



Organisation of  
Qualifications & Awards

# Examinations Handbook

[www.oqa-uk.com](http://www.oqa-uk.com)

## 1. Examination Policies and Procedures

### a) Format of written Final Examinations

Most written final examinations will consist of eight questions each carrying equal marks. Candidates will be required to answer five questions within three hours. The Study Centre will print all final examination papers

### b) Notification of examinations

Details of final examinations will be posted at participating institutions' notice board no later than four weeks before the examinations are due to begin and preferably in the student manual given at the commencement of the term.

The details will include:

- i) Name of the course and subject being offered
- ii) Whether re-sits are also being offered
- iii) Place of examination
- iii) Date and time of day when taking place. Students should be notified in the Study Centre student manual of this procedure so they will relate to the notice board at the appropriate time and cannot claim that they have not been given adequate or sufficient notice. Distance learning or independent students will be notified directly and will be advised by the tutor support provider where they are expected to attend the examination/s.

### c) Marking Schemes

If the approved centre is involved in the setting of examination papers, a precise marking scheme for an examination will be submitted by the member of faculty responsible for setting an examination paper. The questions must relate directly to the official syllabus of the subject under examination and a detailed marking scheme will allow:

- (i) Any person marking the paper understands what answer(s) the person who sets the paper was seeking
- (ii) The Dean/Programme Advisor is able to check the questions for ambiguities
- (iii) OQA is able to make a full assessment of its accuracy and standard in relation to academic requirements.

d) Moderating the examination papers

Once the course instructor has completed the paper he/she must present it with the marking scheme to the Academic Registrar or Examinations Officer of the approved study centre. The examination papers and marking schemes must be forwarded to OQA for moderation and approval. Any amendments will be communicated to the study centre for further consideration until all questions have been agreed. Once the examination papers have been approved by OQA, the Study Centre will be advised so that the necessary amount of copies can be produced for the examinations. These will be placed in a safe place until the date of the examinations. A copy of each finalised paper and marking scheme will be kept in the approved centre's files.

On the day of the Examinations a sealed envelope containing the examination questions must only be opened in the presence of examinees in the places of the examination.

It is expected that any member of the faculty or any administrator who has seen the papers will treat them in the strictest confidence.

e) Marking the examination papers

The examinations scripts will be marked by the instructors who set the examination questions. Once the papers are marked, a sample of examination scripts must be sent to OQA for moderation. A representative sample of **5 Scripts** will be sufficient and it should represent the full range of marks. OQA will assess the accuracy, consistency and fairness of the marks awarded and will confirm the moderated marks and grades to the study centre

f) Specimen marking scheme

The faculty members will be free to determine the method of marking each answer and the marks that should be awarded in line with the marking schemes included when the proposed examination paper is submitted.

However certain rules must be observed when compiling a marking scheme, namely:

- (i) Questions that require an 'absolute answer' must be accompanied by a full answer to the question when the marking scheme is submitted. This may include certain statistics and accounting questions. It must be proved that the question is capable of a correct answer in order to help establish that the question is correct in its setting.

Marks awarded to such questions would then be allocated to correct tabling, graphing, working, etc, and not simply to the correct end figure/conclusion.

- (ii) The major marks awarded for essay type questions should be for reasoning and supportive facts unless has specifically stated that only an understanding of the principles is necessary and not an in depth appreciation of the counter-arguments that may exist concerning the application of the principles.
- (iii) If it is intended that special materials such as 'log tables' are required for answering a question this must be noted under SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS at the top of the paper.
- (iv) Noiseless calculators may be used in final examinations but not programmable calculators.

## **2. Appeals Procedure**

1. Students are required to make available to the approved centre – in writing – information relating to circumstances, which could seriously affect their examination performance, and which they would wish OQA to take into account when assessing results, e.g., dyslexia. Such information must be made available before the scheduled examination(s). Evidence of such circumstances produced after the results are declared will not be considered as an appeal except as described in paragraph 4.
2. Any evidence so given will be treated in the strictest confidence, and will only be made known to OQA when a candidate is on the border line between success and failure and then only with the prior permission of the student. The approved centre will then have the responsibility of collating evidence and ensuring its availability to OQA
3. Any evidence, which a student provides, must be substantiated by an independent and preferably professional authority, bearing the appropriate stamp, e.g., Doctor, Social worker etc.
4. When a student has grounds for an appeal which he/she is unable to make known to the approved centre before the exam (e.g., illness during the examination) he/she may submit an appeal in writing within seven days of the date of his/her latest examination. Such an appeal must be substantiated as under paragraph 3 above.
5. The approved centre should then provide appropriate information to OQA which will be to examine the appeal and make a judgment on the candidate's case.
6. Where there is an agreement to re-examine an individual student's script the student must pay a pre-agreed fee per subject to cover the cost of the service.

