

ONCAMPUS Exam Guidelines for Centres

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Introduction

This document outlines the end-to-end examination process for Centres, ensuring the handling and storage of confidential exam material is fully secure and all exams are invigilated robustly and professionally. Although some aspects on delivery and storage of exam papers may not be applicable to Digiexam (online exam platform), all other relevant processes and instructions must still be followed.

Paper based exams

Delivery of examination materials

- Where possible, all first sitting exam papers will be printed by externally sourced printers, coordinated by the Central Academic Team.
- The Central Academic Team will confirm with each Centre which exams are required and how many papers, names of authorised personnel to sign for/collect the delivery and perform the required checks, and the delivery address.
- Authorised personnel are typically:
 - Centre Director (CD)
 - Deputy Centre Head/Head of Learning and Teaching (DCH/HLT)
 - Head of Student Services (HoSS)
 - Curriculum Information Officer (CIO)
- Where delivery is required to a partner university building or reception, ONCAMPUS staff must still be listed. The Centre should liaise with their university to agree a suitable process for signing for and collecting the delivery.
- It remains the responsibility of the authorised personnel to collect the parcel in a timely manner (where signing for delivery is not an option), check the materials and confirm receipt.
- Papers will be delivered to each Centre (as required) approximately 1 to 2 weeks prior to an exam sitting.
- On receipt, the question paper packets and examination material must be checked carefully.
- Centres must inform the Central Academic Team immediately if there are any problems:
 - it appears that the parcel or one of the packets has been opened during transit and therefore there may have been a breach of security;
 - there are any differences between the material received and the dispatch/delivery note;
 - the material has been significantly damaged in transit;
 - materials are not as requested.
- All materials must be checked immediately upon receipt and put into secure storage facilities until the day of the examination (see 'secure storage' below).
- If question papers cannot be checked immediately upon receipt, they must be locked away in secure storage until an authorised member of staff is available to make the necessary checks.
- Centres are advised to keep a detailed record of all confidential materials received, including which member of staff signed for delivery and confirmation that they have been stored securely.

Printing in Centre

- If printing exam material in Centre is required i.e. resits with short turnaround following the first sitting, papers will be shared with authorised personnel via SharePoint in the [Secure Assessments Area](#) approximately 1 to 2 weeks before an exam sitting.
- Printing should take place within ONCAMPUS premises (where possible).
- Printing must be undertaken by an authorised member of staff only and supervised at all times i.e. should not leave an exam paper printing and return to the room 1 hour later.
- Printing should be conducted at quieter periods during the day where feasible i.e. not in a staffroom during a lunch break.
- Once printed and stapled, the same requirements for storing materials should be followed.
- If a partner university printing services is to be used, a process must be agreed that ensures the guidelines for sharing of exam material and secure printing can be maintained.

Secure storage of examination materials

- Once the Centre has confirmed receipt of the examination material or printed in Centre, it must be stored securely, conforming to the following requirements:
 - Strong cabinet (ideally metal), that may be fixed in place (where possible);
 - Have a robust security lock or combination code (2 or 3 key holders only);
 - Located in a secure lockable room within ONCAMPUS premises that is not accessible for students when alone;
 - The storage unit must be suitable for the volume of materials expected for the academic year. Additional cabinets/rooms may be required and must meet the same requirements.
- ONCAMPUS Centres must be able to demonstrate that the appropriate security systems are in place to prevent unauthorised access to examination materials.
- It is recommended that blank exam booklets, paper and formulae sheets are stored in the same location to ensure all required material is readily accessible on the day of the exam.
- Confidential material must be kept secure throughout the examination window. Excess **unused** exam material should be destroyed (shredded or confidential waste bin) once the exam session is complete.
- Centres must have a robust system for recording when material is taken from or returned to the secure storage.
- In the event of a natural disaster, fire, theft, loss, damage or any other circumstances, which render the existing accommodation or secure storage of

examination materials at risk, must be reported immediately to the Deputy Chief Academic Officer (DCAO) and Head of Curriculum.

