Policy and Guidance for Examiners and others involved in University Examinations

Valid from Michaelmas Term 2016
USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

Student Registry

Head of Examinations and Assessments
Katy Fifield/ Nicola Cooper-Harvey (headofexams@admin.ox.ac.uk) 2-76911

Deputy Head of Examinations and Assessments
Catherine Porter (from Nov 2016) 2-76917

Examinations Manager
Matt Kirk (exam.arrangements@admin.ox.ac.uk) 2-76907

Submissions Manager
Amanda Tattersall (taughtdegrees@admin.ox.ac.uk) 2-76906

Alternative Arrangements and Services Manager
Gemma Webb (exam.services@admin.ox.ac.uk) 2-76302

Academic Records Office Manager
Fiona Simons (aro@admin.ox.ac.uk) 2-76912

Technical support for Tableau
sdma@admin.ox.ac.uk

Proctors’ Office

Deputy Clerks
Stephen Hearn
Esther Villiers

Assistant Clerks
Jonathan Gordon
Pete Mills

All enquiries (examinations@proctors.ox.ac.uk) 2-70205/2-70092

Education Policy Support

Policy
Philippa O’Connor (philippa.oconnor@admin.ox.ac.uk) 2-80707

Dispensations
Susan Brace (Humanities) 2-80651
Victoria Campbell (Medical Sciences and OUDCE) 2-80109
Siân Griffiths (MPLS) 2-80659
Katy Holmes/ Frances Wayman (until/from 1 February 2017) (Social Sciences) 2-80469
(edcapplications@admin.ox.ac.uk)

External Examiners’ Reports
external-examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk
## Useful contact details
Useful contact details for various sections of the document.

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PREFACE

The conduct of University examinations is overseen by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (PVC) (Education) and the Proctors. The PVC (Education) acts in the place of the head of the institution that awards degrees as well as on behalf of Education Committee. The Proctors act as independent overseers with a duty under the University Statutes to ensure that examinations are properly conducted in accordance with the Statutes and Regulations. Examiners, including chairs and externals, are appointed by the PVC (Education) and the Proctors. Assessors are appointed by the examiners; in all cases approval by the PVC (Education) and the Proctors is also necessary.

This document provides information on the relevant regulations and statements of policy and guidance on examinations and assessment for taught courses. It also provides practical information to assist examiners and examination administrators in running an examination in accordance with the Examination Regulations. Guidance on the conduct of research degree examinations may be found in the Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees (www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/policyonresearchdegrees/).

This document should be read in conjunction with the Examination Regulations (sometimes known in hard copy as the ‘Grey Book’, with amendments published in the Oxford University Gazette, www.ox.ac.uk/gazette). From Michaelmas 2016, the online copy of the Examination Regulations is the only available version and can be accessed at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs. It is updated throughout the academic year with amendments as published in the Gazette. Examiners should familiarise themselves with the specific regulations that apply to the examination that they are conducting as specified in the relevant section of the Examination Regulations. They should also read the section entitled ‘Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations’ (www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcofunivexam). They may find it useful to look at the University Student Handbook (previously the Proctors’ and Assessor’s Memorandum) for information on examination matters as they affect students. Annex O: Resources provides a detailed list of these and other useful resources.

In this document changes introduced for 2016-17 (and shaded in yellow for ease of identification) reflect aspects of policy which Education Committee has reviewed, drawing on its consideration of examiners’ reports, the Proctors’ annual reports to Education Committee, and the decisions made by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). These highlighted sections also reflect changes to, and clarifications of, processes and responsibilities. The references to the Examination Regulations have been amended to refer to the 2016 edition, and to the online rather than the hard copy version.

Chairs of examiners and examination administrators will find that the examination process runs best if they work in close co-operation with the Proctors’ Office and the Head of Examinations and Assessments in Student Registry (contact details inside the front cover of this publication). If any major difficulties or problems with an examination arise, the Proctors should be contacted for advice on how best to proceed (examinations@proctors.ox.ac.uk).

Professor Emma Smith  
for Education Committee

Dr Elizabeth Gemmill  
Junior Proctor
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The purpose of this document

The University has traditionally provided a framework for examinations and assessment through a three-fold pattern: general and specific regulations set out in the Examination Regulations; policy requirements set out by Education Committee; and specific Proctorial guidance provided for examiners and chairs of examiners. This document brings together all three elements, providing links to the relevant regulations and other policy documents as appropriate.

1.2. The University’s approach to assessment

The University’s educational philosophy is that students acquire a range of critical skills in testing and judging evidence or propositions as well as a sufficient accomplishment in a particular discipline. Courses foster independent work and thought, and students learn how to think rather than being taught what to think. Accordingly examinations seek to assess what candidates have learnt and how they use it rather than merely what they have been taught. The diversified approach to teaching and learning also means that candidates in the same examination may not have been taught exactly the same knowledge of the subject. In these circumstances there is a principle that examination is to some extent independent of teaching. This principle is reflected in the arrangements for the appointment of the examination board which takes its instructions from, but is independent of, the supervisory body for the course. The principle is also reflected in other regulations and policies that seek to ensure, as far as possible, an independence of judgement by the examination board, not unduly influenced by close knowledge of students’ performance in class.

The University’s undergraduate (UG) degree courses involve a first public examination (FPE, primarily Preliminary Examinations, but in a small number of subjects Moderations or Honour Moderations) usually at the end of the first year, and a second public examination (Final Honour School (FHS)) which concludes the course. The second public examination may have more than one part, spread over years two, three, and (where applicable) four. It is designed to assess the success with which students have mastered the overall body of knowledge, and gained the skills and understanding required by their programme. Questions may be both specific and integrative.

The University’s general policy on the question of second-year UG examinations was established in 2000, when it was agreed that subjects might make a case for the introduction of second-year examinations on an individual basis, on the understanding that changes in some subject areas would not lead to wholesale change where this was not felt to be academically desirable. Education Committee recognises that in many subject areas there is a clear rationale for a pattern of examination that leaves the second year free of formal public examination (for a statement of such thinking, see
Annex D: Rationale for Final Honour Schools without a second year examination).

Postgraduate taught (PGT) courses make use of a range of examination and assessment methods according to the elements within the subject to be assessed. The assessment or examination norm for a course which is completed within a year is the equivalent of two three-hour examination papers and a dissertation or thesis of 10,000 – 20,000 words.

The University attaches great importance to both the rigour and the fairness of its public examinations. To this end examinations are designed to include a sufficient range of papers or other components to allow for a fair outcome not weighted by the opinion of too few examiners or assessors. Good practice includes the anonymity of examination scripts and submitted work, use of comment sheets by all involved in marking substantive pieces of assessment, marking to reflect criteria agreed in advance of the examination by divisional or faculty boards and made known to candidates, and careful attention to examiners’ and assessors’ marking profiles. Examination scripts for final examinations (not FPE) are double-marked, except in cases where Education Committee has agreed to an exemption.

The University does not support the principle of modularisation of courses (modularisation here being defined as a system in which degree courses are assembled by the selection of building blocks of modules with quantitative credit ratings, levels and common examination conventions within an institution-wide framework). It considers that widespread modularisation of courses would necessitate a uniformity of examining structures and practices which is neither essential nor appropriate within the University. The University awards framework (available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/awardsframework) explains how the University’s qualifications relate to the national standards agreed for higher education qualifications, and the University’s approach to credit.

Within the University’s Examination Regulations and policy framework, and subject to approval by Education Committee and by the relevant division, Education Committee regards the nature and pattern of assessment to be a matter for the academic judgement of those responsible for designing and delivering courses, who will be best placed to relate the desired pattern and type of assessment to the intended learning outcomes of the course concerned. The Committee endorses the position that a range of assessment and examining practices may operate across the University (see Annex E: Good practice guide to assessment design).

1.3. Role of Education Committee

The role of Education Committee is to exercise overall responsibility for the definition and keeping under review of the educational philosophy, policy, and standards of the collegiate University in respect of teaching, learning, and assessment (including all aspects of the practical arrangements for examination, in consultation with the Proctors). Education Committee’s quality assurance role gives it a particular concern to oversee the robustness of arrangements to monitor, evaluate and demonstrate the fairness and consistency of the assessment methods used throughout the University (Council Regulations 15 of 2002).

Education Committee attaches importance to the observance by all examiners of the obligations placed on examiners by the Examination Regulations and set out in detail in this document. Education Committee is acutely conscious of the extent of the burdens placed on examiners and their administrators, but must reiterate the critical importance of examiners following the regulations, policy and guidance provided for their task.
1.4. Role of supervisory bodies

Under the University’s arrangements, boards of examiners operate under the authority of the body or bodies responsible for the subject or subjects concerned (‘supervisory bodies’).

These bodies set the general parameters within which boards of examiners operate, and approve the examination conventions. Where they exist, faculty boards are the supervisory bodies for examinations, under the divisional board; where there is no faculty board, divisional boards will be the supervisory bodies for particular subjects. 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, on the advice of their constituent subjects.

The content of examinations is under the oversight of supervisory bodies, subject always to the framework and guidelines laid down for the University as a whole by Education Committee. Content is defined by the special regulations published in the Examination Regulations as well as being circumscribed by the examination conventions adopted by the board of examiners and approved by the appropriate supervisory body. Formal structures for the conduct of examinations are also approved by Education Committee to ensure fairness to all candidates.

Supervisory bodies, in addition to following the regulations, are normally required to observe the policy requirements in framing their own policy and practice (including any special regulations). Where they wish to vary that policy or practice significantly from the policy requirements set out by Education Committee, they are required to present a reasoned case, and to receive approval from or on behalf of Education Committee.

Supervisory bodies should keep the nature and methods of assessment for each course under review. In reviewing the assessment procedures used, supervisory bodies should pay attention to:

- 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;
- any evidence that the amount of assessment or its timing is having a detrimental impact on the work of candidates;
- the evidence of the teaching quality and methods as revealed through the examination process and the reports of examiners.

1.5. Role of the Proctors

The Proctors are required to ensure that examinations are properly conducted and in accordance with the statutes and regulations governing them; and they may make such regulations concerning the conduct of examinations as they consider necessary (Statute IX, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/785-121.shtml). The Proctors are concerned with ensuring that regulations are applied justly and equally in all cases. In the course of these responsibilities,
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 supervisory bodies.

Additional administrative and disciplinary regulations have been promulgated by the Proctors (Proctors’ Administrative Regulations for Candidates in Examinations (Proctors’ Regulations 1 of 2005) and Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examinations (Proctors’ Regulations 1 of 2003)) under their responsibility for overseeing the conduct of examinations.

The Examination Regulations reserve to the Proctors certain powers such as allowing a candidate who presents written work late to remain in the examination. Day-to-day oversight of examining is exercised by the Proctors independently of Education Committee and of all supervisory bodies. Fairness is thereby enhanced because candidates in all examinations are treated by the Proctors on the same terms. For the same reason colleges must make any special application concerning a candidate through the Proctors (or through the Examinations and Assessments team working under delegated authority) and not directly to the examiners (or in the case of major adjustments to the format or timing of an examination to Council’s Education Committee). This ensures equality of access irrespective of any acquaintance between examiners and those acting on behalf of the college. The Proctors serve also to protect the examiners from solicitations on behalf of candidates from colleges or from individual tutors; examiners should immediately and firmly redirect such approaches to the Proctors.

Any queries or complaints during or after the examining process must also be made through the Proctors. In the first instance the Proctors will act as intermediary, normally transmitting a complaint to the chair of examiners for a response. At a second stage the Proctors, using powers granted under Statute IX, may investigate matters that are the subject of complaint, and achieve a resolution (see section 14 below).

1.6. Feedback to students on their performance

While it is supervisory bodies which are responsible for the methods of assessment used to decide the final outcome and level of the student’s performance on a course (summative assessment), the responsibility for the routine and regular informal assessment provided in tutorials and supervisions is shared by academic staff teaching in colleges, faculties and departments. Within the collegiate University, this form of assessment (formative assessment) is an important element in providing personal and immediate feedback on a student’s work, so as to indicate to students how they are progressing with academic work and in which direction their work should develop.

It is recognised that types of feedback may legitimately vary from individual to individual, college to college, or subject to subject (within the bounds of guidance laid down by colleges or subjects). Students recognise that this is the case while putting a high premium on clear and regular feedback which both informs the work which they are undertaking and gives some indication of the standards which they are achieving. Where more formal methods of formative assessment are involved, e.g. trial papers for college ‘collections’, then particular weight is placed on clear and speedy feedback.

Further information can be found in section 13 below (Feedback and resits).

1.7. Essential information

This section lists the parts of the Policy and Guidance for Examiners and others involved in University Examinations that are essential reading for different parts of the collegiate university.
1.7.1. **Essential information for supervisory bodies**

Supervisory bodies should pay particular attention to Sections 1, 2 and 3 which deal with the University framework for assessment, the duties of supervisory bodies and the appointment of examiners including external examiners, Section 5 which deals with information provided to candidates, Section 6 which deals with preparing examination papers, and Section 11 which deals with marking and adjudication.

1.7.2. **Essential information for chairs of examiners**

Chairs of examiners will find much of this document of importance at varying points in the examining cycle. Particular attention should be paid to:

- Section 4 (Meetings of examiners)
- Section 5 (Information for and communication with candidates)
- Section 6 (Preparing the examination, including requirements for question papers)
- Section 8 (Special arrangements for individual candidates)
- Section 9 (Submission of written work)
- Sections 10.1 and 10.11 (Examiners’ responsibilities on the day of the examination)
- Section 11 (Scripts, marking and adjudication)
- Section 12 (Results)
- Section 13 (Feedback and resits)
- Section 14 (Queries and complaints from candidates)

Annex C: Consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment is also likely to be of particular importance.

1.7.3. **Essential information for examiners and assessors**

Information of particular relevance to examiners and assessors is contained within the following sections:

- Section 4 (Meetings of examiners)
- Section 5 (Information for and communication with candidates)
- Section 6 (Preparing the examination, including requirements for question papers)
- Section 9 (Submission of written work)
- Section 10.1 (Examiners’ responsibilities on the day of the examination)
- Section 11 (Scripts, marking and adjudication)
- Section 12 (Results)
- Section 13 (Feedback and resits)

1.7.4. **Essential information for examination administrators**

Examinations administrators will find much of this document of importance at varying points in the examining cycle but the critical sections will depend on the level and type of support that they provide to boards of examiners. Particular attention should be paid to:

- Section 4 (Meetings of examiners)
- Section 5 (Information for and communication with candidates)
- Section 6 (Preparing the examination, including requirements for question papers)
- Section 7 (Examination entry, timetables and withdrawals)
- Section 8 (Special arrangements for individual candidates)
- Section 9 (Submission of written work)
- Section 10 (Arrangements on the day of timed examinations)
- Section 11 (Scripts, marking and adjudication)
- Section 12 (Results)
- Section 13 (Feedback and resits)
Section 14 (Queries and complaints from candidates)

1.7.5. **Essential information for colleges**

Information of particular relevance to colleges is contained within the following sections:

- Section 5 (Information for and communication with candidates)
- Section 7 (Examination entry, timetables and withdrawals)
- Section 8 (Special arrangements for individual candidates)
- Section 9.4 (Late submission of written work)
- Section 10.5 (Unauthorised absence from a timed examination)
- Section 12 (Results)
- Section 13 (Feedback and resits)
- Section 14 (Queries and complaints from candidates)

Annex A: Major adjustments to examinations and assessment is also likely to be of relevance.
1.8. Overview of changes to policy and guidance for 2016

The main changes to the regulations, policy and guidance for 2016 are as follows:

1.8.1. **New policies and guidance**

1. Standing orders for the composition of boards of examiners no longer need to be submitted to the Proctors; they should be submitted only to the Head of Examinations and Assessments. See 2.1.

2. Medical certificates for cases of acute illness can now be provided by a college nurse without the need for a doctor’s note at a later date. College nurses can also provide signed certificates in cases where the initial letter came from the Dean or Senior Tutor. This should still be within 7 days of the initial request. See 8.8.

3. There is new guidance on students sitting examinations under previous sets of regulations. Within set time limits (see 8.9) students are entitled to sit their examination in accordance with the regulations in force at the time they were taught.

4. Departments wishing to move to online submission of work do not need to contact the Proctor’s Office for guidance on the procedure. A new framework is available that provides information on how to manage the submission of assessments using WebLearn. Departments wishing to change to electronic submission where no provision was previously made for it must use WebLearn and cannot also request hard copies of the same piece of work. See 9.2 and Annex L: Proctors’ guidance for the use of Turnitin in University examinations.

5. The Chair of examiners should determine whether instances of poor academic practice and plagiarism should be dealt with by deduction of marks or by referral to the Proctors (see 9.5.3). The full procedure for dealing with cases of poor academic practice and plagiarism has been added to Annex G: The role of faculties and departments in preventing and dealing with plagiarism, including criteria for referral to the Proctors and guidance on deducting marks. A template for creating a pre-determined scale of mark deductions is given in Annex I: Consistency in examination conventions: Template for examination conventions. Information on the interpretation of Turnitin reports is available in Annex L: Proctors’ guidance for the use of Turnitin in University examinations.

6. The guidance on considering factors affecting performance applications has been substantially revised and expanded. It provides more detailed information on:

   - the actions examiners may wish to take;
   - the consideration of candidates with alternative arrangements where a factors affecting performance application in relation to the alternative arrangements has not been received;
   - the circumstances when a factors affecting performance application should be forwarded to the Proctors for consideration as a complaint;
   - retention of records.

In addition, candidates will now be given a brief summary of the impact that their application for factors affecting performance has had on their results. See 11.7, 11.13 and Annex C: Consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment.
7. Examiners should state whether qualitative checks were used where scaling has been employed. See Annex F: Form of report on examinations

1.8.2. Clarification of existing policies and guidance

1. Examiners are reminded that all members of the board must be present at any ‘final’ meetings (whether these are end-of-year or interim). A meeting is considered to be ‘final’ if the marks and/or classification/final result of one or more candidates are finalised, regardless of the time of year the meeting takes place. External examiners may participate in a meeting via video conference or teleconference where marks/grades for individual assessment items are finalised without the need for prior permission from the Proctors but must attend in person meetings at which the overall classification/result of any candidate is agreed. See 4.2.

2. Examination boards (in particular, Chairs of Examiners) should note that they are responsible for facilitating comfortable visits of external examiners. See 4.5.

3. Further guidance has been given on making major changes to established examination conventions after they have been approved by the supervisory body. Examiners should be aware of the Education Committee’s policy on vested interests when considering these changes. See 6.2.

4. Examiners are reminded that all resit examinations must 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 that which the candidate was originally taught. See 13.3.

5. Clarification that resits are not permitted if a candidate has passed a paper and has not failed the whole Examination/qualification. See 13.3.

6. Further guidance on resit requirements for postgraduate taught course. This gives guidance on which assessment items the candidate is required to resit if they have failed only some parts of papers. See 13.4.

7. The form of report on examinations has been amended to clarify that both the current and the previous year’s breakdown by gender should be included. An exception is permitted for small cohorts where the breakdown by gender would impact on confidentiality. See Annex F: Form of report on examinations.
1.9. Areas requiring particular attention

The following areas require particular attention from boards of examiners and supervisory bodies.

1. Prompt setting of board of examiners’ meeting dates. Meetings of boards of examiners, particularly final meetings, should be set at an early date and all examiners notified so that all examiners are able to attend. Student Administration should be informed of final meeting (and pre-meeting) dates in a timely manner to facilitate release of results and correspondence with examiners about individual candidates. See Section 4.

2. Nominations of examiners and assessors must be made and approved before individuals can act in this capacity. See Section 2.

3. Standing orders must be maintained for each board of examiners, with a copy sent to the Head of Examinations and Assessments before the start of each academic year. See Section 2.

4. As urgent issues, including examination complaints, can arise following final meetings of boards of examiners, chairs of boards should ensure that they have left clear contact details, or have appointed a deputy who must be another member of the board, if they are to be away from Oxford during the period following the final meeting (i.e. at any time during the Long Vacation, for Trinity term examinations). See 2.4 below.

5. Accurate information on all assessment elements must be provided at the start of the academic year. This is particularly important where papers or content are shared with another school. Errors and changes cause distress to candidates and significant extra work for examiners. See 6.4 and 7.1.

6. Errors in papers are not acceptable. The entire board of examiners is responsible for the accuracy of papers and sufficient time should be allocated for the production of camera-ready copies of papers and for checking papers once they have been printed. Departments will be required to provide a statement to the Proctors (and on occasion to the PVC (Education)) on how they intend to reduce the numbers of errors in cases where there are serious or large numbers of errors on papers. See 6.4 - 6.6.

7. Applications under Part 13 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations allow for information about medical or other circumstances affecting a candidate’s performance to be submitted by a candidate through their college. This 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 14).

8. If a candidate for whom an application under Part 13 has been received has missed any papers, the chair of the board of examiners should ensure either that authorisation to consider the candidate for an estimated classification (see sections 11.7 and 11.8) has been received from the Proctors, or that notification has been received that no such authorisation will be given.

9. When external examiners are asked to reach a final decision on significantly discrepant marks from the first and second markers, it is essential that they be provided with sufficient comments to understand the rationale for each of the initial marks awarded. See section 11.5.
10. When students intermit or are granted permission to carry forward marks, it is important that the department make arrangements for the retrieval and storage of any scripts that need to be retained separately from those of the main cohort. See sections 11.13 - 11.15.
2. NOMINATION OF EXAMINERS AND ASSESSORS

2.1. Summary of relevant regulations¹

Supervisory bodies must have standing orders governing the number of examiners, period of office, and appointment of chair, on all University examinations for which they are responsible, and for the composition and constitution of any nominating committee(s) operating on their behalf. The standing orders should be submitted to the Head of Examinations and Assessments before the beginning of each academic year [Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 4, cl. 4.1, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvaca].

Nomination of examiners and assessors is undertaken by the supervisory bodies according to their standing orders. Supervisory bodies may appoint nominating committees and delegate power to them but need not do so other than in the case of an examination for a course which is the responsibility of more than one board or other body, where the responsibility must be delegated to a jointly-appointed nominating committee² [ibid., Part 4, cl.4.4-4.5, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvaca].

Nominating committees must have at least three members and their composition must be reported annually to the Proctors and the Head of Examinations and Assessment [ibid., Part 4, cl.4.5-4.6, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvaca].

Nominations must be submitted to the PVC (Education) and the Proctors [ibid., Part 4, cl. 4.9-4.13, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvaca] in advance of the commencement of the examination. (Ideally, nominations should take place as far in advance of the examinations as possible.)

The supervisory body should nominate for approval by the PVC (Education) and the Proctors a chair of examiners who shall have responsibility for the proper conduct of the business of the board of examiners, including taking proper account of relevant University guidance [ibid., Part 6, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p6chaiofexam].

Sufficient examiners must be appointed for each candidate (other than in Mods or Prelims) to be examined by at least two examiners, or one examiner and one assessor, [ibid., Part 2, cl. 2.2, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p2numbofexam] and in UG examinations (other than in specified cases) no more than two members of the same college may examine in the same examination [ibid., Part 3, cl. 3.2-3.4, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p3qualofexam].

The appointment of any assessor must be approved by the PVC (Education) and the Proctors and shall not be effective until approval is given. [ibid., Part 7, cl. 7.4, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-part7asse].

Where assessors are to be nominated who are not members of a Faculty or a department, the nomination(s) must include sufficient information to allow the PVC (Education) and the Proctors to assess their suitability for the examining task involved (i.e. qualifications, experience of teaching and examining, technical expertise) [ibid, Part 3, cl. 3.1, ¹This summary is not intended to be exhaustive. The full regulations relating to the conduct of University Examinations are grouped together in the Examination Regulations (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvaca).
² In a small number of subjects, Education Committee has approved a dispensation to allow the continuation of pre-existing arrangements.

The examination conventions to be used by the examiners in any examination shall be approved annually by the supervisory body responsible for the course and the examination [ibid., Part 8, cl. 8.1, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p8aocosopapetotexam] subject to the right of a board of examiners to make minor adjustments to the examination conventions during any particular examination, without reference to the supervisory body, if there are exceptional circumstances which so require. In cases of doubt or difficulty, the examiners should consult the Proctors. Nothing in this provision shall affect the authority of the examiners in the making of academic judgements on the performance of each candidate. [ibid., Part 16, cl. 16.2, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p16markandasse].

