension being requested is greater than 12 weeks or will take the total length of extension beyond 12 weeks, the application cannot be considered by the Proctors and will be referred back to the college or department to consider what other action may be appropriate. This could include suspension, withdrawal, or an application to Education Committee for a major adjustment for disability. Advice can be sought from Education Policy Support on the options available.

8.2.3 Evidence requirements

For information on the evidence requirements for applications under Part 14, including provisions for self-certification, see *Annex J: Grounds and supporting evidence for applications under Part 14.* Applications should include the time and date the candidate made the request. If the work has already been submitted before a request has been made, the evidence-based extension will be void and the candidate is not be permitted to withdraw and resubmit their work unless the deadline for submission has not yet passed or there is identification by the examiners that the file is unreadable.

8.2.4 Group submissions

For group submissions, if an extension or late submission application is received on behalf of one member of the group, the outcome will be applied to all members. This means that if an extension is not granted, the late penalty will apply to all members of the group. Where the completion of the assignment has been affected by ill health or complex personal circumstances of a single member, the mitigating circumstances process should be followed.

8.2.5 Appeals

If a candidate is not satisfied with a Proctor's decision (including a decision made by OUDCE under delegated authority), and has grounds to do so, they may submit an appeal to Education Committee.

8.2.6 Marking of work submitted late and late penalties

Examiners may mark work submitted up to 14 calendar days late after the submission deadline and release the mark. The examiners should impose an academic penalty according to the scale published in their examination conventions (see *Annex A: Examination conventions*), unless the Proctors have notified the chair that the late submission has been excused.

Work submitted 14 or more calendar days after the deadline is considered a non-submission (ie including non-working days, with the 14 days running from the time of the deadline; eg deadline of 12 noon 1 September, work submitted from 12 noon onwards 15 September should not be marked). The examiners should not mark work submitted 14 or more calendar days late after the deadline, unless instructions have been received from the Proctors that the candidate has made a successful application for an extension, but should be recorded as a non-submission or 'technical fail'.

For information on the consequences of non-submission see section 11.9.1.

8.3 Replacing an incorrect file

Candidates are responsible for ensuring that they submit the correct file/document and to the correct location. More information is available for administrators as part of the Academic Support website.

8.3.1 Before the deadline

Candidates who have submitted incomplete work or the incorrect file may replace their submitted file on one occasion before the submission deadline by providing the file to their exam administrator. No permission is required.

Where a student submits work whilst they are waiting on the outcome of an extension application to the Proctors, or a dispensation for an adjusted deadline from Education Committee, they may subsequently replace that if the extension or adjusted deadline is granted, as a 'before the deadline' replacement, if the new deadline is a date that has not yet passed.

8.3.2 After the deadline

Candidates are able to review their submission in the system, if using Inspera, to check for substantive errors in what they have submitted (eg wrong file, earlier draft, missing bibliography etc).

Candidates who identify substantive errors and wish to replace their work may submit a replacement file to the exam administrator up to 30 mins (ie 29mins 59 secs) after the deadline without attracting a late penalty. For students whose submission was made after the deadline they may replace their work up to 30 mins ie 29mins 59 secs) after the time of their actual submission without any additional late penalties applying, late penalties applicable to the original submission will still apply. This process should not be used to correct incidental errors eg typos, a missing reference, formatting etc.

There is no mechanism to replace an incorrect file from 30 mins onwards. The work submitted will be marked.

8.3.3 After the deadline – identification of an unreadable file

In cases where a corrupt, illegible (including blurred) or otherwise unreadable file is discovered during the marking process the exam administrator should be notified. The exam administrator should send the problematic file to the Proctors and request permission for the candidate to provide a replacement file. If the Proctors grant permission for a replacement file to be provided, they will notify the exam administrator. The exam administrator should notify the candidate and request the replacement file. The candidate must supply the replacement file within seven calendar days of the request. The exam administrator will send the replacement file to the Proctors who will then decide whether to grant permission for the department to mark the replacement rather than the original file. Permission will only be granted if the candidate can demonstrate that the file they wish to submit in place of the unreadable file has not been modified since the original submission time (either the deadline if submitted before the deadline, or the time of late submission if submitted late, with late penalties to be applied unless waived see section 8.2).

8.3.4 Incorrect location

It is a candidate's responsibility to ensure that they know the correct place to submit their work, whether that be electronically or in hard copy. If a candidate submits to the incorrect location, the recipient is encouraged to notify the candidate as soon as possible but the responsibility remains with the candidate to forward the submission to the correct location.

If there is legitimate confusion over submission location due to an error (eg one location stated in the Examination Regulations and another in the course handbook), this should be dealt with as a dispensation from the regulations granted by Education Committee.

8.4 Other contraventions of regulations

8.4.1 Over length submissions

Examiners may impose an academic penalty where a submission exceeds the length prescribed in the course regulations (ER 16.6) as specified in their examination conventions.

8.4.2 Unauthorised change of title or subject

Where a candidate submits a thesis or other exercise whose title or subject matter differs from that which was approved by the supervisory body concerned, the examiners may similarly reduce the mark by up to one class (or its equivalent) as specified in their examination conventions (ER 16.6).

8.4.3 Poor academic practice and plagiarism

Examiners may apply penalties for poor academic practice in accordance with the examination conventions. For guidance on the types of cases to be dealt with as poor academic practice and the role of examiners and the Proctors in investigating and considering cases of alleged plagiarism see *Annex C: Procedure for the investigation of academic misconduct* ~~*plagiarism*~~.

Academic penalties for poor academic practice can only be imposed by the whole board of examiners. If examiners or assessors have concerns about an assessment, they should

raise them with the Chair to deal with under Annex C: Procedure for the investigation of academic misconduct. Such concerns should not be followed up in a viva.

If a Chair makes a referral to the Proctors for suspected plagiarism **all** relevant materials (as outlined in paragraph 20 of Annex C: Procedure for the investigation of academic misconduct) will need to be submitted for the Proctors' initial consideration. If any relevant materials are missing from the submission the Proctors will return the referral to the chair and no further action will be taken until a complete submission is made.

9 Examinations

N.B. Guidance for examiners and invigilators on the operation of examinations is provided on the SAT website. Guidance for candidates is provided on the Oxford Students website.

9.1 Exam paper queries and errors (in-person and online exams)

If a student has a query or believes they have found an error in their exam paper (in either online or in-person examinations) they should make a note of this at the top of the relevant answer and clearly state the assumptions they have used in answering the question. Exam boards will take into account any identified errors through the mitigating circumstances process given in *Annex E: Consideration of mitigating circumstances by examiners.*

[N.B. Examiners are no longer required to attend for the first 30 minutes of any in-person examinations]

9.2 In-person examinations

An in-person examination may be either a handwritten, oral, or computer-based, invigilated or otherwise supervised formal examination that takes place in-person at a specific place and time and normally has a specified duration.

9.2.1 Mode of completion for in-person written exams

All in-person written exams will have a default mode of completion, either:

Exam - In Person, Handwritten (H)
Exam - In Person, Computer-Based (P)

The default mode of completion for each examination paper will be set by the exam board, subject to any necessary agreement of the SAT, and is denoted in the assessment code by the letter in brackets above.

9.2.2 Invigilation of in-person exams

Where in-person examinations take place, trained invigilators must be present in all examination rooms. Invigilation is arranged on the basis of one invigilator to every 50 candidates (ER 15.3).

The Proctors, or Pro-Proctors, may attend at any point in an examination to satisfy themselves that it is properly conducted.

9.3 Online examinations

Online examinations refer to exams where an exam paper is released and submitted online and taken within a time-limited window (typically three hours but up to 72 hours) with or

without access to other resources; whether remotely invigilated closed-book or 'open book'/un-invigilated.

9.3.1 Mode of completion for online examinations

All online exams will have a default mode of completion, either:

- Exam - Online Typed Only (B)
- Exam - Online Typed with supplementary uploads (D)
- Exam - Online Uploads Only (E)

- ~~Typed answers~~
- ~~Typed answers with supplementary uploads~~
- ~~Uploaded answers only~~

The default mode of completion for each online examination paper will be set by the exam board and is denoted in the assessment code by the letter in brackets above. Exams designated as 'Online Typed with supplementary uploads' will be partly typed with handwritten elements eg mathematical notation, diagrams, graphs etc. Exams with 'Online Typed with supplementary uploads' or 'Online Uploads Only' may involve a single upload or multiple uploaded elements.

9.3.2 Exam duration

For all online exams that have a 'Online Typed with supplementary uploads' or an 'Online Uploads Only' mode of completion, exam boards must include a time allowance for scanning and uploading answers within the main exam duration.

The following is provided as guidance to exam boards:

Mode of completion	Type of upload	Suggested time to build into exam duration
Online Typed with supplementary uploads	Single scanned pdf to several 1-2 page pdfs	20 minutes
Online Typed with supplementary uploads	Several multi-page scans and pdf uploads	30 minutes
Online Typed with supplementary uploads	Multiple multi-page scans and pdf uploads	40 minutes
Online Uploads Only	Several multi-page scans and pdf uploads or a single scan and pdf upload for the whole examination	30 minutes
Online Uploads Only	Multiple multi-page scans and pdf uploads	40 minutes

An upload time allowance should not routinely be added to long duration (8 hours or more) exams.

9.3.3 Word limits for online examinations

For all online exams that have a 'Online Typed Only' or 'Online Typed with supplementary uploads' mode of completion that include substantial prose answers (eg essays but not short answer questions), exam boards are required to set word limits for individual questions/essays. Word limits should include:

- a minimum length – work shorter than this is unlikely to fully answer the question

- a maximum length – text beyond this length will be disregarded by the examiner

Exam boards can also choose to include a typical length. The maximum length should be reasonably generous in relation to the typical length expected (eg 1200-2000 words for a typical essay length of 1500 words). No specific mark deduction penalties should be applied to under or over-length work, noting that existing provisions in examination conventions apply to submissions only.

Examiners should only seek to confirm word counts where a common-sense assessment indicates that a response is likely to be over the maximum length. Word limits should be recorded in the rubric section of the examination conventions, see *Annex A: Examination conventions.*

9.3.4 Start time

Candidates are expected to start their online exam promptly at the published start time. Candidates who are prevented from starting their exam on time will not lose exam duration if they start within 30 minutes of the scheduled time, candidates starting more than 30 minutes late will not be penalised, but will have a proportionately reduced exam duration.

9.3.5 Late submission and marking – Online Typed Only

Candidates undertaking online exams with a 'Online Typed Only' mode of completion have their exam responses automatically captured by the system and therefore are not able to submit late or provide replacement responses. Candidates choosing to type outside of Inspera do so at their own risk. Only work captured within Inspera at the end of the exam duration will be marked.

9.3.6 Late submission and marking – Online Typed with supplementary uploads and Online Uploads Only

This section applies to all candidates taking a 'Online Typed with supplementary uploads' or 'Online Uploads Only' mode of completion online examination, including those who handwrite an online exam as an exam adjustment.

Candidates should upload their exam response within the time allowed for their online examination (which includes an allowance for candidates to scan and upload their answers, see 9.5.1). Any part of an exam response submitted after the exam duration will attract no marks (if the whole response is late it will attract a mark of 0) unless a successful application to have it accepted is made. The penalty applies to the paper as a whole even if the examination is only one part of the assessment of that paper.

If submitting a late exam response, a candidate should make an application using the online help form and attach their response to the form. The application will be considered by Student Assessments Team under delegated authority from the Proctors.

Applications that warrant further scrutiny will be referred to the Proctors for consideration, the work held back from marking, and the student notified that they must provide further information and supporting evidence within 48 hours of receiving the notification or their application will be rejected and any part of their exam response submitted after the end of the exam duration considered as late.

Any applications made more than 30 minutes after the end of the exam duration are likely to be rejected unless the candidate can demonstrate with independent evidence that

circumstances entirely outside of their control (eg acute ill health, failure of a University IT system, power failure etc prevented them from uploading within their exam duration. Applications made more than 24 hours after the end of the exam duration will not be accepted on any grounds. For detailed guidance see *Annex J: Grounds and supporting evidence for applications under Part 14.*

If accepted, the late work will be released for marking along with the on-time work. If rejected only the on-time work (if any) will be released for marking. See also table in section 9.5.8.

9.3.7 Replacing an incorrect exam response

Candidates undertaking 'Online Typed with supplementary uploads' or 'Online Uploads Only' exams are able to review their exam response after upload to check for substantive errors in what they have submitted (eg wrong file, missing pages, blurred scans).

Candidates who identify substantive errors and wish to replace their work may submit a replacement within 30 mins of the end of their exam duration. This process should not be used to correct incidental errors eg typos, formatting etc.

There is no mechanism to replace an incorrect or incomplete file from 30 mins onwards. The work uploaded will be marked.

Incomplete answers (that is with elements missing) will be marked as normal in the same way as if a student failed to complete all elements for an in-person exam. See also table in section 9.5.8.

9.3.8 Replacing an unreadable file – identification by examiners

In cases where a corrupt, illegible (including blurred) or otherwise unreadable file is discovered during the marking process the Proctors can grant permission for the candidate to provide a replacement. The candidate will have to provide their replacement file to the exam administrator within 7 calendar days of being notified of the error. Once received the department can apply to the Proctors to be able to mark the replacement file rather than the original. This will only be approved if the candidate can demonstrate that the file they wish to submit in place of the unreadable file has not been modified since the end of the exam duration. See also table in section 9.5.8.

9.3.9 Summary table for late vs replacement exam responses

No. of uploads required	**Mode of completion**	**What happened?**	**An exam response submitted after the end of the exam duration is therefore:**	**If <u>not</u> accepted what is marked?**
Single upload contains all answers	Online Uploads Only	Nothing submitted in exam duration	Late	Nothing to mark
		Something submitted in exam duration but incomplete or in error eg submitted wrong file, missing pages etc.	Replacement	Original response marked

Multiple uploads	Online Uploads Only AND Online Typed with supplementary uploads	Nothing submitted/typed in exam duration	Late	Nothing to mark
		Some answers submitted/typed in exam duration, some missing; wanting to submit the missing parts.	Partial late	In time elements only
		All answers submitted in exam duration, one or more missing a page/diagram or something is incorrect eg same answer submitted twice etc.	Replacement	Original response marked

9.3.10 Poor academic practice and plagiarism (online examinations)

Exam boards should have an agreed approach, to be followed by all markers, for the consideration of Turnitin reports provided for online exams. They should be considered separately from the marking process.

Where poor academic practice or plagiarism is suspected, either identified through the marking process or as part of consideration of Turnitin reports the process outlined in section 8.4.3 and Annex C: Procedure for the investigation of academic misconduct should be followed. Referrals should, however, take into account the different expectations for standards of referencing and the use of formative, group or pre-prepared material in line with the expectations of *Annex G: Honour Code.*

9.4 Remote invigilation

9.4.1 Whole cohort remote invigilation for closed-book online exams

Remote invigilation may be used as a mechanism to deliver a closed-book examination for a whole cohort with permission from the Proctors and following guidance from the Student Assessments Team. Departments will be responsible for arranging for the delivery of the exam including invigilation. In general, the arrangements for a remotely invigilated closed-book examination will be the same as for an in-person examination. A mode of completion (see section 9.3) will still need to be determined.

9.4.2 Remote invigilation for individual candidates

Remote invigilation for individual candidates is not a standard adjustment for assessment. In exceptional cases Education Committee may approve remote invigilation where it is not possible, for the foreseeable future, for the candidate to attend the assessment in person, or to defer their assessment. Candidates who are unable to attend an assessment in person for time-limited reasons, eg acute illness, are expected to seek exam excusal, and would be expected to sit the assessment in person at the next opportunity. Departments will be

responsible for arranging for the delivery of the exam including invigilation, following guidance from the Student Assessments Team.

9.4.3 Problems during remotely invigilated exams

For candidates experiencing difficulties accessing the online exam they will have 30 minutes to resolve the difficulty before the exam attempt is abandoned. As they will not have accessed the exam paper they will be able to apply for exam excusal from the Proctors (see section 9.8 below). If they are able to log on late they will have the normal duration of the exam from that starting point. Candidates can submit an MCE in relation to the disruption if they believe it has had a substantial impact on their performance.

For unplanned interruptions during the exam these will be logged by the invigilator, and the candidate asked to make contact via chat/email/phone (if possible) to a dedicated address/telephone number. If the disruption is less than 30 minutes the student may resume the exam when the interruption ends, and can submit an MCE. If the disruption is over 30 mins the exam will be abandoned, the partial work completed will be marked, and the student can submit an MCE. The original exam duration is retained and will not be adjusted due to the disruption.

9.4.4 Time zone policy for remotely invigilated exams

Remotely invigilated exams will be taken at the same time regardless of the time zone in which the candidate is located. This may mean that candidates will need to take an exam outside of normal working hours local time. If a candidate does not feel able to sit an exam at unsocial hours they can apply for exam excusal (see section 9.8)

9.5 Interruption of an examination for an individual candidate

A candidate can complete an MCE in relation to their partial or nil exam response if they have been taken ill during an exam, or were unable to complete their exam due to disruption of an in-person individual sitting (see section 11.9.3). The MCE process cannot be used for difficulties in the *submission* of online exam responses as this is covered by other processes (see section 9.5).

Disruption affecting more than one candidate sitting an examination (eg fire alarm) should be taken into consideration through the group MCE process given in *Annex E: Consideration of mitigating circumstances by examiners*.

9.6 Absence of a candidate from an examination

If a candidate is unable to attend an examination, they may make an application to the Proctors for permission for that non-attendance to be excused on the grounds of 'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable' (ER 14).

Applications may be made up to four weeks in advance of the examination or up to 14 days after the non-appearance. In all cases, the applications will be considered on the basis of the evidence provided. Applications must be made via a candidate's college or department.

A candidate cannot be excused if they have attempted the examination. There are exceptions in the case of multi-day OSCEs and clinical medicine multi-day Applied Knowledge Tests (AKTs), where the student may be excused from the whole assessment if they attempt one day of the assessment but are then unable to attend a subsequent day. For online examinations, applications can only be considered if the student has not accessed the question paper.

For information on the evidence requirements in relation to applications under Part 14 see *Annex J: Grounds and supporting evidence for applications under Part 14*.

For information on the consequences of an unauthorised absence from an examination see section 11.9.1.

9.7 Behaviour of candidates

9.7.1 During in-person examinations (including candidate dress)

Candidates are bound by Statute XI, including the follow provisions:

Part A: Definitions and Code of Discipline
CODE OF DISCIPLINE

(5) cl:

> (g) No candidate may leave or re-enter an examination room unless permitted by an invigilator;
>
> (h) No candidate shall enter an examination room more than thirty minutes after an examination has started except with the permission of the Proctors or an invigilator;
>
> (i) No candidate shall, unless permitted by the Proctors or an invigilator, leave an examination room within thirty minutes of the beginning of an examination; or within thirty minutes of the time at which it is due to end;

If a candidate is taken ill while an examination is in progress, or for other reasons choose to leave, then that examination is considered to be have been attended, and any work completed will be marked on its merits (ER 14.15(2)). The student may submit a mitigating circumstances notice to enable the examiners to explain the circumstances (see 11.9.3 and *Annex E*:).

If candidates are found or suspected to have unauthorised materials (eg paper, mobile phones, other electronic devices) an invigilator will inform the Head of Student Assessments, who will contact the Proctors. Disciplinary action may be taken under Statute XI Part A (5) cl. (d) and (j).

Candidates (with the exception of students taking University Examinations as non-members) must present themselves for in-person examination in full academic dress ie cap, gown and 'subfusc' clothing (cl. 5, Regulations relating to academic dress made by the Vice-Chancellor, as authorised by Council (Vice-Chancellor's Regulations 1 of 2002).

Candidates must hand back to an invigilator all the paper provided for writing their answers, including paper used for rough drafts and paper which has not been used. No paper may be removed from the examination room other than the question-paper for the examination that has just been completed. ~~Candidates are not allowed to remove any examination booklets (used or unused) from the examination room~~.

9.7.2 During online examinations

Candidates will be expected to abide by the Honour Code (see Annex G: Honour Code).

10 Use of vivas

Examiners (and, if invited, an assessor) may examine a candidate *viva voce* in a University examination only where the specific regulations make provision for the use of vivas. Examiners should be clear as to the purpose of a viva voce examination, for example it should not be used as a means of assessing suspicions about possible plagiarism. A viva need not be held on a failing candidate if it is not specified in the requirements of the course and the failure is beyond any margin of doubt.

If examiners, following *Examination Regulations*, intend to call some or all candidates for a *viva voce* examination, the dates should be included as accurately as possible in the chair's circular to candidates early in the year of the examination. When examiners have retained the option of vivas, any request from a candidate for dispensation from the possibility because it conflicts with travel or vacation plans will be refused; the Proctors may, however, seek from the chair an indication of the probability of a viva voce examination, so that the candidate may judge the risk involved in travelling at the specified date. If examiners are certain that they will not hold vivas at all, this can be communicated to candidates.

Viva voce exams may take place remotely (eg via videoconferencing) if they conform to the relevant provisions for remote vivas documented in the *Policy and Guidance on research degrees*.

When examiners call candidates for *viva voce* examinations, the conduct of the *viva* should be sufficiently formal to ensure fairness of treatment for all candidates examined in this way. Notes must be kept of the questions asked, together with an indication of the level of response, and assessment made at the time. This material must be given to the chair of examiners (see 11.10 concerning ~~the General Data Protection Regulation/Data Protection Act 2018~~ UK Data Protection legislation).

11 Marking and adjudication of overall outcomes

11.1 Standardised expression of agreed final marks

Numerical marking, which must be expressed in whole numbers on a scale from 0 to 100 for agreed final marks, must be used for both undergraduate and graduate examinations. These are known as University standardised marks (USM).

Examiners should be encouraged to use the entire range of the marking scale.

All examiners are required to express agreed final marks for individual papers (including those for formally assessed coursework) in the following form on the basis of the following class boundaries.

11.1.1 Undergraduate degrees

For Moderations and Preliminary Examinations	
70 – 100	Distinction (where relevant)
40 – 69	Pass

For the Second Public Examination and Honour Moderations	
70 – 100	First Class
60 – 69	Upper Second

0 – 39	Fail

50 – 59	Lower Second
40 – 49	Third
30 – 39	Pass in Finals/Honour Mods
0 – 29	Fail

Some integrated Masters courses use the Postgraduate taught course scale for assessment taken in the final Part of the University Examination, and for determining the outcome of the final award.[1]

11.1.2 Undergraduate certificates and diplomas

For undergraduate certificates and diplomas offered by the Department for Continuing Education	
70 – 100	Distinction
60 – 69	Merit
40 – 59	Pass
0 – 39	Fail

An overall award of distinction may be made to candidates who have shown excellence over the whole University Examination. An overall award of merit may be made to candidates who have produced work of particularly high quality in the whole University Examination.