Opening examination materials

- Centres should keep question papers in their sealed packets and open them in front of candidates where possible. If multiple rooms across one or more sites are being used for the same examination, the packets may be opened immediately before the examination so they can be distributed appropriately.
- If an exam packet is required to be opened before the examination, as few papers should be accessed as possible and done **within one hour of the published start time on the day of the examination**.
- Where confidential materials are required to be opened in advance of the examination and held for use over an extended period, strict precautions must be taken to securely store them after they have been opened.
- All opened packets and exam materials must be collected at the end of the assessment session, including blank booklets, rough paper and formulae sheets and handed in person to the designated member of staff (usually CIO).
- Under no circumstances can exam materials, both unused and complete, be removed from the Centre, and when not in use, must be stored securely as described above.
- If material is to be transported between premises, this must be done securely and timely, taking into consideration the amount/weight of papers and distance required.
- Material used for live assessments **must not be used as practice material for future intakes**, unless confirmed by the Central Academic Team.

Examination room

- Centres must ensure an appropriate assessment environment is provided to all candidates.
- All candidates must **sit the examination on site** (ONCAMPUS or partner university building), unless you have received permission from the CAO/DCAO beforehand for candidates to take the examination elsewhere.
- Any room in which an examination is held should provide candidates with **appropriate conditions** for taking the examination. Centres must consider conditions such as heating, lighting, ventilation and the level of outside noise.
- Practical examinations must be held under conditions that will give all candidates the chance to carry out their tasks and to display their true levels of attainment in the subjects concerned.

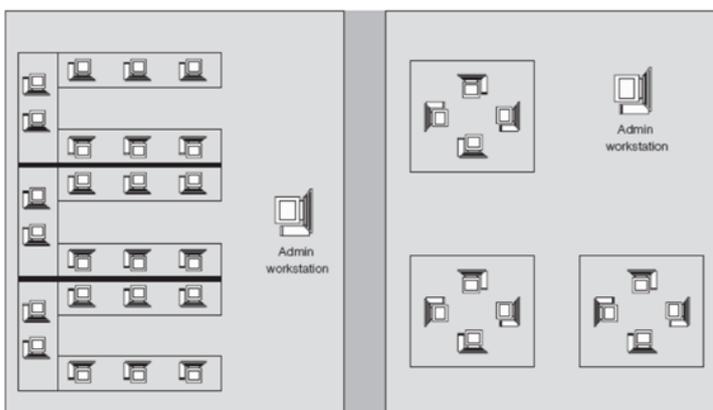
- Where an exam requires audio, arrangements must be made in advance to test the sound, ensuring that the audio is clear and can be heard by all candidates, regardless of where they are seated in the room.
- Display material (such as maps, diagrams, wall charts and projected images) which might be helpful to candidates **must not** be visible in the examination room.
- You must take particular care with examinations held in laboratories.
- A **reliable clock** must be visible to each candidate in the examination room. The clock must be big enough for all candidates to read clearly. You should carry out regular checks to make sure all clocks used in the examination room are in good working order and show the same time. Digital clocks are recommended where available.
- A board must be visible to all candidates showing the actual start and finish times of each examination.
- The seating arrangements must prevent candidates from overlooking (intentionally or otherwise) the work of others. As a guide, the distance between candidates' chairs in all directions should be a **minimum 1.25 metres**.
- Wherever possible, for written examinations:
 - all candidates should face in the same direction;
 - each candidate should have a separate desk or table big enough to hold question papers and answer booklets.
- Candidates who are not working at individual desks must be far enough apart so that their work cannot be seen by, and contact cannot be made, with others.
- Candidates who are working on a drawing board set on an easel or other non-horizontal surface must be arranged in an inward-facing circle or similar pattern.
- Under certain circumstances, 1.25 metres may prove to be an insufficient distance to prevent candidates seeing, intentionally or otherwise, the work of others. The main objective is to ensure that no candidate's work can be overseen by others, and exams officers must take appropriate steps to ensure this can be achieved.
- When preparing your examination rooms, you should consider making provision for candidates to securely store their personal belongings outside the room. If this is not possible, determine how bags and other items could be stored within the examination room so that they are out of reach of candidates and access to them can be monitored by the invigilator (usually at the front of the room).
- It is recommended that centres create and allocate a seating plan and assign rooms for all examinations as part of pre-exam planning. Desk labels with the candidate details and photo are advisable. If a seating plan is used, a copy should also be placed outside of the room for candidates to check before entering.
- It is recommended that candidates are seated in **candidate number order**.
- Exams across different modules may be taken in the same room at the same time, as long as it does not cause any disturbance i.e. different time lengths could cause disruption if a large number of students are leaving early.