2.2. Composition of boards of examiners

Apart from a small number of specialist examinations, the number of examiners and assessors appointed is a matter for the supervisory body according to their standing orders. However, the University requires large final honour schools to have more than one external examiner to cover the full breadth of the examination; it also requires that in joint schools each panel of examiners, drawn from the parent schools, should include at least one external examiner.

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

2.3 Role of supervisory bodies in nominations

Supervisory bodies are asked to keep under review the mechanisms for their part in the nomination and appointment of examiners, including the chair and external examiner(s), and for ensuring the competence (this includes ensuring that nominees have relevant experience and qualifications, and ensuring that appropriate support is provided to inexperienced examiners) and avoidance of conflicts of interest in relation to all examiners, including external examiners (see especially Annex J: UK-wide criteria for appointing external examiners).

In exercising their overall responsibility for the membership, powers, procedures and accountability of examiners, supervisory bodies should take care to ensure that boards of examiners are aware of:

- requirements relating to declarations of personal interest;
- the minimum numbers of internal and external examiners who must be present for decisions to be valid;
- the keeping of appropriate records of examiners’ meetings and the reasons for any specific decisions in relation to individual cases.

2.4 Nomination of chair and secretary

For each examination, a chair of examiners must be nominated by the course supervisory body in the Trinity Term preceding the academic year of the examination and approved by the PVC (Education) and the Proctors.

The examiners should identify one of their number, or an academic administrator, to act as secretary, who will record the names of those present at meetings and the decisions which were taken. Other roles (e.g. of communication with candidates) may be delegated to the secretary by the chair.
Chairs should be aware that they are required to be in Oxford during the examinations for which they are responsible. It will assist the Proctors if chairs ensure, in addition, that an appropriate person is available to respond during investigation of examination complaints 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. A timetable for the board of examiners should be drawn up as early as possible so that the examiners can plan to be in Oxford for critical meetings. Student administration should be notified of examination board meeting dates as soon as they are set.

2.5 Appointment of assessors

Assessors are appointed to complement the examiners and to assist in the setting and marking of papers. Before a list of assessors is submitted, the chair is encouraged to consult the Senior Nominator for the subject. The nominators 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 prime criterion for appointment is that assessors be members of a faculty or department of the University. When nominating a postgraduate research (PGR) student to act as an assessor, the Nominating Committee must state how the criteria set out in Annex H: Appointment of postgraduate students as assessors in taught-course examinations) will be met. Such nominations will be considered particularly carefully by the PVC (Education) and the Proctors. It should also be noted that postgraduate students should not be responsible for the setting of questions/papers.

Particular importance is attached to the timely nomination of assessors, and approval for the appointment of assessors should be sought before they act in this capacity (forms for this purpose are available on WebLearn in the Examiner Appointments area (weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/:central:aad:ea:exapp1617) Please note that there is now a specific form to provide supporting information for the appointment of PGR students as assessors, separate from the similar form required for the appointment of other non-Faculty members. Notes on completion of the forms are supplied in Annex K: Appointment of assessors – notes. The forms should be signed by the chair and sent to the Examinations and Assessments team for processing and forwarding for the approval of the PVC (Education) and Proctors. Before seeking approval, chairs should check that these persons are qualified to act under the provisions of Part 7 of the Examination Regulations, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcouse-part7asse.

This procedure applies also to the appointment of any supplementary assessors required at a later stage (e.g. after candidates’ essay titles have been approved). Appointments must always be approved before any person acts in this capacity. Chairs should ensure that assessors are aware of the level of remuneration (the current fee schedule is available on the Examiner Appointments area on WebLearn).
3. EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

3.1. Summary of relevant regulations

On the nomination of a supervisory body, or of a nominating committee acting on its behalf, the board of examiners for each University examination for the Second Public Examination must include a person as an external examiner who is approved to act as an external arbiter of standards; and it may also include a person as an external examiner to provide academic expertise not otherwise obtainable from within the University. All such nominations in either category must be designated as an external examiner by the PVC (Education) and the Proctors [Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 4, cl. 4.15, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvaca].

Unless they are appointed to examine in separate subjects or in separate parts of an examination divided into Part I and Part II, no two persons who are, or have been during the two preceding years, on the teaching staff of the same university or other institution shall be nominated to serve at the same time as external examiners in the same examination [ibid., cl. 4.18, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvaca].

A person holding a post in the University or any college or other Oxford institution associated with the University in the examination of candidates may not be approved or designated as an external examiner [ibid. cl. 4.17, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvaca].

An external examiner who fails to submit the annual report required by the University may continue in office only with the permission of the PVC (Education) and the Proctors [ibid., cl. 4.16, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvaca].

External examiners should have access to all examination papers in their draft form (ibid., Part 8, cl. 8.2, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p8acassopapetoeexam); they are not required to attend the statutory meeting of examiners prior to the examination, but should be informed by the chair of its proceedings and decisions [ibid., Part 6, cl. 6.6(2), www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p6chaoiofexam].

3.2. Policy requirements

External examiners are required to sit on the boards of examiners for all public examinations except the FPE. It should be noted that individuals may be nominated to serve as external examiner in two categories: either (1) as an external arbiter of standards or (2) to provide academic expertise not otherwise obtainable within the University. The same individual may only serve in both categories at the same time with the permission of the Proctors, since it should be noted that, with the exception of courses with very small numbers of students, this is likely to impose an excessive load on the external examiner concerned.

All nominations of external examiners by supervisory bodies (or nominating committees which have delegated responsibility for nominations) submitted to the Proctors and PVC (Education) should be accompanied by the current CV of the proposed appointee, together with a supporting information form (available on WebLearn in the Examiner Appointments area (weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site::central::aad:ea:exapp1617)).

Appointments of external examiners should normally observe the requirements set out in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education which are reproduced as Annex J: UK-wide criteria for

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3 This summary is not intended to be exhaustive. The full regulations relating to the conduct of University Examinations are grouped together in the Examination Regulations (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcomunivexam).
appointing external examiners. In some cases, proposed appointments may not fulfil all the criteria set out in Annex J. 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 and PVC (Education) 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.

Supervisory bodies should ensure that external examiners have sufficient and appropriate information for their role, i.e. organisational procedures, practices, and academic regulations, including a written statement on the nature and scope of the external examiner’s roles, 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).

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, i.e. to:

(a) have opportunity to comment on all examination papers in draft form;
(b) have access to all scripts and other material submitted by candidates;
(c) see a sample of scripts including scripts at the borderlines of classes or Fail/Pass/Distinction;
(d) see a sufficient sample of dissertations, extended essays and course work to be able to comment on the marks awarded;
(e) 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;
(f) be provided with sufficient evidence to endorse the outcomes of the assessment processes concerned.

In relation to (e), the University does not regard this as requiring the external examiner to give a definitive final mark where there is initial disagreement between first markers (although boards of examiners may choose to ask the external examiner(s) to act in this way), but to be in a position to report on the soundness of the procedures used to reach a final agreed mark. Similarly the University does not normally expect external examiners to make individual decisions relating to medical or other factors 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 (b)-(e) above; the timetabling of arrangements should take account of this.

Supervisory bodies should ensure that all those involved in the examining process understand the University’s expectation that external examiners will be used primarily to comment on the standard of its awards and the fairness of its examination procedures.

3.3. External examiners’ reports

The University requires external examiners to prepare a report addressed to the Vice-Chancellor at the end of each year of their period of office. External examiners are asked to report on the aspects listed below (which are drawn from the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B7 ‘External Examining’):

In relation to academic standards:
(a) 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;

(b) whether or not the assessment process measures student achievement rigorously and fairly against the intended outcomes of the course(s);

(c) 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;

In relation to process:

(d) whether sufficient information and evidence was received in a timely manner to enable the role to be fulfilled effectively;

(e) whether the assessment process was conducted in line with the University’s policies and regulations; and

(f) whether issues raised in any previous reports were responded to and have been, or are being, addressed to their satisfaction.

External examiners are also invited to:

(g) give an overview of their term of office (when concluded);

(h) comment on good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment they have observed; and

(i) comment on opportunities to enhance the quality of learning opportunities provided to students.

A form is provided to all external examiners for use when writing their report. The external examiner’s report should be sent to the Vice-Chancellor, 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.

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. On behalf of Education Committee, officers monitor all external examiners’ reports on receipt to identify any matters of urgency and forward them to divisions, highlighting areas of particular concern as necessary, for consideration with the relevant examiners’ reports.

External examiners are specifically asked to return their reports as soon as possible after the completion of the examination process in order to assist academic committees with their consideration of the reports. All reports are considered by the relevant committees in faculties and departments and by divisions; composite reports are then provided for Education Committee and a consolidated report highlighting key points emerging from the year’s reports is considered annually by or on behalf of Education Committee.
External examiners’ reports must also be made available to students.
4. MEETINGS OF EXAMINERS

4.1. Initial meeting of examiners

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 (including penalties for late submission (see 6.2 below);

(iii) agree on the form of marks sheets to be used and arrange for their production (see also 11.5 below 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 camera-ready copy in accordance with dates determined by the examiners (see 6.4 below);

(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 5.2 below and consider (iv) and (v) above);

(xiii) consider the most effective role for the external examiner(s) 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 camera-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 Factors Affecting Performance applications, 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 (e.g. 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. A copy of this schedule should be sent to the Head of Examinations and Assessments.
The external examiners may wish to attend this initial meeting of examiners, but it is not essential for them to be present.

4.2. Attendance at meetings of boards

After its initial planning meeting the board may follow up with further meetings to address particular aspects 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 and in such circumstances the Proctors' permission is not needed for individuals to be absent from the meeting. However, all board members must be present at any meetings at which the marks and/or classification of one or more candidates are finalised, regardless of the time of year at which the meeting takes place. For final meetings the Proctors’ prior permission must be granted for individual non-attendees; examiners are reminded that in no case does such permission have validity for longer than the current academic year.

In order to obtain permission for non-attendance individual examiners must discuss the matter with their chair of examiners and all requests to the Proctors must be made by the chair of examiners. Permission for non-attendance will only be granted in exceptional cases (such as ill health or acute personal difficulty) and not for academic activities of any description.

In cases where individual examiners are excused from attending a marks-approval meeting, the Proctors will give instructions about procedures for signing the Results List.

In exceptional cases, the Proctors may be willing to allow examiners to participate in a meeting by video conference or teleconference. Chairs should discuss any such proposals with the Proctors as early as possible in the process. Any approval will include directions about the practical arrangements for signature of Results Lists. Where a meeting takes place without all members present, or with any examiners participating by video conference or teleconference, results must not be submitted to the Academic Records Office (ARO) for release to students without proof of the Proctors’ prior approval. Where marks/grades for individual assessment items are to be agreed for the purposes of feedback (see section 13.2) and no overall classification/result is finalised, such approval is not required as regards external examiners’ participation via video conference or teleconference.

In no circumstances will the Proctors regard a board as being quorate unless at least two members are present in person.

In cases where candidates are granted extensions to submission deadlines which fall after the board’s scheduled final meeting (but within the same academic year) the Proctors will generally look sympathetically on requests from chairs for results to be considered by confidential correspondence. In such cases, all examiners must actively indicate their individual agreement with the board’s decision.

Under a change to regulations introduced in October 2013, where a candidate’s results are incomplete when the results for the main cohort are submitted to the ARO and the reason for this is an approved alternative examination arrangement such as an extension to a submission deadline, chairs will no longer need to seek a supplementary results list authority from the PVC (Education) and the Proctors, but can submit the candidate’s results straight to the ARO after they have been signed off by all examiners.

4.3. Minutes of examiners’ meetings

Minutes should be kept of examiners’ meetings. Information contained in the minutes about individual candidates should be restricted to a note of their final marks and how authorised information about medical or other special circumstances was taken into account (see Annex
C: Consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment).

4.4. Examiners’ reports

The University regards the reports made on behalf of all the examiners as an important element of its quality assurance arrangements. The examiners must prepare a report on the examination (Annex F: Form of report on examinations provides a template) which should be sent to the Secretary of the appropriate divisional or faculty board.

Examiners report on the examination process that has been completed and on the student outcomes for the examination. Through their report they demonstrate their adherence to University procedures and expectations regarding academic standards.

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.

All parts of the report, with the exception of Section E of Part II, should be shared as a matter of course with joint consultative committees (or equivalents) and made available to students (as should the external examiner’s report). Examiners are reminded not to make comments that might enable individual students to be identified in any other part of the report. To assist examiners, a Tableau report is available presenting number of students by classification (please contact sdma@admin.ox.ac.uk).

Detailed information on supervisory bodies’ review of Examiner’s reports and examination procedures is available in the document Procedures for the annual monitoring of courses (www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/ga/pamc).

4.5. Claims for expenses

Examination boards (in particular, Chairs of Examiners) are responsible for facilitating comfortable visits of external examiners. Claims for examiners’ fees, travelling expenses and subsistence allowances for external examiners will be dealt with by the Examiner Appointment and Payment team (examiners@admin.ox.ac.uk, 2-76304). It is possible to reclaim the cost of taxis for transporting scripts to and from Ewert House and the Examination Schools. The exam fee claims form is provided by the Examiner Appointment and Payment Supervisor, and chairs are responsible for ensuring that it is completed and returned to the team. An up-to-date schedule of fees and expenses payable is available on WebLearn via weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/central:aad:ea:exapp1617.

Note: No claims can be made for:

- entering marks into books or on to a computer;
- preparation of Results Sheets by examiners or faculties;
- attendance at meetings, or meals, for internal examiners;
• invigilating candidates over lunchtimes.
5. INFORMATION FOR AND COMMUNICATION WITH CANDIDATES

5.1. Policy requirements

Supervisory bodies should ensure that all students receive appropriate guidance on the seriousness with which the University views all forms of plagiarism, and on means to avoid it (Annex G: The role of faculties and departments in preventing and dealing with plagiarism provides further guidance).

All students should be reminded that it is their own personal responsibility to ensure that all course work is submitted in the required format (including numbers of copies), by the right day and time, and at the right place (Proctors’ Administrative Regulations for Candidates in Examinations (Proctors’ Regulations 1 of 2005), cl.3, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/253-114.shtml).

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 Annex I: Consistency in examination conventions. Education Committee is particularly concerned to avoid late or incomplete information being circulated to candidates by chairs of examiners. Boards are asked to ensure that any circulars to candidates concerning the fine detail of arrangements should 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 attention of students should be drawn to the role of the Proctors in ensuring the proper conduct of examinations and in investigating complaints in relation to the assessment of student work. The University places a high priority on the fair and consistent operation of assessment procedures, especially in relation to measures to prevent fraudulent activities; to the detection of any forms of academic misconduct relating to assessment such as plagiarism, collusion, cheating, impersonation and the use of inadmissible material; and to the imposition of appropriate penalties for the late or non-submission of material for assessment. All these matters should be referred to the Proctors (although see also 7.3 below).

Decisions of boards of examiners should be published as speedily as possible, consistent with appropriate rigour in assessment and decision-making and accurate and systematic recording.

5.2. Communication with candidates

Candidates should be sent individual copies of any communications from the chair directed to all candidates (see 4.1 above). While it is good practice to publish such information on the web, this is not a sufficient mode of communication in itself. Such circulars should include or link to examination conventions and the dates reserved for viva voce examinations (as appropriate). Chairs will usually find that there is a standard set of instructions to candidates in their examination, but on occasion a circular may be needed to emphasise additional information, for example, changes to the syllabus or rubric.

Judicial review of examination complaints has concluded that all communications from examiners to candidates may be regarded by a court as providing information on which candidates are entitled to rely. Any discrepancy between the chair’s communication and the process actually followed can lead to a complaint. The wording of any circular should therefore be composed with great care. However, there should be no direct communication between those setting examinations and individual candidates.
1. The circular should advise candidates that there will always be an examiner present during the first half-hour of a written examination, to whom questions about the paper can be addressed. It is better to have questions at this stage than complaints after the examination, and it helps to ensure a fair examination if candidates know and can act on this principle. Candidates’ attention may be drawn to the use of script booklets for rough working and the restrictions on which items they may bring with them into the examination room (see 10.9 below for details).

2. If the examination includes provision for the submission of work other than written papers, detailed instructions as to how and where the work is to be submitted should be given to candidates in good time (see section 9 below). It is essential that any hand-in dates given in communications to candidates or course handbooks be in agreement with those in the Examination Regulations. The examiners should remind candidates that work presented late will not be taken into account unless the Proctors give permission, that a late-presentation fee may be imposed, and that the examiners may be authorised to impose an academic penalty. A scale of penalties should be included in the examination conventions. Failure to hand in work without good cause can lead to failure of the entire examination. Chairs are asked strongly to encourage candidates to hand in their work themselves, as friends or other agencies (e.g. printing services) often prove unreliable.

3. Chairs may refer candidates to the examinations material in the Student Handbook (previously the Proctors’ and Assessor’s Memorandum), and on the Oxford Students Website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams) including the material on plagiarism (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism), and to the provisions regarding the use of calculators and computers in examinations in the Examination Regulations, Part 10, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcouse-p10dopatuw-p-ccaominexam.

4. Chairs should remind candidates of the requirement to take University Cards to the examination as a means of identification. Persistent failure to produce a University Card will result in the candidate being summoned to the Proctors’ Office to check that impersonation has not taken place.

Chairs conducting resits or other examinations in the Long Vacation are reminded of the importance of similarly communicating necessary information to candidates and subject-tutors. Chairs will not have vacation addresses for candidates and may ask colleges to forward communications.

Chairs and examiners are reminded that gifts from candidates must not be received or accepted.
6. PREPARING THE EXAMINATION

6.1. Examination conventions – responsibility of supervisory bodies

In approving examination conventions, supervisory bodies should ensure that consideration is given to:

- Rubrics for individual papers
- Marking conventions
- Progression rules and classification conventions
- Resits
- Factors affecting performance
- Details of examiners and rules on communicating with examiners

Further guidance is available in Annex I: Consistency in examination conventions.

6.2. Examination conventions – responsibility of examiners

At their first meeting, the examiners should satisfy themselves, e.g. in the light of comments from their predecessors, 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 examination, without reference to the supervisory body, if there are exceptional circumstances which so require. The examination conventions must be published to prospective candidates not less than one whole term before the examination takes place or, where assessment takes place in the first term of a course, at the beginning of that term. The examination conventions should be published on departmental/faculty websites, alongside the relevant course handbook(s). See Annex I: Consistency in examination conventions for further information on requirements for examination conventions.

If the examiners find it necessary to make major and immediate changes to established examination conventions after approval by the supervisory body, the chair should seek the approval of the board and the Proctors, since the latter will need to be satisfied that such changes will not have an adverse or discriminatory effect on candidates whose preparation for the examination is far advanced. In considering any major changes, examiners should be aware of Education Committee’s policy on vested interests, as detailed in Annex I of Policy and Guidance on new courses and major changes to courses, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgnewcourses.

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.

6.3. Setting of question papers

Principles relating to assessment are set out in Section 1. Examiners are obliged to set papers in accordance with the prevailing regulations and examination conventions for the
course, and in line with any current course handbook. Any discrepancy between the formal regulations and other information given to candidates must be reported to the Proctors (who will advise what action to take). Precedent represented by past papers should also be taken 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. 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. The external examiner should have the opportunity to comment on draft examination papers.

The importance of clear and unambiguous expression cannot be overstated. Examiners should use straightforward English that is not likely to present a barrier to comprehension by non-native speakers. Question papers should be subject to careful scrutiny by the examiners. In the case of small subjects, a draft paper must be scrutinised by at least one established member of staff who is not the paper setter.

The setting of all papers for an examination should be completed according to a schedule overseen by the chair. Mishaps are far more likely to befall a paper that does not progress through the stages of setting, scrutiny, and proof-reading along with the others. Errors in the setting of papers are very difficult to rectify once the examination has begun.

Where a paper is to be shared with another school, or where a paper has shared content with another paper, this information should be notified to the Examinations and Assessments team (exam.arrangements@admin.ox.ac.uk) at an early stage in order to ensure that the timetable takes this into account, and to avoid the extended supervision of candidates.

Chairs are asked to ensure that the rubric and the content of questions are double-checked before each paper is submitted to the Examinations and Assessments team. Examples of common problems include:

- papers not set in accordance with current syllabus;
- papers containing incorrect passages for analysis;
- papers containing images that are not clear;
- papers that reproduce questions from recent previous years; and
- questions containing typographical errors or errors in mathematical formulae.

When the content of all examination papers has been agreed, final versions should be prepared as camera-ready copy under secure conditions in faculty or departmental offices. Section 6.4 below gives full details of how camera-ready copy should be prepared.

6.4. Production of question papers

The instructions which follow are particularly important. Examiners who hand in copies of question papers late or whose papers contain inaccuracies heighten the potential for error to be introduced or go undetected. The Examination and Assessments team is instructed to notify the Proctors of examiners failing to comply.

Examiners are responsible for producing camera-ready copy (CRC) of examination papers; that is, a final master which is completely ready for reproduction. Chairs of examiners should ensure that this is done to a timetable that allows sufficient time to prepare accurate CRC which has been approved by all examiners and can be delivered to Examination Schools on time (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 8, cl. 8.2-8.4, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p8aocasopapetoexam). The Head of Examinations and Assessments is responsible for printing the bulk copies required.
for the examination, and (once the examination is complete) for the publication of papers on
the OXAM website.

The following notes provide advice on the detail of production.

(a) Two originals (not photocopies) of the CRC should be delivered by hand to the
Examinations and Assessments team at Examination Schools (Monday – Friday,
8.30 am – 4 pm). Electronic copies can be submitted via USB Memory Stick, CD or
secure transfer on WebLearn. If copies are being submitted electronically, then the
file should be in Portable Document Format (pdf) and saved as the paper reference
number (e.g. A12939W1).

(b) Details of any special printing or reproduction requirements (e.g. punched hole in
question paper; photographs to be reproduced) should be included with the CRC.
Examiners should note that reproduced photographs may not be as clear as the
originals, and should check legibility on the version to be given to the candidates (not
CRC) in good time.

(c) CRC must reach the Examination Schools no later than five weeks before the first
day of the examination. Where enlarged papers (e.g. A3 instead of A4) or tables or
extracts are required, these should be submitted seven weeks in advance. When
Braille papers are required, papers should be submitted nine weeks in advance.

(d) All printed papers will be held until the date of the examination by the Head of
Examinations and Assessments. If papers are to be sent elsewhere (e.g. a practical
paper taken in a laboratory), this should be discussed with the Head of Examinations
and Assessments when the CRC is submitted.

(e) In the interests of security, copies of the reproduced papers will be retained at all
times within the Examination Schools and cannot be sent to chairs for checking.
Chairs who wish to inspect papers at the Examination Schools should arrange this in
advance by telephone (2-76907) or by e-mail
(exam.arrangements@admin.ox.ac.uk). It is important that papers containing
complex or colour images be checked well before the examination is scheduled to
take place.

(f) CRC must be prepared on white A4 paper and on one side of the paper only. Care
should be taken to make sure that the margins are no smaller than 26 mm at the top
and bottom of the page and 21 mm at the left and right sides of the page.

(g) The front page (example on next page) should not contain any questions, only
headers and rubric, including information on any materials or special stationery
provided, and, where appropriate, any items which the candidate is permitted to
bring, e.g. calculator. It should have the paper reference number (as shown on the
entry form, e.g. A12939W1) at the top left-hand corner. The title(s) of the
examination(s) and the paper title(s) should be stated clearly (as shown in the
annotated example on the next page, which should be used as a model).

(h) The reference number should be included at the bottom left-hand corner of the
second and all subsequent pages.

(i) The sequence of page numbers starts with the front (cover) page, which is page 1.
Page numbers should appear in the centre of the bottom line.
(j) The instruction ‘turn over’ should appear on page 3 and if necessary on every subsequent odd-numbered page, placed at the bottom right-hand corner, within the typing area described in (f) above. Blank pages and the last page should be identified as such.

(k) Papers will be produced directly from CRC without enlargement or reduction. Copy should be as clear as possible, as there may be a slight loss of quality on reproduction. Best results are obtained by using a word-processor with a laser-quality printer. Whenever possible, use a proportionally spaced font (e.g. Times New Roman). If images need to be reproduced to photographic quality, this should be notified clearly to the Examinations and Assessments team at the time of submission of the paper.