### **3. Examination Malpractice**

Any examination candidate found to have committed an act of gross malpractice, e.g., cheating, during the examination will not have his/her script marked and may not be allowed to retake the course.

Where malpractice is believed to have taken place the examinee will be informed of the accusation by the invigilator and all details and the time of the incident will be passed on to OQA which will take the final decision.

Any student found to be talking during the examination will be warned and a report made of the incident, and a second occurrence will cause the matter to be passed on to OQA for a final decision

### **4. Examination Regulations**

There a number of key regulations for the conduct of all examinations that study centres should rigidly adhered to:

The question papers and examination stationery should ideally be deposited in a safe at the examination centre.

The examination papers must be kept in their sealed envelopes until they are required for the examinations.

1. Items required for each examination are:
  - (i) A sealed envelope containing the examination paper.
  - (ii) Examination booklets
  - (iii) Continuation stationery and treasury tags
  - (iv) A list of candidates names
  - (v) An invigilator's declaration

They should be collected by the Invigilator(s) at least 15 minutes before the start of each examination.

2. A clock will be prominently displayed in the examination room(s) so that all candidates have a clear view of it.
- 3.
4. The desks will be arranged so that the distance between the chairs is 1.5 meters in any direction.
5. On the whiteboard should be written, in bold letters/numbers
  - (i) the title of the examination
  - (ii) Examination location
  - (iii) The starting and finishing time.

Enough space should be allowed for on the board between starting and finishing times in order that half hour intervals may be entered in the event of the clock stopping.

6. No candidate may be allowed into the examination room until called by the invigilator.
7. Each candidate must produce means of identification on entering the examination room e.g., passport, student identity card with photograph – signed by the partner institutions Academic Registrar. The invigilator should record the presence of each student on the attendance sheet.
8. Invigilators must make sure that before the examination begins, all personal belongings of the candidates are placed at a convenient point in the examination room. Candidates should retain valuables.
9. Candidates are allowed to have on their desks the following items only:
  - (i) Writing equipment
  - (ii) Examination materials
  - (iii) Personal valuables
  - (iv) Calculators (noiseless, non-print out) and dictionaries (standard dictionaries only)

10. Candidates must be directed to read the instructions on the front cover of the examination booklet before the examination begins.

In addition, the following regulations must be announced:

- (i) Candidates may not hand in their script and leave the room during the first hour of the examination
- (ii) Candidates wishing to go up to the toilet, must wait until one of the examination centre staff appears to accompany them.
- (iii) If additional writing paper is needed during the examination, the student should raise their hand to attract the invigilator's attention.
- (iv) No paper must be removed from the booklet.
- (v) Candidates should not use correction fluid. If a mistake is made it should be crossed through neatly and begun again.
- (vi) Candidates may not communicate with any other candidate during the examination. Candidates requiring assistance should raise their hand to attract the invigilator's attention. The invigilator cannot give students any help in interpreting a question.
- (vii) When a candidate has finished the examination and has checked his/her work. He/she should raise his/her hand and the script will be collected. Candidates should be advised not to leave their seats until told to do so.
- (viii) Candidates may leave the examination room with the paper but they are not allowed to keep any other examination materials.
- (ix) Any candidate found to have in his/her possession during the examination any unauthorised materials, whether they are used or not, will be reported to the appropriate examining body and will be disqualified from the examination.

11. Just before the examination is due to start, the sealed envelope containing the questions, must be opened in clear view of the candidates. The examination papers must be placed on the candidate's desks in such a way that the examinees cannot read the questions. The candidates must be told not to look at the questions until the examination officially begins. A check should be made to ensure that every candidate has the examination paper and an answer booklet before the examination starts.