- Any candidate with a medical condition/illness i.e. cold/cough which may disrupt other candidates, is recommended to take the examination in a **separate room** (where available), in which all instructions for conducting examinations can be applied.

Computer-based exams (Digixam)

- The arrangement of workstations for computer-based exams and the position of the invigilator's desk should facilitate detection of any unauthorised activity by candidates, e.g. communication with others or use of unauthorised material.
- When planning the layout of the room, Centres must consider the following limitations:
 - the distance between the screens;
 - the division of the workspace to allow any permitted additional materials to be used;
 - the use of booths, screens or partitions whether temporary or permanent;
 - impact on invigilation requirements;
 - ratio of invigilators;
 - additional support for technical queries.
- Each workspace must be isolated by a minimum space of 1.25 metres measured from the nearest outer edge of one screen to the next, unless the monitors are positioned back-to-back or separated by dividers or protected by privacy screens.
- The Centre Director is responsible for ensuring that health and safety laws are followed, including a risk assessment for the use of power cables and extension leads, in line with their university partner guidelines.
- Alternative desk arrangements, as recommended by the British Council¹, may also be considered where appropriate.

Arrangements of workstations:



¹ British Council (2013) *Standard of examination halls*. Available at: https://www.britishcouncil.ro/sites/default/files/standards_of_examinations_halls.pdf (Accessed 11 January 2023).

Invigilation

The invigilator is the person in the examination room responsible for conducting an examination session in the presence of the candidates. Invigilators have a key role in upholding the integrity of the examination process, including reporting cases of academic misconduct. Each Centre is responsible for recruiting and training their invigilators to the required standard.

Invigilator ratios

There must be:

- at least one invigilator for each group of 30 candidates for written examinations;
 - at least one invigilator for each group of between 15 to 20 candidates for computer-based (with consideration for technical support as required) & Art examinations;
 - at least one invigilator for each group of 15 candidates for Science lab practical examinations.
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- Additional invigilators may be allocated at the exams officer's discretion to ensure supervision of candidates is maintained at all times.
 - Centres may wish to consider a lead/senior invigilator who manages the smooth running of the exam session, including the handling and reporting of any academic misconduct or personal/medical emergencies.
 - Invigilators may be changed, as long as the number of invigilators present in the examination room does not fall below the required number.
 - When one invigilator is present, they must be able to get help easily, without leaving the examination room and without disturbing the candidates. The use of a mobile phone is allowed for this purpose only.
 - If a number of examination rooms open off the same corridor, it may be possible to have a person stationed in the corridor to give or ask for help.
 - For computer-based examinations, technical support should be available throughout the examination in case of hardware/software problems and to assist with the invigilation. This may be part of an existing invigilator's role or additional member of staff, as required, ensuring minimum ratios are adhered to.
 - For Art examinations, the timed test should normally be invigilated by an Art and Design teacher as they may be required to give technical assistance to an individual candidate.
 - For Science lab practical exams, it is essential that a teacher of the subject should

also be present in the examination room at the start of the test (and as necessary after that) to deal with technical difficulties that may arise, including matters of safety.

Invigilator role and responsibilities

- All invigilators must be suitably qualified and experienced adults who must **not** be current students at the centre.
- Any relative or person considered a close relation of a candidate in an examination room must **not** be an invigilator for that examination.
- If a teacher has prepared the candidates for the subject of the examination during the academic year, they must **not** be the sole invigilator at any time during a written examination in that subject.
- Invigilators must **not** carry out any other task (i.e. marking) in the examination room. If a laptop is available, this should be used for monitoring an exam on Digiexam or to contact a member of staff outside of the room via Microsoft Teams **only**.
- Invigilators must:
 - Be clear about the days and times of all upcoming exams
 - Arrive on time as specified by the Centre – typically 45 minutes to 1 hour before the start of an exam
 - Carry identification
 - Wear appropriate professional clothing and soft soled shoes
 - Be familiar with the ONCAMPUS Examination Regulations
 - Be familiar with any specific instructions relating to the subjects being examined
 - Give all their attention to conducting examinations as per ONCAMPUS guidelines
 - Ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to do well
 - Maintain the exam's security before, during and after the exam
 - Prevent possible candidate misconduct
 - Prevent possible administration failures

Before the examination

It is recommended that the lead invigilator (where applicable) meets with all invigilators to brief the team, ensuring the necessary preparation has been carried out. This may also include confirmation of any cases of reasonable adjustments i.e. candidates with extra time.