11.1.3 Postgraduate taught courses

70 – 100	Distinction
65 – 69	Merit
50 – 64	Pass
0 – 49	Fail

An overall award of distinction may be made to candidates who have shown excellence over the whole University Examination. An overall award of merit may be made to candidates who have produced work of particularly high quality in the whole University Examination. Examination conventions should make clear the rules for the awards and these should normally exclude from consideration any candidate who has initially failed an assessment.

Exceptionally, supervisory bodies may approve examination conventions that allow examiners to consider for distinction or merit otherwise excellent candidates who have initially failed a minor assessment item ~~(no more than 10% to the overall award outcome)~~. Examination conventions should specify the element(s) that may be disregarded.

11.1.4 Postgraduate taught courses – alternative model

70 – 100	Distinction
50 – 69	Pass
0 – 49	Fail

[1] MMathPhys – for cohorts completing from 16-17; MMath Mathematics, MMathStat Mathematics & Statistics, MCompSci Mathematics & Computer Science, MCompSci Computer Science for cohorts completing from 2020-21.

This alternative model is permitted to be used by the following awards for the expression of agreed final marks:

- Master of Business Administration
- Executive Master of Business Administration
- Master of Science by Coursework in Major Programme Management
- Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Strategy
- Postgraduate Diploma in Global Business
- Postgraduate Diploma in Organisational Leadership
- Postgraduate Diploma in Strategy and Innovation
- Postgraduate Diploma in Artificial Intelligence for Business
- Postgraduate Diploma in Leadership Coaching

11.1.5 Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

70 – 100	Distinction
65 – 69	Merit at Masters level
50 – 64	Pass at Masters level
40 - 49	Pass at Honours level (for Professional Graduate Certificate in Education)
0 – 39	Fail

Students who do not meet the requirements of the PGCE may be awarded the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education.

11.1.6 Postgraduate taught courses – historic models

For students who started their courses **before** Michaelmas term 2018 only, agreed final marks for individual papers should be expressed according to one of the following scales:

Model 1	
70 – 100	Distinction
50 – 69	Pass
0 – 49	Fail

Model 2	
70 – 100	Distinction
60 – 69	Pass
0 – 59	Fail

11.2 Marking and reconciliation of marks

Moderated marking must be used to judge the performance of candidates in the Second Public Examination, undergraduate certificates and diplomas, and all graduate level examinations, with the exception of papers with precise model solutions (see 11.3).

Double marking has been standard University practice for many years. However, the use of other moderated marking processes is not prohibited. Where exam boards wish to adopt a different practice, divisional approval is required. Guidance on different moderated marking processes can be found at Exam marking, results and ranking | Academic Support.

The following overarching principles of assessment apply regardless of the approach to marking the assessment:

Assessment policies and regulations must respect the academic judgement of the internal examiners in relation to a student's performance against the published marking criteria.

a. All assessment processes, including marking, second-marking and moderation, should be conducted anonymously unless the nature of the assessment makes this impossible.
b. All programmes must include rigorous marking and internal moderation processes which promote consistency and fairness.
c. Marking must be criterion-referenced
d. Marking scales must be transparent and clearly communicated to students in advance of the assessment.
e. All programmes must include rigorous calibration processes for all markers
f. All programmes must define how agreement will be reached on the final marks awarded.
g. All programmes must detail how borderline marks are defined, both in individual assessments and in overall results for a module or course, and what is done with them.
h. The assessment processes and marking criteria must be clearly documented for External Examiner(s).
i. The marking processes and marking criteria must be clearly documented in the Examination Conventions. The timetable for publication of Examination Conventions is set out in the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations: Part 8

Double marking identifies discrepancies of judgement between two markers, which must then be resolved. It is not proper to average the two marks; the markers need to identify the reasons for the difference and agree an appropriate mark. If reconciliation is difficult, a third marker should act as arbiter in agreeing the appropriate mark. Only in exceptional circumstances (if such academic expertise is not otherwise obtainable within the University) should an external examiner be asked to act in this capacity.

There must be a mechanism to verify the marking of all papers for undergraduate second public examinations, undergraduate certificates and diplomas, and graduate examinations under the aegis of all boards, and the minimum standard must be as follows:

- There should be an explicit process in place to ensure that a student's mark is not affected by relatively severe or lenient marking whether that be by double marking, or single moderated marking.
- Alternative methods to double marking are permitted by relevant divisions, if it can be demonstrated that they meet the high-level principles set out above.

Every exam script, exam response or item of submitted work must normally be identified solely by a candidate number and marked independently by two examiners or assessors (unless another marking method has been approved).
Each division should have a consistent method across disciplines for reconciling the marks awarded by two markers.

Where subjects permit averaging of marks (over a narrow range) in reconciliation between markers, the system used must be clear and justifiable, and not operated to the detriment of candidates. If reconciliation is difficult, a third marker should act as arbiter in agreeing the appropriate mark.

All markers of assessed work that is double marked are required to record the process by which initial marks have been reconciled to generate an agreed mark using a reconciliation sheet. This should be done whenever there is a discussion between markers, but is not

required where a simple averaging of marks over a narrow range (in accordance with the relevant examination conventions) has taken place.

Marks reconciliation must take place at the level of the mark for the paper (but may also take place at question level or at individual item level where a paper consists of multiple elements of assessed work). Examination boards should take a consistent approach for each paper as to whether marks reconciliation takes place at the paper or at question/item level, so that different markers do not reconcile at different levels. Where large discrepancies are identified between markers at either question or paper level this should prompt a review of the content of and consistency of application of marking criteria.

Marks reconciliation sheets should be completed for each candidate for each paper or assessment item where a marks reconciliation process has taken place. This sheet should provide the marks of both first and second markers (and the third marker where applicable) and include an effective record, by comments or other means, of the reconciliation process. Examination boards should produce a standard sheet for all markers to use.

In order to enable external examiners to undertake their role as an arbiter of standards, where they are asked to certify the fairness of the approach used for the reconciliation of such discrepant marks, the comments provided must describe the mechanism used by the internal examiners to reach an agreed final mark. If, in rare cases, external examiners are asked to reach a final decision on significantly discrepant marks from the first and second markers, it is essential that they are provided with sufficient comments to understand the rationale for each of the initial marks awarded.

Section 11.12 below sets out the responsibilities of the chair of examiners in respect of the retention of reconciliation sheets along with other examination material. All material must be lodged with the chair, who must make arrangements for its retention for two years following the examination.

11.3 Papers with a model solution

In the case of papers for which there is a precise model solution and marking scheme approved by the examiners for every question, each script or response must be marked by an examiner or assessor; and every script or response must be checked independently (not necessarily by an examiner or assessor) to ensure that all parts have been marked and the marks and part-marks have been correctly totalled and recorded.

11.4 Moderated single marking

In the case of papers which will be marked using single moderated marking, each script must be marked by an examiner or assessor, and details of the methodology used to sample papers for second marking must be provided in the examination conventions along with an explanation of how discrepancies will be resolved.

11.5 Issues in marking

Particular problems may arise in the marking process:

11.5.1 Illegible exam scripts or responses:

If a Chair considers an exam script or handwritten exam response to be illegible due to unclear handwriting, they must inform the Senior Tutor of the candidate's college as quickly as possible. If there is a dispute between the Chair and the Senior Tutor as to the illegibility of a script or scripts, the question should be referred to the Proctors for a ruling. Chairs will

need to send any illegible scripts, by hand or using an appropriate secure mechanism, to the candidate's college asking for them to be typed.

The college will either use the Student Assessments Team transcription service (if available) or will arrange to have the script transcribed. The transcription can be held either in-person or remotely where it is possible for the identity of the student to be verified. The draft transcription should be checked by the student for accuracy. The final transcribed script should be provided to the exam administrator through an approved secure channel (see 11.10). The college is not required to have the Proctors' or the Student Assessments Team's approval for the transcription arrangements. Chairs will be informed of the arrangements. The cost of the typing and invigilation shall not be a charge on the University.

11.5.2 Missing or incomplete exam scripts:

If an examiner or assessor finds that an exam script is missing from the delivered package, or that a script is conspicuously incomplete, the chair should be notified immediately, so that a check can be initiated with the Student Assessments Team and other markers. Exam boards must notify the Student Assessment Team of any such issues within 24 hours of collection/delivery of the scripts.

If any missing scripts cannot be found, the Student Assessments Team will inform the Proctors within 48 hours of notification by the exam board.

~~The Proctors should be informed promptly if it is not found.~~

11.5.3 Scripts or exam responses with inappropriate content

Where examiners feel that the content of a candidate's script indicates that they may require professional help, the chair should contact the Proctors' Office for advice.

11.6 Inclusive marking guidelines (formerly 2D form)

For in-person exams, candidates with an approved exam adjustment to have their work marked in line with the inclusive marking guidelines (IMG) (advising markers in what ways their condition may have affected candidates' written work and to take this into account when marking) may attach the IMG to their exam script.

For online exams and submissions, exams administrators should ensure that markers are aware during marking of candidates with approved adjustments to have their work marked in line with the IMG and provide a link to the IMG. For more information see the SAT website.

11.7 Recording during the marking process (including comments sheets)

Markers should generally not write on examination scripts or exam responses during the marking process. This can compromise the independence of the second marker. In some subjects, however, the nature of the examination answers (such as translations or calculations) may be such that it is appropriate to indicate on the script objective errors for which the mark should be reduced. Comments should not be written on the scripts but on the sheets provided for the purpose. Examination boards should produce a standard sheet for all markers to use.

Under ~~the General Data Protection Regulation/Data Protection Act 2018~~ UK Data Protection legislation, the University is not obliged to return scripts to candidates, but is obliged, if requested, to provide a transcript of anything written on them or separately about a candidate's performance.

Markers must record comments, using comments sheets, for all substantial assessment items. Substantial summative assessment item is understood to mean any thesis, dissertation, project report, extended essay, portfolio, research proposal, and any other summative assessment item that carries weight broadly equivalent to an unseen written exam.

Examination boards are strongly encouraged to use comments sheets for all assessed work (whether consisting of submitted work or written examinations), if they do not already do so. While the use of comments sheets for examinations is not a requirement, it is recommended as best practice, and the consistent recording of comments will aid marks reconciliation processes.

Care should be taken in the completion of comment sheets as they form part of the formal record of the examining process. Comments sheets must be completed independently (ie the second marker should not see the first marker's comments before marking or commenting on the script).

Departments and faculties are encouraged to include the marking criteria on the marking sheet or book: additionally subjects may wish to offer further guidance to examiners on the coverage of their comments.

To facilitate the process of providing comments sheets to students (see section 12.7.1.), it is encouraged that if using comments sheets, boards should ask for a comments sheet for each candidate to be completed by each marker of each paper or assessment item.

11.8 Scaling of marks

Education Committee considers that it is appropriate to scale marks for a paper where it has been established that either:

(a) a paper was more difficult or easy than in previous years, and/or

(b) an optional paper was more or less difficult than other optional papers taken by students in a particular year, and/or

(c) a paper has generated a spread of marks which are not a fair reflection of student performance on the University's standard scale for the expression of agreed final marks, ie the marks do not reflect the qualitative marks descriptors.

In each case, examiners need to establish if they have sufficient evidence for scaling. Different considerations need to be taken into account for each of cases (a), (b) and (c).

(a) A paper was more difficult or easy than in previous years	Examiners may wish to consider scaling where a paper has a higher or lower median or mean mark for a paper relative to previous years as this may indicate that the paper was easier or more difficult than intended, especially in a core paper taken by a large cohort. However, this would not in itself constitute sufficient evidence for scaling. Scaling is not a mechanistic process but one which requires academic judgement. Further evidence should also be identified, for example, via: • examiners' academic evaluation of the performance of the candidates (possibly guided by qualitative descriptors of each class); • a comparison with the questions set in previous years' papers; and/or • an analysis of the spread of candidates' performance in compulsory papers compared to their performance in the paper in question. Scaling should not be used mechanistically to fit the spread of classes on a paper to historical norms (ie norm referencing).
(b) An optional paper was more or less difficult than other optional papers taken by students in a particular year	Again, a higher or lower median or mean mark for an optional paper relative to other optional papers would not in itself constitute sufficient evidence for this. The differences in mean or median scores of students taking different optional papers could simply be the result of natural variation in ability within the cohort of students. If the number of students taking options is small, statistical analysis (say of performance of students in optional versus compulsory papers) can be an unreliable tool
(c) A paper has generated a spread of marks which are not a fair reflection of student performance against the University's standard scale for expression of agreed final marks.	Boards should take all steps which they consider to be reasonable academically to set questions and mark schemes which seek to generate a spread of marks that fairly reflect the student cohort's performance compared with the University's scale for standard expression of agreed final marks and the class descriptors set out in the course examination conventions. However, it is recognised that despite the very best efforts at the examination setting stage, an examination, particularly in a quantitative subject where there is a precise model solution and mark scheme, may not generate such a spread of raw marks. Scaling, with qualitative checks, may then be needed to translate raw marks to marks that are a fair reflection of the performance of candidates on the University scale. Again, academic judgement will be critical here.

In all cases, the general principles below must be followed by all boards of examiners when scaling is used:

- Scaling should only be considered and undertaken after moderation of a paper has been completed;
- If it is decided that it is appropriate to use scaling, examiners should review a sample of papers either side of the classification borderlines to ensure that the outcome of scaling is consistent with academic views of what constitutes a paper in each class. External examiners should be asked to report on this stage of the process;
- All scaling of marks must be done in the year in which the paper(s) in question is/are taken. This point will be particularly pertinent for subjects with second-year examinations and for supervisory bodies considering initiating such examination arrangements;
- All examiners and boards should seek expert advice on the construction and operation of algorithms, where appropriate;

- All algorithms used for the purposes of scaling must be transparent and justifiable, and must be published as appropriate for the information of all examiners and students.

Examiners should also satisfy themselves that, if a computer algorithm is used in the classification process, its rules are fully consistent with the current examination conventions, especially if changes are being made to the examination conventions (see *Annex A: Examination conventions for further detail*). Supplementary advice regarding scaling of marks is available to exam boards.

Where scaling has been used, boards should record its use and provide detailed information about why scaling was necessary and how it was applied.

11.9 Adjudication on the merits of candidates

The chair must arrange for all examiners and assessors to report the marks for those scripts they have marked. Marks are entered against candidates' numbers on the marks sheet, and the examiners must then be provided with complete lists of marks that will form the basis of their adjudication (assessors do not take part in the final adjudication process but may be present in an advisory capacity only (ER 7.7)).

Attention must be paid to the accuracy of data entry into marks spreadsheets and to ensuring that any changes in the list of candidates do not lead to knock-on errors (withdrawals are the most likely changes but the reinstatement of withdrawn candidates can also happen). It is good practice to test new software on a set of dummy results before it is used in the examination.

During the process of adjudication, the scripts of all candidates should be available to the examiners as a whole.

The required attendance by examiners must be met in accordance with section 4.3 above.

11.9.1 Consequences of non-submission or non-attendance

The following rules apply to candidates who fail to attempt (ie non-attendance at an in-person examination, did not access an online examination, did not submit a file for a submission) an assessment unit/paper or item of assessment within a University Examination and have not been excused or received an extension from the Proctors (see section 8.2 for submissions and 9.8 for examinations) and so receive a 'technical fail' (ER 14).

- University Examinations in which honours are awarded (except Honour Moderations in Classics) (ie all or Part of the Second Public Examination): examiners should fail the candidate in the whole University Examination or Part of the University Examination [ER 14.2(1)].
- University Examinations in which honours are not awarded or Honour Moderations (ie First Public Examination, undergraduate and postgraduate certificates and diplomas, Masters): examiners should fail the candidate [ER 14.2(2) and 14.3(3)]:
    - in the assessment unit/paper if the unit contains a single item of assessment
    - in the assessment item and in the assessment unit/paper overall if the unit includes multiple items of assessment. Marks for other assessment items should be recorded as normal, based on student performance.

See *Annex B: Consequences of non-attendance or non-submission* for a tabular representation of the consequences of a 'technical fail'.

11.9.2 Resit marks and overall outcome following non-attendance or non-submission at the first attempt

There is no marks or overall outcome cap applicable to resits involving a technical fail in a University Examination in which honours are awarded (ER 14.3(1)).

For University Examinations in which honours are not awarded or Honour Moderations, any assessment items repeated as a consequence of a technical fail can be awarded a mark no higher than the pass mark (ie the minimum passing mark eg 50 for PGT) for that assessment item and the overall assessment unit (other assessment items can retain their original mark), and the candidate is ineligible for an overall outcome of distinction or merit. That is unless the examination conventions allow for consideration of candidates for distinction or merit who have initially failed a minor assessment item ~~(contributing no more than 10% to the overall award outcome)~~ (see section 11.1.3) or the exam board has chosen to remove the assessment unit cap on receipt of an MCE.

See *Annex B: Consequences of non-attendance or non-submission* for a tabular representation of the consequences of a 'technical fail'.

11.9.3 Consideration of mitigating circumstances by examiners

Information about medical or other circumstances affecting a candidate's performance may be submitted by the candidate directly or via their college to be considered by the board of examiners via a Mitigating Circumstances Notice (MCE) (ER 13).

It is the candidate's responsibility to raise any issue that may have impacted on their performance, to complete a candidate statement, and to provide appropriate evidence in support. The candidate will send a completed MCE (via the secure eVision site). The Student Assessments Team, will forward this to the chair, provided that the form is received by noon the day before the final examiners' meeting.

If a notice is received after this deadline, it will be forwarded to the Proctors for consideration, and will only be passed on to examiners if received within **one month of the date of the final exam board meeting, and if one of the following criteria is met:**

- The candidate's condition is such as to prevent them from making an earlier submission;
- The candidate's condition is not known or diagnosed until after the final meeting of the examiners;
- There has been a procedural error (beyond the candidate's control) that has prevented the candidate's information from being submitted.

Full guidance is available in *Annex E: Consideration of mitigating circumstances by examiners*.

11.9.4 Incomplete results - excused examinations and extensions

If the candidate has had their attendance excused for any examinations by the Proctors (see section 9.8) and therefore their results are incomplete the options available to the exam board are as follows (ER 14):

- Examine the candidate at another time and place (ER 14:19(1))

Or

- [14:19(2)/14.20] Act as if the candidate has completed the missing part of the examination and take one of the following actions:
    - Classify/provide an outcome based on the remaining work if of sufficient quantity and quality [ER 14.20(1)(a) and 14.20(3)(a)]
    - For Honours examinations only – deem the candidate to have deserved honours [ER 14.20(1)(b)]
    - For Honours examinations only – if unable to classify, award an outcome of pass. [ER 14.20(1)(c)]
    - If unable to classify/provide an outcome/pass – award an outcome of fail. [ER 14.20(1)(d) and 14.20(3)(b)]

Where a candidate has missed one or more papers in a First Public Examination taken during Hilary or Trinity term, chairs will be instructed to examine the candidate during Trinity term or the Long Vacation respectively, ie when they would normally provide resits if a candidate had failed. For other examinations, if the next available opportunity falls in a year's time, the exam board is strongly urged to consider arranging an earlier sitting to avoid delaying the candidate's academic progression.

The Proctors will only contact the chair if an application for excusal has been approved. Where no excusal has been approved or extension put in place the exam board should follow section 11.9.1.

Where either a candidate has been excused for missing an examination or a candidate has not completed all required submitted work by the time the final exam board meets because they have been granted an extension by the Proctors or adjusted deadline by Education Committee, the board should record the candidates overall outcome as ‘Incomplete’ and leave the mark as blank for the affected papers. Marks for all completed work or non-attended/non-submitted assessment items/units should be released.

11.9.5 Declared to have Deserved Honours/Masters

In specific circumstances candidates may be awarded a:

- Declared to have Deserved Honours
- Declared to have Deserved Undergraduate Certificate
- Declared to have Deserved Foundation Certificate
- Declared to have Deserved Undergraduate Diploma
- Declared to have Deserved Undergraduate Advanced Diploma
- Declared to have Deserved Masters
- Declared to have Deserved Postgraduate Diploma
- Declared to have Deserved Postgraduate Certificate

Where these match the intended awards and where candidates are unable to complete the assessment for the original award. Undergraduate declared awards are collectively referred to as DDH, postgraduate declared awards are collectively known as DDM.

Students are able to indicate that they wish to be considered for a declared award via the form available on the Academic Support website. Education Policy Support will co-ordinate the application process and departments and colleges will be asked for information on the

students' academic standing and progress as part of this process. See *Annex H: Procedure for the award of Declared to Deserve Honours/Masters* for further detail. The exam board will be informed whether the student does or does not meet the eligibility criteria.

The exam board should consider the eligible students and determine in the first instance whether a classified outcome may be awarded. If this is not possible and the student meets the eligibility criteria for DDH/DDM, a DDH/DDM should be awarded.

If a student has been confirmed as not meeting the eligibility criteria for DDH/DDM and cannot otherwise be awarded a classified outcome, the student's outcome should usually be recorded as 'incomplete'.

11.9.6 Calculation of overall marks

Where final outcomes criteria include the consideration of overall marks, these should be calculated to two decimal places.

Overall marks should not be changed if the final outcome or classification has been upgraded as a result of a Mitigating Circumstances Notice (MCE).

Examination boards are not required to calculate overall marks where not already part of the final outcomes process, but where overall marks are calculated they should be reviewed and formally ratified by the exam board along with final marks, and uploaded along with the results list so they can be provided directly to students (see also section 12.5.2).

This facility is not currently available for undergraduate certificates and diplomas, or postgraduate taught awards.

11.9.7 Calculation of ranking

Where examination boards rank candidates according to overall mark, this ranking should apply to the full Final Honour School, and not be subdivided into different course strands or combined across different Final Honour Schools (eg FHS English Language and Literature is divided into Course I and Course II, but are subject to a single set of regulations, therefore they can and should be ranked together; similar all students in Modern Languages or in Asian and Middle Eastern Studies should appear in combined rankings).

Rankings can be provided for the overall cohort only, or also ranked within classification bands. Where candidates are ranked in classification bands, they should be ranked by classification precedence then by overall mark (eg that all students awarded a first class degree will rank ahead of any awarded a 2:1, 2:1s above 2:2s, and 2:2s above third class degrees, pass/unclassified degrees, and fails).