12. All candidates' dictionaries must be thoroughly checked before the examination begins. They cannot be used in cases where notes have been written inside.



13. The invigilator must give a clear announcement of the start of the examination.
14. Candidates may not enter later than 45 minutes after the examination has started except in cases where a candidate is delayed through no fault of their own. The Examination Officer will judge whether the reason for the lateness is legitimate and will allow the candidate to enter the examination room up to 2 hours late provided no candidates have already left.
15. Invigilators must not leave the examination room whilst the examination is in progress except when they are relieved by another invigilator.
16. Candidates are not allowed to borrow items belonging to other candidates during the examinations.
17. Continuation booklets/sheets should not be given to candidates unless they have used up the examination stationery already supplied.
18. During the examination the invigilator should keep a constant check on the candidates to ensure that no malpractice occurs. It would be unacceptable, therefore, for an invigilator to read or otherwise occupy himself/herself whilst invigilating.
19. Where malpractice e.g., cheating, is believed to have taken place, the invigilator must inform the examinee at the same time of the discovery that the incident will be communicated to the Examination Officer. If unauthorised materials are discovered in the possession of a candidate during the examination, they should be removed immediately. The nature of the malpractice/gross malpractice, must be recorded in writing. The candidate(s) concerned must remain behind after the examination to see the Examination Officer.
20. Any candidate who talks during the examination, must be warned by the invigilator at the time of the offence. A report must be written on the incident and given to the Examination Officer at the end of the examination. Again the candidate must be asked to remain behind to see the Examination Officer.

21. If an act of gross misconduct e.g., shouting, occurs which disturbs or threatens to disturb the conduct of the examination, the invigilator must immediately stop the examination, ask all candidates to turn over their examination scripts and papers, and then ask the offending candidate to leave the room. If he/she refuses to leave, the invigilator should send another candidate to the Examination Officer for assistance. The time, at which the examination stops, must be noted by the invigilator. The examination must be resumed as soon as possible with appropriate correction in the time at which the candidates officially finish. A full report of the incident must be written on the appropriate form and given to the Examinations Officer.
22. If the examination has to be stopped for any reason e.g., the fire alarm sounding, the students should be told to stop writing, turn over their papers and leave the room (with the invigilator). There must be no talking. The time at which the examination is stopped must be written on the blackboard. Any extra time to compensate for the disturbance must be agreed with the Examinations Officer. Candidates must in no circumstances be unaccompanied. The time at which the examination recommences must be written on the board together with amended finishing time.
23. Invigilators must not interpret a question in any way for a candidate. Any queries must be referred to the Examination Officer.
24. The invigilator should not allow under any circumstances the removal from the examination room of any examination stationery/materials.
25. Invigilators should inform the candidates how long they have left to write 10 minutes, 5 minutes and 1 minute before the end of the examination.
26. At the end of the examination, candidates should be reminded to check that all their additional sheets are named, numbered, etc., and that they are all attached to the examination booklet with a treasury tag.
27. Invigilators should make a final check of the total number of scripts collected against the number of candidates before they leave the examination room.

28. Candidates are not allowed to smoke or eat during the examination. An exception can be made for those who wish to eat unwrapped sweets.
29. If a candidate falls ill or is otherwise incapacitated during the examination so that he/she is unable to continue, the invigilator will allow him/her to leave the room but he/she must go to the Examination Officer. A member of staff will accompany the candidate until he/she either:
- (i) decides to leave permanently, or,
  - (ii) feels able to continue with the examination.

A report of the incident must be written by the invigilator on the form provided.

If the candidate wishes to return to finish the examination, and is, in the Examination Officer's judgment fit to continue, he/she will be allowed to do so, but no extra time will be given.

30. Candidates are allowed to keep the examination questions.
31. After the candidates have left the room, the invigilator must collect all examination materials and take them to the Examination Officer. On no account should the examination stationery be left in the room.
32. The Examination Officer should ensure that the scripts are kept in a safe place until they are either given or posted to the examiners.
33. On no account should the Examination Officer invigilate. He/she should always be available for administering the examination(s), dealing with the problems, emergencies, etc.
34. Instructors should not invigilate the final examinations in a subject they lecture.