Invigilators must check the following:

- The exam room layout meets ONCAMPUS guidelines, including the cover/removal of any subject materials.

- The correct exam question papers and materials are present in the room. This may include rough paper, graph paper, additional blank booklets and formulae sheets. All exam materials must be kept secure at all times.
- The minimum required number of invigilators are present.
- Invigilators have a means of contacting a member of staff outside of the room for additional support, if required.
- Mobile phones (and any alarms) are switched off. If a sole invigilator is present, a mobile phone may be switched on, but must be set to silent and vibrations switched off.
- Students must **not** have access to the room before and during invigilation preparation.
- Ensure copies of the Exam Regulations and Warning to Candidates documents are placed as appropriate outside the examination room. This may also include posters relating to permitted calculators and reminder to others using the building that silence is required as an exam is in progress.

Entering the examination room

- The exam is in progress as soon as candidates enter the room and they are expected to follow the Exam Regulations.
- A register must be taken, ideally at the door, and candidates then seated using the seating plan provided.
- The CIO/Attendance Officer must be contacted to be advised of any absences so students can be chased prior to the start time of the exam.
- Identification checks must be made. Candidates must bring photo ID with them: passport, driving licence, university ID card or residence permit. These can either be checked at the door, and/or placed on the desk and checked by invigilators throughout the exam (if desk labels are used).
- Candidates must be checked for prohibited materials, paying particular attention to mobile phone/s and smart watches. If materials are found, they must be safely stored by the invigilator and returned at the end of the exam or placed by the candidate in their bag.
- All permitted material must be carefully checked. This can either be done as candidates enter the room or at their desk before the exam has started:
 - Clear pencil case only
 - Clear water bottle only
 - Approved paper translation dictionary with no notes
 - Permitted scientific calculator (make and model may be specified for the exam)
 - For open book exams, check notes meet the requirements stated on the exam instructions i.e. 1 x double sided A4 sheet, handwritten

- For computer-based exams, ensure students have sufficient time to set up their laptop and are advised where their nearest power socket is, should this be required.

Starting the examination

- Once all candidates are seated, the lead invigilator must read or play the ONCAMPUS Invigilator Announcements to students. There are different versions for paper and computer-based exams, so ensure the correct one is used.
- For paper-based exams, open the exam packet and hand out the exam papers and supporting materials according to the seating plan. This may also include distributing formulae sheets and rough paper for computer-based exams.
- Ensure all students are ready and there are no questions before starting the exam.
- If 1-1 technical support is required with a candidate for a computer-based exam, the lead invigilator may decide to start the exam and the candidate join when their problem has been rectified, where appropriate (full time permitted).

During the examination

- Invigilators must give their full attention to invigilating the exam.
- Invigilators must respond as quickly as possible when a candidate raises their hand for help.
- The minimum required number of invigilators must always be adhered to.
- Where a candidate believes that there is an error or omission on the question paper, the invigilator must advise the student to complete the question to the best of their ability and make no further comment. The specific query should be noted down and referred to the lead invigilator/CIO, who will then pass onto the Central Academic Team prior to the marker meeting.
- If a candidate believes that the question paper has a section missing or that they have not been prepared for the set texts or options being tested by the paper, the invigilator **must** report the problem to the CIO immediately. They should check that the candidate has the right paper or has been entered for the correct option/tier or refer to the Central Academic Team if required.
- Invigilators must **not** give any advice or help to candidates about questions in the exam paper.
- Invigilators may read a question to a candidate, word for word, clarify general rules as stated on the exam instructions, or provide technical support with computer-based examinations.
- Invigilators must always remain vigilant and look out for cases of academic misconduct.