For students whose results are incomplete at the time of the final exam board meeting they should not be included in the ranking. When their results are available they should be ranked as follows:

- If the overall mark is equal to the mark of another result within the classification, then it will share the same rank for both classification and cohort;
- If the overall mark is higher than any other mark within the classification, it will share the ranks in classification and cohort of the first placed result in the classification
- It will share the ranks of the result within the classification with the overall mark immediately above it.

For candidates resitting one or more items/units of assessment following failure of a University Examination they should not normally be ranked as they form their own cohort.

Examination boards are not required to calculate rankings, but where they are calculated they should be reviewed and formally ratified by the exam board along with final marks and uploaded along with the results list so they can be provided directly to students (see also section 12.5.3).

This facility is not currently available for undergraduate certificates and diplomas, or postgraduate taught awards.

11.10 Sharing examination and assessment material

All exam related material including, submissions, online examination responses, marks sheets etc should be shared with examiners via a secure channel, preferably SharePoint Online Examining Sites, or sent as a password-protected document via email. Advice on the encryption and decryption of documents may be obtained from the IT Services website

11.11 Confidentiality

Comments, examination scripts and raw marks (ie the marks from individual examiners before agreement or reconciliation) are strictly confidential and in no circumstances may be shown to or discussed with anyone other than examiners or properly appointed assessors (subject to section 12.7 regarding access by candidates). Details of the discussions at examiners' meetings are equally confidential. Apart from the chair, only authorised administrative staff may process the entry of marks and otherwise assist in the handling of information.

11.12 Retention of records

Supervisory bodies should ensure that all examiners acting on their behalf are aware of the Proctorial requirements relating to the retention of records as detailed on the Compliance website.

12 Results

12.1 Reporting results

The Academic Records Office (ARO) is responsible for the publication to students of final results via the online Student Self-Service. These are based on the Results Lists submitted on behalf of the exam board (ER 17 [to be updated]). Operational guidance is available on the SAT website.

Exam boards should finalise and release the students' results based on the information available at the time of the final board meeting. Unless the board has received notification from the Proctors to excuse an exam or waive a late penalty then marks should be finalised with penalties applied.

12.2 Change of results

After the results have been released to the students it is not possible to change the results unless:

- **An error has been identified.** ~~Where the change in marks to correct the error results in a change in the year/examination outcome, or to the final award outcome and the change is to uplift the change can be made with exam board sign off only.~~ The exam board may approve corrections where results are higher than those originally reported. ~~If the change will have a negative effect on the overall outcome, the examiners must seek the Proctors' approval.~~ Where the corrected marks and/or classification are lower than those originally reported, the examiners must seek the Proctors' approval to confirm that the correction has been made on the appropriate basis.
- **A candidate has been accidentally omitted from the results list.** In such instances the examiners must compile an additional Results List and submit this to the ARO with the reason why. This additional Results List should contain the candidates missing from the original Results List.
- **A student has submitted a late MCE** (see section 11.9.3) If the exam board has agreed that the student's overall outcome should be upgraded, the examiners should complete the Change in Results Form signed by the chair and send to the ARO.
- **If the Proctors' Office or Education Committee sends a notification after the final board meeting** (in relation to excusal from an exam or late/non submission of coursework), the board should reconsider the impact of any decision on the student's individual mark(s) and on the student's final classification.

In the above situations the board should meet or meet by confidential correspondence, then complete a Change of Results form and submit this to the Academic Records Office for processing.

12.3 Incomplete results

Candidates whose results are incomplete at the time of the final examiners' meeting are usually recorded as an INCOM on the Results List. Candidates might be incomplete because they are under investigation by the Proctors or were granted an extension.

When the examiners are ready to examine the 'late results' they may meet as normal or by confidential correspondence. The results should be submitted to the ARO in the same way as the original Results List, as described above. In the case of results which are late due to candidates having been granted an extension, there is no requirement to seek Proctors' permission to produce a further Results List. In the case of results delayed due to Proctors' investigation, or due to late or non-submission without prior approval from the Proctors, the Proctors' permission is required to produce a further Results List.

12.4 Prizes for examinations

Where examiners are responsible for awarding prizes on the basis of examination results, it is the duty of the chair to send notification of the awards to the secretary of the appropriate divisional or faculty board, and college office. The secretary will arrange for payment to be made to the prize-winners.

12.5 Disclosure and publication of candidates' results

When the entire University Examination is complete and the results released into eVision, the candidates' assessment marks and award outcomes will be available to the candidates and to staff with eVision access to the candidates' assessment records. In the case of a multi-part FHS, the agreed marks should be disclosed *after* the completion of each part of the FHS.

The Senior Tutor (and their delegates) at a candidate's college may access candidate results from the eVision dataviews. Senior Tutors can make the marks available to subject tutors. Chairs of examiners should not send separate lists to Senior Tutors because of information security issues with using email to circulate personal data.

Examiners should not disclose agreed marks to candidates or to staff until the results have been formally released into eVision. No candidates' marks should be released by examiners to colleagues in departments. Staff in departments may view results through eVision if they have appropriate access. The department Information Custodian has responsibility for determining who should have access to results views in eVision and granting access. This should normally be on the basis of a general responsibility for student performance and the course eg course director, Director of Undergraduate Studies/Director of Graduate Studies, and may also include the supervisor, taking into account issues of student welfare as well as data protection.

12.5.1 Question level marks

Examination boards may choose to provide question-level marks to students where such question-level marks are reconciled and available. If boards wish to do this, they should be aware that they will need to use local processes to release question-level marks (they will not be released into eVision) and will need to be able to provide technical support for this in-house.

Question-level marks must not be provided to students until **after** results are formally released into eVision. Examination boards must also comply with data protection requirements in relation to question-level marks (see 12.7).

If boards wish to begin providing question-level marks and have not done so previously, they should contact the Education Policy Support team for further information and guidance before beginning to provide such marks.

12.5.2 Overall marks

If examiners calculate an overall mark (sometimes known as an average mark) as part of the consideration of the results for the First Public Examination or Second Public Examination (see section 11.9) this is provided to students through student self-service.

This facility is not currently available for undergraduate certificates and diplomas, or postgraduate taught awards.

12.5.3 Rankings in cohort and class

If examiners produce a ranking of candidates (see section 11.9.7), the information is provided to students through student self-service except in the following circumstances:

- Rankings will not be made available to students where the number in the classification or cohort is fewer than or equal to five.
- Where the number in the classification is five or fewer, but the number in cohort is more than five, the ranking in cohort should be released but not the ranking in classification.
- Where the entire cohort is five or fewer, no rankings will be released, only the overall mark will be available against the student record.

This facility is not currently available for undergraduate certificates and diplomas, or postgraduate taught awards. Further information on ranking can be found on the Overall Marks and Ranking - Key Facts | Academic Support webpage.

12.6 Transcripts of results

In addition to viewing their results in eVision, all examination candidates can access a transcript showing their final agreed marks using the standardised expression of marks (see 11.1) for the individual papers, and (for undergraduate degrees) how these marks relate to the final degree classification.

The transcript will show the final agreed marks according to the common scale and indicate the basis by which the classification is achieved. This may be on average mark alone, or may include specifications as to mark distribution (5 papers in the 2.1 class, etc).

12.7 Candidate access to other types of assessment related information

12.7.1 Comments sheets and reconciliation sheets

All examination boards ~~are permitted, but not required, to~~ must provide question-level marks, records of examiners comments ('comments sheets') and records of the reconciliation process ('reconciliation sheets') directly to students on request (where these marks and sheets exist). Where examination boards decide to ~~do this~~ provide the records proactively to all students, it will negate the need for students to submit ~~a subject access request to obtain these sheets~~ individual requests. Boards may decide to release sheets either to individual students on request or proactively to all students.

12.7.2 Examination scripts

All examination boards are permitted, but not required, to give students access to their in-person examination scripts as they see fit in controlled circumstances within the department or faculty. Boards can set their own access policy as to whether scripts are accessible only on individual request, or whether to specify sessions where any student could attend to view scripts. Boards can also set local policy as to whether scripts for only certain papers or all papers are available for access (particularly where access would compromise the integrity of the examination process such as multiple choice questions (MCQs)).

Student access should be supervised by academic or administrative staff according to local policy. Students are not permitted to remove their scripts from the department or to photograph or copy them.

Online exam responses are provided directly to students through Inspera. This does not apply to MCQ format online exams.

12.7.3 Information via subject access requests

~~For boards who choose not to directly provide information under section 12.7.1, or~~ For other categories of exam related information the following provisions (under ~~the General Data Protection Regulation/Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR/DPA 2018)~~ UK Data Protection legislation) apply.

Students may make a subject access request for information related to the assessment process that is otherwise treated as confidential. By making such a request a student may obtain all personal data generated as part of the examination process, including:

- ~~all marks held, including raw marks;~~
- ~~copies of markers' comments on their work;~~
- (if identifiable separately from other individuals) comments recorded about their performance, whether by name or candidate number, in material presented to or in the minutes of examiners' meetings
- any other information relating to their performance, such as information about medical problems

All subject access requests submitted to the University are processed centrally by the Information Compliance team. Under no circumstances should examiners, assessors, or administrative staff respond to direct requests for disclosure of information relating to the examination outside of the provisions of section 12.7.1. and 12.7.2.

However, due to a specific provision in GDPR/DPA 2018, **examination scripts** are exempt from this general right of access, although a student is still entitled to any marks or comments recorded in the margins of a script. Therefore student access to examination scripts is at the discretion of the department under section 12.7.2.

13 Resits (including deferred first attempts)

13.1 Relationship between teaching and assessment

Students are expected to take assessments relating to the curriculum they have been taught. If a student delays teaching, or has to retake teaching for any reason, they will take the assessments (first attempts, deferred first attempts, or resits) associated with the new teaching.

13.2 Definitions

A 'deferred first attempt' is

- An assessment for which the student was previously entered, but which they did not take because they subsequently suspended (suspension for any reason)
  OR
- An assessment for which the student has previously been entered, but where they received a Proctors' excusal from the first sitting

A 'resit' is an assessment which the student has attempted before and is permitted to retake, or where they have received a technical fail through non-attendance, and excusal has not been granted. For example if a student fails prelims in June, they have the opportunity to resit in September.

13.3 Resits and deferred first attempts taken in later years than the original assessment

Students must be assessed on material they have been taught. If the teaching syllabus has changed since the student was originally taught, assessment must be based on the original syllabus, subject to the usual time limits specified in the Exam Regulations.

The task and condition for any assessment may change between the date of the assessment for which the student was originally entered, and a resit or deferred first attempt in a later academic year. For example, the **task** could be an examination, an essay, a group

presentation or another task. The **condition** describes the specific circumstances under which the task is completed, such as whether an examination is closed book or open book.

Students taking resits or deferred first attempts in later years than their original assessment will have the same task and condition as the rest of the students taking assessments for their course at the same time. This may be different from the assessment for which the students were originally entered.

Students taking resits or deferred first attempts in later years than their original assessment must be informed of any changes to their assessment. For suspended students, this should be part of the return-to-study discussions. For all other students, this should be at the start of the academic year or at the point that the assessment details are provided to the whole cohort, as appropriate and relevant for the particular course. The relevant department must offer students appropriate support.

If there is a difference in the penalties, marking, or classification algorithms between the original and the new assessment, the examination board will decide on the appropriate application for the individual student.

13.4 Resits and deferred first attempts taken in the same academic year as the original assessment

If a student takes a resit or deferred first attempt in the same academic year as their original assessment, the resit or deferred first attempt must be the same task and conditions as the original assessment, unless the nature of the task makes this impossible. For example, if the original assessment is group work, and there is not a group of students taking the resit, then the resit can be a different task. In such cases the arrangements for in-year resits or deferred first attempts must be clearly explained in the examination conventions.

~~**13.1 Applicable content, format and policy framework**~~

~~All resit and deferred first attempt papers for University Examinations must be sat according to the original Examination Conventions, and cover the same material as the original examination. If the Examination Regulations have changed between the date of the original examination and the resit, the resit should reflect what the candidate was originally taught.~~

~~All resit and deferred first attempt papers for University Examinations should be in the same format (eg written exam, submission) as the original assessment unless otherwise specified in the regulations or examination conventions. The following are not considered to be a change in format, unless these details were specified in the original examination conventions:~~

- ~~A change from open-book to closed-book examination~~
- ~~A change in exam location (in-person to online or vice versa)~~
- ~~A change in assessment software~~

~~All re-sit and deferred first attempt candidates will sit these under the Examinations and Assessment Framework in force at the time they are sat.~~

~~Any emergency changes to assessment for exams originally taken in TT20 or during the 2020-21 academic year (such as reduced or combined papers) will not be carried forward for students re-sitting (or taking deferred first attempts) at a later date.~~

~~With regard to academic mitigation measures:~~

- ~~The relevant safety net policy from TT20 should be applied only if it would have applied to the first attempt/planned first attempt.~~
- ~~The assessment support package (EAF 2020-21) applies (within its own terms) for assessment taken or marks finalised in Hilary and Trinity terms 2021 only.~~

13.5 Organisation of resits

The chair must publish a timetable for resit examinations and communicate with candidates in the same way as for other examinations. Chairs must ensure that examiners are available for invigilation, marking and for the meeting of the board of examiners at the appropriate time; this is particularly important for the Long Vacation resit examinations.

13.6 Entitlement to resit

~~Students are normally entitled to one resit of any failed assessment unit of a University Examination.~~ A candidate's entitlement to resit is dependent on their stage of study and award level. There are general regulations governing entitlement for candidates to resit first and second public examinations. For undergraduate certificates and diplomas and postgraduate degrees and awards, entitlement to resit is detailed in the specific course Examination Conventions.

In all cases, a candidate is not permitted to resit an assessment unit that has been passed unless the whole University Examination (or Part of the Examination in the case of multi-part SPE) has been failed, ie it is not possible to resit an assessment unit in order to improve the mark. The mark for a retaken assessment will replace the previous mark achieved on the candidate's transcript and in the calculation of their overall outcome ie the previous mark cannot be banked in case the mark for the resit is lower. The only exception to this rule is for the professional graduate PGCE (level 6) award, detailed below.

First and Second Public Examinations

The General Regulations for the First and Second Public Examination stipulate that a candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners in their initial examination for the First Public Examination shall be permitted to re-enter for the examination on one further occasion in accordance with the special regulations governing resits in the programme concerned. Candidates are required to resit the same papers for which they were examined at the first attempt.

For the second public examination, no person whose name has been recorded as achieving a classified result (other than a candidate who has been declared to have deserved Honours under the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations) is permitted to be entered again as a candidate in the same Final Honour School. A person who does not achieve a classified result at the first attempt may be admitted again as a candidate in the same Final Honour School on one further occasion and would be required to resit the same papers for which they were examined at the first attempt.

PGCE

A candidate who has obtained a pass at the Professional Graduate (level 6) of the PGCE may 'bank' their results such that they retain this qualification if they subsequently attempt but do not meet the required standard for the Postgraduate (level 7) qualification at resubmission.

13.7 Arrangements for resits for First and Second Public Examinations

A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners in their initial examination for the First Public Examination shall be permitted to re-enter for the examination on one further occasion in accordance with the special regulations governing resits in the programme concerned. This resit attempt shall normally be taken at the next opportunity, but may be deferred once, i.e. it must be taken at one of the next two opportunities.

For Second Public Examinations the resit attempt shall normally be taken at the next opportunity, but may be deferred once, i.e. it must be taken at one of the next two opportunities. For the latter, if the next available opportunity falls in a year's time, the exam board is strongly urged to consider arranging an earlier sitting to avoid delaying the candidate's academic progression.

13.8 Arrangements for resits for postgraduate taught awards

The relevant general regulations for postgraduate awards require that resits should be taken at the next opportunity, and that they must be taken within the next two opportunities, unless the special regulations permit an alternative practice.

Departments are encouraged to consider earlier resits or re-submission dates that will enable students who have incurred a fail, or who have had to withdraw from the examination at the end of the course for urgent reasons, to complete the award. These arrangements should be reflected in the regulations and other course information.

Where an assessment unit of an examination has been successfully completed at the first examination, the mark for the successful assessment unit can be carried over to the succeeding year and only the assessment unit or units which have been failed at the first examination re-taken unless otherwise specified by the special regulations for a course. In this context, an ‘assessment unit’ can refer to a single examination, a submission, other exercise, or a combination of assessment items. Where the assessment unit consists of more than one assessment item, for example a submission and an examination, if the student passes the submission but fails the examination, they are only required to resit the failed assessment item, not all the assessment items for the assessment unit.

13.9 Arrangements for resits for undergraduate certificates and diplomas

The relevant general regulations for undergraduate certificates and diplomas require that resits should be taken at the next opportunity, and that they must be taken within the next two opportunities, unless the special regulations permit an alternative practice.

14 Feedback on assessment

14.1 Feedback to students on formative assessment

Information on the policy for feedback on formative assessment can be found in the *Policy and Guidance on Undergraduate Teaching and Learning*, and the *Policy and Guidance on Postgraduate Taught Degrees*.

14.2 Feedback on the First Public Examination

Examination boards of all First Public Examinations are required to:

- provide candidates who fail the Examination at their initial attempt with as detailed a breakdown of marks as is available for all the failed papers.
- permit candidates who fail any papers, and are planning to re-sit the examination, to see their examination scripts for any papers which they have failed.

Examination boards are encouraged to make the experience of seeing examination scripts as helpful as possible for these students. This could include giving students the opportunity to discuss their script with a tutor, and/or providing students with the marking criteria used alongside their script.

Examinations which consist of multiple choice questions (MCQs) which use question banks are exempt from the requirement to permit failed candidates to see their examination scripts, as doing so could compromise the integrity of the examination.

14.3 Feedback for taught graduate courses

Supervisory bodies are strongly encouraged to consider providing feedback, via examination boards, on any elements of summative assessment which are undertaken prior to the final term of the course. This may include Trinity term assessments for 12-month courses. Supervisory bodies may direct boards of examiners to provide feedback in one or more of the following ways:

- **Marks** – boards may provide marks in accordance with the provisions of section 4.3.
- **Written feedback** - this may accompany marks or be provided without marks. Where boards of examiners wish to give written feedback without marks, they are not obliged to meet in full, but the chair is required to approve the feedback on the board's behalf before it is released to students.

When providing feedback for part-time courses, boards may, alternatively, follow the arrangements for provision of feedback established by the Department for Continuing Education.

Supervisory bodies are required to implement (via boards of examiners) written feedback according to an agreed divisional template or framework for all PGT dissertations or theses or equivalent of 5,000 words or over.

Supervisors can be provided with copies of written feedback.

15 Queries and complaints from candidates

15.1 Queries about the conduct of the examination

Senior Tutors or tutors must not contact examiners regarding individual candidates.

Examiners must not discuss any matter relating to individual candidates with tutors, Senior Tutors, or candidates.

Any attempt at direct communication with examiners by individual candidates should be reported to the Proctors, who will advise the examiners. Such communications compromise the anonymity of the examination process, and are not in candidates' interests.

Students are entitled to make a formal complaint under the *University Student Complaints Procedure* in relation to examinations, noting that an academic appeal should be submitted instead if an individual candidate is dissatisfied with the decision of an academic body.

15.2 Queries about results

Students are entitled to make an academic appeal under the *University Academic Appeals Procedure*.

The Proctors have no power to consider appeals against the academic judgement of the examiners.

Annex A: Examination conventions

1. Introduction

Across the disciplines within each division in the University, there are many similarities in the way we teach and assess undergraduate students and teach and assess graduate students. Some common features in examining, marking and classification would therefore be expected within divisions. This may involve a degree of variation from discipline to discipline.

Whilst academics in subject disciplines are best placed to determine the criteria used in marking and classification, Education Committee also has a duty to ensure that the processes used to apply these criteria are fair, explicit, and transparent. Where the criteria used in marking and classification differ from the norm and from cognate disciplines, there should be a rationale for the divergence.

2. Purpose of examination conventions

Examination conventions are the University's formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which students apply. They are a student-facing document and should be written in a clear and comprehensible manner. The same version of the examination conventions should be used by examiners, with more detailed local operational guidance appended if necessary.

Education Committee's *Policy and guidance on course information* states that there are three key sources of information for on-course students about their course of study. These are the *Examination Regulations*, the relevant course handbook and the relevant examination conventions. Information about the structure of the course and the way it is assessed should be contained in those three documents. Key information on those matters on which students are entitled to rely should not be solely located elsewhere (for example, in a 'Notice to candidates' focusing on administrative arrangements).

3. Publication

Examination conventions must be circulated to all students and also published, either as part of the course handbook or separately, in a place easily accessible to students. Ideally, examination conventions should be publicly available so that prospective students may have access to them. If this is not possible, they should be accessible via Single Sign On (SSO) to anyone in the University so that the Proctors and colleges have access to them.

4. Content

The template below provides the headings of the information that should be supplied in examination conventions with a description of what is expected. In square brackets are references to further information in the *Examinations and assessment framework* and/or the *Examination Regulations* where available or relevant. Please ensure that information is provided in clear and comprehensible language.

Suggested or sample text is provided in [square brackets].

Template for examination conventions

1. Introduction

Include:

- The full title of the course(s) to which the conventions apply;
- The year to which the conventions apply;
- Details of the supervisory body (divisional or faculty board) responsible for approving the conventions;
- The purpose of the examination conventions. You may wish to include the text below:

  [Examination conventions are the formal record of the specific assessment standards for the course or courses to which they apply. They set out how examined work will be marked and how the resulting marks will be used to arrive at a final result and classification of an award.]

2. Rubrics for individual papers

Information on the number of assessments required for the course(s).

Information on the structure of individual assessments, for example: number of questions, compulsory questions etc in examinations and, for online exams, the mode of completion, any time allowance included in the exam duration for uploads, and word limits (see EAF sections 9.3 and 9.5.2). Also include any paper specific regulations on, for example, the use of calculators, permitted reference material etc.