(l) If appropriate software is not available, drawings, symbols, accents, etc. may be added in black ink, using a fine pen. It may be best to produce diagrams (or passages of foreign-language text, etc.) separately and then paste them into position in the text (avoiding any surplus glue that might show on final copies).

(m) Sheets of CRC should not be stapled or pinned together, but placed in a folder showing clearly the examination title, paper title and reference number.

(n) The production of CRC (typing, layout, etc.) should be done either by examiners themselves or by departmental and faculty staff in normal working time. In exceptional circumstances the Proctors may authorise payments for overtime worked by departmental and faculty staff in the production of CRC, provided approval is sought well in advance from the Proctors.

(o) Where prior approval has been given by the Proctors, claims to cover the cost of production of papers must be made on a form supplied by the Head of Examinations and Assessments. The claim must include details of the number of hours worked and the number of pages prepared. All such claims must be submitted via the chair to the Head of Examinations and Assessments as early as possible.
TRINITY TERM 2015

Tuesday 09 June, 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

Please start the answer to each question on a separate sheet.

Candidates should answer ALL questions.

This paper consists of 7 pages.

Do not turn over until told that you may do so.
6.5. Proof-reading of CRC

The accuracy of papers is the responsibility of the chair and the examiners, and CRC must be carefully checked before submission to the Examination Schools, as there will be no proofs and limited opportunity to check it after the bulk copies are printed. Departments will be required by the Proctors to provide a statement on how they intend to reduce the numbers of errors in cases where there are serious or large numbers of errors on papers.

6.6. Security

Persons preparing examination papers should ensure that no-one can enter their room and observe examination material on a screen or in paper form on a desk or printer. If possible, they should work in a separate, locked room not frequented by visitors. Staff should take particular care when laptop computers or personal machines are used to process examination material at home or in other locations (e.g. in public places, or on public transport) outside the institution. Laptops containing examination material should have properly implemented security measures that are proportionate to the anticipated risks. These may include passwords, password-protected screensavers, biometric security mechanisms and encryption. Printed copies of draft examination papers should be securely destroyed (shredded) immediately after use. If they must be kept in paper form, say between examiners’ meetings, they should be stored in locked filing cabinets.

The Proctors should be notified at once if any breach of security is suspected. It is essential that back-ups are maintained and that there is good control over versions of draft papers. Any media storing backed-up papers must be kept secure.

Paper drafts should be transported between examiners by hand, or sent by Special Delivery. Questions, and question papers, should not be sent electronically unless encrypted. Advice on the encryption and decryption of examination papers may be obtained from IT Services. No electronic transmissions should be made without previously informing the Proctors. WebLearn is available to aid boards of examiners in sharing draft examination papers during paper preparation, using authorised additional verification sites only, and the chair should contact the Examinations Manager to request inclusion in this scheme and discuss the practicalities of implementation.

Any exception to these rules must be agreed in advance by the Proctors, who will need to be convinced (taking technical advice if necessary) that it will cause no breach in security.

The attention of all examiners is drawn to their obligation to keep all question papers strictly confidential. In no circumstances should details of the questions or the discussion of papers at examiners’ meetings be disclosed to anyone other than examiners, properly appointed assessors, and, if required, the PVC (Education) and Proctors.

Under no circumstance should examination questions be substantially the same as sample questions made available to candidates before the examination. If tutors have been asked to suggest questions for an examination, it should be made clear that such questions must not be used in tutorials or classes, nor should sample solutions be provided to candidates in advance of the exam. Special care should be taken where an examiner or assessor runs revision classes. Evidence of such similarities will be brought to the Proctors’ attention and may result in the striking out of the compromised paper from the examination.
6.7. Special requirements

Question papers which have special requirements, whether in timetabling (e.g. reading time; duration other than 3 hours) or the provision of materials (e.g. tables, reference books, tracing paper) should be agreed by the examiners (including those in joint schools with which papers may be shared), at their initial meeting. A schedule of materials previously used by the examination will be provided by the Head of Examinations and Assessments; this schedule, amended if necessary, and any other information should then be returned to the Head of Examinations and Assessments as soon as possible. As indicated above, each question paper should specify in the rubric on page 1 details of any special provisions or materials that relate to it. Question papers that contain pages printed in colour may also need special consideration by the Head of Examinations and Assessments and should be highlighted.

6.8. Printing of examination papers

Examiners are responsible for setting the question papers, the accuracy of the contents, and for the production of the camera-ready copy (CRC) in paper or pdf format (details in 6.4 above). Staff within the Examinations and Assessments team are responsible for the printing of the bulk quantities required in the examination room.
7. EXAMINATION ENTRIES, TIMETABLES AND WITHDRAWALS

7.1. Entering candidates

The dates by which candidates have to choose subjects/options and enter their name for an examination are published online by the ARO (www.ox.ac.uk/students/exams/entry/). Examinations, and deadlines for submission of work must not be earlier than these entry deadlines. Colleges are expected to remind their taught-course candidates about entry deadlines, but it is the student’s own responsibility to fill in the necessary forms online and to check that the examination entry details are correct (e.g. for subject options). Candidates may look at their core and option units within the online Student Self-Service (www.ox.ac.uk/students/studentselfservice/).

- **Exams that contain only compulsory core assessment units (exam papers and submissions)**
  Students will be automatically entered for core assessment units (e.g. compulsory papers). Therefore there will be no online entry form for these exams.

- **Exams that include both core and optional assessment units or optional assessment units only (exam papers and submissions)**
  Students will be required to complete an examination entry form online. Core assessments will be included on the entry form, and students will be required to select their optional assessment units on this form.

7.2. Entry information

Once the entry details have been entered onto the student record system (eVision):

- Chairs will be able to view their candidate details, and download reports (Candidate lists, Statistics lists, etc.) from eVision; chairs and supporting departmental administrators who require electronic access to eVision Exam Board Dataviews should contact the ARO.

- Colleges will be able to view full details of papers for which their candidates are entered, so that details can be checked.

- All candidates are advised via the Student Gateway that they are responsible for checking that their entries are correct on student self-service.

Any corrections, notes or changes required should be notified immediately to the ARO. In cases where the ARO identifies an illegal combination of papers, the college will be notified and will need to apply to Education Committee to regularise the position. Education Committee will consult with the relevant chair of examiners before giving approval.

Downloadable Student Assessment Dataviews are available in eVision which detail programmes of study and assessment information for Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate and Visiting, Recognized or Other Candidates, by college, course or department. Chairs should contact the ARO for support in this process if required.

7.3. Late entries to examinations and alterations of options

Candidates must apply for permission in writing through their Senior Tutor or other college officer, to the ARO. A form for the alteration of options is available from college offices. Once completed, the form should be returned to the ARO, and the appropriate payment made via the on-line shop. Applications for late entries and alterations of options will not be processed until payment has been received.

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7.4. Candidate numbers
An individual number is allocated to each candidate as part of the means of ensuring anonymity in examinations. If there are any queries about candidate numbers, chairs should contact the ARO. Chairs should not attempt to change the numbering (even if there are gaps in the sequence as a result of withdrawals), as this could cause considerable confusion.

7.5. Draft timetables
The responsibility for timetabling lies with the Head of Examinations and Assessments, in consultation with the Pro-VC (Education) and the Proctors. The Head of Examinations and Assessments will send a draft timetable to chairs as soon as practicable. This will, for most examinations, be the result of a computer projection of the most effective use of space and will not necessarily resemble closely that of the previous year. The draft timetable provides chairs with the basis for planning examiner attendance at the examination.

Two other points to note are that seating arrangements are constrained, among other things, by fire regulations, so that large schools cannot necessarily be accommodated in a single room; and that, where possible, timetables are arranged to minimise disruption from post-exam celebrations, i.e. to avoid large numbers of candidates taking their last paper at the same time, to ensure that large numbers of candidates do not take their last paper on Encaenia Day, and so that papers of less than three hours are not taken last.

The Proctors liaise with the Head of Examinations and Assessments about constraints on timetabling that might be necessary for individual candidates with needs for alternative examination arrangements.

After considering the draft timetable, chairs should return it to the Head of Examinations and Assessments according to the reply date given, with notice of any errors, inconveniences, excessive demands on individual candidates, or other matters that may require amendments to be made. Chairs should give particular thought to the timetabling of papers shared with, or overlapping with, those in other examinations. If it appears desirable to change the provisional timing of a paper that is shared between two or more schools, the other chairs must be consulted before the request is made to the timetabling team. Re-timetabling that would produce extended supervision of candidates should be avoided wherever possible.

If an examination may include a viva voce examination, the likely date(s) for that examination should be signalled in the timetable.

If confirmation of a draft timetable is not received by the date specified, the Head of Examinations and Assessments will deem the timetable as publishable.

7.6. Published timetable
It is important for candidates as well as examiners that examination timetables are published in good time. The target publication date is no later than five weeks before the date of the first paper, and chairs should make sure that the draft timetable and all necessary alterations have been returned to the Head of Examinations and Assessments in time to achieve this. Examiners should note that the venue for candidates with alternative examination arrangements will be either in the Alternative Arrangements Room or Computer Suite of the Examination Schools during main examination periods (in Ewert House for September resits and occasional examinations outside the main periods) or in colleges. The individual timetables published to students will include a note about venues for these cases.
7.7. Individual timetables for candidates

The Examination and Assessments team will provide to each candidate, no later than two weeks before the examination begins, an individual timetable listing their candidate number and the times, dates and locations of the papers for which they have been entered. Any problems should be notified to the Head of Examinations and Assessments.

7.8. Withdrawals

A candidate whose name has been entered for a University examination may withdraw from that examination at any time before the start of the first paper or the first date for submission of a dissertation or other exercise whichever is the earlier (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14, cl. 14.17, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoup-e-p14ls-n-snawfromexam).

A candidate may not withdraw from a University examination at any time after the start of the first paper or date for submission of the first paper or other exercise unless, with his or her college’s permission, by reason of illness or other urgent cause (ibid., cl. 14.18-14.19, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoup-e-p14ls-n-snawfromexam). If a candidate withdraws from an examination before its completion, the College must notify the ARO who will inform the chair. Such notification should be in writing using the appropriate form, which is available from college offices, specifying the candidate’s name, college, examination, and (where possible) candidate number. If a candidate wishes to withdraw during a paper, he/she must inform an invigilator and the Head of Examinations and Assessments at once, and his or her college as soon as possible. Consultation with the Proctors by the college will be involved.

Candidates are not permitted to withdraw after the written part of the examination is complete.
8. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR INDIVIDUAL CANDIDATES

8.1. Use of calculators in examinations

Chairs are reminded that, where the Regulations require it, they must issue a list of calculators that are permitted. This list should be sent to all candidates as close as possible to the start of the academic year in which they are sitting their examinations. It should also be copied to the Head of Examinations and Assessments. Information on the type of calculator permitted is given in the Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 10, cl. 10.4, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoute-p10dopatuow-p-ccaominexam.

8.2. Bilingual dictionaries

Students whose first language is not English are not permitted to use bilingual dictionaries except in the rare cases where usage is specified in subject regulations or where a student started their current course before 1 October 2009 and has obtained permission for their use. English-only dictionaries and dictionaries in electronic form are NOT permitted under any circumstances (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 10, cl.10.7, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoute-p10dopatuow-p-ccaominexam).

Candidates wishing to use bilingual dictionaries in those rare cases where they are permitted by regulation should apply to the Proctors through their Senior Tutor (or other appropriate college officer). Requests should be made by fourth week of Michaelmas term for examinations taking place at any time during the academic year. Late requests will not be entertained. Permission to use a bilingual dictionary is normally ongoing, unless the candidate changes course, in which case a new application will need to be made.

8.3. Alternative examination arrangements for candidates

Candidates apply through their college to the Examinations and Assessments team (working under delegated authority from the Proctors) to request approval for any alternative arrangements (e.g. use of a computer, papers to be taken in college or with extra time in the Examination Schools) (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 12, cl. 12.2, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoute-p12cwsexamneed ). In most circumstances, a medical certificate will be required.

Applications should be submitted by colleges via a secure SharePoint site. The Proctors (or the Examinations and Assessments team, working under delegated authority) will decide whether to approve the request; the college and the chair will be notified via the SharePoint site. The chair should make particular note of cases when papers will be sat at different times than the main cohort, as this may affect planning for marking. In some cases, the arrangements will apply to the whole cohort to reduce disruption (e.g. papers to be taken in the morning rather than the afternoon for medical reasons or as a result of fasting for religious reasons). The Proctors expect requests for alternative examination arrangements to be submitted no later than Friday of fourth week, Michaelmas Term, for exams not held in Trinity Term or the Long Vacation, and Friday of fourth week, Hilary Term, for exams held in Trinity Term or the Long Vacation. This makes it easier to deal with urgent matters that arise while examinations are in progress.

Please note that students no longer need a medical certificate to support minor adjustments and permission to take medical aids/medication into an examination. This includes bringing snacks, and medications including asthma inhalers, eye drops, ear plugs, nasal spray or a cushion into an examination, or wearing for example a wrist splint. For students with Type 1 diabetes this also includes bringing blood-testing kits, glucose drinks and/or tablets, insulin
with syringes. A letter from the college Senior Tutor or college nurse is sufficient to support these minor adjustments/provide permission to take medical aids/medication into an examination, and should be brought by the student with them into Examination Schools or Ewert House.

All students are permitted to bring water (still, in a spill-proof bottle) and sweets into examinations without special permission. Further information on candidates’ personal possessions in examinations is given in section 10.9.

8.4. Students with disabilities

In the case of students with disabilities, colleges must consider in the light of equality and disabilities legislation what reasonable adjustments to the examination process may be necessary. The identification of a course’s competence standards is key to avoiding unlawful discrimination and enabling the University to meet this anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments. Therefore, supervisory bodies must clarify the competence standards of their courses. Further information on competence standards is available in Annex B: Competence standards.

Candidates should make requests for adjustments through their colleges to the Proctors (through the Examinations and Assessments team via the secure SharePoint site). The Disability Advisory Service is available to offer advice regarding appropriate adjustments. The Proctors may give permission for extra time, rest periods, the rescheduling of examinations, the use of amanuenses, the use of computers and appropriate software, etc.

In the case of candidates with severe disability, variations in the Examination Regulations (concerning course and mode of examination) may be appropriate. Such variations may only be made with the approval of Education Committee, although the Proctors may be able to assist colleges in framing their requests. Please note that special facilities or extra time cannot be accommodated at Ewert House, so students with these requirements will be examined in the Examination Schools or their college (further information on applying for these major adjustments is given in Annex A: Major adjustments to examinations and assessment).

8.5. Candidates with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs), e.g. dyslexia

Permission for extra time in written examinations, normally 15 minutes in each hour, may be given by the Proctors on the advice of the Disability Advisory Service. In some cases, on their advice, a candidate may be given permission to use a word-processor, usually within a special room in the Examination Schools. Candidates with SpLDs should notify (through their college) the Examinations and Assessments team of their requests when an assessment is available, or by the deadlines stated under 8.3 above, whichever is sooner.

The Examinations and Assessments team will arrange for a cover-sheet explaining the typical effects of the candidate’s condition to be attached to each of the candidate’s scripts and to any submitted coursework before they are dispatched for marking. Chairs, in consultation with the Head of Examinations and Assessments, should ensure that cover-sheets are also attached to any examined pieces of coursework not submitted to the Examination Schools.

Arrangements for candidates with SpLDs are normally ongoing, unless the candidate changes course, in which case a new application to the Proctors, through the Examinations and Assessments team, needs to be made. Chairs of First Public Examinations must thus ensure that information concerning ongoing arrangements for candidates with SpLDs is passed on to the appropriate Faculty or Departmental administrator on the completion of the
examination (see 11.14 below). Information on approved arrangements is available to departments via the SITS student record system.

8.6. Invigilation in colleges

When, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate has been allowed to sit an examination in their college, the college is required to provide a suitable room and an invigilator (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 15, cl. 15.5(3), www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p15sainviofexam). The Examinations and Assessments team will provide guidance on who may invigilate in these circumstances and what the invigilator is required to do (see 10.2 below). All invigilators must have received appropriate training from the Examinations and Assessments team, at least once every three years. Colleges must obtain approval of the invigilator(s) from the Proctors via the Examinations and Assessments team for each college examination sitting. The aim must be to ensure that the examination is conducted under similar conditions to those in the Examination Schools. One of the Proctors may attend at any point.

8.7. Question papers in special locations

The provision of papers for candidates sitting examinations in specially approved locations (college, Alternative Arrangements Room, Computer Suite) is the responsibility of the Examinations and Assessments team, and examiners should not supply papers for this purpose. The Examinations and Assessments team will have packages for each candidate, containing question papers, script booklets and any materials, available half an hour before the start of the examination for collection by the appointed invigilator, who will be required to provide their University card as evidence of identity. After each examination is completed, scripts must be delivered promptly to the Examination Schools by the invigilator and signed in. Such scripts can be delivered to markers or collected from Examination Schools, as with all other scripts, although they may be a little delayed if sat later than the main cohort.

A small number of online examinations are conducted in the Medical Sciences Teaching Centre. A set of procedural arrangements agreed between the MSTC and the Proctors is sent to colleges each year. These include contingency arrangements for candidates who are unable to sit these examinations in the MSTC and need to sit them in their colleges.

8.8. Medical information in support of alternative examination arrangements

A certificate from a candidate’s doctor is normally required in support of a request for alternative examination arrangements or late presentation. The Proctors will accept a letter from the college nurse for minor ailments and injuries. A medical certificate is required when the request involves a significant change to the conduct of an exam (college venue, extra time/rest breaks, use of a word processor etc.). The certificate should indicate the medical reason for the specific request. The Proctors will expect the certificate to include an independent medical assessment and it should not simply reproduce the candidate’s claims uncritically. The candidate should request a certificate from the doctor at a time when the doctor is able to certify the facts. Colleges are responsible for transmitting the medical certificate in good time to the Examinations and Assessments team via the relevant application form (see also 11.7 below).

From Michaelmas term 2015, the University medical certificate template should be used in all University procedures requiring medical evidence, including requests for alternative arrangements or late presentation. The template is available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/resources/medicalcerts, and college doctors will be provided with an electronic version of the certificate which is compatible with their information management systems, and which can be pre-populated with both doctors’ and student patients’ details. A completed copy of the medical certificate template should accompany applications for alternative arrangements in examinations. The template asks for specific
information from medical practitioners, including any recommendations for alternative arrangements, and should aid University and college staff by providing the information required in a standard format.

‘Guidance for medical practitioners on the use of medical certificates’ has also been produced, and is available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/resources/medicalcerts. While aimed at medical practitioners, this may also be helpful to University and college staff dealing with medical certificates, and to examiners. It includes guidance on information required when a medical certificate is requested to support an application for alternative examination arrangements, and a list of common adjustments to exam arrangements.

From Michaelmas term 2015, the University (including the Proctors’ Office and Student Administration) will accept medical certificates supplied electronically (which may include a scanned version of a signed, hard copy), where the receiving officer is satisfied that the e-mail address from which the certificate is sent is a genuine UK NHS medical practitioner’s or practice / hospital account (e.g. doctor.name@trust.nhs.uk or equivalent).

In cases of acute illness when a medical certificate is necessary, but when there is no time prior to the start of the exam to obtain one, the request for alternative arrangements may be accompanied by a signed letter from the college nurse, Dean or Senior Tutor. If the letter comes from the Dean or Senior Tutor, a letter or medical certificate from a doctor or college nurse must follow and should be provided within 7 days of the initial request.

The statement from a college nurse, Dean or Senior Tutor should include the name of the student, the name of the college, and a full description of the illness/condition, symptoms, and the onset date. It should state how long the symptoms are expected to last and what adjustments would be appropriate to enable the student to sit their examinations. The statement should be accompanied by the usual college alternative exam arrangements application form and submitted to the secure SharePoint site for alternative arrangements (see section 8.3 above).

Where a candidate takes examinations at a particular disadvantage, it is always preferable to alleviate the disadvantage by appropriate alternative arrangements rather than to expect examiners to compensate in their adjudication on the merits of performance.

8.9. Candidates sitting an examination under a previous set of regulations
Candidates are entitled to sit their examination according to the regulations 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, so long as the time elapsed since they were originally due to be examined is not greater than the maximum time permitted for completion of their course.

Outside of these time limits, students will usually be examined under current regulations. Requests to be examined under previous regulations in such cases need to be made by applying for a dispensation from Education Committee.

Education Policy Support officers will contact the faculty/department (generally the Chair of examiners/Examination Administrator) to confirm that papers will be set under old regulations and inform the college of this confirmation.
Full details of the new procedure for sitting examinations under old regulations, including the responsibilities of colleges, departments, faculties and Education Policy Support, is available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/casemanagement under Useful Documents.
9. SUBMISSION OF WRITTEN WORK

9.1. Date and time stipulated

The published regulations should stipulate when work must be handed in. The submissions desk in the Examination Schools is closed over the weekend and after 5pm, and thus, late submissions made on the following Monday will be three days late and those made the following morning will be at least 16 hours late. Divisions have therefore agreed that all subjects should work towards having deadlines at noon rather than 5pm and on days other than Friday, with changes made to regulations as appropriate. In addition, this allows boards of examiners to impose academic penalties, as specified in the relevant examination conventions, for work handed in on the day of the deadline but after the time of the deadline without further reference to the Proctors (see also 9.4 below). In order to avoid problems when the date falls on a bank holiday or Easter, it is also desirable to avoid selecting Mondays or Easter closure days for submission dates when regulations are drafted.

The examiners should remind candidates that if they present work late, they may be charged a late presentation fee, receive an academic penalty, or possibly fail the examination.

9.2. Instructions for handing in

Instructions for handing in must be circulated to all candidates in good time before the stipulated date. A copy of these instructions should also be sent to the Head of Examinations and Assessments. Chairs must ensure that the date and time specified are correct under the current regulations.

The Examination Schools serve as the central point for the handing in of theses or other exercises for examination. This is because the Examinations and Assessments team has well-established procedures for recording late submissions and notifying the Proctors, which include issuing receipts and recording the time when work is presented. Any late or missing submissions are notified to the Chair of Examiners, the student and his or her college. The Proctors must give exceptional permission for work to be presented for examination other than in the Examination Schools (for example in the Department for Continuing Education). Examiners must not accept work sent to them or departments (e.g. electronically) outside the specified handing-in arrangements. Alternative submission arrangements (e.g. online submissions) are only allowed if specified in Special Subject Regulations in the Examination Regulations. This does not prohibit submission in electronic form or by electronic means in addition to submission by other modes, for example for the purposes of plagiarism detection, again when allowed by special subject regulations.

If faculties or departments wish to consider the possibility of making changes to allow for online submissions, they should refer to Annex M: Framework for the use of WebLearn to manage submission of assessment.

Candidates must be instructed to write their candidate number, examination title and subject matter on the envelope containing their written work; they must not write their name or college. Similarly, the written work itself should carry only the candidate’s number and neither name nor college.

Candidates should also hand in a signed declaration that the written work is their own and has not previously been submitted for examination at Oxford or elsewhere. This declaration should be in a sealed envelope (which may be included inside the envelope used to hand in the written work). Standard forms should be available from the department (or the department’s website) for this purpose. The form of declaration recommended by Education Committee can be downloaded from the Oxford Students website www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills.
Candidates should be clearly instructed to present their work on time in the Examination Schools. If they are unable to present their written work by the stipulated time, they should contact their Senior Tutor. In no circumstances should chairs enter into separate negotiation with candidates or their colleges about revised submission times. All requests for extension of the submission date for written work must be handled by the Proctors. Failure to obtain permission for late submission can lead to an academic penalty (see 9.4 below), and possibly failure in the examination.

9.3. Collection and distribution

The chair is responsible for arranging the sorting of written work and its distribution to examiners or assessors. In an examination with many candidates the chair will need to arrange for assistance with this. If support is requested well in advance, staff from the Examinations and Assessments team will be able to assist.

Staff in the Examinations and Assessments team will verify whether all candidates have presented the required work, liaising with the chair or administrator as necessary. The name of any candidate who has not handed in the work required will be notified to the Proctors by the Head of Examinations and Assessments.

If the chair comes into possession of work that was not handed in at the appointed time and place, the matter should be referred to the Proctors.

9.4. Late presentation of written work for examination

If a candidate is unable to present work required for examination by the stipulated date and time, the college must make an application to the Proctors for permission for the candidate to remain in the examination. Neither college nor candidate is permitted to approach the examiners direct to request an extension of time and candidates must not be offered extensions informally by tutors, supervisors, or departmental staff.