- Invigilators should be aware of any candidates who may look or be feeling unwell and act accordingly.
- As per the Exam Regulations, candidates are **not** permitted to go to the toilet during the examination. In cases of an emergency, a designated toilet must be assigned which is carefully checked prior to each examination for additional devices, notes etc. Candidates must be accompanied by a member of staff to and from the bathroom, ensuring they remain in silence. The minimum required number of invigilators must continue to be adhered to.
- If a candidate has medical grounds with prior approval which requires toilet breaks, the same instructions for escorting to and from the exam room apply.
- If an event occurs in the examination room which is deemed outside of standard exam practice, this must be recorded on the Incident Report Form, detailing what has happened, the candidate's details and the time. The form must then be passed to the CIO and DCH/HLT for further action.

Late arrivals and time restrictions

- As per the Exam Regulations, if a candidate arrives **within the first 15 minutes** of the start time, they may enter, however must not be allowed any extra time.
- For English exams, candidates must arrive on time. No late arrivals will be permitted.
- If a candidate arrives **after 15 minutes**, they will not be allowed to enter the examination room.
- Students are not allowed to leave the examination room within the **first hour** of the exam commencing.
- Students are not allowed to leave the examination room during the **last 15 minutes** of the exam.

Behaviour management

- An invigilator's role is to maintain the appropriate environment for examinations to take place and ensure exams are conducted correctly.
- Invigilators must:
 - Be vigilant and remain aware of emerging situations;
 - Remain calm and professional at all times;
 - Not raise their voice;
 - Sympathise as appropriate but be firm;
 - Reinforce the exam regulations where required;
 - Summon help from outside of the exam room as necessary.
- Cases of academic misconduct may include (but are not limited to):
 - Use of unauthorised material, including ear pieces;
 - Access to communication devices i.e. mobile phone, smart watch;
 - Bypassing exam software to access material or communicate with others;

- Copying or attempting to copy from other candidates;
 - Escaping from supervision;
 - Collusion with others, both inside and outside the exam room;
 - Taking an exam on behalf of another candidate.
- Depending on the seriousness and nature of the case, Centres may deem it necessary to:
 - Confiscate unauthorised material and/or allow the student to continue, with warning that they may be disciplined at a later date;
 - Remove the student from the exam room immediately, referring the candidate to the CD/DCH/HLT as appropriate.
 - It is recommended that the lead invigilator makes the final decision on the most appropriate course of action.
 - All cases of suspected academic misconduct or inappropriate behaviour must be recorded on the Incident Report Form.

Evacuation procedure

In the event of an evacuation alarm e.g. a fire alarm:

- Stop candidates from writing.
- Make a note of the time.
- Collect the attendance register.
- Advise candidates to leave all papers, scripts and belongings in the room and to leave the room calmly in silence and make their way to the designated assembly point. Candidates should be advised on the nearest assembly point at the start of the exam.
- Candidates are advised during the invigilator announcements that they must remain in silence at all times during an evacuation.
- It is recognised that it may not always be possible to stop communication during evacuations, especially in large groups, however candidates must be made aware, and invigilators should assist in enforcing this where possible.
- On return to the exam room, the exam can continue once all candidates are settled. The end time of the exam should be updated to ensure the full time is given.
- For computer-based exams, the timer on the exam will continue in the background, therefore pausing is not an option. Please refer the case to the Central Academic Team.
- If the situation is severe and a return to the exam room is not possible within a reasonable amount of time, this must be reported to the DCAO/Head of Curriculum as soon as possible so a decision can be made on the best course of action.
- The aim should always be to complete an exam rather than abandon an attempt, but it is recognised that in some evacuation situations, a rearrangement of the exam

may be required.

Ending an examination

- An announcement should be made 15 minutes before the end of the exam to advise of the remaining time and that candidates may no longer until the end.
- Once the time has finished, announce the end of the exam.
- If multiple exams are being run in the same room, be clear about which examination is ending.
- Candidates must be reminded to remain under exam conditions until scripts have been collected/laptops switched off and they have left the exam room.
- Candidates must be reminded to leave all rough paper and additional exam materials on their desk.
- Invigilators must collect any equipment loaned to candidates and return any prohibited items to students once they have left the room.