3. Marking conventions

3.1 University scale for standardised expression of agreed final marks [EAF 11.1]

Include one of the following as appropriate:

Undergraduate courses

For Moderations and Preliminary Examinations	
70 - 100	Distinction (where relevant)
40 – 69	Pass
39 – 0	Fail

For the Second Public Examination and Honour Moderations	
70 - 100	First Class
60 – 69	Upper Second
50 – 59	Lower Second
40 – 49	Third
30 – 39	Pass in Finals/Honour Mods
29 – 0	Fail

Some integrated Masters courses use the Postgraduate taught course scale for assessment taken in final Part of the University Examination, and for determining the outcome of the final award.[2]

For undergraduate certificates and diplomas offered by the Department for Continuing Education	
70 – 100	Distinction
60 – 69	Merit
40 – 59	Pass
0 – 39	Fail

An overall award of distinction may be made to candidates who have shown excellence over the whole examination. An overall award of merit may be made to candidates who have produced work of particularly high quality in the whole examination.

Postgraduate taught courses

70 - 100	Distinction
65 – 69	Merit
50 - 64	Pass
49 - 0	Fail

Postgraduate taught courses – alternative model

70 - 100	Distinction
50 – 69	Pass
49 - 0	Fail

This alternative model is permitted to be used by the following awards for the expression of agreed final marks:

- Master of Business Administration
- Executive Master of Business Administration
- Master of Science by Coursework in Major Programme Management
- Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Strategy
- Postgraduate Diploma in Global Business
- Postgraduate Diploma in Organisational Leadership
- Postgraduate Diploma in Strategy and Innovation

[2] MMathPhys – for cohorts completing from 16-17; MMath Mathematics, MMathStat Mathematics & Statistics, MCompSci Mathematics & Computer Science, MCompSci Computer Science for cohorts completing from 2020-21.

Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)

70 – 100	Distinction
65 – 69	Merit at Masters level
50 – 64	Pass at Masters level
40 - 49	Pass at Honours level (for Professional Graduate Certificate in Education)
0 – 39	Fail

Students who do not meet the requirements of the PGCE may be awarded the Professional Graduate Certificate in Education.

Postgraduate taught courses – historic models

For students who started their courses **before** Michaelmas term 2018 only, agreed final marks for individual papers should be expressed according to one of the following scales:

Model 1	
70 – 100	Distinction
50 – 69	Pass
49 – 0	Fail

Model 2	
70 – 100	Distinction
60 – 69	Pass
59 – 0	Fail

3.2 Qualitative marking criteria for different types of assessment

Marking criteria are a public statement of the main forms of judgement that assessors and examiners use when looking at a piece of examined work. Every different type of assessment should have in place a set of qualitative marking criteria. Marking criteria need to provide descriptors of the qualities that are expected in the assessed work and a description of the standard expected to obtain a mark in each of the standard bands for that course (for example for UG programmes: ≤39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69, etc, and for PGT programmes: ≤49, 50-64, 65-69, etc).

Where a change to assessment format compared to previous years has been made, this section should be updated to ensure that any new assessment formats have qualitative marking criteria that are appropriate for the assessment format.

3.3 Verification and reconciliation of marks [EAF 11.2]

For FPE [Except Honour Moderations]

There should be a clear statement on how each script/item is marked and the moderation process which is to be followed.

For FHS, Honour Moderations, and PGT courses

There should be a clear statement on how each script/item is to be marked and the moderation process which is to be followed. Where ‘double blind marking’ is used there should be a clear statement on reconciliation procedures demonstrating that any relevant University and divisional guidance is being followed. This statement should encompass an explanation of how any discrepancies between markers will be resolved. Simply averaging

the marks is discouraged, especially where there is more than a few marks' difference, or if the two marks are on different sides of a class boundary. If reconciliation is difficult, a third marker should act as arbiter in agreeing the appropriate mark. Only in exceptional circumstances (if such academic expertise is not otherwise obtainable within the University) should an external examiner be asked to act in this capacity. If an alternative method of marking has been approved by Education Committee details of this should be provided.

For papers for which there is a model solution and marking scheme approved by the examiners, there should be a statement that each script is marked by an examiner or assessor and is checked independently to ensure that all parts have been marked and the marks and part-marks have been correctly totalled and recorded.

For papers where single moderating marking has been used, there should be a statement that each script is to be marked by an examiner or assessor, details of the methodology used to sample papers for second-marking, and an explanation of how any discrepancies will be resolved.

For papers which are made up of a number of elements, give an explanation of how marks are awarded for the individual elements of assessment and how these marks are translated into paper level marks on the scale set out above (see section 3.1). Information should be provided about the decimal precision of the calculations and the conventions used for rounding marks.

3.4 Scaling
[EAF ~~11.7~~ 11.8]

Where scaling is used a clear description should be given of the circumstances in which it will be used and the methodology which will be used (detailed algorithms should be included as an appendix rather than in the main part of the examination conventions, and further detail should be given in examiners' reports). It should be made clear that scaling is not a mechanistic process, but one in which the examiners will use their academic judgement to ensure that appropriate classifications are awarded.

The following text is provided as an example:

[The Examiners may choose to scale marks where in their academic judgement:

a. a paper was more difficult or easy than in previous years, and/or

b. an optional paper was more or less difficult than other optional papers taken by students in a particular year, and/or

c. a paper has generated a spread of marks which are not a fair reflection of student performance on the University's standard scale for the expression of agreed final marks, ie the marks do not reflect the qualitative marks descriptors.

Such scaling is used to ensure that candidates' marks are not advantaged or disadvantaged by any of these situations. In each case, examiners will establish if they have sufficient evidence for scaling. Scaling will only be considered and undertaken after moderation of a paper has been completed, and a complete run of marks for all papers is available.

If it is decided that it is appropriate to use scaling, the examiners will review a sample of papers either side of the classification borderlines to ensure that the outcome of scaling is consistent with academic views of what constitutes an appropriate performance within in each class.

Detailed information about why scaling was necessary and how it was applied will be included in the Examiners' report and the algorithms used will be published for the information of all examiners and students.]

3.5 Short-weight convention and departure from rubric in examinations

There should be a statement on the short-weight convention that will be applied. If there are alternative arrangements (for 'compensation') these should be described.

The following texts are provided as examples:

> [A mark of zero shall be awarded for any part or parts of questions that have not been answered by a candidate, but which should have been answered.
>
> OR
>
> The maximum deduction that can be made for short weight should be equivalent to the proportion of the answer that is missing.]

This section could also describe the treatment of instances where a candidate fails to comply with the paper rubric (for example by not answering a compulsory question).

The following text is provided as an example:

> [Where a candidate has failed to answer a compulsory question, or failed to answer the required number of questions in different sections, the complete script will be marked and the issue flagged. The board of examiners will consider all such cases so that consistent penalties are applied.]

3.6 Penalties for late or non-submission of submitted work
[EAF 8.2; ER 14]

There should be a clear statement of penalties for late or non-submission of items, or non-completion of practical work. It should be made clear that non-submission of a required assessment for the FHS will result in failure of the whole FHS or in the case of an FHS assessed in Parts, the whole Part of the FHS. For the FPE and PGT programmes, it should be made clear that non-submission of a required assessment for the FPE or for the PGT programme will result in failure of the assessment with any resit capped at the pass mark.

The following text is provided as an example:

> [The scale of penalties agreed by the board of examiners in relation to late submission of assessed items is set out below. For information on penalties for late submission of open-book examination scripts, see section 3.10 below. Details of the circumstances in which such penalties might apply can be found in the *Examination Regulations* (Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14.)

Lateness	**Cumulative mark penalty**
After the deadline but submitted on the same day	[insert mark deduction*]
[insert time period]	[insert mark deduction*]
[insert time period]	[insert mark deduction*]

[insert time period]	[insert mark deduction*]
More than 14 calendar days after the deadline	Fail

* It should be clear whether this is a specific number of marks, or a percentage of the marks achieved by this student on this assessment

]

AND

[Failure to submit a required element of assessment will result in the failure of the whole Second Public Examination/Part.]

OR

[Failure to submit a required element of assessment will result in the failure of the assessment. The mark for any piece of the assessment will be capped at a pass.]

3.7 Penalties for over-length work and departure from approved titles or subject-matter in submitted work

[ER 16]

There should be a clear statement of the penalties for over-length work and departure from approved titles or subject-matter if these are in place.

There is no mechanism for requesting exemption from a penalty for over-length work. In exceptional cases Education Committee may consider a dispensation request on disability grounds. Requests without the strong support of DAS are unlikely to be granted.

The following texts are provided as examples in relation to over-length work:

[Where a candidate submits a dissertation (or other piece of written coursework) which exceeds the word limit prescribed by the relevant regulation, the examiners, if they agree to proceed with the examination of the work, may reduce the mark by up to one class (ie from a 1st to a 2:1, or its equivalent).

OR

The board has agreed the following tariff of marks to be deducted for over-length work:

Percentage by which the maximum word count is exceeded	**Cumulative mark penalty** (up to a maximum of [insert mark deduction])
Up to [insert value] %	[insert mark deduction*]
Over [insert value] % and up to [insert value] %	[insert mark deduction*]
Over [insert value] % and up to [insert value] %	[insert mark deduction*]

For each further [insert value] %	[insert mark deduction*]

* It should be clear whether this is a specific number of marks, or a percentage of the marks achieved by this student on this assessment

]

3.8 Penalties for poor academic practice in submitted work and open-book online examinations

[EAF 8.4.3]

Assessors should mark work on its academic merit with the board responsible for deducting marks poor academic practice ie for derivative or poor referencing. There should be a clear statement of the penalties for poor academic practice. There should be consistency across the cohort, for example, choosing to use or not use Turnitin for online submissions.

The following text is provided as an example:

[The scale of penalties agreed by the board of examiners in relation to poor academic practice for submitted work and open-book online examinations is set out below.

Band into which each case falls	**Mark penalty** (Must be between 1 and 10% of the marks available)
Band A: [insert example case]	[insert mark deduction*]
Band B: [insert example case]	[insert mark deduction*]
Band C: [insert example case]	[insert mark deduction*]

* It should be clear whether this is a specific number of marks, or a percentage of the marks achieved by this student on this assessment

OR

The Examination Board shall deal wholly with cases of poor academic practice in submitted work and open-book online examinations where the material under review is small and does not exceed 10% of the whole.

Assessors should mark work on its academic merit with the board responsible for deducting marks for derivative or poor referencing.

Determined by the extent of poor academic practice, the board shall deduct between 1% and 10% of the marks available for cases of poor referencing where material is widely available factual information or a technical description that could not be paraphrased easily; where passage(s) draw on a variety of sources, either verbatim or derivative, in patchwork fashion (and examiners consider that this represents poor academic practice rather than an attempt to deceive); where some attempt has been made to provide references, however incomplete (eg footnotes but no quotation marks, Harvard-style references at the end of a paragraph, inclusion in bibliography); or where passage(s) are ‘grey literature’ ie a web source with no clear owner.

In addition, any more serious cases of poor academic practice than described above should also always be referred to the Proctors.]

3.9 Penalties for non-attendance at examinations
[EAF ~~9.3.1~~ 11.9.1; ER 14]

There should be a clear statement of penalties for non-attendance at an examination (whether online or in-person). It should be made clear that non-attendance at an examination for the FHS will result in failure of the whole FHS or in the case of an FHS assessed in Parts, the whole Part of the FHS. For the FPE and PGT programmes, it should be made clear non-attendance at an examination for the FPE or for the PGT programme will result in failure of the assessment with any resit capped at the pass mark.

[Failure to attend an examination (whether online or in-person) will result in the failure of the whole Second Public Examination/Part.]

OR

[Failure to attend an examination (whether online or in-person) will result in the failure of the assessment. The mark for any resit of the assessment will be capped at a pass.]

3.10 Penalties for late submission of online examination scripts
[EAF 9.3.2]

There should be a clear statement of penalties for late submission of open-book examination scripts. The following text is provided as an example:

[For online exams using an Upload mode of completion candidates should ensure that any elements of an exam that are completed outside of Inspera (handwritten answers, graphs etc) are uploaded within the time allowed for their online examination.

Candidates should upload their exam response within the time allowed for their online examination (which includes an allowance for candidates to scan and upload their answers). If candidates do not upload their exam response within the time allowed, they may make an application via the online help form to have their exam response considered as in time at the point they upload their late response. The application will be considered by ~~Examination and Assessments~~ Student Assessments Team under delegated authority from the Proctors.

Where the entire script is uploaded after the end of their exam duration, and it is not accepted as if in time, the penalty of a mark of 0 shall be applied by the exam board. The penalty applies to the paper as a whole even if the examination is only one part of the assessment of that paper.

Where part of the script is uploaded after the end of their exam duration, and is not accepted as if in time, only the portion of the script that was uploaded within the time allowed for the online examination will be marked.

For exams using Typed mode of completion if a student has chosen, against advice, to draft their answers outside of Inspera, anything not copied into Inspera prior to the end of the exam duration cannot be submitted late and will not be marked.

]

3.11 Penalties for non-attendance at practical classes

[Attendance at the practical classes for Paper x is compulsory and will be monitored by the practical class instructors.]

There should be a clear statement of penalties for non-attendance at practical classes. The following text is provided as an example:

[A penalty of x% of the final mark for the paper will be applied for missing x classes, and a penalty of xx% for missing more than x classes, from a total of x classes.]

OR

[

Number of practical classes missed where excusal has not been granted	**Cumulative mark penalty** (up to a maximum of [insert mark deduction])
Up to [insert value]	[insert mark deduction*]
Over [insert value] and up to [insert value]	[insert mark deduction*]
Over [insert value]	[insert mark deduction*]

]

[The exam board will also be presented with the attendance information for students, specifying where non-attendance has been excused, and will make the final decision on application of penalties and/or progression.]

4. Progression rules and classification conventions

4.1 Qualitative descriptors of classes (FHS) / Qualitative descriptors of Distinction, Pass, Fail (FPE) / Qualitative descriptors of Distinction, Merit, Pass, Fail (PGT)

Qualitative descriptors should be given for classes for FHS examinations; for Distinction, Pass and Fail for FPE; and for Distinction, Merit, Pass and Fail for postgraduate taught courses. Qualitative descriptors for bands of marks may be given as an alternative.

4.2 Classification rules (FHS) / Final outcome rules (FPE/PGT)

There should be a clear explanation of the classification rules/rules for obtaining the final outcome. This should include the weight accorded to each element of assessment and how the marks aggregate to produce the classification or final outcome. For example, papers may have equal weight and an average taken, papers may be weighted and an average taken, and/or there may be preponderance rules. There may also be rules that specify that no paper may be below a certain threshold.

In the light of the rules followed, a statement about the way in which the board of examiners undertakes consideration of borderline outcomes might also be included.

When provided for in the relevant *Examination Regulations* (ie MSt, MPhil and MSc) you should include a statement on the restrictions on the award of distinction or merit for candidates who have resat an element of assessment. You may wish to include the text below:

[Candidates who have initially failed any element of the examination will not be eligible for the award of a Distinction or Merit.]

4.3 Progression rules

[to be taken from the special Examination Regulations for the course]

The subject-specific *Examination Regulations* should state the rules for progression, for example, from one 'Part' to another within the FHS or from year one to year two of a two-year Master's course. This information should also be provided or referenced in the examination conventions and may include more detailed information on the rules for progression. It should also be clear what happens if the student fails to meet the progression requirement.

4.4 Use of vivas
[EAF 10]

There should be a statement on the use and purpose of vivas where these are permitted by regulation. This should indicate whether vivas are to be used for all candidates, for candidates with outcomes on the borderline between particular classifications, or for failing candidates. Such vivas should be distinguished from any requirement for an oral element of a standard examination which is marked or part of a marked component.

5. Resits
[EAF 13]

The *Examination Regulations* state the circumstances when a resit is permitted either in the general regulations or the subject-specific regulations. In the examination conventions there should be a clear explanation of the circumstances in which students are entitled to resit an element of assessment and when resits would take place, with cross-references to the relevant *Examination Regulations*. Where resit marks will be capped, this should be clearly stated. This includes where resit marks are capped following failure of an assessment as a result of non-submission or non-attendance.

For PGT courses where an assessment, or assessments, for an examination have been failed at the first attempt, students are entitled to one further attempt unless otherwise specified by the special regulations for a course. Marks for any assessment that has been successfully completed at the first attempt may be carried forward, and therefore it will only be necessary for students to re-sit the failed assessment(s).

It should be made clear when resubmitted work can be a reworked version of the original submission and when a completely new submission is required. The following text is provided as an example for FPE and PGT courses which do not cap resits following academic failure:

> [Where a candidate has failed an assessment unit as a result of poor academic performance the mark for the resit of the assessment unit will be awarded on the merits of the work.
>
> Where a candidate has failed an assessment unit as a result of non-submitting an assessment item or as a result of non-attendance at a timed examination the mark for the resit of the assessment unit will be capped at a pass.
>
> In this context, an 'assessment unit' can refer to a single timed examination, a submission, other exercise, or a combination of assessment items. Where the assessment unit consists of more than one assessment item, for example a

submission and a timed examination, if the candidate passes the submission but fails the timed examination, they are only required to resit the failed assessment item (in this example the timed examination) not all the assessment items for the assessment unit.]

6. Consideration of mitigating circumstances

[EAF Annex E:]

There should be a statement explaining the procedure that will be adopted for the consideration of mitigating circumstances notices to examiners (made under Part 13 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations). The following text is provided as an example:

> [A candidate's final outcome will first be considered using the classification rules/final outcome rules as described above in section 4. The exam board will then consider any further information they have on individual circumstances.
>
> Where a candidate or candidates have made a submission, under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University Examinations, that unforeseen circumstances may have had an impact on their performance in an examination, a subset of the board (the 'Mitigating Circumstances Panel') will meet to discuss the individual applications and band the seriousness of each application on a scale of 1-3 with 1 indicating minor impact, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact. The Panel will evaluate, on the basis of the information provided to it, the relevance of the circumstances to examinations and assessment, and the strength of the evidence provided in support. Examiners will also note whether all or a subset of papers were affected, being aware that it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers. The banding information will be used at the final board of examiners meeting to decide whether and how to adjust a candidate's results. Further information on the procedure is provided in the *Examination and Assessment Framework, Annex E* and information for students is provided at https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment
>
> Candidates who have indicated they wish to be considered for DDH/DDM will first be considered for a classified degree, taking into account any individual MCE. If that is not possible and they meet the DDH/DDM eligibility criteria, they will be awarded DDH/DDM.]

7. Details of examiners and rules on communicating with examiners

List the name, position, and institution of the external examiner(s) as well as the names of all internal examiners (but not assessors). In conjunction with this, however, the conventions should underline the fact that candidates must not under any circumstances contact examiners directly. The following text is provided as an example:

> [Candidates should not under any circumstances contact individual internal or external examiners.]

Appendix [optional]

Provide details of any operational information for examiners if required. This would not normally be provided to students.

Annex B: Consequences of non-attendance or non-submission

In the table below, 'assessment unit' can refer to a single examination, a submission, other exercise, or a combination of assessment items (eg an exam and a submission, a submission and a viva etc, and 'University Examination' refers to all the assessment for the FPE, FHS, Part of an FHS, MSc, MSt, MPhil etc.

'Technical fail' refers to a fail due to non-attendance at an examination or non-submission of an assessment which is not excused by the Proctors. 'Academic fail' refers to a failing mark (any mark from 0 to below the pass threshold) for a piece of assessed work which has been attempted.

Assessment failed at first attempt	**Reason**	**Resit arrangements**	**Automatic fail of whole University Examination**	**Resit mark capped?**[3]	**Comments**
FPE assessment unit	Academic fail	Assessment retaken at next opportunity	No	No	If 50% of assessment units or more failed, all assessment units must be retaken. Exact requirements are described in special subject regulations.
	Technical fail	Assessment retaken at next opportunity	No	Yes	
FHS assessment unit	Academic fail	Resit only permitted if student not given classified outcome	Dependent on classification conventions	No	Some classification conventions state that a candidate with less than 30 on any assessment unit automatically fails the FHS. Resit arrangements for FHS with Parts are specified in special subject regulations.
	Technical fail	Resit of all assessment (for either whole FHS or Part of the FHS depending on subject)	Yes (either whole FHS or Part of the FHS depending on subject)	No	

[3] ER 14.22(3) 'Where a candidate is deemed to have failed a paper under this Part and the Examination is one in which Honours are not awarded or for Honour Moderations, for any further attempt at that paper that is permitted by regulation the examiners shall award a mark no higher than the pass mark (as defined for the Examination) for the paper'.

Assessment failed at first attempt	Reason	Resit arrangements	Automatic fail of whole University Examination	Resit mark capped?[3]	Comments
PGT assessment unit (one item of assessment)	Academic fail	Assessment retaken at next opportunity	No	Dependent on special subject regulations or examination conventions	Ineligible for a distinction or merit overall*
	Technical fail	Assessment retaken at next opportunity	No	Yes	
PGT assessment unit (two or more items of assessment)	Academic fail	Failed assessment item(s) retaken at next opportunity; passed assessment item(s) carried forward	No	Dependent on special subject regulations or examination conventions	Ineligible for a distinction or merit overall*
	Technical fail	Failed assessment item(s) retaken at next opportunity; passed assessment item(s) carried forward	No	Yes – assessment item and assessment unit capped at pass mark	Both assessment item and assessment unit mark are specified as being capped at the pass mark for the resit to allow for differences in presentation on the transcript of assessment units with multiple assessment items. Ineligible for a distinction or merit overall*

* Exceptionally, supervisory bodies may approve examination conventions that allow examiners to consider for distinction or merit otherwise excellent candidates who have initially failed a minor assessment item ~~(no more than 10% to the overall award outcome)~~. Examination conventions should specify the element(s) that may be disregarded (see section 11.1.3).

Annex C: Procedure for the investigation of academic misconduct ~~plagiarism~~

This procedure aims to deal with any concerns identified by examiners, or others, about the standard of scholarly referencing and attribution in submitted work. It is designed to operate proportionately, investigating and resolving concerns at the lowest appropriate level, and in a timely manner.

Please refer to the University Academic Disciplinary Procedure for more detailed information. The procedure applies to reports of breaches of the Code of Discipline, as set out in Statute XI, made on or after 1 September 2025. The provisions of Statute XI which will apply in any particular case will be those in force when the behaviour occurred.

Annex D: Competence standards

1. Competence standards can be defined as the 'academic, medical or other standard[s] applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability'[4] in their course, or as 'a particular level of competence or ability that a student must demonstrate to be accepted on to, progress within and successfully complete a course or programme of study.'[5] A competence standard must not itself be unlawfully discriminatory[6], therefore it must not be applied only to a disabled student and must be:

   - Genuinely relevant to the course;
   - Applied equally to all students, whether with or without a disability; and
   - A proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

2. The *proportionate means* component requires that:

   - There is a pressing need that supports the standard's purpose;
   - The application of the standard will achieve that aim; and
   - There is no other way of achieving the aim that is less detrimental to disabled people.