Requests ahead of the due date

The procedure by which a candidate may request permission to submit a thesis or other exercise after the stipulated time, is found in the Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14, cl. 14.3-14.12, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p14ls-n-snawfromexam. The request must be made through the candidate’s college to the Proctors’ Office. Chairs and other examiners must never negotiate extensions of time directly with candidates or colleges. After consultation with the chair about significantly long extensions, the Proctors will normally give permission where the reason is illness or other urgent and reasonable cause. Where the extension is likely to take the date of submission beyond the term of office of the current examiners, the application will normally be considered by the Chair of the Education Committee. In all cases, the applications will be considered on the basis of the evidence provided to support the additional time sought.

After the due date

Written work submitted after the stipulated time will be received. The Examinations and Assessments team will inform the Proctors and Chair of Examiners of late submissions; the email to the Chair of Examiners will provide information on what steps to take depending on the circumstance. The Examinations and Assessments team will also send an email to all candidates who submit work late, and their College, informing them of the process that will be followed.

Candidates who submit work on the day of the deadline but after the time of the deadline will be permitted to remain in the examination. Examiners should apply an academic penalty as decreed within the examination conventions. If there are extenuating circumstances beyond the candidate’s control, candidates can ask their College to inform the Proctors accordingly.
The Proctors will notify the Chair of Examiners directly if an academic penalty is to be waived, due to extenuating circumstances.

Candidates who submit work after the day of the deadline will only be permitted to remain in the examination with the permission of the Proctors and after the case has been investigated. Candidates are given the opportunity to explain, through the Senior Tutor of their college, reasons for late presentation. In cases of significant lateness the Proctors will normally enquire of chairs whether they are willing to accept the work. In all cases of submission after the deadline day, the work can be marked but **no marks confirmed**: the Proctors will confirm to the Chair of Examiners whether the mark can be released.

Candidates who present work late without prior permission are liable to an academic penalty, or possibly failure in the examination. A late presentation fee will usually be charged for the extra administrative work caused by late submission *(Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14, cl. 14.9-14.10, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p14ls-n-snawfromexam)*.

### Academic penalties

The Proctors have discretion to allow examiners to impose an academic penalty for late presentation, in accordance with the scale of penalties approved by the board of examiners for the exam in question and described in the examination conventions. The penalty is intended to remove any unfair advantage gained by taking more time than was available to other candidates, and examiners should be aware of the importance of fairness for all candidates. It should be proportionate, and account must be taken of any reasons for lateness provided through the Proctors by the candidate’s college.

If a piece of work is not handed in by two weeks after a due date the Proctors may rule that the work has not been handed in at all. Failure to hand in work can lead to failure in the entire examination *(Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14, cl. 14.2, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p14ls-n-snawfromexam)*. Boards of examiners should contact the Proctors before failing a candidate for such non-submission of work for examination, to ascertain whether they have been given permission to remain in the examination. Such candidates’ results should be marked as pending until boards of examiners have received notification from the Proctors as to whether the non-submission has been excused.

### 9.5. Other contraventions of regulations

#### 9.5.1. Overlong theses

Under the regulations concerning the submission of theses or other exercises *(Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 16, cl. 16.6, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p16markandasse)*, examiners may impose an academic penalty where written work exceeds the length prescribed in the Regulations. If they agree to proceed with the examination of the work, they may reduce the mark for that item of work by up to one class (or its equivalent).

#### 9.5.2. 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) *(ibid., Part 16, cl. 16.6(2), www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p16markandasse)*.

#### 9.5.3. Plagiarism

The Proctors’ regulations state that ‘No candidate shall plagiarise by presenting someone else’s work as their own, or by incorporating other people’s work or ideas into their own work
without full acknowledgement. This includes: verbatim quotation, cutting and pasting from the internet, and paraphrasing without clear acknowledgement; collusion; inaccurate citation; failure to acknowledge assistance; use of material written by professional agencies or other persons; and autoplagiarism’ (Statutes and Regulations, Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examinations, Proctors' Regulations 1, cl. 4). ‘Auto-plagiarism’, i.e. re-use of work previously examined at Oxford or elsewhere, is forbidden unless such re-use is covered by Special Subject Regulations. If examiners or assessors have any concern about the content of a written exercise (or about similarities between several candidates’ work), they should report the matter to the chair. The chair will compile any evidence and decide whether the case is one to be dealt with by the Board (poor academic practice) or one to be referred to the Proctors. The types of cases to be dealt with as poor academic practice and the full plagiarism procedure are detailed in Annex G: The role of faculties and departments in preventing and dealing with plagiarism.

An examiner or assessor should not decide to impose an academic penalty if intentional plagiarism is suspected without consulting the Chair and examiners should not use a viva to follow up concerns. Any suspicions must be referred immediately to the chair and thence the Proctors. The Proctors will normally suspend a candidate's examination while they fully investigate such cases.

Guidance on the role of faculties/departments in preventing plagiarism is provided in Annex G: The role of faculties and departments in preventing and dealing with plagiarism. Boards of examiners may wish to use Turnitin as one tool in helping to identify potential cases of plagiarism. Points of guidance for this are given in Annex L: Proctors’ guidance for the use of Turnitin in University examinations.
10. TIMED EXAMINATIONS

10.1. Presence of examiners

Chairs must arrange for an examiner or assessor acquainted with the particulars of the relevant question paper to be present for half an hour at the start of an examination to address any questions concerning the paper, and must satisfy themselves that this duty is properly carried out. Examiners should arrive at the examination venue at least 20 minutes before the start of the examination so that they have time to do a final check of the examination paper. Lists of examination locations are provided in the entrance hall of the Examination Schools.

When there are candidates taking a variety of question papers in the room at the same time (as happens with options) and several people have participated in setting questions, the examiner present must know where the other examiners can be contacted directly by telephone at the time required. Since candidates are most likely to get prompt answers to any queries raised when the examiner is present in the examination room, candidates should be made aware of how long the examiner intends to be present; this must be for at least the first half hour. If the numbers of candidates have required that they are accommodated in more than one room, the examiner or assessor must confirm to the Examination and Assessments team the room in which he or she will be located.

Examiners attending for the first half an hour of an examination must present themselves at the examination venue in academic dress (i.e. gown and hood) and formal clothing; this may include ‘subfusc’ clothing but this is not required.

For particularly complex papers, examiners may wish to remain at the examination venue for the duration of that examination paper in order to respond to queries raised via the Head of Examinations and Assessments. In such cases, it is helpful if the chair could let the Examinations Manager know in advance that examiners intend to stay so that desk spaces can be found for them.

Examiners and invigilators are reminded that the announcement of changes to or interpretations of examination papers must be heard by all the candidates concerned. It is vital that any advice given to any individual candidate about the question paper must be communicated to all candidates, including those sitting examinations in colleges. Inconsistency of treatment, however apparently trivial, may give rise to complaints.

Whenever examiners are present in the examination room they must not engage in activities distracting to candidates, nor must they mark examination scripts in a room where an examination is taking place.

All corrections to or clarifications of examination papers must be reported immediately to the Head of Examinations and Assessments, so that the information can be conveyed to colleges or other locations where candidates are taking papers under alternative arrangements, and be logged. Examiners should not seek to convey this information themselves.

10.2. Invigilators

Invigilators are present in all examination rooms. They will have received formal training in the required procedures and are responsible for the ‘housekeeping’ aspects of the examination process.

Invigilation is arranged on the basis of one invigilator to every 50 candidates (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 15, cl. 15.3, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p15sainviofexam). The Head of
Examinations and Assessments will deploy invigilators as necessary and may consult with chairs as to how far examiners will be involved (e.g. for subjects such as maths, sciences and languages in which frequent ‘technical’ questions arise).

The University Safety Officer requires all invigilators to be fully briefed about what action to take in the event of a fire during the course of examinations. The Examinations and Assessment team is responsible for drawing the attention of all invigilators to the detailed fire instructions, which are displayed in each examination room.

If, for any reason, an examiner or invigilator needs to speak to an individual candidate, (s)he should take care not to unsettle him/her during the examination nor to disturb other candidates. If a candidate insists on a protracted conversation with an invigilator, (s)he should be invited to pursue the matter outside the examination room so as not to disturb the other candidates. Problems should not be raised with a candidate during the examination if they can be dealt with at the end.

A log-sheet is provided in each examination room and will be used by those invigilating the examination to record any incident (and its time) which the examiners or the Proctors may need to consider later in the examining process. Log-sheets will be held in the Examination Schools and will be made available to boards of examiners on request. Where the log refers to a medical incident, chairs of examiners should not take this into account unless separate medical evidence has been provided via the Proctors.

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

10.3. Timing

Examinations must begin and end at the advertised times unless special authority has been obtained from the Proctors. If circumstances have caused a small delay in starting, the examination must continue for its full advertised duration. Invigilators will arrange to admit candidates in good time before the start, so that they have time to find their seats. However, candidates will not be given sight of the exam questions, nor will they be allowed to begin writing, until the start time for the examination. Invigilators will ensure that all candidates finish writing when they are told to at the end of the examination, including any who may have arrived late. If a candidate fails to finish writing when told to do so, the Head of Examinations and Assessments will notify the Proctors.

10.4. Seating and attendance of candidates

Invigilators will be provided with lists of candidates’ numbers, names and seat numbers for use in seating the candidates, in checking for absentees and in checking off scripts at the end of the session. During the examination all candidates must display on their desks their University Card (Proctors’ Administrative Regulations for Candidates in Examinations (Proctors’ Regulations 1 of 2005), cl. 4, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/253-114.shtml). Failure to provide proof of identity by a candidate is taken very seriously by the Proctors and will be investigated as a possible case of impersonation. Before the start of the paper, invigilators will ask for candidates who do not know their candidate numbers to raise their hands. If any candidate does not know his/her candidate number, the invigilators will be able to confirm the number from the lists provided.

Invigilators will check their records and then announce the names of unrecorded absentees to ensure that a candidate is not reported as absent when he or she is known to be sitting elsewhere or is simply in the wrong seat. Invigilators will note on the forms (also provided on the invigilator’s table) the names of any candidates absent when the examination began and not accounted for by this procedure. Absentee forms will be collected by Examinations and Assessments team staff soon after the start of the examination; the absence will be investigated through the candidate’s college, and
information will be relayed to the invigilators. Invigilators will also report, on the form provided, the names of all candidates absent thirty minutes after the beginning of the paper; the form should be given to a member of Examinations and Assessments team staff.

10.5. Unauthorised absence

If a candidate is absent from a particular paper without explanation, the Head of Examinations and Assessments will inform the Proctors and the college. The Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 14, cl. 14.2 state that, with minor exceptions, a candidate who fails to appear for any part of a University examination ‘will be deemed to have failed the entire examination or, in the case of a Second Public Examination taken over more than one year, the entire Part of the Examination’ (www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p14ls-n-snawfromexam). Candidates whose absence was a result of acute illness or other urgent cause may make a submission to the Proctors through their Senior Tutor that they should be permitted to remain in the examination (ibid, Part 14, cl.14.13-14.16, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p14ls-n-snawfromexam). Boards of examiners should contact the Proctors before failing a candidate for non-appearance, to ascertain whether they have been given permission to remain in the examination. Such candidates’ results should be marked as pending until boards of examiners have received notification from the Proctors as to whether the non-appearance has been excused.

10.6. Candidates who enter or leave the room

No candidate may leave the room during the first thirty minutes or last thirty minutes of the examination without the Proctors’ permission, except in the case of medical emergency or fire (Proctors’ Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examinations (Proctors’ Regulations 1 of 2003), cl. 12, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/288-072.shtml).

A candidate who arrives more than thirty minutes after the time when the examination began should be allowed to attempt the paper, finishing at the same time as the others, but should be advised that the work cannot be taken into consideration without the consent of the Proctors. The invigilator will report the circumstances to the Head of Examinations and Assessments, who will contact the Proctors.

No candidate is allowed to leave the examination room for any purpose during the examination without an invigilator’s permission. Details should be recorded in the log-sheet, except when the reason for absence is to use a lavatory. Invigilators are strongly encouraged not to allow more than one person of each sex to go to the lavatory at any one time, and to note if any one candidate repeatedly requests to visit the lavatory.

The Head of Examinations and Assessments will put arrangements in place to ensure that candidates are not able to confer outside the examination room (e.g. in the lavatories) or to contact someone outside the building by using a mobile phone or other communication device.

If a candidate is taken ill while an examination is in progress, or expresses a desire to leave the examination room with the examination incomplete, the invigilator will call a member of Examinations and Assessments team staff. The invigilator will not leave the examination room. The staff member will take whatever action is necessary, which may include making arrangements for the candidate to be escorted back to college or, with serious illness, calling for an ambulance. Once a candidate leaves the examination room due to sickness, he or she will be advised that they will not be able to continue that same paper in college. If the candidate chooses to return to the examination room he or she will not be allowed to leave and return again owing to sickness (Proctors’ Administrative Regulations for Candidates in Examinations (Proctors’ Regulations 1 of 2005), cl. 5, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/253-114.shtml).
10.7. Paper in an examination

Writing paper is provided for all examinations. For most examinations this takes the form of booklets. Candidates should be advised to write any plans, drafts, or rough working in the writing booklets; this may be done in the same booklet as the fair copy, in which case it should be clearly indicated to the examiners what is to be marked (e.g. by striking through rough work); or rough working may be done in a separate booklet, which must be clearly labelled and handed in along with the fair copy.

At the start of an examination, invigilators will remind candidates that they are not allowed to remove from an examination room any answer booklets, but only the question paper and such books or papers, if any, as they were authorised to take into the room (Proctors’ Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examinations (Proctors’ Regulations 1 of 2003), cl. 15, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/288-072.shtml).

There should be no paper on a candidate’s desk other than the question paper and answer booklets. If those invigilating an examination suspect that any candidate has crib-notes, they will inform the Head of Examinations and Assessments, who will contact the Proctors. The candidate will be observed closely but not challenged in the examination room; at the end of the examination, or sooner if the candidate leaves the room, the candidate will be challenged and instructed to hand over the notes to the Head of Examinations and Assessments for delivery to the Proctors. If those invigilating an examination suspect that any candidate is removing writing booklets, they will challenge the candidate when (s)he leaves the room and immediately inform the Head of Examinations and Assessments, who will contact the Proctors.

10.8. Announcements

Before the start of each paper, and with 30 minutes remaining and at the end, the invigilator will read out to the candidates the standard announcements. This is the responsibility of the Senior Invigilator.

It is essential that these announcements are made by invigilators to ensure the appropriate and fair conduct of the examination. The starting announcement is particularly important to ensure that candidates are reminded at each session that unauthorised items are not permitted in the examination room and that failure to surrender them will constitute a breach of regulations.

10.9. Candidates’ personal possessions

- Only transparent pencil cases containing personal items and permitted calculators may be brought into the examination room, and candidates must offer them for inspection if requested.

- Candidates may also bring a watch, a wallet/small purse, individual timetable, and a small packet of sweets (chewing gum is not allowed). Invigilators may remove any items of food that might cause a disturbance to other candidates.

- Candidates are permitted to bring non-carbonated water into the examination room, in a spill-proof bottle (sports cap).

- Candidates are permitted to bring asthma inhalers, silent blood testing kits, epi-pens, over-the-counter or prescription medicine, and medical aids (such as a wrist splint or back support pillow) into an examination provided there is a medical need and the candidate has a letter of support from their Senior Tutor or college nurse.

- Items of food and drink other than water are not permitted in the examination rooms except on medical grounds and approved by the Proctors, the candidate’s Senior Tutor or college nurse.
- Candidates given permission by the Proctors, their Senior Tutor or their college nurse to take items, such as medicine, food or drink, into an examination must carry a copy of the permission letter with them and produce the letter if requested by an invigilator.

- Where permission has already been granted for their use, dictionaries brought into the examination room must remain there until the end of the examination: they may not be taken away at the end of each paper but must be left in the examination room until all papers are complete.

- Bags and other personal belongings must not be taken beyond the areas designated for the deposit of such items (e.g. the marqueses specially erected in the quad in Examination Schools and outside Ewert House).

- The use of communication devices such as mobile telephones and hand-held electronic organisers is forbidden anywhere in the Examination Schools and in the Ewert House examination hall; such devices must not be taken into the examination room but must be left in the waiting area. If candidates are found or suspected to have unauthorised materials the same procedures as outlined above concerning ‘Paper in an examination’ will be followed. If mobile phones or other electronic devices have been taken into the examination room despite being strictly forbidden, and go off during the examination, they must be switched off and handed to an invigilator.

Dress

Candidates must present themselves for examination in full academic dress, i.e. cap, gown and ‘subfusc’ clothing, which is defined as a dark suit, skirt or trousers with dark socks, black tights or stockings, black shoes or boots, a plain white collared shirt or blouse and white bow tie, black bow tie, black full-length tie or black ribbon, and, if desired, a dark coat.

If any candidate arrives at an examination dressed improperly, the Proctors require that an invigilator simply ask the candidate, at the conclusion of the paper, to dress correctly for his or her next appearance, and make a note in the log-sheet. If the candidate appears at a subsequent session still improperly dressed, or at the last session, the Proctors should be informed at once. The Proctors do not wish improperly dressed candidates to be refused admission to an examination.

Candidates should be allowed to remove their caps during the examination, and also gowns or jackets, if they find these uncomfortable or inconvenient. Invigilators will ensure that the candidates are properly dressed when they leave the place of examination.

10.10. Conclusion of an examination

In arranging for the handing in of scripts, invigilators will take care that the identity of the markers on the address sheets is not visible to candidates. This is to preserve the anonymity of markers.

Responsibility for handing in a script rests with the candidate, who must give it to the invigilator when requested, along with any answer-booklet(s) used for rough work. Scripts must not be removed from the examination room. Any candidate who decides not to attempt an examination and who, therefore, has no script to hand in must report the fact to an invigilator before leaving the building.

Invigilators will follow a checking-off procedure to confirm that all scripts have been received. Examiners should not remove scripts from the examination room until the invigilators have confirmed that all scripts are accounted for.

Candidates will not be allowed to remove any examination booklets (used or unused) from the examination room. During handing in, there is a great deal of movement in the
examination room; wherever possible, an invigilator will be stationed at the doorway to ensure that booklets are not removed from the room. Candidates in the Examination Schools will be instructed to leave quietly as others with extra time will not have completed their papers.

10.11. Packaging, delivery and collection of scripts

Invigilators will check the scripts handed in against the list of numbers provided in the room and the list of absentees before any scripts are taken out of the examination room. Missing scripts will be reported to the Head of Examinations and Assessments at once, so that the room can be searched, and to the Proctors thereafter. Unless a search is made at once, it is much more difficult to establish later whether a missing script had in fact been handed in. This procedure will inevitably take some time after the end of the paper.

Scripts should never be left unattended. Where a single invigilator is in a room, assistance will be summoned.

After checking, all scripts will be packaged with an address sheet showing the name of the relevant examiner or assessor, the number of scripts enclosed, the candidate numbers of any absentees, and any corrections announced during the sitting of the paper. All script delivery instructions should be clear and accurate. Copies of the question paper will also be enclosed. (Bags and address sheets are provided by Student Administration.)

Where relevant, the scripts of candidates with dyslexia or other Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLDs) should be identified and the SpLD pro forma cover sheet attached before they are sent to the examiner or assessor.

Packages of scripts will be taken from the room and handed to Examinations and Assessments team staff; arrangements will be made for their delivery or collection as requested by the department. If examiners collect scripts directly from the examination room, they must show University Card ID and sign the appropriate documentation. Scripts must never be left in the examination room.

Completed examination scripts can be passed to examiners in three ways, subject to the arrangements being confirmed with the Examinations and Assessments team:

i) Collection from examination room. Examiners or administrative colleagues can collect scripts from invigilators at the end of the examination. They should wait outside the room until the invigilators confirm scripts are ready. Scripts will need to be signed for and a valid University ID card will need to be shown. Note this is possible only for those scripts from the main room – separate arrangements are required for extra time, Computer suite and college sittings.

ii) Collection from Examination Schools. Examiners or administrative colleagues can collect scripts from the Examinations and Assessments team offices, after the examination is complete. Scripts from morning examinations can normally be collected after 4pm the same day; scripts from afternoon examinations can normally be collected after 11am the following morning. Scripts from extra time, Computer suite and College sittings will be included, unless a candidate has exceptional permission to delay their sitting substantially. Scripts will need to be signed for and a valid University ID card will need to be shown.

iii) Delivery. The Examinations and Assessments team can arrange for delivery of scripts direct to markers or to departments. Delivery information must be provided at least one week in advance of the exam/s taking place, ideally at the time of confirming the timetable if possible, and deliveries are only authorised to college or department addresses within central Oxford. Scripts from extra time, Computer
suite and college sittings will be included, unless a candidate has exceptional permission to delay their sitting substantially. Scripts are normally delivered within 24 hours of the completion of the examination. Scripts will need to be signed for on receipt.

Scripts from examinations sat at Ewert House can be collected immediately following the examination. Alternatively they will be returned to Examination Schools for delivery or to await collection; an additional 24 hours delay should be expected.

Examiners are recommended to deliver scripts in person to the second marker, or to the second marker’s college lodge or departmental office. Any query about the script delivery service should be discussed with the Head of Examinations and Assessments on 2-76911. If scripts are left with a departmental office or college lodge, the examiner should record the name of the person taking delivery and emphasise that the package contains scripts and should be held securely, preferably in a safe.

Scripts which exceptionally have to be mailed to examiners outside Oxford should be sent by Courier or by Special Delivery, and a certificate of despatch or posting obtained, unless permission has previously been given by the Proctors for some other form of delivery. Under no circumstances are scripts to be faxed. The Examinations and Assessments team will arrange for approved posting if requested.

Invigilators are alert to the possibility of scripts being deliberately removed from the examination room. Chairs may wish to consider if additional precautions are required in their own examinations, and the Head of Examinations and Assessments will be able to advise further about this. If requested, invigilators may follow a more rigorous checking-off procedure.

If scripts are found to be missing (or incomplete because not all answer-booklets appear to be present) at any stage of the examination process, the examiners should contact the Proctors immediately.
11. SCRIPTS, MARKING AND ADJUDICATION

11.1. Marking

Marking of scripts and adjudication on the merits of candidates will proceed in accordance with the principles in this section, section 9, section 13, and the particular conventions of the examination concerned (see 6.2 above).

Particular problems may arise as follows:

(i) **Illegible Scripts:** If a chair considers a script to be illegible, he or she 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 return any illegible scripts, by hand, to the candidate’s college asking for them to be typed. The college will either make arrangements to use the Examinations and Assessments team transcription service or else will contact the Proctors for permission to type the script(s) in house. Chairs will be informed about the arrangements. The cost of the typing and invigilation shall not be a charge on the University.

(ii) **Missing or incomplete scripts:** If an examiner or assessor finds that a 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 Examinations and Assessments team and other markers. The Proctors should be informed promptly if it is not found.

(iii) **Scripts with inappropriate content:** Where examiners feel that the content of a candidate’s script indicates that s/he may require professional help, the chair should contact the Proctors’ Office for advice.

The scripts and submitted work of candidates whose dyslexia or other Specific Learning Difficulty has been notified through the Proctors will each have a cover-sheet advising markers of this fact and indicating in what ways the condition may have affected candidates’ written work. The scripts are to be marked as normal, but the marks-sheet should show when a candidate has a SpLD, so that this information can be considered by examiners in adjudicating on the candidate’s performance.

11.2. Standardised expression of agreed final marks

Numerical marking, which must be expressed in whole numbers for agreed final marks, will be used for both undergraduate and graduate examinations. All examination candidates will be provided with a transcript showing their final agreed marks for the individual examination papers or other examined elements of their degree course, and (for undergraduate degrees) how these marks relate to the final degree classification.
Undergraduate courses

The University requires all examiners in Honour Moderations and second public examinations 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70 - 100</td>
<td>First Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>Upper Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 59</td>
<td>Lower Second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 49</td>
<td>Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 – 39</td>
<td>Pass in Finals/Honour Mods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 – 0</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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.).

As Moderations and Preliminary Examinations are not classified, an amended version of this scheme is required as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70 - 100</td>
<td>Distinction (where relevant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 – 69</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 – 0</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Postgraduate taught courses

Following extensive consultation with divisions/Continuing Education, Education Committee has concluded that, with appropriate explanation on any accompanying transcript, two models for the award of agreed final marks within the categories of distinction, pass and fail are acceptable. Agreed final marks must be expressed in numerical form.