Paper-based exams

- Instruct candidates to stop writing when the time is up. Please remember that some candidates may have extra time (see reasonable adjustments section).
- Candidates must be advised to correctly name and attach any loose sheets of paper they require to be marked.
- Ensure that candidate details have been completed on the scripts, including Student ID Number, before each paper is collected.
- Invigilators must carefully store the completed exam papers ready to be transported back to the authorised exam officer, including a separate pile for unused exam papers and material to be destroyed i.e. rough work, formulae sheets.

Computer-based exams

- The exam paper will hand in automatically once candidates have had the full time in the paper. This may vary slightly if candidates started the exam a few minutes after the official start time, including those permitted to start late due to technical issues.
- If a candidate arrived late but within the first 15 minutes for a computer-based exam, an invigilator must ask the student to hand their paper in and watch until this is complete as the platform will assume that the full time is permitted.
- All students must have handed their paper in before they leave the exam room, unless there is a known connection issue, in which arrangements are to be made with the student to hand in when connection has resumed.

Reasonable adjustments

Where an individual candidate requires alternative arrangements, ONCAMPUS Centres must make reasonable adjustments to accommodate examinations. The candidate must follow the steps outlined in the [Reasonable Adjustments Policy](#) and complete the relevant form. Once approved by the DCAO, the following invigilation guidelines should be applied. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

- If additional time is permitted (typically 25%), the student may be accommodated in the same room, as long as no further recommendations have been made.
- All invigilators must be aware of the additional time and where the student is seated to ensure they are given the correct instructions.
- The candidate should be made aware of their end time separately and appropriate announcements given to them during/towards the end of the exam.
- All other candidates in the room must be reminded to leave the exam room quietly to minimise any disruption to those still completing the exam.
- If a Centre has multiple students requiring additional time, they may deem it appropriate to accommodate them in a separate room. All guidelines regarding minimum number of invigilators must be adhered to.

- Arrangements that will require the candidate to be accommodated in another room, requiring a separate invigilator:
 - **Practical assistant**
 - **Read aloud**
 - **Reader**
 - **Scribe**
 - **Sign language interpreter**
 - **Word processor**

- The CD/DCH/HLT **must** ensure invigilators and those acting in the above roles (or similar) fully understand their respective role and what is and what is not permissible in the examination room.

Distributing paper-based exams for marking

- Once the examination is complete and the papers have been returned to the exams officer, they should be securely stored, following the same guidelines as when they were first delivered/printed.
- Under no circumstances should exam papers leave the ONCAMPUS premises/university campus, therefore all marking (first and second) must be conducted on site, typically during work hours.
- The Centre must keep a detailed sign in/sign out record of all exam papers that are released to tutors for marking, including strict deadlines on when they should be returned.
- Centres may wish to consider designated classrooms or times where marking can take place.
- Should a Centre require support from another ONCAMPUS Centre during the marking process, each paper must be scanned in and stored securely on SharePoint before it is shared. Depending on the time frame, the papers may either be posted by recorded delivery or shared as an encrypted file (password protected) via email.
- The completed marked papers should be returned in the same way.
- Where feasible, Centres may wish to consider scanning all papers and uploading to Turnitin where marking can take place online, removing the restrictions of marking physical papers.
- With computer-based exams, permission to access an exam paper is managed by the Central Academic Team and all papers are held securely within the online platform.
- Markers may log onto the platform away from the Centre, however should remain conscious about where they are located and who else has visibility of their screen.
- All marking should be conducted online and papers must be not downloaded, printed or shared, unless for External Examiner or standardisation purposes.

Archiving completed exam material

- Any **unused** exam materials and rough work may be disposed of safely once the exam session is complete (shredded or confidential waste bin).
- All used and completed exam material must be stored securely, following the guidelines in this document, for **one further academic year**. This includes formative work and summative Art sketchbooks/pieces not collected by students.
- Oral assessment recordings must be uploaded and stored securely in the Centre's area on SharePoint only for **one further academic year**.
- Once the end of the following academic year has been reached, all material can be

disposed of safely.

- Centres may wish to consider scanning all completed materials and storing on SharePoint for the required amount of time to reduce the amount of physical space needed to store them securely.
- Digiexam accounts and associated papers are deleted in full at the end of the following academic year.