4. The Equality Challenge Unit states that 'Higher education institutions (HEIs) have responsibility for developing non-discriminatory competence standards, and designing a study programme to address these competence standards. HEIs also have the responsibility to ensure that assessment methods address the competence standards. Adjustments to ways that competence standards are assessed may be required so that disabled students are not put at a disadvantage in demonstrating their achievement.'[7]

5. Competence standards cannot be used to justify 'direct discrimination' against a disabled person. For example, a blanket refusal to allow a student to participate in any assessed experimental work merely because they are physically disabled would clearly be direct discrimination. Equally, it is important to ensure that competence standards are not indirectly discriminating against disabled students. The Equality Challenge Unit gives the example of requiring all students to write examinations by hand, which would put a student with arthritis at a disadvantage.

6. Not all competences or assessment criteria which students might be expected to fulfil on a particular course can necessarily be considered 'competence standards'. For example, a language course may require that students spend a year abroad, but this requirement in itself is not a competence standard, and so is subject to the duty to make

[4] Equality Act 2010

[5] Understanding the interaction of competence standards and reasonable adjustments, Equality Challenge Unit

[6] Unlawful discrimination includes direct discrimination, which is never justifiable, and indirect discrimination or discrimination arising from a disability which cannot be justified in accordance with the numbered requirements set out in paragraph 2.

[7] Understanding the interaction of competence standards and reasonable adjustments, Equality Challenge Unit

reasonable adjustments. The competence standards are the knowledge and skills which the students are expected to acquire during the year abroad.[8]

7. *Examples of competence standards.* These will vary considerably between disciplines. Some courses need to comply with external standards set by the relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body, which will feed into their competence standards. Some examples are included in the guidance from the Equality Challenge Unit on the interaction of competence standards and reasonable adjustments.[9] Competence standards include admissions criteria – such as having studied a modern foreign language – where these are valid requirements for the course. Ability to communicate well in the English language might also be a competence standard.

8. In the sciences, students may be required to undertake laboratory practicals or complete manual clinical tasks in order to achieve the learning outcomes for an award. A time limit may be imposed on the assessment of a fundamental skill where this is genuinely relevant and necessary, eg a clinical measurement or task. The Equality Challenge Unit gives the example of a chemistry degree which is primarily theoretical, in which 'being able to manipulate test tubes or visually identify chemicals might not be a competence standard, and may be reasonably adjusted through provision of a practical assistant. However, in a pharmacy degree, training a student to achieve the practical competencies to become a pharmacist, the same tasks might constitute competence standards.'[10] In some examinations, for example those assessing knowledge of and application of quantitative techniques, the format of the assessment may be restricted by the nature of the test. An in-person, invigilated assessment may therefore be most appropriate when candidates are being tested on their crystallised knowledge and ability to select and apply relevant techniques and skills. Where candidates are expected to demonstrate competence in a variety of modes of assessment, it would be reasonable to state that, for example, submission of a research project or extended piece of writing formed one of the competence standards for the course.

9. Assessment methods should assess competence standards, and it needs to be considered whether a proposed reasonable adjustment compromises the competence standard in any way. For example, in an assessment testing students' knowledge of the spelling and grammar of a foreign language, the Equality Challenge Unit suggests that it is unlikely that a student would be able to use a computer spelling and grammar checker in the relevant language as a reasonable adjustment, as this would compromise the competence standard.[11]

10. *Identifying competence standards.* Each course's educational aims and the programme outcomes students are expected to achieve should be set out in the relevant course handbook. These provide the framework within which competence standards are applied in order to determine whether students have achieved the requirements for an award. Supervisory bodies should consider which aspects of the programme aims and learning outcomes may justifiably be considered competence standards, ie strictly relevant and necessary for course completion. This will involve identifying the particular knowledge, skill or ability which is being tested, and the appropriate standard required in

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid

[10] Ibid

[11] Ibid

order to obtain the award. A competence standard which does not meet the requirements of being genuinely relevant to the course, applied equally to all students, and a proportionate means of meeting a legitimate aim may be unlawfully discriminatory.

11. *Distinguishing competence standards and methods of assessment.* While competence standards are exempt from the obligation to make reasonable adjustments, the method by which students demonstrate their attainment of a learning outcome is not itself a competence standard (although there may be rare occasions where the competence standard and the method of assessment are inextricably linked, eg a musical performance). Thus, requiring all candidates to complete a written exam within three hours would lead to indirect discrimination[12] and discrimination arising from disability[13] against people with fatigue conditions, physical impairments, or learning disabilities unless it could be shown that the three-hour time limit met all the requirements of criteria (1) to (3) in paragraph 2 above. This would be unlikely in most courses given the variety of methods of assessment already accepted within the University, as well as the difficulty of demonstrating that an ability to write within a single particular time limit was an integral and irreplaceable component of the standards applied in order to determine whether the student has the required level of competence or ability. Failure to make adjustments to the mode of assessment for disabled students could therefore give rise to claims of discrimination, including a failure to make reasonable adjustments. By contrast, an ability to demonstrate synoptic knowledge of material studied over the course of one or two years is likely to be regarded as an acceptable competence standard. However, a method of assessing this knowledge which required high levels of stamina in order to complete a number of papers within a limited time scale would not be justifiable.

12. The identification of a course's competence standards is key to avoiding unlawful discrimination and enabling the University to meet its anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments (See Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements). Therefore, supervisory bodies must clarify the competence standards of their courses[14]. The Equality Challenge Unit 'recommends a collaborative approach to developing and reviewing competence standards. This will require input from those with particular knowledge of disability as well as from academic staff with subject-specific knowledge', and provides some guidance on this.[15]

[12] 'Indirect discrimination' occurs when a policy, criterion or practice applied equally to all students has the effect of putting disabled students at a substantial disadvantage and is unlawful unless it can be justified as a 'proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'.

[13] 'Discrimination arising from disability' occurs where a person is treated less favourably as a result of their disability and the treatment cannot be justified.

[14] The OIA has recommended that the University review its assessment criteria and processes with the aim of identifying appropriate competence standards for its courses.

[15] Understanding the interaction of competence standards and reasonable adjustments, Equality Challenge Unit (Advance HE)

Annex E: Consideration of mitigating circumstances by examiners (MCE)

Introduction

1. This annex is organised into two parts:

    - taking into account disruption to teaching, learning and assessment that could affect the performance in assessment of a whole group or cohort of candidates
    - mitigating circumstances that might affect the performance in assessment of an individual candidate.

2. The exam board should consider any disruption to teaching, learning and assessment prior to the consideration of any adjustment for individual mitigating circumstances.

3. The relevant Examination Regulations are the *Regulations for the conduct of University Examinations: Part 13 Mitigating Circumstances: Notices to Examiners* (ER 13).

Disruption affecting a group or cohort of candidates

4. Disruption to teaching, learning and assessment could affect the performance in assessment of a whole group or cohort of candidates. The candidates could be all candidates taking a particular assessment (who may or may not all be on the same course) or could be a whole course cohort. The disruption is likely to affect all candidates in the group, although candidates may experience different impacts as a result of the disruption.

5. Disruption that could affect a group of candidates will fall into one of the following two categories:

    - *disruption to the examination or the examination process* eg bells, building work, failure of a University IT system, or errors in papers
    - *disruption to teaching and learning* eg pandemic, industrial action, issues with buildings or facilities, issues with staffing etc.

6. Under Part 16 of the *Examination Regulations* (ER 16) examiners are not normally able to take into account circumstances not related to the examination when adjudicating on the merits of candidates, as set out in section 16.1:

    > No examiner adjudicating on the merits of any candidate shall take account of any circumstances, not forming part of, or directly resulting from, the examination itself, except as provided in Parts 12 *[exam adjustments]* or 13 *[mitigating circumstances]* of these regulations.

7. It is important that examiners only consider circumstances that have been officially notified to them. This is to ensure that candidates' personal circumstances that are known to the examiner, or other information about the course, do not influence the independence of the decision-making process.

8. This process allows examiners to take into account matters of disruption to the examination process (which could be considered as 'directly resulting from, the examination itself') but also matters related to teaching and learning that are out of scope of the current provisions in regulation.

9. The pre-board process in relation to disruptions to the examination process will be as follows[16]

    - For disruptions to the examination process the Proctors Office should be notified promptly after the examination as to the nature of the disruption, the duration of the disruption and who was impacted. This notification can be from the Examination School, a College or a candidate directly.
    - Once notified the Proctors Office will then provide the relevant information to the Student Assessment Team and the Chair of Examiners and instruct them to consider the impact under the group MCE process.
    - The Chair of Examiners should issue a circular to the candidate cohort and their college academic administrators to advise them that the impact has been recorded and will be considered in due course at the board meeting.
    - At this time the Chair should also encourage any candidate who believes they were unduly impacted beyond the rest of the cohort to detail this through the individual MCE process.

10. For disruptions to teaching and learning – such as a result of industrial action or a pandemic – the department should ensure that exam boards are notified at a high level of the overall status of disruption and any mitigation that has been put in place that relate to the papers for which the exam board is responsible. This should focus on any elements of teaching and learning that have not been able to be delivered at all or only partially (in the original form or an acceptable alternative).

Process for consideration

11. When the exam board meets, they will first need to consider any information received about group/cohort disruption, before consideration of any individual MCEs. The group consideration should be done at a paper by paper level through a three stage decision making process (stage 1 and stage 3 parallel the two stage process for individual MCEs):

    i. Assess the information provided in relation to the group disruption of teaching and learning and/or disruption of an exam, this could include:
        - Did the disruption compromise the assessment in its entirety or only partly?
        - How significant was the impact on the candidates' ability to prepare for/complete assessment?

    ii. Assessing mitigation – what has already been done to reduce/eliminate the impact? Does the mitigation neutralise the impact fully or partially?

    iii. What (if any) action should be taken to address any residual impact? (these parallel the three outcomes from the individual MCE process):

        a) Disregarding a paper

        This is the action to remove a paper or papers from consideration entirely and classify on a reduced set. This should only be undertaken if the residual impact is felt to be very severe and that the disruption compromised the paper in its entirety. This action should normally be taken in advance and agreed as

[16] This is based on existing custom and practice within the Proctors Office.

part of any revisions to assessment and examination conventions in response to disruption.

b) *Finalising the mark for a paper taking into account all available material*

This action allows examiners to potentially disregard elements of a paper (eg a particular question), as can be necessary, for example:

- where there is an error in the exam
- where elements were not taught
- where elements could not be completed or not completed to the normal expected standard (such as due to interrupted lab work or library access)
- by modifying assessment criteria to reflect what has been taught (this should, wherever possible, have been done proactively but can be done during the examining process if needed).

c) *Reviewing the overall mark profile for the paper*

Examiners can compare the overall mark profile for the paper and if significantly out of line with previous years use scaling to adjust the profile (see also the marks safeguard).

12. The exam board should record stages i to iii within the board minutes. ~~This may be as a narrative description or~~ This should be in tabular format similar to that ~~suggested~~ for recording the for individual MCE actions and decisions, and provide the reasons as to why a particular decision was made and why other options were not appropriate.

Individual mitigating circumstances

What the process covers

13. Part 13 of the University's *Examination Regulations* states that:

> This Part is concerned with candidates whose performance in a University Examination may be significantly affected by acute illness or some other urgent cause, not falling within regulation 12.1 above, which the candidate wishes to be brought to the attention of the examiners before, during or after an examination.

14. The process is about circumstances that have seriously affected a student's *performance in assessment* ie how well they have completed the assessment task, and circumstances which are related to acute illness or other urgent cause which is unavoidable and/or insurmountable. Circumstances relating to long-term issues, chronic conditions or disabilities should normally be dealt with via other university processes, including:

- Standard examination adjustments, as set out in Annex I
- Major adjustments to assessment, as set out in Annex F
- Exam excusal, as set out in EAF section 9.8
- Extensions for submission of work, as set out in EAF section 8.2

15. Candidates with long-term issues, chronic conditions or disabilities may still submit an MCE in relation to their circumstances where:

- There has been a significant change or exacerbation of the circumstances during the assessment period;

- A late diagnosis has meant that it was not possible to implement assessment adjustments. Where late notification of an SpLD has occurred, the exam board should also take into account whether the work has been remarked with the IMG when considering what action to take (see Annex I paragraph 24).

- Adjustments implemented were not sufficient to fully mitigate against the candidate's circumstances.

Where late notification of an SpLD has occurred, examination boards should have a record of the assessments for which an IMG has been considered during marking and take this it in account when considering what action to take.

16. The **MCE process cannot take into consideration aspects of assessment that are covered by other regulations and processes and/or that do not relate to performance in assessment**, including:

    - Issues relating to late submission of submitted work/exam responses, non-attendance at examinations, incorrect submissions/exam responses (covered by Part 14 of the Examination Regulations and EAF sections 8.2, 8.3, 9.5 and 9.8). These circumstances are covered by other University processes and do not relate to the student's performance in assessment, but their ability to attend an examination or on time and correctly submit a submission/exam response. With the exception of students who have become ill or affected by other urgent cause during an examination (whether in-person or online) and have been unable to complete it for that reason (see EAF section 9.7).

    - Issues relating to academic misconduct ~~or poor academic practice~~ (see EAF sections 8.4.3, 9.6 and 9.9). (Where an exam board chair has decided that a matter can be considered by the board as poor academic practice, then the board **can** take an MCE in to account when considering a penalty, including choosing to reduce a penalty or deciding not to impose a penalty. (See the University Academic Disciplinary Procedure.))

Procedure for notifying examiners

17. Candidates can notify the examiners of mitigating circumstances due to the impact of any of the following on their performance in assessment:

    - sudden illness or accidental injury
    - more long-standing conditions which may or may not have resulted in alternative examination arrangements under Part 12 (see paragraph 15 above)
    - bereavement (usually the death of a close relative/significant other)
    - significant adverse personal/family circumstances
    - other serious circumstances (eg the impact of a crime).

18. Candidates who have in place exam adjustments (see EAF section 7.1) or major adjustments to assessment (see EAF section 7.2), but who believe that those arrangements may not be sufficient to fully mitigate the impact of disability on their performance, either

- due to the nature of the disability
- as a result of a fluctuating condition, or
- because exam adjustments could not be delivered due to late application

can use the mitigating circumstances notice to examiners procedure to make examiners aware of this. Candidates with exam adjustments or major adjustments to assessment will not be considered under the mitigating circumstances process if they do not submit an MCE.

19. A mitigating circumstances notice to examiners (MCE) should be submitted by the candidate. Guidance is provided for candidates.[17] They may also seek support from college staff. The college may, but is not required to, include a college statement as part of the notice to examiners. Notices should be submitted through student self-service/eVision. Colleges may submit an MCE on behalf of a candidate, if the candidate is unable to do so themself (eg due to hospitalisation).

20. Candidates should provide a detailed statement explaining the ways in which their circumstances affected their preparation for or performance in assessment, alongside at least one piece of independent evidence.

21. Independent evidence may be medical evidence provided by a doctor (which should meet the University's standard for medical evidence), supporting statements from other professionals (counsellors, chaplain, tutors, college staff, solicitor etc), or other documentary evidence (travel schedules, funeral programme, police report, relevant emails etc).

22. In the case of MCEs submitted in relation to exam adjustments/major adjustments to assessment which the candidate believes did not fully mitigate the impact of disability on their performance, the notification of approved adjustments should be included, eg extra time, rest breaks, not taking exams in the morning, an amanuensis, etc and the candidate should explain why the adjustments have not been sufficient.

23. The MCE process should not be used to make complaints about the conduct of examinations, and any such complaints should be referred to the Proctors for consideration (see section 15 of the *EAF*).

Timing of mitigating circumstances notices

24. MCEs can be submitted at any time and candidates should submit them as soon as they are able after the circumstances that have affected performance have occurred.

25. MCEs will be forwarded to the chair of examiners if they are received before noon on the day before the exam board meeting. Notices received after this deadline will be considered by the Proctors, and will only be passed on to examiners if received within **one month** of the meeting of the final exam board **and** if one of the following criteria is met:

    - The candidate's condition is such as to prevent them from making an earlier submission;

[17] https://www.ox.ac.uk/candidates/academic/exams/problems-completing-your-assessment

- The candidate's condition is not known or diagnosed until after the final meeting of the examiners;
- There has been a procedural error (beyond the candidate's control) that has prevented the candidate's information from being submitted.

Any applications received more than one month after the final exam board meeting will be considered as out of time.

26. If the Proctors decide not to pass on an MCE to examiners, the regulations require them to give their reasons for their decision. A candidate or their college may appeal against a decision of this kind under the regulations governing appeals.[18]

Consideration by a Mitigating Circumstances Panel

27. A subset of the board (the 'Mitigating Circumstances Panel') should meet to discuss the individual notices to examiners. Except for very small examination boards, the Panel should consist of a minimum of three members. In smaller departments, the entire exam board may need to act as the Panel. ~~The Panel should band the seriousness of each notice to examiners on a scale of 1-3, with 1 meaning that the evidence indicates that the mitigating circumstances would have had a minor impact on the candidate's performance, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact.~~

28. The Mitigating Circumstances Panel should document each issue raised in a notice, the paper(s) impacted, the evidence taken into account when considering the impact, and the extent of the impact on the affected paper(s) with the Panel's reasoning.

~~28. The Mitigating Circumstances Panel should not consider examination scripts/exam responses/submissions or marks, but should only consider the mitigating circumstances notices, ie it should consider the evidence regarding the mitigating circumstances rather than its impact on the actual work submitted. The role of the Panel is to evaluate, on the basis of the information provided to it, the relevance of the circumstances to examinations and assessment.~~

29. The board of examiners will separately consider whether and how to adjust a candidate's results as a result of the mitigating circumstances, taking into account both the Panel's considerations of the notice(s)~~banding of the seriousness of the notice~~, and the scripts/submissions and marks.

30. ~~When making its decision on the seriousness of each notice to examiners,~~ The Panel should consider the circumstances and their **relevance** to examinations/assessment and the **strength of the evidence** provided:

(a) The circumstances and their relevance to examinations/assessment

- the types of circumstances which are likely to be covered in mitigating circumstances notices to examiners are covered in paragraph 17 above.
- in the case of health issues or bereavement, it may be helpful to consider whether the circumstances would have resulted in sick or compassionate leave in an employment context.

[18] Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 18 Appeals Against Decisions of the Proctors and Examiners

- that relatively minor illnesses, which might have resulted in one day's absence in an employment context (eg a migraine), could be judged as being likely to have had a very serious impact on a candidate's performance for an examination taking place on the day of the illness.

- any evidence provided on how the impact of the circumstances has already been mitigated should be taken into account (eg if an extension has already been granted for a submission).

- for candidates with exam adjustments or major adjustments to assessment (see paragraph 18) ~~banding~~ the Panel should take into account the information provided that existing accommodations have not fully mitigated the impact of the disability or illness. This might be the case if the candidate has:

    - a very serious disability/long-term health condition which is difficult to fully adjust for
    - if they have a fluctuating condition and were particularly affected during the examination/assessment period
    - if an examination adjustment itself has had an adverse impact on the candidate's performance (examples might include the fatigue caused by taking examinations with extra time; the experience of lengthy extended supervision; and frequent interruptions due to the need to take rest breaks).

- how the timing of the circumstances relates to the examination period/deadline for submission, including to the preparation period for the assessment, and whether it is reasonable to conclude that the circumstances described would be likely to have an impact on a candidate's performance.

- whether all or a subset of papers appear likely to have been affected, based on the evidence provided regarding the timing (since it is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers).

(b) Strength of the evidence

31. All evidence should clearly demonstrate that the student was affected at the time of the examinations/assessment and/or in the preparation period, and provide explicit detail about the ways in which the circumstances would have affected the candidate's performance. All MCEs must be supported by at least one piece of evidence provided by an independent source, meaning an unbiased item of evidence or testimonial that corroborates the candidate's statement.

32. All evidence must be:
    - dated, signed or otherwise authorised (eg from an NHS email address) and make clear the identity of the source (eg headed paper, email signature)
    - clearly legible and ideally typed rather than handwritten
    - provided in English. An informal translation can be provided by the student if the evidence is not in English. The board may request an official translation
    - provided in an easily accessible and (relatively) secure format generated by the source eg pdf.

33. For health issues, medical evidence, normally from a college doctor, should be supplied. This will be stronger if it was generated at or near the time of the circumstances, and if it is based on the medical practitioner's examination of the student, rather than only reporting the student's views. General information about a candidate (eg Student

Support Plan (SSP), general diagnosis, statement of fitness to work) is not sufficient to support an MCE.

34. Please note that in cases of acute illness (eg a relatively minor illness on the day of an examination), evidence from a college nurse should be accepted and considered to be appropriate.

35. In cases where the notice to examiners indicates that a student completed only part of a paper, chairs of examiners should note that they can request the invigilator's log for the examination in question from the Student Assessments Team as supporting evidence (eg the log will note if a candidate left the examination room due to illness).

36. Other appropriate evidence might include a statement from the Disability Advisory Service or Counselling Service, in the case of long-term conditions, or a statement from the police or a solicitor, in the case of a crime.

37. In the case of bereavement, a copy of a death certificate might be supplied, although a statement from a doctor or from the Counselling Service could also be accepted as appropriate evidence.

38. In the case of adverse personal/family circumstances, the Panel should note that it might be difficult for the student to provide appropriate evidence other than a statement from their college. A detailed statement from the college, which might include what it has done to help the student, should be accepted as appropriate evidence in such cases.

39. The presence or absence of a college statement should not in itself be taken as indicating the seriousness of the notice to examiners, as there is no requirement for such statements to be included as part of the notice.

40. Colleges should not comment on the prior academic performance of a student, and if they do, the Panel should not take this into account.

41. Evidence in a college statement may be useful in explaining any issues with obtaining other evidence, or in providing evidence regarding what help has already been given to the student due to their mitigating circumstances.

Consideration of MCEs by the board of examiners

42. Once any adjustments have been made at the group level the exam board should consider the individual MCEs and make any further adjustments if appropriate. considerations of the notice(s) by the Mitigating Circumstances Panel and the scripts/submissions and marks. Where the exam board decides that the mitigations taken as a result of consideration of group-wide disruption are sufficient and no further adjustment is required, this should be recorded.