(a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70 – 100</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 – 69</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 – 0</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70 – 100</td>
<td>Distinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 69</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59 – 0</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An overall award of distinction may be made to candidates who have shown excellence over the whole examination. Examination conventions should make clear the rules for the award 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 otherwise excellent candidates who have initially failed a minor assessment item (no more than 10%). Examination conventions should specify the element(s) that may be disregarded.

There is currently no provision for the award of a degree ‘with Merit’, other than the special provision for the First and Second BM.

11.3. Double-marking

It is University policy to use double marking to judge the performance of candidates in the Second Public Examination and all graduate level examinations, with the exception of papers with precise model solutions, or those given special permission by Education Committee to use alternative methods of marking (see below). 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 if such academic expertise is not otherwise obtainable within the University should an external examiner be asked to act in this capacity (see section 3 above).

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

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 must be marked by an examiner or assessor; and every script 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.

For papers without a model solution,

(a) There should be an explicit process in place to ensure that a student’s mark is not affected by relatively severe or lenient marking;

(b) The majority of courses in the University use independent double marking for this purpose;

(c) Alternative methods such as those used by Jurisprudence are permitted, if it can be demonstrated to Education Committee that they serve the same purpose.

Every script or dissertation 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 (perhaps – but not necessarily - the external examiner, see section 3 above) should act as arbiter in agreeing the appropriate mark.
Markers should generally not write on scripts 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 mark sheets provided for the purpose.

**Under the Data Protection Act, 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.**

### 11.4. 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, i.e. 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 (i.e. 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:

(i) Scaling should only be considered and undertaken after moderation of a paper has been completed;

(ii) 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;

(iii) 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;

(iv) Detailed information about why scaling was necessary and how it was applied should be included in the examiners’ report;

(v) All examiners and boards should seek expert advice on the construction and operation of algorithms, where appropriate;

(vi) 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 I: Consistency in examination conventions for further detail on examination conventions).

11.5. **Comment sheets**

Education Committee policy requires that comment sheets be used 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.

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.
Where 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. In cases where the external examiner is asked to certify the fairness of the approach used for the reconciliation of such discrepant marks, the comments provided must also describe the mechanism used by the internal examiners to reach an agreed final mark.

Section 11.13 below sets out the responsibilities of the chair of examiners in respect of the retention of the comment 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.

11.6. 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 – see Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 7, cl. 7.6, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-part7asse).

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. All examiners must be present at all Examination Board meetings unless prior permission has been obtained from the Proctors on the basis of exceptional circumstances – see 4.2 above.

11.7. Medical certificates and other special circumstances

Under Part 13 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, information about medical or other circumstances affecting a candidate’s performance may be submitted by the candidate via their college. It is the candidate’s responsibility to ensure that an application is made. For applications made before the final examiners’ meeting, the candidate’s college will send a completed application form (via the secure SharePoint site provided for this purpose) to the Examinations and Assessments team which will forward this to the chair, so long as the form is received by noon the day before the final examiners’ meeting.

If the candidate has missed any papers the chair should ensure that either of the following has been received from the Proctors:

- authorisation to consider the candidate for an estimated classification (see section 11.8); or
- notification that no such authorisation will be given.

Until one or other has been received, the candidate’s results should be marked ‘pending’; thereafter, the examiners should finalise the results accordingly.

The process for considering factors affecting performance should not be used to make complaints about the conduction of examinations, or other issues such as
teaching, supervision or accommodation. If any such complaints are received by examiners they should be referred to the Proctors for consideration (see section 14).

A subset of the board of examiners should meet to discuss all information received on factors affecting performance (if necessary, in smaller departments, this may need to be undertaken by the entire board). For courses where marks are released at multiple points throughout the academic year, and for multi-part examinations, it is permissible to hold more than one of these meetings. All applications relating to the same papers should be discussed at the same meeting.

The meeting should not discuss examination scripts or marks, but should only consider the factors affecting performance applications. At this meeting each candidate’s circumstances should be considered and banded on a 1-3 scale to indicate the seriousness of the impact of the circumstances on the candidate’s performance with 1 indicating minor impact, 2 indicating moderate impact, and 3 indicating very serious impact. Examiners can adapt the proposed 1-3 scale as they regard appropriate for their subject area. Candidates who have had alternative arrangements for their examinations may also submit an application for factors affecting performance where they consider the adjustments have not fully mitigated the impact of their disability/health condition. In these cases, candidates should clearly state in the application why the approved adjustments did not fully mitigate the impact. Examiners should consider all the evidence for this, and the banding should take into account the impact of the alternative arrangements.

Examiners should also determine whether all or a subset of papers have been affected. A formal note should be kept of these decisions. The banding information should be used at the final meeting of examiners to adjudicate on the merits of candidates. Annex C: Consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment provides further information on the courses of action open to examiners and the detailed procedures to follow.

Examiners should not give consideration to a candidate’s special circumstances if no application for factors affecting performance has been received. This includes giving further consideration to a candidate who has had alternative arrangements for an assessment if no factors affecting performance application relating to the insufficiency of the alternative arrangements has been made.

Information received by the Examinations and Assessments team after noon on the day before the final examiners’ meeting, and which cannot be sent to the chair of examiners in time for the meeting, will be sent to the Proctors. The Proctors will only forward medical or other information to the chair if one of the following criteria is met:

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

As the use of information about candidates’ special circumstances is increasingly the subject of query or complaint, boards are asked to keep a brief, formal note confirming that special circumstances information has been taken into account where an application has been received under Part 13, and indicating the outcome. Further guidance on reporting, including a template for decisions, is provided in Annex C: Consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment. Information from the template will be used to give candidates a brief
summary of the impact their application for factors affecting performance has had on their results.

Records relating to factors affecting performance decisions should be retained with material pertaining to the marking of the exam, and not with the exam scripts. The records should be kept in accordance with the policy set out in section 11.13.

11.8. Incomplete examinations

If a candidate does not complete an examination, under Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 13, cl. 13.5 (www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcouve-p13fapianexam), the Proctors can:

- Authorise examiners to examine the candidate at another place or time under such arrangements as they deem appropriate. Or, if the candidate has already submitted sufficient other work, to act as if he or she had completed the part of the University examination which he or she was unable to attend, and to award an estimated classification; or use the words 'declared to have deserved Honours' in the case of a classified degree if the examiners are unable to classify the candidate but none the less judge that the candidate would have obtained Honours if he or she had been able to complete the examination; or else fail the candidate.

- In the case of a pass/fail degree, the examiners must consider whether the candidate has submitted sufficient work of sufficient merit for them to judge whether it is appropriate to award a Pass.

Where a candidate has missed one or more papers in a First Public Examination, chairs will be instructed to examine the candidate during the Long Vacation, i.e. when they would normally provide re-sits if a candidate had failed.

11.9. 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, which should be referred directly to the Proctors.

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. Remote attendance at a viva voce for an undergraduate or postgraduate taught examination (e.g. via videoconferencing) is not permitted. If examiners are certain that they will not hold vivas at all, this can be communicated to candidates. 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.

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 11.12 concerning the Data Protection Act).
11.10. Sharing information between examiners

Marks should be transported between examiners and assessors and the chair or relevant administrative officer by hand, sent by Special Delivery, or transmitted via an authorised additional verification WebLearn site. They should not be sent electronically unless encrypted. Advice on the encryption and decryption of marks sheets may be obtained from IT Services. No electronic transmissions should be made without previously informing the Proctors. WebLearn additional verification is available to aid boards of examiners in sharing marks and submitting marks to the chair, and the chair should contact the Examinations Manager to discuss applying to set up a site and the practicalities of implementation.

Any exception to these rules must be agreed in advance by the Proctors, who will need to be convinced (taking technical advice if necessary) that it will cause no breach in security.

It is not good practice to use 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 Data Protection Act.

11.11. Transparency and confidentiality

What can be disclosed?

The University takes the view that all agreed marks awarded should be disclosed to students, because of the educational value of feedback on assessed work. Evidence of recent medical problems etc. should have been considered by this stage in the process (see Annex C: Consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment). Degree classification will continue to be a matter for boards in accordance with their examination conventions using the complete set of standardised marks.

What is confidential?

Subject to section 11.12 below, it is University policy that examiners’ comments, examination scripts and raw marks (i.e. 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. 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. Data Protection Act – Right of access to personal data

The Data Protection Act entitles an individual to make a subject access request in order to obtain a copy of any personal data held about them. Personal data is any information that relates to an identifiable individual, including information about their performance in an examination such as marks and examiners’ comments.

All subject access requests submitted to the University are processed centrally by the Information Compliance team in the Council Secretariat. Under no circumstances should examiners, assessors, or administrative staff respond to direct requests for disclosure of information relating to the examination. Those wishing to make such a request should be advised to contact the Information Compliance Team in the Council Secretariat at data.protection@admin.ox.ac.uk. Alternatively, they may submit their request via the online shop, which will forward it automatically to the Information Compliance Team: www.oxforduniversitystores.co.uk/browse/department.asp?compid=1&modid=1&deptid=211. A fee of £10 is payable.

The right of subject access under the Data Protection Act means that students may access information 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; and
• any other information relating to their performance, such as information about medical problems.

However, due to a specific provision in the Data Protection Act, 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.

It should be noted that when responding to a subject access request for exam-related information, the Information Compliance team redacts the names of examiners in order to preserve the anonymity of the examination process. For the same reason, the team will also transcribe any handwritten comments, although may need to ask individual examiners to do this where the handwriting is not legible.

11.13. 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.

The Data Protection Act requires that personal data should not be kept for longer than is necessary to meet the purpose for which it is being processed. In the light of this, the Proctors instruct the examiners, once the examination is complete and the final list produced, to do the following as regards retention of records:

**Hard copy records**

• Each examiner and assessor, including external examiners, should hand over to the chair of examiners all material in their possession pertaining to the marking of the exam. This includes mark sheets, mark books, and notes on individual written answers and on vivas. They must sign a declaration that they no longer have such material in their possession.

• The chair of examiners should retain these records, and records relating to the adjudication of candidates, including records of those scripts which were remarked or on which the external examiner’s advice was sought, and the outcome; all medical evidence including a note, which must be countersigned by external examiner(s), of any actions taken in reaching the final marks and degree results; the declarations of examiners. All this material must be deposited with the nominated administrative officer and retained for two years. Duplicates and confidential waste must be destroyed (this means shredded, not put intact in a bin).

• Appeals against final results are normally only possible within 3 months after the publication of results, although it is prudent to keep all records for two years. **Records should not be destroyed if an appeal to the Proctors is in progress.**

• If, during an examination itself or during classification of results, any automated processing or weighting of results takes place, the chair should be able to provide a formal statement that explains the logic behind any such processing. If an assessment itself is based partly on automated means (e.g. multiple choice tests) which form only a part of a larger assessment, the procedure for combining different sets of marks should be available.
• The above arrangements apply to each completed examination (including the previous parts of a multi-part FHS). In a multi-part examination, scripts and other submitted work, and notes on performance, must be retained (for consideration by the following year’s examiners) until all parts of the examination are complete.

• It remains the University’s policy that results (i.e. the final marks that have been agreed, scaled and moderated) should be made available to candidates through their colleges (and via the student record system) at the end of the examination process. As indicated in section 11.11 above, raw marks should not be disclosed to colleges or candidates.

Computer records

Items which it is necessary to retain in electronic form include only such data to which there would be no objection to a candidate’s having access, including his or her final class and agreed marks on individual papers. This data should be retained for two years after the final examiners’ meeting. These provisions have particular implications for chairs of examiners in Schools with multiple parts. In these cases, records should be retained for two years after the final examiners’ meeting for the final part.

Data from the examination may be kept in electronic form for subsequent purposes (e.g. evaluating proposed changes in examining procedures, such as changes in paper weightings) beyond the time limit mentioned above provided the information is depersonalised or does not contain items that should not be divulged (such as raw marks).


The nominated administrative officer should retain copies of all the agreed marks, and any notes relating to them, for two years after the final meeting. This is necessary in order to deal with examination queries and complaints, and to handle cases in which candidates carry forward their marks in the written papers to the following year, for example, when resubmitting only their dissertations.

Outgoing chairs should keep records for the assistance of future chairs on matters such as special problems encountered and arrangements made with the Head of Examinations and Assessments. The records should take the form of a chair’s book, which can be passed on each year. It is very important that chairs transmit to their successors any medical certificates and ongoing permissions (i.e. in relation to SpLD arrangements) for candidates likely to be resitting the examination, or any element of it. Reports are available via the SITS student record system of all approved alternative arrangements. It is preferable if these materials are deposited with a member of the Faculty/Departmental administrative staff who will arrange for onward transmission.

11.15. Security, deposit and retention of scripts/submissions

Scripts and other examination submissions in the possession of examiners and assessors must be locked away, particularly before they have been marked.

Faculties and departments are now permitted to retain scripts and submissions, rather than being required to store these in the Examination Schools, if they can provide suitable storage space. Scripts/submissions can still be stored in the Examination Schools script store if preferred, but will be destroyed six months after the publication of results.

Scripts and submissions sent to the Examination Schools should be packaged securely in boxes, clearly labelled with the name of the examination and the term and year, with the course code/paper numbers and in candidate number order. In the event of a
student intermitting, or submitting an appeal or complaint, the department will be required to retrieve and retain the candidates' work; therefore storage labelling and records should facilitate easy retrieval. Faculties and departments choosing to store scripts/submissions locally should follow similar procedures as appropriate.

In the case of multi-part examinations, scripts/submissions sent to the Examination Schools will be retained until six months after results are released for the final part of the examination. If scripts and submissions are being sent to the Examination Schools script store, the Head of Examinations and Assessments should be informed of such cases and the scripts must be clearly marked (e.g. ‘TO BE RETAINED FOR PART II’). Faculties and departments storing their own scripts/submissions for multi-part examinations in the same way.

Faculties and departments are now responsible for locating and storing all scripts and submissions for candidates who have (a) intermitted for a period of time having completed some summative assessment, or (b) made a complaint or appeal to the Proctors or who have received a completion of procedures letter following an application to Education Committee. The Proctors’ Office will now notify the relevant faculty or department on receipt of a complaint or appeal, requesting that all of the papers completed by the candidate in that academic year should be located and retained by the faculty/department. Similarly, officers in Education Policy Support will notify the relevant faculty/department if a student has received a completion of procedures letter following an application to Education Committee. Once the investigation of the complaint or appeal is complete, the Proctors’ Office will provide a date for destruction that is two years after the completion date of the investigation of the appeal or complaint or the predicted completion date of the student’s course, whichever is the longer.

Scripts retained as a result of this process must be stored within faculties/departments as there are no facilities at Examination Schools or the Proctors’ Office for long-term storage. Scripts must be stored securely and shredded when the date for destruction has passed. Full guidance on retaining and storing scripts is available from the Exams and Assessments website at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/aad/exams/services/#d.en.208937.

After the release of the results for the examination, copies of theses that are required to be deposited at the Bodleian Library should be delivered to the Head of Examinations and Assessments, who will record them and arrange delivery. Where a board requires a candidate to make minor corrections to a thesis before deposit at the Bodleian Library, the candidate should submit the revised version to Examinations and Assessments and not directly to the Bodleian Library. Where theses are deposited with another library (e.g. in the department), chairs should make the necessary arrangements.
12. RESULTS

12.1. Results lists

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 approved and signed off by the examiners (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 17, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p17publofresu). The ARO aims to publish results within two working days of receipt, but this can be delayed if there are problems with the electronic or hard-copy Results Sheets. As a result, chairs and examiners are strongly advised not to inform candidates that results will be issued at a certain date and time. They must not inform individuals of their results before the results have been issued.

Comprehensive guidance on how to complete and upload results lists can be found on the ARO Results Drop Box WebLearn site.

Chairs, or Examination Board administrators, will be provided with access to WebLearn at the start of the examination process for loading marks, and the ARO Manager will arrange access to the Examination Board dataviews in the student record system. These marks should be returned as whole numbers rather than decimal places using the 100-point scale as agreed by Education Committee. The completed marks record should be loaded into WebLearn. This information must also be certified on the Results Template which may be extracted from either a file or a spreadsheet by the signature of all the examiners who have acted together in the assessment of the candidates in the examination. The Deputy Director of Student Administration (Registry) will then arrange for the publication of these results in a form that will be determined by the Registrar (ibid., cl. 17.15, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p17publofresu).

It is the responsibility of chairs to check that all candidates are accounted for on the Results Template (file or spreadsheet) as completed at the examiners’ meeting, and that their results are correctly shown on the Results Template when it is signed.

No lists should be displayed on any website or notice board, since to do so would breach the Data Protection Act. The ARO will upload the approved individual assessment grades and year outcome from WebLearn that has been submitted with the certified Results Template. This data will then be available for viewing via the Examination Board dataviews in the student record system.

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

a) 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, the examiners must seek the permission of the PVC (Education) and the Proctors by completing the Change in Results Form. Where the change in results does not result in a change in the year/examination, or final award outcome, the Change in Results Form should be submitted to the ARO signed by the Chair.

b) A candidate has been accidentally omitted from the results list. In such instances the examiners must apply to the Proctors for permission to compile an additional Results List. This additional Results List should contain the candidates missing from the original Results List.

Candidates whose results are incomplete at the time of the final examiners’ meeting are usually recorded as an INCOMPLETE on the Results List. Candidates might be incomplete...
because they are under Proctorial investigation or were granted an extension. When the examiners are ready to examine the 'late results' they should meet as a full board unless the Proctors have granted permission for them to meet with reduced numbers or consult by 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 Proctorial permission to produce a further Results List. In the case of results delayed due to Proctorial investigation, or due to late or non-submission without prior approval from the Proctors, Proctorial permission is required to produce a further Results List.

Once results are released, all students will be informed by email that their results are available in student self-service.

In order to avoid inadvertent breaches of candidates' rights of confidentiality under the Data Protection Act, Student Administration will be unable to disclose results over the telephone, since staff have no means of confirming the identity of the caller.

12.2. Results spreadsheet/file sheets

The ARO will provide a Results Template to chairs and examination board administrators in good time for the examination board. These are distributed as late as possible to ensure they capture any last minute student changes (withdrawals, late entry). If student circumstances change after the Results Templates have been distributed, then departments need to request a new template from the ARO to accommodate these late changes.

12.3. 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. The secretary will arrange for payment to be made to the prize-winners.

12.4. Disclosure and publication of candidates’ marks

When the entire 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 two-part FHS, the agreed marks should be disclosed after the completion of the first part of the FHS.

The Senior Tutor (and his or her delegate) at a candidate’s college may access candidate results from the eVision dataviews. Colleges require this information since some grant-giving bodies request it and it is helpful in the preparation of academic references. Senior Tutors will make the marks available to subject tutors. Chairs of Examiners should no longer 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.

If the examiners calculate an overall mark (sometimes known as Average Mark) and/or a candidate ranking in class or cohort, the Chair of examiners may additionally submit this information in an upload Excel file to the ARO via the results upload WebLearn facility. It is intended that new eVision functionality will enable this additional information to be displayed in eVision dataviews to staff who have access to assessment information. Until such time as this eVision functionality becomes available, average mark and student ranking can be published in Tableau Examination Results reports which were created to assist examiners and departments with the distribution of examination results. These can be accessed at
12.5. Transcripts of results

The ARO will post an academic transcript to each student taking a Final Honour School or final postgraduate taught course examinations. The transcript will detail the overall award outcome and individual assessment results. Transcripts are available for all students who commenced their studies in Michaelmas term 2007 or after. Students commencing their studies before Michaelmas term 2007 should request transcript information from their college.

The transcript includes space for departments to include some explanatory text about the examination conventions and an exercise to collect and update this information is carried out each Trinity Term via the Divisional Offices. Chairs and academic support staff may access current transcript course text either via their Divisional Office, or via the transcript text functionality in eVision.

For further information on transcripts please refer to the Academic Transcripts section of the University’s website (www.ox.ac.uk/students/graduation/transcripts).
13. FEEDBACK AND RESULTS

13.1. Feedback at First Public Examination
Examiners of all First Public Examinations are required to provide candidates who fail the First Public Examination at their initial attempt with as detailed a breakdown of marks as is available for all the failed papers.

13.2. Feedback for taught graduate courses
Education Committee’s policy on feedback for taught graduate courses has three parts. Supervisory bodies are required to:

(a) ensure written feedback on at least one designated piece of formative assessment, e.g. essay or assignment, during the course of the first term. The purpose of this assessment would be to:
   - provide guidance to those for whom extended pieces of writing are unfamiliar forms of assessment;
   - indicate areas of strength and weakness in relation to the assessment task;
   - provide course members with an indication of the expectations and standards towards which they are working.

(b) 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 of the following ways:
   - Final marks: the board of examiners must meet in full (the external examiner may be included by teleconference) to confirm and release marks to students via the ARO. In circumstances where final marks cannot be confirmed, i.e. where the examiners consider that scaling may be required, the board may, exceptionally, apply for permission from the Proctors to release unconfirmed marks. Unconfirmed marks should be provided to students by the department or faculty accompanied by the wording: ‘The marks provided are provisional and may be reviewed and amended at the final meeting of the board of examiners.’
   - Written feedback: this may accompany final 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.

(c) 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.

4 ‘Unconfirmed’ results will not be released on Student Self Service.
The Proctors are aware of the pressure for ‘feedback’ on performance in examinations, particularly at postgraduate taught level where candidates may be thinking of going on to postgraduate research degrees. It is essential that any board of examiners wishing to provide such feedback beyond agreed marks pay careful attention to the requirements of this section and to the relevant parts of Section 11, and if in doubt about any aspect of current policy, consult the Proctors.

13.3. 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. For resits where only a subset of papers are taken, the chair may nominate a subset of the original examiners to assist him/her, provided that the Head of Examinations and Assessments is notified before the start of the examination (the Head of Examinations and Assessments will notify the Proctors). An external examiner, if appropriate, must be included in this subset.

All resit examinations must 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.

A candidate is not permitted to resit an assessment unit that has been passed unless the whole qualification or Examination (or Part of the Examination in the case of multi-part FHS) has been failed, i.e. it is not possible to resit an assessment unit in order to improve the mark.

13.4. Arrangements for resits for postgraduate taught courses

Students are entitled to one resit of any failed element of an examination. Regulations should indicate what arrangements will be in place for resits. For postgraduate taught courses Education Committee’s normal expectation is that any resits will be taken at the time the subject is examined the following year, unless the special regulations permit an alternative practice. However, departments are encouraged to consider alternative (earlier) re-sits 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 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 student passes the submission but fails the timed examination, they are only required to resit the failed assessment item not all the assessment items for the assessment unit.
14. QUERIES AND COMPLAINTS FROM CANDIDATES

14.1. The Proctors’ role

Any complaint or query about the content, conduct, or outcome of an examination, by a candidate or their tutor should be made by the Senior Tutor, who is invited but not required to comment on the issues, and should be addressed to the Proctors. This prevents chairs and individual examiners from being lobbied or pestered in any way, and in particular ensures that no unfair advantage is given to particular candidates or groups of candidates by reason of a Senior Tutor’s or tutor’s acquaintance with an examiner. Examiners must on no account 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.

If the Proctors consider the matter sufficiently serious to warrant investigation, they will usually start by getting in touch with the relevant chair of examiners (or, if the matter relates to some aspect of practical arrangements for the examination, the Head of Examinations and Assessments) to ask for comments.

Information explaining the details of the procedure is available to candidates on request (email proctors.office@proctors.ox.ac.uk).

14.2. Complaints about the setting of a question paper

If a problem emerges with a question paper, this should be dealt with either before, or as close as possible to, the start of an examination. Typing errors, for example, may result in a question from a candidate, which can be answered on the spot in the examination and the answer communicated to all candidates. If a complaint is made after the particular paper has ended but before the marking and classification are complete, and this complaint is upheld, the Proctors will seek to agree with the chair of examiners a means of fairly compensating all candidates before any results are disclosed. A similar complaint made after the results are published is very difficult to deal with in a satisfactory manner.

14.3. Queries about results

With regard to examination results, it should be noted that the Proctors will not consider complaints simply on the grounds that the result did not match expectations or that re-marking might give a candidate an improved result needed for acceptance for further study or employment. The Proctors have no power to consider appeals against the academic judgement of the examiners.

Most inquiries are a matter of double-checking that scripts have been fully assessed, marks properly recorded, and classifications correctly arrived at. On receipt of the chair’s response, the Proctor will evaluate the information and, if he or she considers that it answers the query, relay the details to the candidate(s) and college(s) concerned.

14.4. Complaints about the conduct of an examination

Where a matter appears to be more serious at the outset, or where the initial response provided does not satisfy, the Proctors will make a more detailed investigation into a complaint about the conduct of the examination. This may involve extensive correspondence with the chair (and, exceptionally, individual examiners or assessors) and meetings to explore and resolve particular issues. At the end of the process, a full written adjudication will be produced and the outcome of the investigation notified to those who have participated.
If the Proctors find that there has been a significant error in the conduct of an examination, they will indicate an appropriate course of action to the board of examiners or other responsible body. This may involve asking the examiners to reconvene, or consult by correspondence, in order to review their decision relating to a particular candidate or group of candidates. If this leads to a change in the candidate’s result, the examiners will be formally authorised by the PVC (Education) and Proctors to amend the Results Sheet.

The Proctors’ duty under Statute IX to ensure that examinations are conducted in accordance with the Statutes and Regulations does not empower them to challenge properly exercised academic judgement.

The Proctors’ adjudication of either a complaint or an academic appeal completes the University’s internal procedures. Complainants are also able to take cases to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) after all internal University procedures are exhausted.

Chairs are asked to ensure, if they leave Oxford for any significant period of time during the year following the conclusion of the examination, that their records relating to the examination remain available for consultation by the Proctors if required. This is particularly important for the first forty days, since the University has a legal obligation under the Data Protection Act to disclose certain information on application within this period. Chairs must not provide information directly to, or enter into correspondence with, individual candidates, tutors, or any other party acting on candidates’ behalf, even after results have been notified to colleges.
ANNEX A: MAJOR ADJUSTMENTS TO EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT

Summary

1. Equality legislation¹ requires that all universities must not discriminate against disabled students. Discrimination includes treating a disabled student less favourably and failing to make 'reasonable adjustments'. As a consequence, the University needs to have procedures for approving 'reasonable adjustments' to ensure that disabled students (or prospective students) are not placed at a 'substantial disadvantage' in comparison with their non-disabled peers. This obligation covers many aspects of higher education but this annex deals only with significant adjustments to course and assessment requirements which require approval on behalf of Education Committee, and the normal procedures to be followed in considering applications for such adjustments.

2. Other reasonable adjustments involve alternative arrangements for examinations which are approved by the Proctors (or by the Examinations and Assessments team under delegated authority from the Proctors), such as use of a computer or extra time for written examinations, and these are dealt with in sections 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5 above of this Policy and Guidance. Institutions are not required to make adjustments which would compromise the academic ‘competence standards’ of the courses in question (see Annex B: Competence standards for more information on competence standards). It should be noted that all universities are subject to the public sector equality duty², the effect of which is to require universities to promote and embed disability equality proactively across institutional policies, procedures and practice³.

Some key definitions

3. 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, e.g.

- Vision or hearing impairments;

¹ 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 have been incorporated into the Equality Act, together with a new, broader public sector equality duty.

² 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.

³ The EHRC has published guidance for providers of post-compulsory education which is available to download from www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/further-and-higher-education-providers-guidance/.
• 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 – activity⁴.

4. **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 – 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.

5. **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 ability⁵ 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’⁶. A competence standard must not itself be unlawfully

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⁴ Paterson v The Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (2007) UKEAT 0635/06.


discriminatory\textsuperscript{7}, therefore it must not be applied only to a disabled student and must be:

i. Genuinely relevant to the course;

ii. Applied equally to all students, whether with or without a disability; and

iii. A proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

6. The \textit{proportionate means} component requires that:

i. There is a pressing need that supports the standard's purpose;

ii. The application of the standard will achieve that aim; and

iii. There is no other way of achieving the aim that is less detrimental to disabled people.

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

\textit{Current procedures for evaluating the needs of disabled students}

7. In most cases, candidates with significant long-term health conditions should be evaluated under the provisions relating to disability. The Disability Advisory Service will provide recommendations for support arrangements and adjustments to study conditions. Medical professionals or other specialists may also be asked to provide specific guidance. Advice on reasonable adjustments to assessment should be sought from the Disability Advisory Service\textsuperscript{8} – and if necessary from the Proctors – well in advance of the examination. It should be noted that 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. Furthermore the duty to make reasonable adjustments continues to apply.

8. There is a wide range of adjustments that may be made to provide disabled students with an opportunity to meet the competence standards required on their course. Most commonly these involve alternative arrangements for examinations which are approved by the Proctors/the Examinations and Assessment team, on which further information can be found in sections 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5. These may involve adjustments to the conditions under which timed examinations are taken, including the provision of extra time and/or rest breaks; taking examinations in college or in a separate room; the use of word processing and other assistive technology; ergonomic furniture; and permission to take food, drink or medication into the examination room. Additionally, disabled students undertaking practicals or clinical assessments can be provided with an adapted laboratory environment, permitted the use of assistive technology, or allowed extra time to complete non-time critical elements of the task\textsuperscript{9}.

\textsuperscript{7} 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.

\textsuperscript{8} \url{www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/disability}

\textsuperscript{9} The latest edition of the General Medical Council’s guidance to medical schools ‘Gateways to the Professions. Advising medical schools: encouraging disabled students’ (GMC, 2010) contains
9. When a candidate’s disability-related needs cannot be met by such adjustments, it is necessary to consider more significant adjustments that may require dispensation from the regulations, and which require Education Committee approval. An example of an adjustment which would require Education Committee approval would be a course supervisory body devising an alternative assessment format which would test the same competence standards as the original assessment, e.g. a take-home paper. Further examples are provided in paragraph 17 below. The procedure for applying for such adjustments follows.

Applications to Education Committee for significant adjustments to course or assessment requirements

10. Reasonable adjustments which require significant changes to University examinations are approved by or on behalf of Education Committee. The committee has delegated authority from Council to approve the necessary dispensations from the regulations required to put such changes into effect. Education Committee seeks supporting material from a number of sources in reaching decisions on applications of this type. In such cases applications to the Chair of Education Committee need to be made as early as possible, preferably by email to edcapplications@admin.ox.ac.uk, or through internal post to Education Policy Support. Further general information on applying for dispensations from Education Committee is available from www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/casemanager/dispensations.

11. First, the application is routed through the student’s college and therefore the expectation is that it will have been discussed and considered with relevant college tutors before submission. An indication of the extent of a college’s support for an application is obviously helpful. Similarly it is expected that the college will have considered the nature and type of any adjustments which it wishes to ask the University to consider, and will set these out in the application. It will normally also have been in contact with the Disability Advisory Service. For postgraduate students, the application may be routed through the student’s department/faculty, in which case the student’s college will also be approached for a view.

12. Second, an application must be supported by appropriate medical or other specialist evidence to confirm the nature of the disability and its 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, in particular the need for and effectiveness of the requested adjustments.

13. Third, for most cases, a view of the application will also be sought from the Disability Advisory Service which has substantial experience of providing appropriate support for students with disabilities and identifying appropriate adjustments.

14. Fourth, the application will be sent to the relevant supervisory body for the course concerned and that body will be asked to provide a comment on the adjustments proposed. It is important that the relevant board of examiners are also consulted, particularly about any changes in the mode of assessment which they will be asked to oversee. In giving its view, the supervisory body should refer explicitly to a comprehensive Appendix with numerous examples of the reasonable adjustments made for medical students in UK medical schools. (www.gmc-uk.org/education/undergraduate/gateways_guidance.asp)
the material setting out the competence standards for the award, for example the course handbook.

15. In the light of the material collected from these sources, a decision is then taken on behalf of Education Committee and passed back to the supervisory body/examiners, to the Disability Advisory Service and to the college (which communicates the decision to the student). Clearly the aim of the process is to secure a way forward which is acceptable all round, although the final decision rests with Education Committee (normally the PVC (Education) acting on its behalf). If a student is not content with the decision that is reached, the normal route of appeal is 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\textsuperscript{10}.

16. A reasonable adjustment to a mode of assessment would normally be implemented by the Examinations and Assessment team as overseen by the Proctors. Once the decision has been made it is therefore also communicated to the Examinations and Assessment team and to the Proctors’ Office, for it to be implemented.

**Examples of adjustments which require approval on behalf of Education Committee**

17. An extensive range of adjustments is already made via the Proctors’ Office/the Examinations and Assessments team and details of these and the application process are set out in sections 8.3, 8.4 and 8.5 of this document. These include some of the most frequent adjustments allowed such as additional time, rest breaks, adaptations to an individual’s timetable, etc. The adjustments which require approval on behalf of Education Committee are more significant in character and usually require a dispensation from the existing regulations governing aspects of the student’s course. Examples might include any of the following:

- A student is awarded a **substantial** extension to the submission date of his or her thesis or dissertation which will take it beyond the current examination season (i.e. it may not be able to be examined by the current board of examiners).

- A student is allowed to extend the overall period of time within which a course is normally taken, i.e. to timetable the component elements of a Final Honour School across three rather than two years.

- A student is permitted to substitute an alternative method of assessment for one or more of the normal assessment items. This usually, though not universally, entails finding alternatives to unseen written examinations, e.g. extended essays, take-home papers, or an additional dissertation. Where this is not feasible, it may be possible to alter the timing or duration of the assessment, e.g. by splitting it over more than one session or allowing the candidate significantly longer to complete it.

- A student is exceptionally permitted to omit one or more papers from the normal assessment requirement on the basis that the examiners are

\textsuperscript{10} www.oiahe.org.uk
content that they will have sufficient material on which to reach a
classified outcome.

18. These four examples illustrate the exceptional nature of such adjustments, and
the care with which they need to be considered and put in place. It is also
important to understand that the requirement is to identify what would be fair and
reasonable for the student concerned in his or her 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 has to be considered on its merits. Fairness to other
candidates is ensured by taking very seriously the requirement not to
compromise the competence standards of the course. Therefore it is important
that an adjustment to a particular assessment method should not relax the
academic requirements to be assessed as a whole. However, for the type of
disabilities envisaged in this section, ‘levelling the playing field’ is unlikely to be a
straightforward process.

Marking and classification

19. Examiners are often concerned as to whether reasonable adjustments should
constitute the sole accommodation made to take account of a candidate’s
condition. Under Part 12 of the regulations for the conduct of University
examinations, a candidate with special examination needs ‘may apply to the
Proctors through the Senior Tutor of his or her college for special examination
arrangements relating to his or her condition’, and may also apply to the Head of
Examinations and Assessment through the Senior Tutor of his or her college for
the condition to be taken into account by the examiners as a special factor that
may affect his or her performance in examinations (Examination Regulations,
Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 12.2,
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p12cwsexamneed).

20. 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 evidence to the examiners – via the
Examinations and Assessments team – requesting them to take the candidate’s
circumstances into account.

21. It is accepted that examiners cannot assess undemonstrated performance and
that candidates should not receive double compensation. Nevertheless, when an
application for consideration of factors affecting performance is received,
examiners are asked to take a view as to whether the reasonable adjustments
are likely to have fully compensated for a candidate’s condition and allowed him
or her to demonstrate his or her ability.

22. Furthermore examiners are also asked to consider the possibility that an
examination adjustment may itself have adverse effects on a candidate’s
performance and that some compensation might be appropriate even where the
adjustment (e.g. extra time or rest breaks) has ostensibly compensated for the
effects of the disability. 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.

23. Parity with other candidates is maintained by the requirement that all candidates
must fulfil the assessment criteria of the course. Reasonable adjustments to the
mode of assessment or the conditions under which the assessment is taken are
designed not to compromise these academic standards. 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 (paragraph 4 above). Therefore, supervisory bodies are urged to clarify the competence standards of their courses in order to be better prepared for future applications for major adjustments to the mode of assessment. This will make it easier to determine the most appropriate assessment for a disabled candidate.

24. The board of examiners is asked to bear these factors in mind when attempting to determine the candidate’s proper class or result. Examiners may find the contextual evidence of especial use in cases where candidates have provided short weight answers or been placed close to a borderline.

25. See Annex C: Consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment for further guidance on the procedures to be followed in the consideration of medical and other evidence. Of particular importance is the necessity of keeping written records of the process of consideration and its outcome.

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11 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 SIGNIFICANT ADJUSTMENTS TO COURSE OR ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

Student obtains detailed evidence of impact of disability on study / examinations

College discusses application with student and Disability Advisory Service

College submits application to Chair of Education Committee on student’s behalf

Officers in Education Policy Support consult:
- Disability Advisory Service
- Course supervisory body
- Board of examiners

PVC (Education) takes a decision on behalf of Education Committee

The decision is communicated to the college, supervisory body/examiners, DAS, Proctors’ Office and Student Administration

Appeals are considered by two members of Education Committee

If still dissatisfied, a student may make a complaint to the OIA

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ANNEX B: 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’ 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.’ A competence standard must not itself be unlawfully discriminatory, therefore it must not be applied only to a disabled student and must be:

   i. Genuinely relevant to the course;

   ii. Applied equally to all students, whether with or without a disability; and

   iii. A proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim.

2. The proportionate means component requires that:

   i. There is a pressing need that supports the standard’s purpose;

   ii. The application of the standard will achieve that aim; and

   iii. There is no other way of achieving the aim that is less detrimental to disabled people.

3. 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.’

4. 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.

5. Not all competences or assessment criteria which students might be expected to fulfil on a particular course can necessarily be considered ‘competence

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3 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.

4 www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/understanding-the-interaction-of-competence-standards-and-reasonable-adjustments
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 reasonable adjustments. The competence standards are the knowledge and skills which the students are expected to acquire during the year abroad.\(^5\)

6. **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, available at [www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/understanding-the-interaction-of-competence-standards-and-reasonable-adjustments](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/understanding-the-interaction-of-competence-standards-and-reasonable-adjustments).

   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.

7. 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, e.g. 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.’\(^6\) 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. A timed, 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.

8. 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 checked in the relevant language as a reasonable adjustment, as this would compromise the competence standard.\(^7\)

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\(^7\) Example taken from [www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/understanding-the-interaction-of-competence-standards-and-reasonable-adjustments](http://www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/understanding-the-interaction-of-competence-standards-and-reasonable-adjustments)
9. **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, i.e., 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 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.

10. **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, e.g., a musical performance). Thus, requiring all candidates to complete a written exam within three hours would lead to indirect discrimination and discrimination arising from disability 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.

11. 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 A: Major adjustments to examinations and assessment). Therefore, supervisory bodies must clarify the competence standards of their courses. 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

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8 ‘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’.

9 ‘Discrimination arising from disability’ occurs where a person is treated less favourably as a result of his or her disability and the treatment cannot be justified.

10 The OIA has recommended that the University review its assessment criteria and processes with the aim of identifying appropriate competence standards for its courses.
this.\textsuperscript{11} Work is ongoing to provide guidance on including information on competence standards in the template for course handbooks.

\url{www.ecu.ac.uk/publications/understanding-the-interaction-of-competence-standards-and-reasonable-adjustments}
ANNEX C: CONSIDERATION OF MEDICAL AND OTHER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN EXAMINATION AND ASSESSMENT

Summary

The purpose of this annex is to set out the main lines of the University’s policy on consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment. It draws attention to the relevant sections of the Examination Regulations and then deals with the policy aspects of procedures and timing. It also makes cross-reference to the related annex which deals with major adjustments for disabled students (Annex A: Major adjustments to examinations and assessment).

Background

Chapter B6 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Assessment and the Recognition of Prior Learning states that institutions’ regulations, policies or processes should make explicit requirements relating to ‘the exercise of discretion in a consistent manner by individual boards/panels, for example in relation to extenuating/mitigating circumstances, and borderline cases’ and that ‘Examination boards/assessment panels are responsible for ensuring that assessment decisions are recorded accurately, supported by taking adequate minutes of any discussions which, in particular, demonstrate the factors taken into account when discretion is exercised or extenuating/mitigating circumstances considered’. In addition the University’s procedures relating to medical evidence have been a factor in a number of determinations from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA). In this context, the University’s governing regulations are reviewed regularly and the guidance provided by the Proctors is updated each year in the light of issues which emerge from each examination period.

Some key principles

(a) Regulations

1. There are two sets of applicable regulations in the current regulations for the conduct of University examinations.\(^{12}\)

2. **Part 12 Candidates with Special Examination Needs** relates to students with some form of disability, i.e. candidates ‘who have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. These regulations apply to all forms of disability which impair a candidate’s capacity to demonstrate their academic abilities in the same way as candidates without a disability. See section 8 and Annex A: Major adjustments to examinations and assessment for further guidance on disability.

3. There are two dimensions to the general rules in Part 12. A candidate with special examination needs ‘may apply to the Proctors through the Senior Tutor of his or her college for special examination arrangements relating to his or her condition’; and may also apply to the Head of Examinations and Assessment through the Senior Tutor of his or her college for the condition to be taken into account by the examiners as a special factor that may affect his or her performance in examinations (Examination Regulations, Regulations for the

\(^{12}\) Examination Regulations: Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Parts 12 and 13, [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoup-p12cwsexamneed](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoup-p12cwsexamneed) and [www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoup-p13fapianexam](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoup-p13fapianexam).

\(^{13}\) Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations; Part 12 Candidates with Special Examination Needs (Part 12.1 (1)).
Conduct of University Examinations, Part 12.2). The first provision relates to reasonable adjustments to the conditions under which the examination is taken, including extra time, rest breaks, sitting the exam in college, using a computer or amanuensis, etc. It does not apply to major adjustments to the mode of assessment which would require an application to Education Committee (see Annex A: Major adjustments to examinations and assessment). The second provision enables a candidate to provide medical evidence as to the likely impact of the disability on their examination performance, notwithstanding any reasonable adjustments already agreed. Where a candidate chooses to provide such supplementary evidence, it would be for the examiners to decide whether – in their view – the adjustment(s) in question should be regarded as providing a sufficient accommodation to the student’s disability or, alternatively, that additional consideration might need to be given. This will require a balanced assessment of the medical (or other) evidence and consultation with the external examiner(s).

4. In relation to the procedures used for marking and classification, in addition to the procedures given in (c) below, reference should also be made to the following points drawn from Education Committee’s guidance on disability (Annex A: Major adjustments to examinations and assessment). (The original numbering has been retained for clarity.)

21. It is accepted that examiners cannot assess undemonstrated performance and that candidates should not receive double compensation. Nevertheless, when an application for consideration of factors affecting performance is received, examiners are asked to take a view as to whether the reasonable adjustments are likely to have fully compensated for a candidate’s condition and allowed him or her to demonstrate his or her ability.

22. Furthermore examiners are also asked to consider the possibility that an examination adjustment may itself have adverse effects on a candidate’s performance and that some compensation might be appropriate even where the adjustment (e.g. extra time or rest breaks) has ostensibly compensated for the effects of the disability. 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.

23. Parity with other candidates is maintained by the requirement that all candidates must fulfil the assessment criteria of the course. Reasonable adjustments to the mode of assessment or the conditions under which the assessment is taken are designed not to compromise these academic standards. 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 (paragraph 4 above). Therefore, supervisory bodies are urged to clarify the competence standards of their courses in order to be better prepared for future applications for major adjustments to the mode of assessment. This will make it easier to determine the most appropriate assessment for a disabled candidate.

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14 Education Committee has the power to implement major adjustments to the mode of assessment as a dispensation from the special regulations for each course. Advice on ‘Applications concerning individual students (Dispensations etc.)’ is available to download from the Education Committee website at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/casemanagement/ and the Committee’s terms of reference may be viewed on the University’s Statutes and Regulations website (Council Regulations 15 of 2002).
5. **Part 13 Factors affecting performance in an examination** relates to unforeseen factors which may have an impact on a candidate’s performance\(^{15}\). When such factors come to the attention of the college, the Senior Tutor guides the candidate in making a submission (submitted by the college through the secure SharePoint site provided by the Examinations and Assessments team) that the factors are likely to have (or to have had) an effect on a candidate’s performance. It is the candidate’s responsibility to ensure that an application is made. The Examinations and Assessments team will forward this information to the chair of examiners. The medical or other certificate may be submitted before, during or after the examinations but will not be passed on automatically to the examiners if it is received after noon of the day before the final meeting of examiners.

6. These provisions cover:

   a) the effects of non-medical ‘urgent causes’ such as bereavement or the impact of a crime;

   b) sudden illness or accidental injury; and

   c) more long-standing conditions which may or may not have resulted in an alternative examination arrangement under Part 12.

7. Applications received after noon of the day before the final meeting of the examiners will be considered by the Proctors and only passed on to examiners if received within three months of the publication of results and if one of the following criteria is met:

   a) The candidate’s condition is such as to prevent them from making an earlier submission;

   b) The candidate’s condition is not known or diagnosed until after the final meeting of the examiners;

   c) There has been a procedural error (beyond the candidate’s control) that has prevented the candidate’s information from being submitted.

8. If the Proctors decide not to pass on information of this kind, the regulations require them to give their reasons for their decision. A candidate or his or her college may appeal against a decision of this kind under the regulations governing appeals (*ibid.*, Part 18.1).

9. Where a candidate takes examinations at a particular disadvantage, it is always preferable to alleviate the disadvantage by appropriate alternative arrangements, such as extra time, than to expect examiners to compensate in their adjudication on the merits of performance. If a candidate has been working below his or her best ability or approaches the examination in this condition, he or she will have to

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\(^{15}\) Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 13 Factors Affecting Performance in an Examination
choose whether to go ahead with the possibility of impaired performance or to withdraw until his or her situation improves. However, candidates who elect to take their examinations at a disadvantage do not thereby give up their right to be considered under the provisions relating to disability or ‘factors affecting performance’ (ibid., Part 13) as described in (b) Procedures.

(b) Procedures

10. Boards of examiners should adopt the following procedure for the consideration of medical and other special circumstances transmitted to them via the Examinations and Assessments team:

a) A subset of the board should meet to discuss the individual applications (if necessary, in smaller departments, this may need to be undertaken by the entire exam board) 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. When reaching this decision, examiners will need to take into consideration the severity and relevance of the circumstances, and the strength of the evidence. Examiners should bear in mind that a minor but acute illness, such as a stomach bug, can have a severe, time-limited impact. Examiners should 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. Where candidates have had alternative arrangements for their examinations, but have also submitted an application for factors affecting performance to be considered in relation to the alternative arrangements, the banding should take into account the strength of the evidence that these have not fully mitigated the impact of the disability or illness. Boards should not consider candidates who have had alternative arrangements in these procedures unless candidates have separately made an application for factors affecting performance to be considered. It is at the discretion of the chair of the board whether all attendees at the pre-board meeting should see all the evidence supplied with a factors affecting performance application. The meeting should not discuss examination scripts or marks, but should only consider the factors affecting performance applications;

b) For courses where marks are released at multiple points throughout the academic year, and for multi-part examinations, it is permissible to hold more than one of these banding meetings. All applications relating to the same papers should be discussed at the same meeting;

c) The banding information should be used at the final board of examiners meeting to adjudicate on the merits of candidates. It is likely that in most cases no further action will be required for applications in band 1;

d) If the candidate has missed any papers, the chair should ensure either that authorisation to consider the candidate for an estimated classification (see section 11.8 of the Policy and Guidance for Examiners and others involved in University Examinations) has been received from the Proctors, or that notification has been received that no such authorisation will be given;

e) A brief, formal record should be kept confirming (a) the fact that information about special circumstances has been considered by the examiners, (b) how that information has been considered, and (c) the outcome of the consideration with the reasons for the decisions reached.
This should be available as part of the minutes of the examiners’ proceedings. A pro forma to help boards record this information is available at the end of this annex.

11. This 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.

12. The importance of the final requirement in 10 (e) regarding keeping a record of the decision is already stressed in section 11.7 of the Policy and Guidance for Examiners and others involved in University Examinations and Education Committee underlines its importance in the context of an increasing number of appeals to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator where the use made of such material is critical.