43. When deciding what action to take from an MCE, examiners must select one or more of the options in the table below. Examiners are always expected to consider very carefully the circumstances that affected the candidate's performance on the relevant examination/assessment dates and/or in the preparation period, and to determine whether those circumstances are likely to have affected the candidate's results to the extent that any adjustment should be made. When considering what action to take the board should be aware of the limits of the process explained in paragraph 16. Where more than one action may be possible, the exam board must document the actions

considered and reason(s) for the action chosen and why other options were not appropriate.

Actions	Guidance
1. No Action*	Examiners determine that it would not be appropriate to take any of the other options given in this table.
2. Finalising the* mark for a paper or papers taking into account all available material	This could mean finalising a mark for a paper on the basis of the number of questions actually completed rather than the number of questions required, where there is evidence that a particular paper was affected. It is likely that this will be appropriate for papers where at least half of the questions have been completed. Examiners should not otherwise change the mark for an individual paper.
3. Passing the* notice to the examiners of the final results/ classification meeting	For early parts of multi-part exams, and exams which release final marks throughout the course, the mitigating circumstances notice must be passed to the final exam board which will make the final classification decision, so that the board can consider whether the final classification should be affected. However, this should not preclude examiners for the earlier parts from also considering notices if this is felt appropriate, eg to determine eligibility for progression. If a candidate's circumstances are considered more than once (eg at the meeting for an earlier part and at the final meeting), this should be recorded, with the decisions made at the different stages made clear. A confidential record of previously submitted medical evidence will need to be kept, including any action taken, eg on a password-protected spreadsheet, for use in the final classification meeting.[19]
4. Disregarding a paper or papers and finalising results on the basis of the remaining work	This is most likely to be appropriate in cases of acute illness, where it is clear that performance in a particular paper affected by that illness is weaker than other papers. It is likely that it will normally be appropriate to allow only one paper to be disregarded while still allowing results to be finalised on the basis of the remaining material, although exceptionally it may be appropriate to disregard more than one paper. Where a paper is disregarded, its mark should be reported as 'no result expected' rather than as zero. Note that this action cannot be taken by an interim board as the decision whether or not to disregard a paper should be done only when all assessment has been completed giving the full context for and consideration of the impact of disregarding the paper.

[19] Under ~~the terms of the General Data Protection Regulation/Data Protection Act 2018~~ UK Data Protection legislation, sensitive personal information must be kept securely and accessed only on a 'need-to-know' basis. Adequate security measures must be observed, eg the information must not be copied to laptops or memory sticks and taken off the premises (c.f. the University's Policy on Data Protection at https://compliance.admin.ox.ac.uk/data-protection-policy).

	Boards should not take this action where doing so would compromise the competence standards for the award.
5. Reviewing the progression requirements*	Where there is evidence that a candidate's performance has been affected over one or more papers and this leaves them just below a progression boundary, examiners may consider whether they are allowed to progress (eg permitted to progress to the FHS, or to the final Part of a multi-part honours school, despite not having met the usual threshold for doing so). This may include extending the threshold usually used for consideration of boundary cases or reducing the requirements for progression. If this action is taken and the progression threshold requirements have been extended or reduced, and examiners consider that it is not appropriate for the mark for an individual paper to appear on the candidate's transcript, the examiners should report the mark as 'no result expected'
6. Reviewing the classification/overall outcome requirements (giving particular consideration to candidates who are just below boundaries)*	Where there is evidence that a candidate's performance has been affected over one or more papers and this leaves them just below a classification boundary, examiners may consider whether they should be awarded the higher classification. This may include extending the threshold usually used for consideration of boundary cases for classification in the higher band, or removing the overall outcome cap following a resit. Boards should not take this action where doing so would compromise the competence standards for the award. Where there are multiple overlapping MCEs, more than one action may be required including reviewing classification. However, reviewing classification should not be considered if individual adjustments to **all** affected papers have already been applied to avoid double compensation. Where a student fails to meet the required classification for progression, but an uplift of classification is granted under action 6 such that the student now meets the requirement, any other progression requirement also impacted by the MCE should be waived under action 5[20]. If this action is taken and the classification threshold requirements have been extended or reduced, and examiners consider that it is not appropriate for the mark for an individual paper to appear on

[20] For example, where the progression into the 4th year of an integrated masters requires achievement of an overall classification at the end of year 3 and also an average mark for year 3 assessments, the overall classification at the end of year 3 may be uplifted in response to an MCE such that the classification progression hurdle element is now met, but the average mark for the impacted assessments remains below the required level of the second progression hurdle element. In such cases, the second progression hurdle element should be adjusted as necessary to ensure consistency and fairness. For instance, by waiving the average mark requirement for the year 3 assessments for progression.

	the candidate's transcript, the examiners should report the mark as 'no result expected'.
7. Removing any* cap on resit marks	Where a candidate has submitted evidence that they were significantly affected for an assessment or assessments but the examiners do not consider it appropriate to give the assessment a passing mark (or to disregard the assessment), and the resit attempt would ordinarily be capped, the examiners may recommend to the resit board that the resit attempt should not be capped. This is an alternative action where examiners are unable to take action 2 or 4 because it would compromise competence standards. Boards cannot uncap resits (or awards) where capping would normally be applied due to a technical fail.
8. Recommendation to Education Committee for an exceptional resit*	In circumstances where there has clearly been serious impact on a candidate but there is no action which the examiners determine it is appropriate to take, they may wish to consider whether to recommend that an application is made to Education Committee for appropriate dispensation with regard to resit entitlement. For example, examiners may recommend that a candidate be granted: • a reduced schedule of re-assessment • a second attempt at an assessment where this would not normally be allowed • eligibility for an overall award of a distinction or merit where the exam board is recommending uncapped resits • an exceptional third attempt at an assessment In such cases, the exam board administrator should inform the college (or department for non-matriculated students) of the board's recommendation in order to allow them to make an application to Education Committee. Requests to void an assessment attempt cannot be considered. Examiners should also note the option, under action 7, of recommending to a resit board that the resit attempt should not be capped.

*These are the only actions that can be taken by interim exam boards.

44. When deciding what action to take from an MCE, the board cannot:

Change marks	Except where finalising a mark for a paper on the basis of the number of questions actually completed rather than the number of questions required.	Annex E, Table Option B
Uncap a resit requirement arising from a technical fail	Boards cannot uncap resits (or awards) where capping would normally be applied due to a technical fail	Annex E Table Option G
Retrospectively take action in relation to first attempts	Post resit, the resit board cannot consider action relating to the first attempt except under a late MCE, eg	Annex E, paragraph 46

	the resit board cannot uncap the resit if this was not recommended by the board that considered the first attempt.	
Consider circumstances not related to acute illness or other urgent cause (unless related to specific criteria regarding chronic conditions or disabilities)	Eg the board cannot consider complaints about teaching and supervision, access to resources, etc. The Student Complaints Procedure is the appropriate route for addressing these issues.	Annex E, paragraphs 14 and 15
Waive penalties for late submission and overlength work where these are prescribed by the examination conventions		Annex E, paragraph 16
Excuse a subset of papers	Exam boards cannot do a combination of the two options ie a student either has to be examined at another time and place on **all** the excused assessments **or** it is decided that the available material is sufficient to allow the candidate to progress / be classified.	11.9.4

This list is not exhaustive. If boards are in any doubt whether an action is permitted clarification should be sought from Education Policy Support.

45. ~~44.~~ When considering the impact of a disability upon a candidate's assessment, it is appropriate to bear in mind the relevant equality law. For candidates who submitted an MCE having already been granted alternative arrangements/major adjustments for disability, examiners should be aware of *Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements* and *Annex I: Examination adjustments*. Universities are obliged under the Equality Act 2010 to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates. The only exception to this is in the application of a competence standard. However, there are limitations on what may fairly be judged to be a competence standard and in nearly all cases reasonable adjustments must be made to the way in which the standard is assessed (also see *Annex D: Competence standards* for further details).

Consideration of MCEs for resits

46. Mitigating circumstances for a candidate who is resitting a paper or papers can only be taken into account in relation to the papers that are being resat, and in relation to a candidate's overall academic performance (where they are not resitting all papers but carrying forward some from their first attempt). Exam boards are therefore limited to paper level actions for the resit papers (Actions 2, 4, and 5) whilst also being able to take action 6 in terms of the overall outcome (including removing any overall outcome cap).

47. A resit board cannot retrospectively take action in relation to first attempt papers. A re-sit is a new entry for a 'University Examination' (eg FHS, MSc). MCEs must be submitted by noon of the day of the final exam board and so the MCE relevant to the 1st attempt is

considered at that point, and then a final outcome released completing that University Examination. A new MCE can be submitted prior to the resit exam board meeting.

Record-keeping

48. A formal record should be kept of the exam board's consideration of any cohort wide actions taken. This should be captured in the minutes under a separate section. In addition to this the exam board's consideration of a candidate's MCE and any actions taken should be recorded.

49. For both the cohort-wide action and the individual circumstances actions exam board should confirm that (a) information about mitigating circumstances has been considered by the examiners, (b) how that information has been considered (ie the information that has been taken into account, and the conclusions that have been drawn from that information), and (c) the outcome of the consideration with the reasons for the decision(s) reached and why other options were not appropriate. This should be available as general minutes for the cohort-wide actions (although other formats can be used) and as a table for the self-assessment actions in the minutes of the examiners' proceedings. Exam boards should record this information either on the pro forma~~s~~ available at the end of this annex or in a spreadsheet.

50. The outcome should be entered onto eVision[21] for publication to candidates with results via Candidate Self Service.

51. The mitigating circumstances notice to examiners (MCE) procedure should be part of the information published for candidates in the published examination conventions, and should be clearly communicated to them. It should allow appropriate involvement by the external examiner(s) who should be in a position to certify the fairness of the procedure followed.

Report on a mitigating circumstances notice to examiners

~~A record in either the pro-forma (section A below) or~~ The table template (~~section B~~ below) should be used to record actions taken for each candidate for whom the board of examiners has received a mitigating circumstances notice to examiners under Part 12 or 13 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations (http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2019-20/rftcofunivexam/). A separate ~~pro-forma or~~ line in the table should be completed for each candidate and this should form part of the exam board minutes.

[21] Further guidance on recording the outcome on eVision is available at eVision User Guides and Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) | Academic Support ~~https://examshandbook.admin.ox.ac.uk/home~~

MCE decision record: Table template

Please note the table should be completed in reference to the guidance provided for Boards of Examiners in *Annex E: Consideration of Mitigating Circumstances by Examiners* of the Exams and assessment framework.

Actions available:

1. No adjustment made/action taken*
2. Finalising the* mark for a paper or papers taking into account all available material
3. Passing the* notice to the examiners of the final results/ classification meeting (this **must** be done for early parts of multi-part exams, and exams which release final marks throughout the course)
4. Disregarding a paper or papers and finalising results on the basis of the remaining work
5. Reviewing the progression requirements*
6. Reviewing the classification/overall outcome requirements (giving particular consideration to candidates who are just below boundaries for classification)
7. Removing any* cap on resit marks
8. Recommendation to Education Committee for an exceptional resit*

*All actions can be taken by a final exam board but these are the only actions that can be taken by interim exam boards.

Candidate Number	**Evaluation of seriousness of impact to examiners**				**Summary of Action taken**	
	(completed at Mitigating Circumstances Panel meeting)				*(to be completed at results confirmation meeting)*	
	Papers likely to have been affected (All papers or subset of papers)	If a subset of papers (please state which)	Which mitigating circumstance(s) impacted the paper(s)	Commentary on impact of mitigating circumstance(s) on listed paper(s): *(This commentary should be sufficiently detailed to enable the exam board to determine what actions may be applicable: please provide comments for each circumstance, the evidence considered/absent, and seriousness of impact considered to have occurred with reasoning.)*	Action(s) taken: (1-8; eVision requires a numerical value) *(if more than one mitigating circumstance has been reported, please indicate which action relates to which circumstance and, where relevant, which subset of papers)*	Commentary on options considered *(This commentary should be sufficiently detailed for a candidate to know what options have been considered, the reason(s) for the decision made, and why other options were not appropriate.)*
	Section completed by:				**Section completed by:**	**Date:**

Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements

1. This annex provides information on major adjustments to course and assessment requirements, made on the grounds of disability or complex mitigating circumstances. Such changes require approval on behalf of Education Committee via a dispensation.

2. These adjustments go beyond the standard reasonable adjustments to online and in-person examination arrangements which can be approved by the Student Assessments Team under delegated authority from the Registrar (see section 7 of the *EAF*).

3. In this annex, further information is provided on the University's legal responsibilities with regards to disabled students, its policy on adjustments for complex mitigating circumstances, the types of adjustments approved for students, and the normal procedures to be followed in considering applications for such adjustments.

Legislation

4. Equality legislation[22] requires that universities must not discriminate against disabled students. Discrimination includes treating a disabled student less favourably and failing to make 'reasonable adjustments'. Universities are also subject to the public sector equality duty[23], the effect of which is to require universities to promote and embed disability equality proactively across institutional policies, procedures and practice.

5. The University is therefore required to put 'reasonable adjustments' in place with regards to examinations and assessments for disabled students, to ensure that they are not placed at a 'substantial disadvantage' in comparison with their non-disabled peers. It should be noted that it is permitted for disabled students to receive favourable treatment compared to a non-disabled student, if this results in the removal or mitigation of a disadvantage.

6. Universities are not required to make adjustments which would compromise the academic 'competence standards' of the courses in question. For more information on competence standards, see *Annex D: Competence standards*.

7. Candidates with eligible long-term health conditions continue to be regarded as disabled even when they have been deemed well enough to resume study or assessment, and the duty to make reasonable adjustments continues to apply.

[22] The Equality Act 2010 replaced the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1995, amended 2001, 2005). In amending the DDA, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA, 2001) introduced the concept of 'reasonable adjustments' to the provision of higher education. The 2005 revision to the DDA placed a 'positive statutory duty' on public bodies (including the University) to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and other persons and to avoid disability-related discrimination (among other obligations). All these provisions were incorporated into the Equality Act, together with a broader public sector equality duty.

[23] The public sector equality duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations between people with a 'protected characteristic' and those without. 'Protected characteristics' are defined as age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, and pregnancy and maternity.

Key definitions

8. A **disability** is defined as a condition which has a long-term (has lasted for 12 months or is likely to do so), substantial (not minor or trivial) and adverse impact on an individual's capacity to undertake normal day-to-day activities. Disability covers a wide variety of conditions, encompassing long-term illness (often from the point of diagnosis) as well as physical or psychological problems, eg

    - Vision or hearing impairments;
    - Physical impairments such as paraplegia, cerebral palsy, repetitive strain injury (RSI) and arthritis;
    - Mental health difficulties such as depression, anxiety and eating disorders;
    - Specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, dyspraxia and Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder. These conditions do not need to be shown to have a substantial adverse effect on 'normal day-to-day activities' as it is accepted that they will in all cases significantly affect students in higher education;
    - Long-term health conditions such as HIV, diabetes, epilepsy, inflammatory bowel disease/Crohn's disease, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME, multiple sclerosis and cancer. A person with such a condition continues to be regarded as disabled despite fluctuations in the severity of their condition or, in the case of cancer, after recovery.

    Case law has indicated that undertaking examinations is considered to be a day-to-day – rather than specialised – activity.[24]

9. **Reasonable adjustments** are central to the concept of disability equality. Where a disabled student suffers – or would suffer – a substantial disadvantage, the University is under a duty to make reasonable adjustments to overcome that disadvantage. The intention is that the adjustments should 'level the playing field' for the disabled student. It is important that adjustments meet the needs of the individual disabled student rather than providing a generic response to a class or type of disability. Once implemented, adjustments do not provide automatic precedents for other students, but may be taken into account when considering what would be appropriate in a different case. The duty is anticipatory which means that the University should not wait until it is asked to consider what adjustments might be made, but should be ready – where feasible – with solutions to overcome disadvantages. The failure to make reasonable adjustments cannot be legally justified and if an adjustment is deemed to be reasonable then it must be made.

10. **Competence standards.** There is no obligation to make adjustments to competence standards. Competence standards can be defined as the 'academic, medical or other standard[s] applied for the purpose of determining whether or not a person has a particular level of competence or ability'[25] in their course or as 'a particular level of competence or ability that a student must demonstrate to be accepted on to, progress within and successfully complete a course or programme of study'.[26] A competence standard must not

[24]Paterson v The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (2007) UKEAT 0635/06.

[25] Equality Act 2010, Schedule 13, 4(3). Guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission for higher education providers is available at https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/higher-education-providers-guidance.

[26] Guidance from the Equality Challenge Unit on the interaction between competence standards and reasonable adjustments is available at www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/understanding-the-interaction-of-competence-standards-and-reasonable-adjustments

itself be unlawfully discriminatory[27], therefore it must not be applied only to a disabled student and must be:

- Genuinely relevant to the course;
- Applied equally to all students, whether with or without a disability; and
- A proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

11. The proportionate means component requires that:

- There is a pressing need that supports the standard's purpose;
- The application of the standard will achieve that aim; and
- There is no other way of achieving the aim that is less detrimental to disabled people.

12. Further information on competence standards is provided in Annex D: Competence standards.

13. **Complex mitigating circumstances** arise when a student faces serious and long lasting difficulties or disruption out of their control that means that they are unable to meet the standard assessment requirements for their course and with impact beyond that which can be accommodated under the Proctors' powers. This may include:

- serious injury or illness, often with new onset and so not yet meeting the definition of disability but likely to do so in due course (and where suspension is not available or not appropriate)
- longer lasting impacts of being a victim of crime including sexual assault
- new or unexpected additional childcare or caring responsibilities
- bereavement with long lasting impacts
- family estrangement with ongoing impacts
- serious and ongoing disruption to living/accommodation arrangements.

14. In cases of complex mitigating circumstances students should be in a position to continue studying, if at a reduced pace, in order to be granted adjustments to assessment. Otherwise suspension or withdrawal from the course and reinstatement at a late date is more likely to be appropriate. In cases where serious difficulties have come to light after failure in a course, appropriate intervention is likely to be in the form of removing any cap on resit marks or overall outcomes.

15. Major adjustments to assessment will also be considered where students are participants in elite sport (ie competing internationally at the highest levels of their sport).

Major course adjustments

16. Major course adjustments should be considered when a candidate's disability-related needs cannot be met by alternative examination arrangements, and more significant adjustments requiring dispensation from the regulations may be required. Such adjustments must be

[27] Unlawful discrimination includes direct discrimination, which is never justifiable, and indirect discrimination or discrimination arising from a disability which cannot be justified in accordance with the numbered requirements set out in paragraph 5.

approved by or on behalf of Education Committee. The committee has delegated authority from Council to approve the necessary dispensations. Examples of major course adjustments requiring approval include:

- A student being allowed to extend the overall period of time within which a course is normally taken, eg to spread assessment for a Final Honour School across three rather than two years.
- A revised assessment schedule being approved for a student requiring extra time to complete submitted work.
- An alternative method of assessment being permitted for one or more assessment items. This often entails finding alternatives to unseen written examinations, such as extended essays, take-home papers or an additional dissertation.
- An alteration to the timing or duration of an assessment being permitted eg splitting an examination over more than one session.
- A student being exceptionally permitted to omit one or more papers from the normal assessment requirement. This can be done on the basis that the examiners are content that they will have sufficient material on which to reach a classified outcome.

17. Such changes can be approved on the grounds of disability or complex mitigating circumstances. For instance, a student may have a number of health and/or personal issues (eg bereavement) which would not qualify as a disability, but would have a significant, long-term effect on their studies.

Application process for major course adjustments

18. Applications to Education Committee should be made as early as possible. Further guidance on how to apply for dispensations from Education Committee (via the Education Policy Support team) is available from the Academic Support Website. Generally applications for undergraduate students should be sent from the college, and applications for graduate students should be sent from the department or faculty. It is normally expected that the college and department or faculty will have liaised regarding the proposed adjustments before it is sent to Education Committee. In most cases the college, department or faculty should also have discussed the application with DAS.

19. The application should set out in detail the adjustments being requested and should include the appropriate medical or other specialist evidence. The evidence should confirm the nature of the disability or complex mitigating circumstances, and the likely impact on a student's capacity to undertake all or parts of a course. The evidence should provide sufficient detail to enable those concerned to take a view on the reasonableness of the request, in particular the need for and effectiveness of the requested adjustments. The application should also generally include a statement from DAS.

20. Education Policy Support (EPS) officers will ask the relevant supervisory body/board of examiners to comment on the adjustments proposed. In giving its view, the supervisory body/board of examiners should refer explicitly to the competence standards for the award.

21. The aim of the process is to secure a way forward which is acceptable all round, although the final decision rests with Education Committee. The decision is taken on behalf of Education Committee (normally a policy officer in Education Policy Support or the Pro Vice-

Chancellor (Education) acting on its behalf) in the light of all the information provided, and all parties are informed. The college or department/faculty informs the student.

22. If a student is not content with the decision that is reached, they can appeal against it to two members of Education Committee (who have not previously been involved in the decision). Ultimately recourse would be to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education[28].

23. The requirement when considering applications for major adjustments is to identify what would be fair and reasonable for the student concerned in their individual circumstances, while maintaining the academic standards of the course. Approval for a particular application should not therefore be taken as providing an automatic precedent for another student. Each case is considered on its merits.

24. Fairness to other candidates is ensured by taking very seriously the requirement not to compromise the competence standards of the course. The identification of a course's competence standards is therefore key to avoiding unlawful discrimination and enabling the University to meet its anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments (see Annex B: Competence standards for further guidance). Supervisory bodies are urged to clarify the competence standards of their courses in order to be better prepared for applications for major adjustments to the mode of assessment.[29] This will make it easier to determine the most appropriate assessment for a disabled candidate.

Mitigating Circumstances Notices to Examiners (MCE) for candidates with major course adjustments

25. Part 12 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations allows candidates both to apply for special examination arrangements, and to ask for their condition to be taken into account as a mitigating circumstance which may affect their performance in examinations.