13. When deciding what action to take as a result of being provided with information under Part 12 or Part 13, examiners may wish to consider the following:

   a) Disregarding a paper where there is clear evidence that it has been affected, and finalising results on the basis of the remaining material. 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;

   b) 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. Chairs of examiners should note that they can request the invigilator’s log for the examination in question from the Examinations and Assessments team as supporting evidence (e.g. the log will note if a candidate left the examination room due to illness);

   c) Giving particular consideration to candidates who are just below boundaries for classification or progression. This may include extending the threshold usually used for consideration of boundary cases, or reducing the requirements for progression or for classification in the higher band. However, if the marks for a paper have been disregarded, finalised on the basis of the number of questions actually completed, or otherwise adjusted in compensation for the circumstances, the candidate concerned should not also have the boundary threshold extended or requirements for progression or classification reduced, as this would mean that they would receive double compensation;

   d) With regards to individual marks, examiners may decide to make no change to the mark, adjust the mark in compensation for the circumstances, or report ‘no result expected’ depending on individual circumstances and provided there is consistency in approach for all applications considered by the board and double compensation is not
applied for any student. Raising a mark may be appropriate where a student must reach a certain threshold in order to progress e.g. 40 at Prelims. Alternatively, the option to report ‘no result expected’ may be appropriate if the mark is not to be adjusted but threshold requirements have been extended or reduced, and it is not considered appropriate for the mark to appear on the student’s transcript;

e) For early parts of multi-part exams, and exams which release final marks throughout the course, the information provided under Part 12 or Part 13 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. This should not preclude examiners for the early parts from also considering applications in order to moderate candidates’ marks if wished at each stage, or to determine eligibility for progression.

14. Particularly in cases received after results have been released, examiners will need to consider specifically whether, but for the illness or other urgent cause, the candidate would have achieved a higher classification. Examiners are not required to take the actions suggested at paragraph 13 above, but are always expected to consider very carefully the factors that affected the candidate’s performance on the relevant examination dates, and to determine whether those factors are likely to have affected the overall classification to the extent that it should be amended in all the circumstances.

15. Colleges should remind candidates that their supporting evidence (e.g. a medical certificate) needs to provide explicit detail about the way(s) in which their condition is likely to affect their examination performance, e.g. fatigue, poor concentration, panic attacks, etc. Colleges should provide a copy of the notification of any approved adjustments, i.e. extra time, rest breaks, not taking exams in the morning, an amanuensis, etc. and the candidate should explain why the adjustments that have been made do not fully compensate for the effects of the illness or disability.

16. A University medical certificate is available for use in all University procedures requiring medical evidence, including as supporting evidence for factors affecting performance. The template is available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/resources/medicalcerts, and college doctors will be provided with an electronic version of the certificate which is compatible with their information management systems, and which can be pre-populated with both doctors’ and student patients’ details. A completed copy of the medical certificate template should accompany applications for factors affecting performance. The template asks for specific information from medical practitioners and should aid University and college staff by providing the information required in a standard format. ‘Guidance for medical practitioners on the use of medical certificates’ has been produced, and is also available at www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/resources/medicalcerts. While aimed at medical practitioners, this may also be helpful to University and college staff dealing with medical certificates, and to examiners.

17. From 2015-16, the University (including the Proctors’ Office and Student Administration) will accept medical certificates supplied electronically (which may include a scanned version of a signed, hard copy), where the receiving officer is satisfied that the e-mail address from which the certificate is sent is a genuine UK
NHS medical practitioner’s or practice / hospital account (e.g. doctor.name@trust.nhs.uk or equivalent).

18. The process for considering factors affecting performance 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 14 of the Policy and Guidance for Examiners and others involved in University Examinations).

(c) **Timing**

**Applications under Part 12 Candidates with Special Examination Needs**

19. The applicable regulations operate according to different timescales. As indicated in paragraph 3 above, it will be for a candidate - through his or her college and in the light of the reasonable adjustments already approved - to ask the Examinations and Assessments team to pass on supplementary medical or other evidence to the examiners (using the Factors affecting performance application form available to colleges via the secure SharePoint site). The candidate should make any such request to the Examinations and Assessments team at the earliest possible opportunity.

**Applications under Part 13 Factors Affecting Performance in an examination**

20. In relation to Part 13, the unforeseen nature of the factors involved makes it more likely that the window of opportunity available for (i) a student to liaise with his or her college and obtain a medical certificate, (ii) the college to submit the material to the Head of Examinations and Assessments via the secure SharePoint site provided for this purpose, and (iii) the Head of Examinations and Assessments to pass this on to the examiners will be restricted. Applications can be made before, during or after the examination, and applications received by noon of the day before the final exam board meeting will be automatically passed to the examiners. If received after this, the Proctors will consider such applications to decide whether they should be passed to the examiners under the criteria below.

21. The Proctors will accept submissions made after noon of the day before the final meeting of the board of examiners if received within three months of the release of results and only if one of the following criteria is met:

a. The candidate’s condition is such as to prevent them from making an earlier submission;

b. The candidate’s condition is not known or diagnosed until after the final meeting of the examiners;

c. There has been a procedural error that has prevented the candidate’s information from being submitted.

Every effort should be made to ensure that medical certificates or other documentation are passed on as soon as possible.

22. The point at which examiners consider the possible impact of a medical or other factor on the performance of a candidate has been complicated by the introduction of multi-part examinations. Practice differs somewhat between subject areas. A number of boards of examiners prefer to consider medical or
other factors at the conclusion of the final part of a multi-part examination when their impact on the final degree classification can be gauged more accurately. Others make use of medical evidence at each stage in order to moderate candidates' marks. Education Committee does not wish to lay down policy on this point except to stipulate that all interim marks should be final rather than raw marks, scaled if necessary, and released to candidates in order to provide feedback on performance. In some circumstances it may be necessary to consider medical evidence at an intermediate point, e.g. when determining eligibility for progression. If a candidate’s circumstances are considered more than once (e.g. at an interim meeting and at the final meeting), this should be recorded, with the decisions made at the different stages made clear. The Committee would also reiterate its general policy, i.e. that the examiners’ preferred approach should be set out in the published examination conventions which should be clearly communicated to candidates, and should have the endorsement of the external examiners. A confidential record of previously submitted medical evidence will need to be kept, including any action taken, e.g. on a password-protected spreadsheet, for use in the final classification meeting for multi-part examinations.\(^\text{16}\)

**Competence standards and reasonable adjustments**

23. When considering the impact of a disability upon a candidate’s assessment, it is appropriate to bear in mind the relevant equality law. Paragraphs 3 to 6 of Annex A: Major adjustments to examinations and assessment provide guidance on these key concepts. Universities are obliged under the Equality Act 2010 (and its predecessor the Disability Discrimination Act (1995, amended 2001, 2005)) to provide reasonable adjustments for disabled students. 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 B: Competence standards for further details).

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\(^{16}\) Under the terms of the Data Protection Act, sensitive personal information must be kept securely and accessed only on a 'need-to-know' basis. Adequate security measures must be observed, e.g. 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 www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/dp/policy.shtml).
Report on an application for consideration of factors affecting performance

This report may be used to record actions taken for each candidate for whom the board of examiners has received an application for consideration of factors affecting performance under Part 12 or 13 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations ([www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcofunivexam](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcofunivexam)). A separate report should be completed for each candidate. Guidance for examiners on how to deal with such applications is available in Annex C: Consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment of the Policy and Guidance for Examiners and others involved in University Examinations ([www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgexaminers](http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgexaminers)).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate Number:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Section 1: Evaluation of seriousness of circumstances - to be completed at pre-board meeting**

Examiners should take into consideration the severity and relevance of the circumstances, and the strength of the evidence.

In the view of the examiners, how serious is the impact of the factors affecting performance given in the application likely to have been?

- [ ] 1 = minor impact
- [ ] 2 = moderate impact
- [ ] 3 = serious impact

Have some or all papers been affected?

- [ ] All papers
- [ ] Subset of papers

If a subset of papers, specify which. (Note: It is possible for circumstances to have different levels of impact on different papers.)

Comments

Section completed by

Date
Section 2: Evaluation of impact of circumstances and report of action taken - to be completed at results confirmation meeting

Examiners should consider specifically whether, but for the illness or other urgent cause, the candidate would have achieved a higher classification. Examiners are not required to take the actions suggested in Annex C, paragraph 13, of the Policy and Guidance for examiners and others involved in University Examinations, but are always expected to consider very carefully the factors that affected the candidate’s performance on the relevant examination dates, and to determine whether those factors are likely to have affected the overall classification to the extent that it should be amended in all the circumstances.

Have the examiners considered the candidate’s performance in the light of the material provided in the application for consideration of factors affecting performance?

How have the factors been considered?

Summary of action taken (the following are examples of some of the actions that might be taken. Boards may decide to do one, some, or none of these actions.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper(s) disregarded</th>
<th>☐ Specify paper(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark for paper finalised on basis of work completed not work required</td>
<td>☐ Specify paper(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classification/final outcome requirements reviewed</td>
<td>☐ Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other action (Please specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Does the application need to be passed to the final results/classification meeting? ☐

Recommendation to future examiners

Reasons for action (if no action taken, please record this and state reason.)

Section completed by

Date
ANNEX D: RATIONALE FOR FINAL HONOUR SCHOOLS WITHOUT A SECOND YEAR EXAMINATION

- The two-year Final Honour School allows time for a coherent programme of study that can more effectively promote students’ sustained academic development.

- The separation of teaching and examining gives more freedom to tutors to explore the subject with students.

- Students are obliged to carry forward skills and link together different strands of the subject; they are discouraged from ‘modularising’ their knowledge, skills and thought.

- Revision for finals becomes an important integrative part of the learning experience.

- Working for a single set of finals requires students to develop their ability to plan ahead, to manage time, and to prioritise their activities.

- One set of examinations after a two-year course may subject students to less pressure overall than annual examinations.

- The early parts of some FHS courses focus on helping students to acquire fundamental skills, and these may well merit early formative assessment; but summative assessment is best delayed to the end of a course by which time students will have gained an appropriate body of knowledge and understanding to demonstrate the use of their skills to best advantage.

- The assessment for the degree takes place only when the students are in a position to demonstrate their ability at the most mature stage of their understanding of the subject.
ANNEX E: GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE TO ASSESSMENT DESIGN

Assessment practices should:

- Promote the academic coherence of planned programmes of study. In designing courses it should be borne in mind that the mode of assessment, and the range of subject knowledge assessed, have a significant impact on students’ learning and therefore their understanding of their subject.

- Encourage students to develop higher order intellectual skills as they progress through their programme of study. Assessment practices should therefore focus on synthesis, critical evaluation and the application of knowledge to unfamiliar problems, and should avoid reliance on testing of factual recall.

- Promote the integration of different strands and topics within the subject of study. The process of revision for formal public examination encourages students to integrate separate elements of knowledge and promotes a deeper understanding of issues integral to the discipline. These benefits may, however, be lost if students are subject to excessive assessment or assessment focussed on factual recall.

- Enable students to demonstrate their ability at the most mature stage of their understanding of the subject.

- Test students’ ability to meet multiple academic demands, manage their time and prioritise their activities.

- Allow tutors and students freedom to explore the subject and take intellectual risks free of excessive pressure of assessment.

The Oxford Learning Institute is able to provide advice on course design and development, including assessment.
ANNEX F: FORM OF REPORT ON EXAMINATIONS

[In compiling their reports, examiners are asked to have regard to the Policy and Guidance for Examiners and others involved in University Examinations, and any applicable divisional/subject guidance. All parts of this report, with the exception of Section E of Part II, should be shared as a matter of course with joint consultative committees (or equivalents) and made available to students.]

[EXAMINATION TITLE AND DETAILS HERE]

Part I

A. STATISTICS [In each case please give the figures for the preceding two years in brackets.] [Statistical data should not be provided for cohorts comprising five or fewer students.]

(1) Numbers and percentages in each class/category

(a) Classified examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.I</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.II</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
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<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Unclassified Examinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distinction</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>( )</td>
<td>( )</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(2) If vivas are used:

Please include numerical detail of any vivas which were held, with an indication of the effect of any vivas on classes or results.

(3) Marking of scripts

Please give details of scripts which are not double-marked.

Please state whether qualitative checks were used where scaling has been employed.

B. NEW EXAMINING METHODS AND PROCEDURES

[Please state here any new methods and procedures operated for the first time in the current academic year with any comment on their operation in the examination and on their effectiveness in measuring the achievement of the stated course objectives.]

C. Please list any changes in examining methods, procedures and examination conventions which the examiners would wish the faculty/department and the divisional board to consider.

D. Please describe how candidates are made aware of the examination conventions to be followed by the examiners (Please attach to the report a copy of the examination conventions and any other relevant documentation [including the relevant standing orders – see Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 4, cl. 4-1-4.2, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/2016-17/rftcoue-p4enomiandvac]).

Part II

[i.e. the remainder of the report containing discussion of individual papers etc.]

Examiners are asked to ensure that any comments that they do not wish to have transmitted to students are indicated clearly and are kept within the separate Section E of this report. The report should include the following sections:

A. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE EXAMINATION

[excluding comments on identifiable individuals and other material which would usually be treated as reserved business. This section should include any matters which the examiners wish to draw to the particular attention of the responsible body, including any comment on statistical trends as shown in section A. It is especially helpful to have a comment on the overall standard of performance in the examination, including any trends in results or in relation to particular areas of the curriculum, and on any developments or changes to the existing course which might have been suggested by the examination process.]

B. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES AND BREAKDOWN OF THE RESULTS BY GENDER

[Chairs of examiners should include in the reports of their boards a commentary on any general issues relating to questions of equality and diversity, and of special educational needs (comments which might identify individual candidates should be confined to section E). A breakdown of the results by gender for both the current year, and at least the previous 3 years should always be supplied, so that it is possible to track systematically gender differences in examination performance. In small cohorts this breakdown by gender may be omitted to maintain confidentiality. This section of the
report should also include comments on the effect of different methods of assessment (e.g. problem questions, extended essays, essay papers) on any observed differences.]

C. **DETAILED NUMBERS ON CANDIDATES’ PERFORMANCE IN EACH PART OF THE EXAMINATION**

[This section should include the numbers taking any optional papers. Where appropriate, and where the information is likely to be useful, it should also include the number of attempts and a breakdown of the marks on each individual question. This will help towards a judgement about whether candidates are achieving a balanced coverage of the syllabus.]

D. **COMMENTS ON PAPERS AND INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS**

[This part (which is likely to be the longest part of the report) should be physically separate. Together with the preceding sections, it will be scrutinised by teaching committees and examination committees, and made available to Joint Consultative Committees with Undergraduates and to college and departmental libraries. It must not therefore contain any material which would usually be treated as reserved business.]

E. **COMMENTS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF IDENTIFIABLE INDIVIDUALS AND OTHER MATERIAL WHICH WOULD USUALLY BE TREATED AS RESERVED BUSINESS**

[This part must be physically separate, and must be detached from the version of the report sent to JCCs and to college and departmental libraries. Include in this section the total number of applications for consideration of factors affecting performance received and the number of candidates for whom the application had a material impact on their results and/or classification.]

F. **NAMES OF MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF EXAMINERS**
ANNEX G: THE ROLE OF FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS IN PREVENTING AND DEALING WITH PLAGIARISM

Education Committee has agreed a strategy for preventing and dealing with plagiarism on the part of students. This document outlines a key element of that strategy which is the role of faculties and departments in educating students in good academic practice, and raising their awareness of plagiarism. Their responsibilities in this respect are set out below.

GUIDANCE ON PREVENTION

Recognising the need for a set of University resources as part of a prevention strategy, Education Committee has produced and approved an extensive set of web pages, including new video resources on academic skills such as note-taking and time management. These can be found via www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills.

Education Committee is clear that all resources of this sort need to be used as part of a co-ordinated strategy to educate students. It therefore asks divisions, faculties and departments to ensure that:

Course handbooks (and websites) include the following, as set out in the template for handbooks¹:

- The University definition of plagiarism given below and a link to the Oxford Students Website guidance on plagiarism (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism)

[Plagiarism is presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own, with or without their consent, by incorporating it into your work without full acknowledgement. All published and unpublished material, whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form, is covered under this definition. Plagiarism may be intentional or reckless, or unintentional. Under the regulations for examinations, intentional or reckless plagiarism is a disciplinary offence.]

- Appropriate subject-specific guidance on plagiarism, including a range of relevant examples;

- Specific guidance on academic good practice and topics such as time management, note-taking, referencing, research and library skills and information literacy and a link to the Oxford Students skills webpage (www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills);

- a style guide to inform students of good referencing practice.

In addition, faculty/department induction sessions should – in Education Committee’s view – always incorporate separate sessions on good academic practice and the avoidance of plagiarism, which should include advice on note-taking, referencing practice and study skills. They should also emphasise how different university learning methods are from those employed at school. It should be made clear to students when it is and is not appropriate to re-use or draw closely on work already submitted for assessment. Further sessions on plagiarism and academic practice should be organised as students prepare to undertake projects and dissertations. The University has invested in a new online course (weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/skills/plag) and Education Committee has endorsed its use as part of faculty/department induction sessions. Online learning works most effectively when it is reinforced with face-to-face teaching. Faculties

¹ Included in Education Committee’s ‘Policy and Guidance on Course Information’ www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pandgoncourseinformation
and departments are strongly advised to direct their students to complete the course within the context of their academic induction.

Faculty/departmental guidance should also consider the particular needs of students who are non-native speakers of English.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH CASES OF POOR ACADEMIC PRACTICE AND PLAGIARISM IN TAUGHT DEGREE EXAMINATIONS: GUIDANCE FOR CHAIRS OF EXAMINERS

Introduction

Procedures have been developed for dealing with the full range of situations in which examiners are presented with submitted work for taught degrees that gives rise to concerns about the standard of scholarly referencing and attribution. These will range from students using the wrong type of referencing style, to knowingly trying to pass off the work of others as their own. The procedures aim to deal with this wide range proportionately and without undue delay. Boards of Examiners have a clearly defined role that is strictly academic in nature. The Proctors will take forward investigation for disciplinary action for plagiarism only when cases are referred to them by Chairs of Examiners, and only then when they are satisfied that such action is warranted.

This guidance does not cover cases of poor academic practice and plagiarism in research degrees, as research degree students are advanced students for whom different procedures are appropriate. Cases of suspected plagiarism in research degrees should continue to be referred to the Proctors.

Level 1: procedures for Examination Boards

If a marker, or a Turnitin report generated in the course of examination procedures, raises concerns about the proper attribution of a passage or piece of submitted work, the matter will be reported to the Chair of Examiners. The Chair will compile and retain any evidence and decide whether or not the case is one which may be dealt with by the Board (poor academic practice) or whether it is one that requires reference to the Proctors for investigation and possible disciplinary action. The Chair may consult the Proctors in cases of doubt.

The following step-by-step guidance is provided in order to assist the Chair with this decision.

Step 1

If the concern has been identified by a high Turnitin score, follow the separate guidance on interpreting Turnitin reports (Annex L) to establish the report’s accuracy.

If the concern has been identified by a marker, examine the source the marker has referred to; or in the case of suspected collusion or copying between students, examine all pieces of work giving rise to this concern.

Step 2

Consider the characteristics of the passages which have given rise to concerns.

Characteristics of cases to be dealt with as poor academic practice
In all cases dealt with wholly by the Examination Board the extent of the material under review must be a relatively small proportion of the whole. Small will be in the context of the length of the work but as a guide it will not exceed 10%.

If the case is then best described by one or more of the criteria below, on balance this is likely to indicate a case of poor academic practice and can be dealt with by the Examination Board.

- The material is widely available factual information or technical description that could not be paraphrased easily.
- The passage(s) draws on a variety of sources, either verbatim or derivative, in patchwork fashion. This is likely to indicate poor English/poor understanding rather than an attempt to deceive.
- Some attempt has been made to provide references, however incomplete (e.g. footnotes but no quotation marks, Harvard-style references at the end of a paragraph, inclusion in bibliography)
- The passage is ‘grey literature’ i.e. a web source with no clear owner
- The student is not known to have previously received a marks deduction for poor academic practice or been referred to the Proctors for suspected plagiarism. (This will only be relevant for Honour Schools examined in Parts, or master’s courses with multiple submission deadlines.)

Thresholds for reference to the Proctors

If the passage(s) giving rise to concern meets any of the criteria below, this is likely to indicate that referral to the Proctors is warranted.

- The extent of the material under review is a substantial proportion of the whole.
- The material contains passages of analysis or research data that is clearly the intellectual property of the original author.
- The passage(s) exhibits heavy reliance on one source which may indicate plagiarism of ideas/arguments.
- There is evidence that the student has copied the development of an argument (which may not be verbatim quotation – it could involve paraphrasing a line of argument or sequence of points).
- There is evidence of copying or collusion between students.
- The student has previously received a marks deduction for poor academic practice or has been referred to the Proctors for suspected plagiarism in the same or earlier programme of study.
- The submission clearly infringes rules on resubmitting material (autoplagiarism) for examination.

Step 3

Where the Chair finds that the matter can be dealt with by the Board, assessors will mark the work on its academic merits. The Board will then deduct marks for derivative or poorly referenced work according to a pre-determined scale set out in the marking conventions. Boards are free to operate marks deductions of between 1 and 10% (maximum) of the marks available for that particular piece of work. In practice, it will often be difficult to operate very fine-grained distinctions and it is acceptable for examination boards to exercise their judgement within a small range of ‘bands’ e.g. on a 100 point
scale a Board might judge cases to fall in one of three bands for which 3, 6, or 10 marks are deducted. Where the consequence of the marks deduction would result in failure of the assessment and of the programme (i.e. no resit opportunity) the case must be referred to the Proctors.

Where the Chair finds that the matter should be dealt with by the Proctors, the Chair should follow the steps outlined in Level 2 below.

**Step 4**

For their academic development, students should be informed that marks have been deducted for poor academic practice if they have further examinations to take during their course (for example if it is a preliminary examination, a part of a FHS examination before the final year, the qualifying examination for MPhil, or early examinations for other master’s courses), and an explanation should be given of where and how in their work this was evidenced. This feedback should be provided via the Chair of Examiners to the Senior Tutor in the case of undergraduates, or the Course Director in the case of graduates. Students should also be reminded of the disciplinary regulations concerning plagiarism.

**Level 2: procedures for the Academic Conduct Panel**

Examination Boards will refer cases to the Proctors’ Office if the Chair has made a decision that a case exceeds the criteria for dealing with Level 1.

**Step 1**

The Chair should first summarise the case for the Proctors indicating the relevant sources, extent, and seriousness of the plagiarism. A report printout from Turnitin is insufficient on its own and will be returned to the Chair for analysis and summary. In cases of students suspected of colluding or copying from each other, the Chair should examine the work of both the students involved, so that the nature of the apparent collusion can be established. All materials should be securely submitted to the Proctors’ Office. Support will be provided by a caseworker in the Proctors’ Office who will ensure that all relevant materials are collated and presented.

**Step 2**

The case will be given initial consideration by one of the Proctors who will determine whether it is a case that should be referred back to the examiners to deal with at Level 1 (in cases where the Chair has asked for advice), a suitable case for the Academic Conduct Panel, or one that is so serious that it should be directed to the SDP. Cases where it is likely that the outcome would result in failure of the whole degree will always be referred to the SDP.

**Step 3**

If it is decided that the case should proceed to the Academic Conduct Panel, the student’s consent will be sought, offering the alternative of referral to the SDP. The Proctors’ Office will as soon as possible notify the student of the referral to the Panel, except when the student is currently undertaking examination. In such cases, steps will normally be taken to delay notification to the student until a time that will not interfere with ongoing exams.

**Step 4**

An interview with the student will be conducted between the Proctor and the student with a note-taker as part of the preparation for the Panel meeting; this may be by telephone, email questions, or other means of telecommunication. If, during the interview, the student admits a breach of the regulations, the Proctor may offer the student the option...
of the matter being concluded without further meetings. The Proctor will arrange for the Panel to agree a penalty by email correspondence (the Panel may not impose a penalty which is more severe than the Penalty recommended by the Proctor, and the student will have the right of appeal as set out under Appeal process below). Otherwise, paperwork for the Panel, including a note of the interview, will be provided to the student who will be given a minimum of three clear days to submit any further information for inclusion.

**Step 5**

The Proctors will convene a meeting of the Academic Conduct Panel. The ACP will consist of three people: one of the Proctors; a person who has previously served as Proctor (preferably from the most recent Proctorial team for continuity) or as a member of the SDP; and a member with relevant subject expertise (but not a member of the Examination Board). The Panel will be convened as necessary to deal with plagiarism cases referred to it. The Panel will consider cases within one month of referral by the Examination Board.