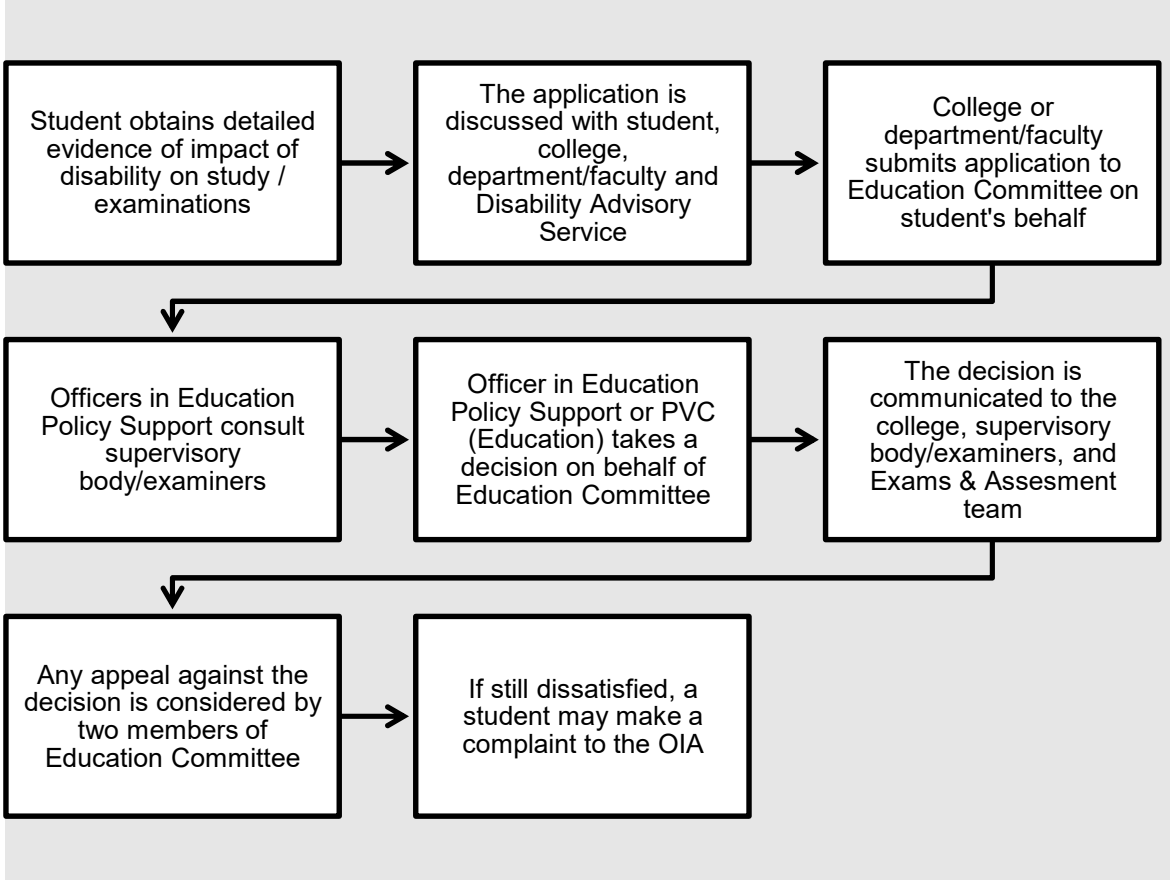
26. This means that even when alternative examination arrangements, including major adjustments which were approved on behalf of Education Committee, have been implemented to take account of a candidate's condition, the candidate, through their college, may submit a mitigating circumstances notice to examiners.

27. It is accepted that examiners cannot assess undemonstrated performance and that candidates should not receive double compensation. Nevertheless, when a mitigating circumstances notice to examiners is received from a student with major adjustments to examinations and assessment, examiners are asked to take a view as to whether the adjustments are likely to have fully compensated for a candidate's condition and allowed them to demonstrate their ability. See Annex E: Consideration of mitigating circumstances by examiners for further guidance on the procedures to be followed in the consideration of these notices.

[28] www.oiahe.org.uk

[29] The OIA has recommended that the University review its assessment criteria and processes with the aim of identifying appropriate competence standards for its courses.

Requesting major adjustments to course or assessment requirements



Annex G: Honour Code

Candidates will be expected to abide by the Honour Code for open-book and closed-book remotely invigilated online exams published at https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/open-book/honour-code?wssl=1 and confirm the **Honour Code Pledge** for each open-book or remotely invigilated closed-book examination.

Annex H: Procedure for the award of Declared to Deserve Honours/Masters[30]

Eligibility

1. Any student can apply for the DDH or DDM award who is unable, due to illness, incapacity or other exceptional circumstances to complete the summative assessment for their course and who does not wish to suspend their studies and return at a later time.

2. Students will be expected to have completed nearly all the teaching for their programme, and will normally have commenced the final term of the course prior to applying for a DDH or DDM. Students on integrated Masters who have commenced the final term of the third year of the course will be eligible to apply for a BA declared award; in order to apply for a Masters level declared award, they would be expected to have started the final term of their fourth year.

Submission of applications

3. Students who are not suspended may submit an application for award of DDH or DDM at any point during the final term of their final year or during the following vacation but no later than 14 days after the deadline for the final assessment. Students who suspended during the final term of their final year may apply for a DDH or DDM while suspended and should remain suspended while the application process is underway.

4. The exam excusal and/or non-submission process must be followed for any assessment that the student is unable to complete. This can be undertaken in parallel if necessary to meet the application window noted in paragraph 3. Eligible students who are currently suspended and have not yet entered for assessment do not need to apply for exam excusal.

5. Students will be required to state the reasons for applying for consideration for the award of a DDH or DDM, but will not be required to provide supporting evidence. However, they may provide supporting evidence if they wish and where available. Students will be expected to confirm that they are unable to suspend and return the following academic year.

Consideration of applications

6. Applications for consideration for award of a DDH or DDM will be collated by Education Policy Support for review by officers.

7. Education Policy Support will seek confirmation from the relevant college and/or department that the student is in good academic standing and that, in their judgement, would, but for their absence from assessment, have obtained an honours degree (for undergraduate full degree programmes) or at least a pass (for postgraduates and for undergraduate sub-degree programmes).

[30] For convenience, DDH is used to cover Declared to Deserve Honours, Declared to Deserve Undergraduate Advanced Diploma, Declared to Deserve Undergraduate Diploma, Declared to Deserve Undergraduate Certificate, Declared to Deserve Foundation Certificate, and DDM is used to cover Declared to Deserve Masters, Declared to Deserve Postgraduate Diploma, and Declared to Deserve Postgraduate Certificate, as appropriate.

8. In providing this confirmation, the college or department will be expected to certify that the student:

    - Has passed all summative assessment to date, in accordance with the subject's normal rules[31]
    - Does not have any resits for summative assessment outstanding
    - Has achieved a satisfactory performance in formative assessment
    - Is not subject to outstanding academic disciplinary procedures

9. Officers will review the confirmation, and supporting evidence, and, where satisfied, will advise the exam board that a DDH or DDM may be awarded.

10. Students will be notified of the outcome of the review and advice to the relevant exam board that a DDH or DDM may be awarded.

11. Before considering the award of a DDH or DDM, the exam board will first consider whether the candidate has submitted enough work to allow them to award a classified degree, and where possible will determine the candidate's proper class, based on the academic performance achieved.

12. Students who are awarded a DDH in relation to an Honours degree are entitled to apply to Education Committee for a further attempt at the Final Honours School.

13. If a candidate does not meet the DDH or DDM eligibility criteria, their results will usually be recorded as 'incomplete', and they will have the opportunity to complete assessment at a later date, usually the next time the missed assessments are offered.

Recognition

14. Recognition of the award of a DDH or DDM for the purposes of professional accreditation will be a matter for the relevant professional body.

[31] Any fail on record that has not been retrieved through a resit, even if not required to pass the course normally, will leave a student ineligible for the DDH/DDM.

Annex I: Examination adjustments

Introduction

This annex provides guidance for situations where students may have examinations adjustments put in place for the following reasons:

- When the standard examination arrangements would put the student at a substantial disadvantage because of a disability (including specific learning difficulties) or a specific health condition.
- If the student is undertaking a religious observance and they are not permitted to work for a specific period of time which coincides with an assessment.
- When an illness or injury affects a student's ability to undertake an examination.

1. A person has a disability under the Equality Act 2010 if they have a physical or mental impairment and the impairment has a substantial ('more than minor or trivial') and long-term (lasting or likely to last 12 months or more) adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Examinations and assessments are considered normal day-to-day activities. Therefore, education providers have a duty under the Act to make reasonable adjustments so that students can access their studies without experiencing undue disadvantage because of their disability. Reasonable adjustments in an exam context could include extra time, the use of a computer to type answers, an alternative method of examination, or the use of dictation software. The most appropriate reasonable adjustment will depend on the particular difficulties posed for the student by the nature of the assessment in relation to the specific impact of their disability, and the competencies being assessed.

2. This guidance is provided in relation to the different circumstances in which exam adjustment requests may be considered and possible reasonable adjustments and standard adjustments that can be applied. An outline of the process for applying for adjustments, the approval process, and the mechanism for appeals are also given with operational detail provided on the Student Assessments staff website.

3. This guidance specifically covers adjustments to examinations. Adjustments which require a change to a submission, the form of assessment, or to the timing of assessment are covered in *Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements of the Examinations and Assessment Framework*.

Adjustments on the basis of disability

4. In order to access adjustments to examinations, disabled students need to register with the Disability Advisory Service (DAS) and provide evidence of a disability (refer to DAS evidence information: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/needs). DAS will then make a recommendation on suitable adjustments to examinations as part of the Student Support Plan (SSP).

Physical/mobility impairments and chronic health conditions

5. A wide range of physical impairments or chronic medical conditions can require adjustments in examinations. The disadvantage faced by the student can be mitigated by adjustments such as:

    - Accessible exam venues
    - Hearing loops and/or materials provided in written format
    - Question papers and materials provided in enlarged and/or coloured formats
    - Access to medicines, food and drink in exams
    - Access to bathrooms outside of the usual non-permitted periods
    - Typing rather than handwriting exams
    - Use of assistive software or support worker to aid reading and/or writing
    - Extra time to accommodate other adjustments or slower pace of work
    - Use of ergonomic equipment, such as ergonomic keyboards and mice or adjustable desks and chairs
    - Adjusted exam paper/answer booklets (eg enlarged text/paper size, alternative font/paper colour)

6. What is appropriate as an adjustment is likely to be unique to each student. Most of these adjustments, (including up to a maximum of 25% extra time) can be accommodated in the main exam venue (either in the main room or computer suite). However, where arrangements cannot be accommodated within the main exam venue then a candidate may require a small group sitting or an individual sitting or need to undertake the examination through an alternative form of assessment.

7. An individual sitting will normally only be an appropriate adjustment when there is a need for a scribe or assistive technology, or where it has been specifically specified in the SSP. Other adjustments which cannot be accommodated within the main venue will normally be held in a small group sitting. For students requiring multiple adjustments, including those that result in a much longer exam duration, an alternative mode assessment, allowing the student to be assessed outside of exam conditions, is likely to be more appropriate.

Sensory Impairments - visual[32] and auditory[33] impairments

8. 'Visual impairment' (VI) is a term used to describe a loss of sight that cannot be corrected using lenses. Sight loss is usually categorized into partial or severe impairment and once formally identified, the individual automatically meets the definition of a disabled person under the Equality Act (2010). However, degrees of sight loss, the impact on daily functioning, and the type of support required varies considerably from person to person. Many individuals will have some level of functional sight and the VI will often not be obvious to others (even if registered blind).

9. A variety of adjustments can be made to accommodate the different needs and normal working patterns for students with VI. These range from enlarged print, braille, to a reader and/or amanuensis. Whilst many of these adjustments will help to mitigate the impact of VI on the practical parts of taking of an exam, most will also require extra time. A balance will

[32] https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/academic/documents/media/visual_impairments_vi.pdf

[33] https://academic.admin.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/academic/documents/media/hearing_impairments_hi_0.pdf

therefore need to be struck between the total length of time a student would be sat taking an exam and whether an alternative form of assessment would be a better adjustment.

10. If a student has a hearing impairment (HI), they have some degree of hearing loss but the level of hearing loss and precise nature of impact varies enormously from person to person. It can be mild, moderate, severe or profound, but it is important to note that even mild hearing loss can still significantly impact on access to communication and information.

11. During examinations, many instructions are given verbally with little or no notice. A student with a HI should have written instructions for all standard pre-exam communications. Any announcements during the exam should be quickly communicated to the student in writing by a member of staff and they should receive individual time prompts. Oral exams may require extra time and practical guidance should be given to examiners on ensuring their communication style does not impede the student.

12. Dual sensory impairment (with combined vision and hearing loss) has a different impact than either considered separately. The two impairments combine to increase the effects of each and cause problems with communication, access to information and mobility.[34] Such difficulties may require major adjustments to both course structure and the methods of assessment.

Mental health conditions

13. Many students experience a mental health condition, some of which can be chronic, long-term and very debilitating. Such conditions often meet the definition of a disability under the Equality Act. Symptoms can be exacerbated during examination periods.

14. Depending on the severity of the mental health disability and the symptoms the student is experiencing, an adjustment to the examination schedule could be considered appropriate. Adjustments to the timing of examinations (eg ensuring that there is at least a 24 hour between the start of exams) will, as far as possible, be accommodated within the main exam timetable. Where this is not possible or more extensive timetable adjustments would be required, an alternative form of assessment may be more appropriate.

15. Extra time during the exam itself, noise-cancelling headphones, sitting in a specific area of the room, may also be appropriate for some students to help manage their symptoms, or mitigate their impact.

16. The appropriate adjustment to put in place, however, should not be assumed to be standard for all students in this group. Careful consideration should be given to the specific impact a student's condition(s) is having and the best way in which to mitigate against it. Students with long standing mental health conditions that constitute a mental health disability, such as generalised anxiety disorder, must have registered with DAS and provided evidence of a disability (refer to DAS evidence information: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/needs) in order to access examination adjustments. Medical evidence alone is not sufficient to make a judgement on the appropriateness of adjustments when an application is considered.

17. As with complex physical disabilities, in some cases it is questionable whether the available exam adjustments (including individual sittings) for mental health disabilities are sufficient to mitigate against the impact of the disability. In such cases therefore major adjustments such

[34] What is deafblindness? | Sense

as splitting assessments into parts to reduce the length of an examination, using alternative methods of assessment, or making a major adjustment to the examination timetable and/or course structure, should be considered as reasonable adjustments when exploring the options available. Such adjustments should be requested as early as possible, and in advance of the student starting each stage of their course (*Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements* of the *Examinations and Assessment Framework*

Specific learning difficulties (SpLD)

18. The term Specific Learning Difficulty (SpLD) refers to a neurological difference that can have a significant impact during education eg dyslexia, dyspraxia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Whilst the impact can vary at different stages of education, on different academic courses, and between different individuals, the underlying condition does not vary over time.

19. Students must register with DAS and have evidence of an SpLD (refer to DAS evidence information: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/needs). If a SpLD has not previously been diagnosed, but is suspected, then DAS can arrange an assessment.

20. Students with a SpLD (following an assessment with DAS) are usually provided extra time in examinations to allow them to read the examination paper, consider their responses to the questions, plan out their work, and read it over at the end. It is also very common for permission to be given to use a word processor to type answers. The amount of time may vary according to the severity of their difficulty and whether another condition(s) exist, but is typically set at 15 mins per hour/25% extra time. This is the standard extra writing time allowance made for SpLD, and to aid in the administration of examinations, even students whose assessment recommends less than this, will be given the full standard allowance.

21. All students with SpLDs (following an assessment with DAS) have the following permissions:

    - to attach an Inclusive Marking Guide (explaining the effects of the SpLD to the examiner for consideration when marking) to their work, whether that be a submission or exam script (this may be provided as a link for the marker);
    - to have spelling and/or grammar checking enabled where a computer has been recommended as part of their exam adjustments.

22. It is no longer a requirement for candidates to attach an IMG form to their summative work, nor is it permissible for a candidate to be asked to provide any further information. Departments must therefore ensure that markers are aware, during the marking, of candidates with SpLDs where the Inclusive Marking Guidelines need to be followed. This information is available via the SpLD Status report in eVision and should be downloaded when giving the assessments to markers. If preferred, a department can construct and use their own mark sheet but must ensure the candidate SpLD information from eVision is included.

23. Attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) are recognised as both a mental health condition and/or an SpLD but a specific diagnosis is required to ensure the DAS can advise on the appropriate adjustments and support.

Late notification of an SpLD whilst on course

24. Where mark(s) have not yet been released (final or provisional), remarking should take place with the IMG and the student may also submit an MCE where additional time is now recommended in their SSP. If marks have already been released an MCE should be submitted highlighting the adjustments that would have been provided had an earlier diagnosis been made.

Autism Spectrum Disorder

25. Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a condition that affects social interaction, communication, interests and behaviour.[35]

26. Students with ASD must register with DAS and provide evidence of a disability (refer to DAS evidence information: https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability/needs) in order to access examination adjustments. Medical evidence alone is not sufficient to make a judgement on the appropriateness of adjustments when an application is considered. ASDs have a high degree of co-occurrence with other disabilities and health issues. Individuals might also experience mental health conditions (eg acute anxiety), specific learning difficulties, or heightened sensory sensitivity. The co-occurrence of other conditions would also need to be taken into account when considering any appropriate examination adjustments.

Late disclosure of disability

27. Students are encouraged to disclose their disability, and to register with DAS, as soon as possible either prior to or on arrival at Oxford if they wish to access exam adjustments. Deadlines are set for applications for exam adjustments relevant to the timing of the exam(s) in question.

28. In most cases, the University is unable to accommodate requests for alternative examination arrangements made after the relevant deadline. Applications made less than five working days before an examination will not be considered. Students will need to make a choice between:

    - continuing with their examinations as planned (notifying the examiners via the mitigating circumstances process that their agreed adjustments could not be implemented (see EAF section 11.9.3))
    - attending some of their examinations if that is appropriate (and seeking an excusal for non-appearance from the Proctors from those that will be missed)
    - or suspending or withdrawing from the examination entirely and taking their exam(s) at another opportunity when adjustments arrangements can be put in place, noting the implications of this for course progression or completion.

29. Last minute exam adjustments relating to adjustments to the mode of completion and for late diagnosis of conditions, such as an SpLD, will be granted for any exams taking place five working days after the application has been submitted.

[35] https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/brain-nerves-and-spinal-cord/autistic-spectrum-disorder-asd

30. In cases of late diagnosis the University will use its reasonable endeavours to respond to urgent cases where practically possible, but this cannot be guaranteed once the relevant deadline has passed.

Adjustments on the basis of illness or injury

Injury, surgery, acute non-contagious illness

31. In cases where a student has suffered an injury or undergone surgery that necessitates a request for adjustments for their examinations to be put in place, medical evidence must support that the student is fit to take the exams and to support the type of adjustments required (eg use of a computer, ergonomic equipment,). If the student is considered medically fit, then adjustments should be made where necessary to mitigate the limitations posed by the injury, aggravation of the injury or the cause of additional pain and discomfort.

32. It is only guaranteed that adjustments will be accommodated if the request is received before the relevant deadline. If the University is unable to reasonably accommodate a late request then the student will have to consider alternative courses of action (as outlined above in paragraph 27).

Exam anxiety

33. Anxiety in relation to exams is common. The symptoms experienced by a student may be worrying and unpleasant but it does not automatically mean that alternative exam arrangements should be put in place. Experiences in college collections can provide early warning signs of students who are struggling to manage exam anxiety. Students who are overly anxious during these times should be guided to the resources available in college, via GP practice, and on the Oxford Students Website. Wherever possible students should be encouraged to take active measures to combat their own exam anxiety, and to seek the appropriate support and advice as soon as possible.

34. Exam anxiety on its own is not a disability, and so requests for exam adjustments owing to exam anxiety will therefore **only** be considered where supporting evidence is provided by a college doctor, DAS, the Counselling Service, or other appropriate medical professional. The evidence will need to demonstrate that the student is likely to experience anxiety significantly over and above the usual level of anxiety to be expected in an examination, and that this is very likely to have a material detrimental impact on their exam performance, and that this impact could only be mitigated by putting exam adjustments in place.

35. While the University will use its reasonable endeavours to respond in cases of urgent late diagnosis of relevant conditions by medical staff where possible, it can only be guaranteed that adjustments will be accommodated if the request (with appropriate evidence) is received before the relevant deadline. If the University is unable to reasonably accommodate a late request then the student will have to consider alternative courses of action (as outlined above in paragraph 27).

Acute contagious illness

36. To avoid the spread of any serious infectious or highly contagious disease (eg mumps, measles, meningitis, tuberculosis, influenza (flu), chicken pox, rubella, active gastroenteritis, glandular fever) students suffering or suspected to be suffering from one should not attend lectures, tutorials, classes or examinations (including college sittings). Any advice given by a health practitioner should be followed and this could include returning home.

37. Individual sittings will therefore not usually be approved for any acute contagious illness. Students who are not fit to sit an examination should be advised to consider suspension, withdrawal or seeking excusal from the Proctors for non-attendance.

Adjustments on the basis of religious observance

38. Requests for adjustments to accommodate short periods of religious observance which prevent a student from being able to undertake examinations will be accommodated through adjustments to the examination timetable if requests are received prior to the relevant deadline. Accommodation of late requests cannot be guaranteed.

39. Other types of religious observance, for example practices such as fasting during Ramadan, are accommodated as far as possible within the main examination timetable (eg morning sittings). These are not normally sufficient grounds for an individual adjustment. If a student feels that an exam has been impacted by their fasting an MCE can be submitted with the appropriate evidence. Further information for students is available on the Oxford Students website.

Illegible handwriting

40. Poor handwriting on its own does not entitle a candidate student to the use of a PC for time written examinations. However, where a student has exam adjustments in place for other reasons and has previously had to use the transcription service due to illegible handwriting, the use of a PC for written exams will be granted.