The student, supported by a friend or a Senior Member, will be invited to attend the meeting, but the Panel may go ahead in the student's absence. The Panel may require the student to attend, or be available by telecommunication.

The Panel will have a range of outcomes available to it:

- Finding that plagiarism has not occurred
- Directing that the student has support and training
- Deduction of marks for the piece of work: examiners will conclude examination
- Submission awarded 0% - resubmission required in order to conclude examination but mark not capped
- Submission awarded 0% - resubmission required in order to conclude examination and mark capped
- Serious Academic Misconduct - Referral to the Student Disciplinary Panel

The Panel cannot give a penalty that would result in the student failing the whole degree or other award-bearing course.

**Appeal process**

The student will be able to appeal a decision of the Academic Conduct Panel by sending a written appeal within fourteen days of receiving the Panel's written decision. Two members of the Academic Conduct Panel with no previous connection to the case will consider the appeal, and this will normally be a paper-based exercise.

The student will not be able to appeal a referral to the Student Disciplinary Panel but will, in such cases, have the right to apply for permission to appeal to the Student Appeal Panel following the outcome of the Student Disciplinary Panel.

**Level 3: Student Disciplinary Panel**

The Student Disciplinary Panel will deal with the most serious cases of plagiarism, and those referred to it by the Proctors or the Academic Conduct Panel because the likely outcome would be failure of the whole degree.

The procedures and regulations set out in Statutes and Regulations apply www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/352-051a.shtml#Toc28142346
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/234-062.shtml.

**Thresholds**
In addition to those cases referred to the Student Disciplinary Panel by the Academic Conduct Panel as described above, the Proctors may refer cases to the Student Disciplinary Panel directly after receipt from the examiners and after their investigation, but will only do so in what appear to be very serious cases. This is likely to include cases of apparent deliberate deception such as purchase of submissions from an essay mill or ghostwriting service, students with a history of plagiarism, or very extensive plagiarism.

Outcomes

The Panel will have a range of outcomes available to it including:

- Submission awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-submit i.e. failure of programme
- Award classification reduced
- Failed award
- Expelled from institution and failed award
- Removal of a degree (in cases of former students)
- Additionally, any of the outcomes available at Level 2
EDUCATION COMMITTEE’S POLICY ON THE APPOINTMENT OF POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AS ASSESSORS IN TAUGHT-COURSE EXAMINATIONS

1. Only senior research students\(^2\) should be eligible for appointment, though exceptions may be made in certain circumstances.

2. Students must have relevant expertise or experience. They should normally have teaching experience of the relevant paper.

3. It is preferable that nominees are employed either as Graduate Teaching Assistants / Teaching Associates etc. or as college tutors.

4. Graduate students should only be nominated with the consent of the paper setter and the convenor of the subject teaching group.

5. They should have attended appropriate training or received individual instruction from an experienced examiner.

6. They should have access to information about the paper, examination conventions, marking procedures and general expectations of candidates.

7. Provision should be made for the supervision and monitoring of their performance.

8. Their scripts should be subject to additional sampling and consistency checks.

9. Otherwise qualified students without teaching experience should be confined to marking questions for which there is a precise model solution and an approved marking scheme.

10. 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.

11. Appointment of assessors is subject to the approval of the PVC (Education) and the Proctors in each case. Proposed appointments of postgraduate students as assessors are considered with particular care, and information on why a postgraduate student is appropriate for the role must be provided.

A specific form to provide supporting information on the proposed appointment of a postgraduate student as an assessor is now provided (separate from the similar form required for the approval of other non-Faculty members as examiners/assessors).

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\(^2\) Senior Research Students are defined as those who have successfully completed transfer from PRS status.
ANNEX I: CONSISTENCY IN EXAMINATION CONVENTIONS

1. Introduction

Across the disciplines within each division in the University, there are many similarities in the way in which 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. The QAA expects that ‘Higher Education providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment’.¹ 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.² 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 information³ 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 Policy and guidance for examiners and others involved in University examinations (P&G for examiners) and/or the Examination Regulations where available or relevant. Please ensure that information is provided in clear and comprehensible language.

³ www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pandgoncourseinformation
 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 structure of individual examination papers, for example, requirements relating to questions, number of questions, compulsory questions etc. 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
[P&G for examiners, 11.2]
Include one of the following as appropriate:

For FHS or Honour Mods

Agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mark</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>70-100</td>
<td>First Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Upper second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>Lower second</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Third</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-29</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For Moderations or Preliminary Examinations
Agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>70-100</th>
<th>Distinction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40-69</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-39</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PGT Model 1**

Agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>70-100</th>
<th>Distinction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50-69</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-49</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PGT Model 2**

Agreed final marks for individual papers will be expressed using the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>70-100</th>
<th>Distinction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>Pass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>Fail</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 Qualitative criteria for different types of assessment

Qualitative criteria should be given for different bands of marks for different types of assessment item. For example, a set of qualitative criteria might be given for answers to unseen timed (exam) essay questions, another for translation questions, another for extended essays, and another for extended research projects. Each would give a qualitative description of the type of answer expected to obtain a mark in the range ≤39, 40-49, 50-59, 60-69 etc. (mark ranges should be chosen as judged most appropriate, but should include bands of marks within a first).
3.3 Verification and reconciliation of marks

[P&G for examiners, 11.3]

For FPE
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
For papers without a model solution, there should be a statement that each script/item of work is marked independently by two examiners or assessors (sometimes referred to as ‘double-blind marking’). 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 instances in which the marks from two examiners will be averaged, rather than reconciled using alternative means. 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 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

[P&G for examiners, 11.4]

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, i.e. 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.

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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 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

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

[P&G for examiners, 9.4: Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 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 element will result in failure of the whole Examination (FPE, FHS, MSc, MSt, etc.), or in the case of an FHS assessed in Parts, the whole Part of the Examination.

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. 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.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lateness</th>
<th>Cumulative mark penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After the deadline but submitted on the same day</td>
<td>[insert mark deduction]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[insert time period]</td>
<td>[insert mark deduction]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Failure to submit a required element of assessment will result in the failure of the whole First Public Examination/Second Public Examination/Part.

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

[Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 16, Regulation 16.6]

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.

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 (i.e. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage by which the maximum word count is exceeded</th>
<th>Cumulative mark penalty (up to a maximum of [insert mark deduction])</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to [insert value] %</td>
<td>[insert mark deduction]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over [insert value] % and up to [insert value] %</td>
<td>[insert mark deduction]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over [insert value] % and up to [insert value] %</td>
<td>[insert mark deduction]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each further [insert value] %</td>
<td>[insert mark deduction]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where the deduction of marks results in failure of the assessment and of the programme the case must be referred to the Proctors.

### 4. Progression rules and classification conventions

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

Qualitative descriptors should be given for classes for FHS examinations and for Distinction, Pass and Fail for FPE and 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 (i.e. MSt, MPhil and MSc) you should include a statement on the restrictions on the award of distinction 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.]

#### 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

[PG for examiners, 11.9]

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

[PG for examiners, 13.3 and 13.4]

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.

For PGT courses where an element, or elements, of 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 element 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 element(s).

6. Factors affecting performance

[PG for examiners, Annex C: Consideration of medical and other special circumstances in examination and assessment; Examination Regulations, Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations, Part 13]

There should be a statement explaining the procedure that will be adopted for the consideration of applications for factors affecting performance made under Part 13 of the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations.

The following text is provided as an example:

[Where a candidate or candidates have made a submission, under Part 13 of the Regulations for Conduct of University Examinations, that unforeseen factors may have had an impact on their performance in an examination, a subset of the board 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. When reaching this decision, examiners will take into consideration the severity and relevance of the circumstances, and the strength of the evidence. 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 adjudicate on the merits of candidates. Further information on the procedure is provided in the Policy and Guidance for examiners, Annex C and information for students is provided at www.ox.ac.uk/students.academic/exams/guidance.]

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 seek to make contact with individual internal or external examiners or assessors.]

Appendix [optional]

Provide details of any operational information for examiners if required. This would not normally be provided to students.
ANNEX J: UK-WIDE CRITERIA FOR APPOINTING EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

Indicator 5
Institutions apply the following UK-wide set of criteria for appointing external examiners and make every effort to ensure that their external examiners are competent to undertake the responsibilities defined by the institution. Institutions use the criteria to ensure that potential conflicts of interest are identified and resolved prior to appointing external examiners or as soon as they arise.

Person specification
a. Institutions appoint external examiners who can show appropriate evidence of the following:
   i) knowledge and understanding of UK sector agreed reference points for the maintenance of academic standards and assurance and enhancement of quality
   ii) competence and experience in the fields covered by the programme of study, or parts thereof
   iii) relevant academic and/or professional qualifications to at least the level of the qualification being externally examined, and/or extensive practitioner experience where appropriate
   iv) competence and experience relating to designing and operating a variety of assessment tasks appropriate to the subject and operating assessment procedures
   v) sufficient standing, credibility and breadth of experience within the discipline to be able to command the respect of academic peers and, where appropriate, professional peers
   vi) familiarity with the standard to be expected of students to achieve the award that is to be assessed
   vii) fluency in English, and where programmes are delivered and assessed in languages other than English, fluency in the relevant language(s) (unless other secure arrangements are in place to ensure that external examiners are provided with the information to make their judgements)
   viii) meeting applicable criteria set by professional, statutory or regulatory bodies
   ix) awareness of current developments in the design and delivery of relevant curricula
   x) competence and experience relating to the enhancement of the student learning experience.

Conflicts of interest
b. Institutions do not appoint as external examiners anyone in the following categories or circumstances:
i) 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

ii) anyone with a close professional, contractual or personal relationship with a member of staff or student involved with the programme of study

iii) anyone required to assess colleagues who are recruited as students to the programme of study

iv) anyone who is, or knows they will be, in a position to influence significantly the future of students on the programme of study

v) 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

vi) 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)

vii) a reciprocal arrangement involving cognate programmes at another institution

viii) the succession of an external examiner by a colleague from the examiner’s home department and institution

ix) the appointment of more than one external examiner from the same department of the same institution.

Terms of office

c. The duration of an external examiner’s appointment will normally be for four years, with an exceptional extension of one year to ensure continuity.

d. An external examiner may be reappointed in exceptional circumstances but only after a period of five years or more has elapsed since their last appointment.

e. External examiners normally hold no more than two external examiner appointments for taught programmes/modules at any point in time.
ANNEX K: APPOINTMENT OF ASSESSORS – NOTES

Forms for the appointment of assessors are available on WebLearn via weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/central/aad:ea:exapp1617. Two different Supporting Information forms are provided: one for the appointment of postgraduate students as assessors, and one for the appointment of other non-Faculty members. The guidance below is intended to aid completion of the forms.

- Please do not list examiners (of the same examination) onto the Spreadsheet; only list assessors.

- Assessors should be Members of a Faculty/Department, in order that their academic standing can be easily recognised as being at a level where teaching and research is part of their paid role, and that they possess academic seniority over the candidates they will assess.

- In the event that a nominee is not a Member of a Faculty/Department, please complete the Supporting Information form for the appointment of non-Faculty members.

- Students are normally ineligible to act as assessors. However, Senior Research Students¹ may sometimes be allowed to act as assessors. (This normally applies to undergraduate examinations only; students should only be appointed to mark postgraduate examinations in exceptional circumstances, and such nominees must have passed Confirmation in addition to Transfer of Status; see Annex H.) In general, the appointment of Senior Research Students as assessors will only be approved where the following criteria are met (noting that meeting such criteria will not automatically result in approval). Nominees to serve as assessors should:
  - have teaching experience of the relevant paper;
  - be employed as a Graduate Teaching Assistant, Teaching Associate, college tutor, or so forth;
  - be closely mentored and supervised in their performance when assessing;
  - receive any other appropriate training.

In addition, consent must be given by the paper setter and by the convenor of the subject teaching group.

Education Committee’s policy on this is reproduced in Annex H: Appointment of postgraduate students as assessors in taught-course examinations. The specific Supporting Information form for the appointment of postgraduate students as assessors must be completed, answering all questions.

¹ Senior Research Students are defined as those who have successfully completed transfer from PRS status.
ANNEX L: PROCTORS’ GUIDANCE FOR THE USE OF TURNITIN IN UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

Using Turnitin for plagiarism identification and online submission of work

Turnitin is not plagiarism-detection software. It is, according to the University’s IT Services, “an electronic text matching system that can be used to find text matches between students’ submitted work and existing electronic sources, including extensive databases of electronic articles, other student assignments, and the internet”.

Boards of examiners may wish to use Turnitin as one tool in helping to identify potential cases of plagiarism. Points of guidance for this are given below. If examiners or assessors have any concern about the content of a written exercise (or about similarities between several candidates’ work), they should discuss the matter with the chair, who in turn should seek advice from the Proctors. An examiner or assessor should not decide to impose an academic penalty if intentional plagiarism is suspected, and examiners should not use a viva to follow up concerns. Any suspicions must be referred immediately to the chair and thence to the Proctors. The Proctors will normally suspend a candidate’s examination while they fully investigate such cases. The regulations relating to plagiarism and collusion can be found in Disciplinary Regulations for Candidates in Examinations (Proctors’ Regulations 1 of 2003) clauses 3 – 5.

1. Boards of examiners first need to decide whether they want to submit all examined work to Turnitin; randomly-selected samples; or specific pieces where initial marking has thrown up concerns. Candidates need to be advised about the procedure to be followed. This can be done via the examination conventions, course handbook, or other specific communication to candidates from the chair.

2. Special subject regulations need to be changed so that candidates are required to submit electronic copies of their work (in almost all cases, in addition to hard copies). The regulations need to say when, where, and how electronic copies are submitted. Ideally, electronic copies should be submitted on CD-ROM or memory-stick, along with paper copies of work, to the Examination Schools. The electronic and paper copies must have identical content. Where work is to be randomly or selectively screened, these regulations might be expressed in terms of candidates being required to provide electronic copies promptly on request (instead of submitting these along with hard copies).

3. Online submission of work is available via WebLearn. If the examination regulations state that candidates must submit via WebLearn they must not also request that candidates submit a hard copy. If students are requested to submit a hard copy and an electronic copy, this electronic copy should be in the form of a CD-ROM or memory stick. This option is only available to departments who already have this procedure in place. Departments wishing to start using electronic submission must use WebLearn.

4. Users of Turnitin (for submitting papers and reviewing Originality Reports) should make use of the training and support provided by IT Services. Turnitin can be used either directly (via the TurnitinUK website, for which an instructor account is required), or via the Assignments tool in WebLearn. Use of Turnitin on examined material (essays, reports, dissertations, theses) by individuals who have not undertaken training is strongly discouraged, as misuse of the software could compromise a later disciplinary investigation by the Proctors.
Training courses include: Turnitin Fundamentals, and Interpreting originality reports using Turnitin (See the list of courses under ‘Plagiarism’ at: courses.it.ox.ac.uk/). Before using Turnitin for examined work, it is important that users learn how to carry out the basic software tasks, like how to submit work in such a way that the software does not report ‘matches’ of text which is indented or included in quotation marks; and how to analyse a report so as not to become too concerned about a high Similarity Index which, on inspection, actually consists of a large number of trivial matches. IT Services provide a staff support site in WebLearn (weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/info/plag) and termly meetings of the Oxford University Turnitin User Group, where issues and questions about the service can be raised. The Turnitin User Group provides a forum for dissemination of best practice and experience in using the tools in an Oxford context. For further information, see [IT Services] About Turnitin (www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/turnitin/), or contact turnitin@it.ox.ac.uk.

5. Candidates whose work is being screened or might be screened need to certify that the electronic copies of their work are identical to the hard copies. It is not essential to obtain individual approval for screening of work, but it is prudent to make students aware that electronic copies will be or might be screened (especially if the work is to be added to the Turnitin database). This can be covered by a subject-specific statement on the Declaration form which candidates submit. The sample declaration of authorship form is available from www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/guidance/skills/plagiarism.

Interpreting Turnitin reports

- Interpreting Turnitin reports is a nuanced skill

- The ‘Originality Report’ (displayed within the software as the ‘Document Viewer’) indicates the percentage of words in the document that have been found to match existing electronic sources. The percentage is known as the ‘Similarity index’, measuring the amount of similarity with other sources.

- Turnitin cannot identify text that may have been copied from books (or any other sources) that are not available in electronic format. Even then, there are limits to the databases that Turnitin has access to for searching purposes – there may be some electronic journals or databases that do not have partnership agreements that allow Turnitin to search their content.

- Turnitin can match only electronic text, not equations, computer programs, images, tables, diagrams or pictures. Check the sources of any surrounding text to see whether the diagrams etc are also copied from the same source.

- The list of all submissions shows a visual ‘traffic light’ indicator next to each one, according to the extent of the match percentage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Icon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-24%</td>
<td>Blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-49%</td>
<td>Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-74%</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-100%</td>
<td>Orange</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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There is no recommended 'threshold' as to what scores might be acceptable or unacceptable. Each case needs to be evaluated individually, taking into consideration the nature of the subject matter (e.g. in a Law essay it may be acceptable to cite legal cases without using quotation marks), the nature of the assessment task (e.g. the cognitive level of the task), and any other factors relevant to the particular task.

A high percentage match should not be taken as an automatic indicator that there is a problem with the work; the list of matches may include correctly referenced sources, reference lists, declarations of authorship etc.

There is a filter in the online report which can filter out correctly quoted material (only double quotation marks are recognised), and reference lists. A list of references may also be filtered out but must be preceded by the heading ‘References’, ‘List of References’, or ‘Bibliography’ in order for Turnitin to recognise it – the filter then ignores everything that follows that heading. Note that if the references are within a formatted table in MS Word, it will not be recognised as a list of references:

A match of 0% may be suspicious. In the normal course of writing, one would expect at least some matches of short, commonly used phrases. A score of exactly 0% may indicate that the writing has been electronically manipulated to disguise words and confound the software (e.g. it is possible to insert ‘non-displaying spaces’ within words, which will make the words unrecognisable to the software).

Double check that sources have been attributed correctly and not lumped together e.g. multiple articles from same website may show up as a single large match.

Sources should be checked to ensure there is no misattribution e.g. a report may have been syndicated and published on different website, causing Turnitin to identify a different source from the one referenced by the student.

Where the Turnitin report shows a match with work submitted to another university, check if there may be a third source that both students may have copied from.
• For privacy reasons, Turnitin does not allow access to student papers from other universities if these have been found as a match. Permission needs to be requested from the respective university to that piece of work, if required. This can be done through the online interface, by clicking on the match in question and then clicking on the name of the institution:

![Student paper Submitted to University of Plymouth](image)

Because submitted papers remain the intellectual property of their authors, instructors, and respective institutions, we are unable to show you the content of this paper at this time. If you would still like to view this paper, please click on the institution name above to submit a permission request to the author's instructor.

• If a match is found between two student papers (say, Student A and Student B), it is not possible via the software to identify who copied from whom. That is, the paper of the ‘plagiarist’ may have been submitted and saved to the Turnitin database before that written by the original author. Any such case should be referred to the Proctors for further investigation.

• The Originality Report can be refreshed in the online Document Viewer. If this is done at a later date, it may yield a different score to the one first generated (due to the dynamic nature of content on the internet). Therefore a copy of the Originality Report should be downloaded at the time of the investigation, as evidence of matches found at one particular point in time.
ANNEX M: FRAMEWORK FOR THE USE OF WEBLEARN TO MANAGE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT

1. Further to a decision by the Examinations Panel in Trinity Term 2015, departments that wish to introduce online submission management for summative assessment in taught degrees may now do so, via the centrally supported WebLearn site, subject to the following conditions:

   (a) Departments must first ensure that any necessary changes to course regulations are made following the proper and due process. Adoption of online submission mid-course will be subject to the normal requirements for making regulatory changes with immediate effect, inclusive of securing all members of the cohort’s agreement.

   (b) Departments must ordinarily notify candidates at the start of the course, and in the course handbook, that submissions will be made via WebLearn and offer training, including practice submissions, in how to use the system.

   (c) Only the file submitted via WebLearn constitutes a valid submission; no concomitant hard-copy submission may be submitted, for any purpose, though post-submission hard copies may be produced from the electronic submission, e.g. for marking. Changes to course regulations must make clear that no concomitant hard copy may be submitted. The validity of any supplementary materials required in regulations to be submitted in hard copy (posters, portfolios etc.) is not affected, so long as such materials do not duplicate any element of the electronic copy. No costs arising from post-submission processing by the department may be transferred to candidates.

   (d) Electronic submissions must be received by the deadline; the Examinations and Assessments team will report late submissions to the Proctors’ Office, in the same manner as for hard-copy submissions. Technical problems external to the WebLearn system, such as slow internet speeds, will not be accepted as grounds for excusing lateness.

   (e) Before setting a deadline for submission via the system, departments must consult the Examinations and Assessments team to ensure all relevant operational matters have been addressed.

   (f) All system problems affecting any batch of submissions must be reported immediately to the Proctors.

   (g) Departments are reminded that use of Turnitin – whether for all submissions or for a sample thereof – is subject to all academic and administration staff involved having attended the training course run by IT Services.

2. Relevant contact details are:

   Taughtdegrees@admin.ox.ac.uk to set deadlines and for advice on using the system;
   WebLearn@it.ox.ac.uk for technical support;
   examregs@admin.ox.ac.uk for advice on regs changes;
   turnitin@it.ox.ac.uk for advice about using Turnitin;
   examinations@proctors.ox.ac.uk to report instances of system failure.
ANNEX N: RETENTION OF RECORDS DECLARATION FORM  
(www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/informationandguidanceforexaminers/)

RETENTION OF RECORDS AFTER COMPLETION OF  
A UNIVERSITY EXAMINATION

The Data Protection Act affects the retention of records after a University Examination is completed. Under the Proctors’ guidance, once an examination is complete and the final list has been produced, examiners (including externals) and assessors should hand over to the chair all material in their possession relating to the marking of the examination. This includes mark sheets, mark books, and note of vivas.

To: The chair of examiners for ……………………………………………………………………………………..[examination]

I hereby declare that I no longer have in my possession any material pertaining to the marking of the above examination.

Signed:………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Name (in block capitals):…………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Date:……………………………………

The completed declaration form should be sent promptly to the chair of examiners for inclusion with the retained records.
ANNEX O: RESOURCES

Online version of this guidance

Education Committee website – policies
www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/

Statutes and regulations

Examination Regulations, 2016, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/examregs/ particularly the Regulations for the Conduct of University Examinations
Statute IX, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/785-121.shtml
Statute XI, University Discipline, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/352-051a.shtml
Regulations for Divisional Boards, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/522-122.shtml

Oxford University Gazette, www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/ for changes to the Examination Regulations approved during the year

Resources provided by Education Committee

Policy and Guidance on Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance

Policy and Guidance for Postgraduate Taught Courses, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgpgtaughtcourses

Policy and Guidance on Research Degrees, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/policyonresearchdegrees

Policy and Guidance on Course Information, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pandgoncourseinformation

Policy and Guidance on new courses and major changes to courses (includes guidance on plagiarism in assessment design) www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/pgnewcourses

University awards framework www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/policiesandguidance/awardsframework

Procedures for the annual monitoring of courses www.admin.ox.ac.uk/edc/qa/pamc

Resources provided by the Proctors

The Student Handbook 2016/17, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/info/pam/, particularly Section 5: Examinations

Retention of records form, www.admin.ox.ac.uk/proctors/informationandguidanceforexaminers/

Plagiarism resources

Plagiarism/academic good practice resources for students, www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/goodpractice/
Online plagiarism course for students
weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/skills/plag
IT Services plagiarism staff support site, weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/info/plag
Information on Turnitin, www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/turnitin/

*Information for students*
Information on examination entry published by the Academic Records Office (ARO), www.ox.ac.uk/students/exams/entry/
Student self-service, www.ox.ac.uk/students/studentselfservice/
Academic transcripts, www.ox.ac.uk/students/graduation/transcripts

*Technical resources*
WebLearn resources for examiners including the assessor nomination forms, weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/directtool/7d6bfddf-39ef-45bd-b7a6-611e38eb6ff6/
Tableau Examination Reports, https://bits.uas.ox.ac.uk/workbooks/ExaminationResults

*External resources*
QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, www.qaa.ac.uk/AssuringStandardsAndQuality/quality-code/Pages/default.aspx