Table 1: Types of adjustments

Food and drink	All students can take clear, non-spill water bottles (containing still water only) into their examinations. Students with additional needs, such as diabetes, are permitted to also take additional items into examinations rooms and these only require a signed letter from their college nurse or senior tutor explaining why it is necessary.
Extra writing or rest time	With effect from 4 February 2025, there is no practical distinction between extra writing time and rest time even though the reasons for extra time being recommended may relate either to the need for extra writing time, or for time specifically to rest, or both. Students are expected to manage their extra time as they see fit and invigilators do not need to monitor the amount of rest time used. **For students with cognitive, learning, or physical needs** who require extra writing time to complete the examination this will be implemented at the standard rate of 15 mins per hour (25%), even if their specific recommendations are for less than this amount. **For students who require additional time in which they might rest,** this will be implemented at the standard rate of 15 mins per hour (25%), even if their specific recommendations are for less than this amount. Students with this standard extra time allowance (15 mins per hour or 25%) can sit their exams at the main exam site and start their examinations at the same time as the main cohort. Students requiring more extra time than this will need to be accommodated in a small group sitting. Where the type of rest the student needs might disrupt other candidates (eg if they need to lie down, or move away from their desks to stretch) then the students should be located in a small group or individual sitting and this should be requested as part of the examination adjustment application. Where recommendations are made for more than one adjustment of extra time they are all calculated in relation to the original exam duration. Extra time is not added to exams with standard durations of eight hours or more as the format is designed to be inclusive for most students.
Use of a computer +/- spelling and grammar check enabled	The use of a computer is permitted for a variety of disabilities and conditions. Spelling and grammar checking is only permitted for students with a diagnosed SpLD, unless specifically detailed in an SSP. For foreign language translations, students with a SpLD have spelling and grammar checking enabled when translating into

	English but disabled when translating English into a foreign language. Use of a PC may be permitted where a student has previous evidence of transcription services being required due to the illegibility of their handwriting and other exam adjustments are required.
Assistive software	Assistive software falls into four main categories – voice recognition for dictation (eg Dragon), screen reader (eg JAWS), music notation (eg Sibelius), and screen magnifier (eg SuperNova). Use of such software is permitted for a variety of disabilities and conditions. The use of assistive software can only be accommodated in an individual sitting and must be specified in an SSP and the approved exam adjustments.
Noise-cancelling headphones	The term 'noise-cancelling headphones' is often used to describe both active (Bluetooth/Wi-Fi enabled and battery operated) and passive headphones (battery free). The use of such devices is prohibited unless specified in an SSP. Unless otherwise detailed in the SSP, it is assumed the recommendation refers to 'passive' headphones. Where active headphones are recommended the student will also require an individual sitting arrangement (the latter being due to the noise such headphones may emit and be heard externally, and the reduced awareness the user may have of noises they make themselves or announcements they need to listen to). All headphone devices are subject to inspection by staff involved in the running of the examination where they are being used. The use of earbuds is not permitted.
Ergonomic equipment	Students with certain physical or musculoskeletal conditions may require the use of ergonomic chairs and/or sit-stand desks. The Examinations Schools has a small number of ergonomic chairs and students can usually be accommodated at the main site but need to ensure they detail the specifications of the chair they require when submitting their application. Students may require use of their own specific equipment such as ergonomic keyboards and mice (providing compatibility has been checked in advance of exams). Sit-stand desks are a distraction to other candidates so necessitate an individual sitting.
Alternate paper formats and answer booklets	Visually impaired students may request examination papers in enlarged font or braille on a paper size of their preference. Certain colours of paper or overlays may assist some students with visual impairments or SpLDs and enable them to read printed content more easily. Equally, plain or squared paper can help some students with their writing. All of these adjustments can be accommodated at the main exam sites. Written instructions for any announcements and paper corrections.

Scribe/amanuensis	Some students who qualify for the use of assistive software may prefer to use a scribe rather than voice recognition software. Use of a scribe/amanuensis can only be accommodated in an individual sitting.
Reader	A reader may be recommended for a student who is visually impaired and unable to use a digital screen reader. Often they will work alongside a scribe. Use of a reader can only be accommodated in an individual sitting.
Exam timings	Exams may be timetabled in the morning but during peak periods they will be timetabled for both mornings and afternoons. If a student requires their exams to be restricted to morning or afternoon sessions, or need at least 24h between each exam they sit, then requests must be made by the 4th week of Michaelmas term in the academic year the exams are being taken.
Small group sitting	Where a student's conditions mean that they are unable to sit in the main exam venue, but do not necessitate an individual sitting, the student will be accommodated in a small group venue. These venues usually have no more than 16 students at a time, and allow for better support of exam adjustments.
Individual sitting	Where specific conditions require adjustments that cannot be accommodated at the main exam site eg the use of voice recognition software, an individual sitting can be requested.
Specific seating in the examination room, waiting area in and/or entrance to the exam venue	Specific seating within the exam room may also be requested eg near the exit, window, at the front to assist with managing a condition. Students with sensory impairments may also require individual time prompts. When the quad marquee is in use as a pre-exam waiting area, students with certain disabilities or severe anxiety can be accommodated in the main entrance hall, subject to space and prior approval.

Duration of adjustments

41. In approving adjustments the appropriate duration will also be considered:

- *Ongoing for duration of course*: Arrangements for conditions that are ongoing, such as an SpLD, certain disabilities, long-term mental health conditions or Autistic spectrum disorders, will be made on an ongoing basis.
- *Temporary for academic year:* Arrangements for conditions that are liable to change or where the student is seeking support, such as physiotherapy or beginning a new course of medical treatment, should be made on an annual basis (current academic year) and reviewed on an annual basis.
- *Temporary for exam period:* Arrangements for acute illness or a short term medical issue should be made for one specific exam or the specific examination session to cover all examinations being sat that day/week/term.

42. On-going exam adjustments apply for the duration of a student's course. Due to IT system limitations, if the student changes course or college, their college will need to re-apply for adjustments.

Supporting evidence

43. All applications for examination adjustments must be accompanied by appropriate supporting evidence including details of the impact of the condition eg recommending extra time because a student has wrist pain without details of the impact on writing speed, pain, and measures they can take during an examination to alleviate the symptoms will not be sufficient. Applications which provide insufficient information will be rejected or sent back to the college for more information.

44. Evidence provided should be signed (or confirmation provided by the college that evidence has been received from an NHS email address) either by a medical professional, counselling service, or DAS disability advisor in the case of a Student Support Plan (SSP). If evidence has been provided by an external professional or clinic it must be signed and on headed paper.

45. Where a combination of conditions is present, extra time may be recommended by different professionals. In such cases, exam adjustments are not cumulative, and will not necessarily represent the sum of adjustments requested. The total amount of extra rest/writing time requested should be made clear within the application by the College.

Table 2: Types of evidence required

SpLD (Specific Learning Difficulties)	An educational psychologist's or specialist teacher's report should be provided to the Disability Advisory Service who will arrange a summary sheet to be produced by the University's SpLD specialist. The assessment must meet the University of Oxford's Guidance on SpLD Diagnostic Assessments (https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/arrangements).
Long-term conditions and disabilities	A Student Support Plan (SSP). Any medical evidence from a specialist, general practitioner and/or college doctor that the student wishes to rely on in a request for alternative examination arrangements must be provided to DAS to review as part of their assessment in designing or updating a SSP.
Short term illness/conditions, or a long-term condition that does not meet the definition of disability	A medical form from the college doctor. For short term illness/conditions the evidence should explicitly state whether the student is currently fit to sit their exam(s).
Injuries and surgery	A medical form from the college doctor must include date of incident. The evidence should explicitly state whether the student is currently fit to sit their exam(s).

Fluctuating conditions (ie anxiety, RSI, tendonitis, etc)	A medical form from the college doctor must include the duration of the condition. In cases of anxiety, the form must state whether it is acute exam-related anxiety or exacerbation of a chronic anxiety condition eg GAD and any measures that have been taken to alleviate the condition

Standard adjustments

46. Allowances are based on the assumption that a student is fit to sit their examination(s). Standard allowances are listed in table 3 below. If these are insufficient to mitigate the impact of the student's condition or circumstance on their examination performance then, based on the evidence, more substantial adjustments will be considered. If a student is not medically fit to sit their examination(s) then alternative options must be explored. This may include excusal from an exam, or withdrawal from all or any remaining exams.

47. If the standard adjustments are insufficient or unsuitable, or cannot be practicably accommodated, then more substantial adjustments (eg >25% extra time, individual sittings) or more significant changes to the student's assessments would be considered.

48. Arrangements for an individual student will be determined by the specific condition(s) they have and their severity. Therefore, a student will not necessarily be granted all arrangements in the category their condition falls into. Where a student has conditions that fall into more than one category, they may be granted a combination of selected arrangements from those listed but this will be determined on a case by case basis.

Table 3: Standard adjustments

Reason for request	Standard arrangements that <u>may</u> be appropriate, depending on the details of each case	Duration	Evidence	Notice time cut-off
Medical condition (acute or short-term but non-contagious condition)	• 15 min/h extra time (if processing speed affected by condition or medication) • Specific seating at main venue • Medications • 15 min/h rest time • PC and/or ergonomic equipment • Individual sitting if rest-time involves exercises that cannot be done silently whilst sitting down or a sit/stand desk is required	Temporary	Medical form	• > five working days
Medical condition (chronic)	• 15 min/h extra time (if processing speed affected by condition or medication) • 15 min/h rest time • Snacks • Medication • Specific seating at main venue • PC and/or ergonomic equipment • Individual sitting if rest-time involves exercises that cannot be done silently whilst sitting down or a sit/stand desk is required • Adjustment to timetable	Ongoing	• SSP (informed by medical evidence) • Medical form (at minimum until an SSP can be completed)	• Week 4 Michaelmas term if adjustments to timetable required[36] • Otherwise, no later than week 4 of the term before the exams are due to be taken.

[36] Students need to register with the DAS prior to arrival or as soon as practicable if a diagnosis is received after the start of their course. Once an assessment has taken place, the DAS need 6-8 weeks to complete the SSP. All requested evidence needs to be provided, or change in circumstance notified, promptly.

Reason for request	Standard arrangements that <u>may</u> be appropriate, depending on the details of each case	Duration	Evidence	Notice time cut-off
Visual/Auditory condition	• Alternative paper formats • Alternative mode of assessments • 30min/h extra time • 15min/h rest time • PC • Individual sitting if reader/amanuensis/assistive software required	Ongoing	• SSP (informed by medical evidence) • Medical form (at minimum until an SSP can be completed)	• Week 4 Michaelmas term if adjustments to timetable required[37] • Otherwise, no later than week 4 of the term before the exams are due to be taken
Mental Health condition (acute)	• 15 min/h extra time (if processing speed affected by condition or medication) • Specific seating at main venue • Medications • 15 min/h rest-time	Temporary	• Medical form	• >five working days
Mental Health condition (chronic)	• 15 min/h extra time (if processing speed affected by condition or medication) • Specific seating at main venue • Medications • 15 min/h rest time • Individual sitting	Ongoing	• SSP (informed by medical evidence) • Medical form (at the minimum until an SSP can be completed)	• No later than week 4 of the term before the exams are due to be taken.

[37] Students need to register with the DAS prior to arrival or as soon as practicable if a diagnosis is received after the start of their course. Once an assessment has taken place, the DAS need 6-8 weeks to complete the SSP. All requested evidence needs to be provided, or change in circumstance notified, promptly.

Reason for request	**Standard arrangements that <u>may</u> be appropriate, depending on the details of each case**	**Duration**	**Evidence**	**Notice time cut-off**
SpLD	• 15 min/h extra time • PC + spelling-grammar check enabled • College sitting where voice-recognition software or amanuensis used.	Ongoing	• SSP (informed by Educational Psychologist's or specialist teacher's report)	• No later than week 4 of the term before the exams are due to be taken
ASD/ADHD	• 15 min/h extra time • Specific seating at main venue • 15 min/h rest time • Sub-fusc excusal • Noise-cancelling headphones • Individual sitting	Ongoing	• SSP (informed by medical evidence)	• No later than week 4 of the term before the exams are due to be taken
Religious	• Time-table adjustments (may require extended invigilation and a college sitting in some cases)	Temporary	• Supporting statement from college	• Week 4 Michaelmas term if adjustments to timetable required • Otherwise, no later than week 4 of the term before the exams are due to be taken

Reason for request	Standard arrangements that <u>may</u> be appropriate, depending on the details of each case	Duration	Evidence	Notice time cut-off
Illegible handwriting (for students with other exam adjustments only)	• PC, spelling-grammar check disabled	Ongoing	• Supporting statement from college – evidence of previous transcription having been required	• No later than week 4 of the term before the exams are due to be taken

49. If extended invigilation is required due to exam timetabling issues, this should not extend overnight, ie overnight invigilation is not permitted. Examination boards are expected to adhere to timetabling requests and where these are not possible, bespoke assessments should be set for the affected students(s).

Consideration of non-standard adjustments

50. Where an application involves adjustments that are beyond that provided as standard it will be referred for consideration by Education Committee, drawing on its powers to make adjustments to assessment.

51. Examples of types of adjustments that may be referred include:

- requests for adjustments to online exams with an eight hour or longer standard duration.
- requests to handwrite a computer-based exam
- requests for non-standard assistive technology/software

52. Where Education Committee approval is required applications should be submitted to the normal deadlines. Late applications will not be considered if received less than 10 working days before the first affected examination.

The application and approval process

53. Details of the application and approval process for exam adjustments are provided on the Student Assessments website.[38]

The appeal process

54. A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of their application for exam adjustments may, or their college may, appeal under *Part 18 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations*.[39] There are specific grounds under which a student can appeal and they must bear in mind that any recommendations for adjustments in their application are recommendations only and do not guarantee they will be granted. Ultimately, the outcome of their application is determined by what would be best to mitigate the impact of their circumstances on their ability to perform at their best under standard examination conditions.

[38] https://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/arrangements?wssl=1

[39] https://examregs.admin.ox.ac.uk/Regulation?code=rftcoue-p18afdotptheregiandexam

Annex J: Grounds and supporting evidence for applications under Part 14

1. Applications under Part 14 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations should be submitted with appropriate evidence to show that a candidate's circumstances fall under the definition of

   'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable'.

2. Any evidence must give a clear indication of the time period during which the candidate was impacted by the circumstances, be dated and provided in English.

3. Any evidence-based extension application should include details of time and date the candidate made the request.

4. The below guidance applies to all applications for waiver of late submission penalties, extensions for submitted work and exam excusal. Specific guidance on expectations for what is acceptable as 'illness or other urgent cause' for late upload of online examination responses (see section 9.5.5 of the EAF) is provided in paragraph 27 onwards below.

Acute illness or injury

5. 'Acute illness' is a term that can cover a very wide range of severity of situations, including what might be consider a 'minor illness'. Applications under Part 14 will only be considered in relation to an acute, debilitating illness that would reasonably be considered to necessitate an absence from work for an employed person.

Self-certification

6. A candidate may 'self-certify' for up to 7 days in support of an extension application if they, or a dependent for whom they are the primary carer, experiences an acute short-term illness (such as migraine, gastroenteritis, flu, or Covid-19). ~~for acute short-term illnesses (such as migraine, norovirus, gastroenteritis, flu, Covid-19 or diarrhoea), up to seven days per submission.~~

7. In these circumstances a candidate may apply directly to the Proctors for the extension or late submission excusal, rather than needing to make a request through their college or department. Where this will be the first application for an extension for an assessment, the application should be made through Student Self-Service. If the student has already been granted an extension for the assessment on the basis of independent evidence, the application should be made through the college (or department for candidates who do not have a college).

8. Requests for further time following self-certification must be supported by medical evidence.

9. Self-certification cannot be used in relation to exam excusal.

Medical evidence

10. Medical evidence must meet the expected standard.

11. It is expected that medical certificates should normally be provided by a doctor, but certificates from college nurses are also sufficient for short extensions of up to one week or short extensions in relation to a flare up of an existing condition.

12. Details of a scheduled hospital appointment may be considered acceptable evidence for an extension or excusal, if it can be shown that it would not be possible or reasonable to rearrange the appointment.

Exacerbation of chronic conditions

13. For candidates with disabilities or chronic illnesses that fluctuate, the entitlement to request an extension of up to 14 days may be recorded in their Student Support Plan (SSP) as an appropriate support mechanism in the event of an exacerbation of their condition. Where this is the case an application can be made directly to the Proctors using the SSP as evidence. Repeat applications for the same submission or applications for longer than 14 days will require further medical evidence.

14. Students without this provision in their Student Support Plan can apply with supporting evidence as normal if they have experienced an exacerbation of their condition.

'Urgent cause' other than illness

Bereavement

15. For bereavements, candidates should provide as evidence a supporting statement explaining the relationship to the deceased and the impact on their ability to complete the relevant assignment or attend the relevant examination. Evidence is not required but date of bereavement should be provided. Additional evidence may be supplied, including a death certificate, an order of service, or a published obituary. Evidence of travel arrangements may be provided if a funeral took place abroad. Students who are requesting extensions over two weeks (total duration) should provide independent evidence of the ongoing impact (eg medical certificate, supporting statement from a tutor). If the bereavement is not recent, supporting evidence will be required to support the request.

Maternity, paternity or adoption leave

16. Candidates who have chosen not to suspend for reasons of maternity, paternity or adoption and who require an extension or excusal from attendance at an exam may submit an application using a birth certificate (for a short extension up to six weeks), evidence from a doctor or midwife, or other evidence showing the period of maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Applications on these grounds are subject to the same application time limits and maximum period of extension available, with further evidence required beyond six weeks.

17. Applications for pregnancy related illness should follow the normal process for acute illness or injury.

Work commitments

18. Full-time students cannot request extensions or excusal on the grounds of work-related commitments. This includes volunteering, internships and interviews.

19. Part-time students may apply for extensions or excusal only if related to exceptional, unexpected and time-limited additional commitments (ie up to 12 weeks). Part-time students are expected to balance their work and studies. Evidence should normally be provided by the employer. For self-employed or otherwise do not have a line manager (eg CEO) you should provide a statement explaining the circumstances and any relevant evidence which is available, for example, contractual agreements or other such documents. For students in military service changes in deployment would only be considered a reason for an extension or excusal where its time-limited.

Victim of crime

20. Applications should be supported by independent evidence of the crime (for example a police report, insurance letter etc) and a statement explaining the impact of the crime on your ability to work/attend an examination. If relevant, medical evidence can be provided to support this.

Jury service or requirement to participate in legal proceedings

21. Applications should be supported by appropriate evidence such as a jury service letter, a letter from the court or a letter from your solicitor. All evidence should include the dates of the relevant legal proceedings.

Religious observance

22. As the date of a religious observance is known in advance it is not covered by Part 14 (as it isn't an 'urgent cause'). There are other mechanisms through which candidates can ask in advance for adjustments to assessment to accommodate religious observance (such as the exam adjustment process or dispensations). However, if religious observance causes or is related to illness or other urgent cause, an application to the Proctors may be appropriate.

Significant adverse personal or family circumstances

23. Significant adverse personal or family circumstances may impact a candidates' ability to undertake assessment and in cases where the circumstances are exceptional, unexpected and time-limited an application for an extension or to be excused from attending an exam may be appropriate. Applications should be supported by appropriate evidence such as a statement from the candidate describing the impact of the circumstance on their ability to work/attend the exam. Applications should also be supported by a statement from an appropriate independent person. This could include a solicitor, chaplain or similar, therapist or counsellor, family member's doctor, supervisor, senior tutor, but cannot include family members or friends.

Inability to have approved exam adjustments in place

24. Where a candidate has had examination adjustments recommended in their Student Support Plan (SSP) or suffered from an acute injury that requires exam adjustments, but

it is too late for those adjustments to be put in place this is considered a valid reason for exam excusal so that the candidate can take the exam at a later date with adjustments in place. Supporting evidence can be in the form of an email from Student Assessments Team or the student's college.

Academic or administrative difficulties outside of the candidate's control

25. There are some circumstances in which academic or administrative difficulties may be considered adequate grounds for an extension where these have been outside of the candidate's control. Independent evidence would need to be provided to support the application from the Director of Graduate Studies or equivalent. Administrative or technical difficulties in relation to submitting work electronically are not considered valid grounds for extensions or excusals.

Circumstances not considered valid grounds for applications under Part 14

26. The following circumstances are not considered valid grounds for applications under Part 14 as they do not meet the definition of 'illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable':

- Delays in postage of submitted work or reliance on third parties to deliver submitted work. Students should ensure plenty of time to submit work by the deadline.
- Difficulties experienced submitting work electronically including, but not limited to: failure of hardware, failure of internet connection, failure of software, and lost or stolen files. Students should ensure plenty of time to submit their work by the deadline and ensure they have backed up their work, including both physical backups and online.
- Social obligations and similar avoidable/adjustable events, foreseeable or routine commitments. This may include, but is not limited to: holidays, weddings, parties, routine medical appointments, moving house, changing job.
- Other commitments including: normal work commitments, voluntary commitments, extracurricular activities, regular caring commitments, job interviews, internships, sporting commitments etc.
- Failed travel arrangements or inadequate travel planning (including leaving insufficient time to apply for a visa).
- Financial difficulties.
- Long-term ill health or disability which has not been subject to exacerbation (see Annex F: Major adjustments to course and assessment requirements for more information on the appropriate route to follow for students requiring adjustments on these grounds).
- Poor planning or time management, clustered deadlines (including due to previous extensions), misreading of the examination timetable (including misunderstanding of time zones), misreading assessment requirements or location of submission.
- Failure to take note of course information (Examination Regulations, examination conventions, course handbook) or other key information such as the Student Handbook.

Evidence standards for ‘illness or other urgent cause’ for the late submission of online examination responses

27. This section only applies to online exams taken in ‘Typed ~~answers~~ with supplementary uploads’ or ‘Uploads ~~answers~~ only’ mode of completion examination (including those who handwrite an online exam as an exam adjustment) where the candidate has received notification to make an application to the Proctors in relation to a late exam response (see section 9.5.5 of the EAF).

28. The nature of online exams mean that only a limited set of acute situations will prevent a student submitting an exam response on time by interfering with the upload process at or towards the end of the exam duration; therefore a much narrower definition of ‘illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable’ is applied.

    - For a sudden and debilitating illness at or towards the end of the exam duration (eg panic attack, seizure etc) that would have caused a student to leave an in-person exam, a report of an independent party (eg member of college or department staff) at the time of or very shortly after the incident can support an application due to acute illness.
    - For sudden disruption (eg fire alarm, acute illness of family member/friend requiring medical attention), a statement from an independent party/witness.
    - For University IT system failure at or towards the end of the exam duration, an IT ticket acknowledgment email or other officially generated evidence.
    - For failure of wi-fi or internet service provision at or towards the end of the exam duration, evidence of an official service down notification or similar independent evidence.
    - For failure of laptop or PC at or towards the end of the exam duration, a statement from an independent party (eg a member of college or department staff from whom they sought help).

29. In all circumstances given above and for any not listed the circumstances must be ‘unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable’.

30. The following are not considered valid reasons for applications under Part 14 in relation to the late submissions of online exam responses as they do not meet the definition of ‘illness or other urgent cause that is unforeseeable, unavoidable and/or insurmountable’:

    - Difficulties in compiling or formatting documents for upload
    - Failure to leave enough time to complete formatting and uploading within the exam duration.
    - Illness or other urgent cause that is not acute to the timing of the end of the exam duration.
    - Disability or long-term health conditions
    - Laptop or PC failure due to computer updates, failure to ensure power supply etc.