

Examinations Policy

This policy covers summative examinations in support of Senate Regulations, from September 2018.

Key Principles

This policy is based on the principle of providing a fair and equitable examination experience for all students, meeting academic requirements, and ensuring practicalities are met as effectively and efficiently as possible. It ensures that all staff and candidates are clear as to their responsibilities regarding examinations, and how to work with and access the services provided.

Main Policy

1 Purpose and Key Objectives

This policy has been developed in consultation with the Student Experience and Welfare Committee. It is prepared as a guide to the examinations process with transparency against a shared purpose. It is informed by current practice and has been benchmarked against the wider higher education sector.

It remains a live document, which will need to develop and evolve with teaching and learning practice at Brunel, and as the supporting systems and teams progress. The context is for us all (staff and students) to work together, as a community, to provide the best possible environment for candidates to succeed and realise their potential within a fair and equitable system.

2 Examination Period and Session Times

Examination periods and session times shall be agreed with Senate and in accordance with Senate Regulations ([SR 4.9](#)).

Summative Examinations

- Summative examinations which fall outside of these periods shall conform to this policy's standard provision as far as possible, including provision of trained invigilators and technical support.
- The examinations team will endeavour to make suitable venues available, and to maintain a pool of trained invigilators and support staff that can be made available to colleges.

3 The Examination Timetable

- It is recognised that the earlier the timetable can be finalised the more beneficial this is for candidates revision planning.

- The examination timetable shall be published ahead of the examination period, in accordance with [SR 4.9 and 4.18](#).
- Initially the timetable is scheduled, as far as possible, using only the morning (09:30) and afternoon (14:30) sessions. Evening sessions are then used where practicalities prevent use of the earlier times.
- The only constraint applied is to avoid scheduling any candidate with two examinations on the same day, or with an evening examination followed by a morning examination the next day. This may not always be possible, especially during the re-sit period.
- The examinations shall be distributed with consideration given to the spread for candidates and dependent on their level of study.
- The University wants to provide equal opportunity and so implementation of these principles need to take account of extra time allocated to candidates with additional requirements and the practicalities of parallel examinations sat at remote sites, including partner institutions.
- All candidates are normally limited to a maximum of 5 hours of examinations per day.
- All students are required to use their own online examination timetable as it will provide the most accurate and up to date information.

4 Examination Durations

- Examination duration shall be agreed as part of the module (and programme) approval, and this duration shall be inclusive of advised reading time. Students will not be prevented from writing during reading time.
- Normally examinations are to be 60, 120 or 180 minute durations. This is to allow greater flexibility in allocating examinations to venues and to minimise disruption in venues particularly during the re-sit period.

5 Venues

- All examination venues shall be fit for purpose and create an environment which allows students to achieve their potential and prevent opportunity for misconduct.
- The examinations team shall provide centrally invigilated rooms for all AN (Additional Needs) candidates, including those that require additional time, a PC (for non-digital examinations), specialised equipment or IT and an individual space. These venues will be located in clusters, to enable efficient use of resources and provide familiarity for candidates requiring them.
- Any venue that fails to meet expectation should be reported to examinations team by candidates or a member of staff.

6 Managing Additional Needs

- Students requiring adjustments will be identified as AN students or candidates, where AN (pronounced “A N”, not “an”) simply refers to “Additional Needs”
- In accordance with [SR 4.19 & 4.20](#) and [DDS guidance](#), the University will discharge the obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 (SENDA) to make appropriate adjustments for examinations. However, we also need to produce employment-ready graduates, and it is important for students to understand and fulfil their responsibilities toward their studies and assessment, including those who have a right to reasonable adjustments. We also need to ensure that management of adjustments is feasible, to ensure that needs are met for all AN students meeting the deadline, handling those for whom any delays are not of their making (e.g. obtaining medical evidence), and any unavoidable last minute

issues can be fairly and adequately managed, via the Extenuating Circumstances process where necessary.

- Candidates who require reasonable adjustments due to a disability or dyslexia should register with the DDS. The Disability or Dyslexia Advisor will complete a support profile document to confirm recommended adjustments to each candidate's college as well as to the examinations team.
- Candidates, academics and administrators are advised to make contact with the DDS and examinations team where necessary to seek further advice, and to enable solutions to be implemented to provide the best outcome for the individual or sub-group and the overall cohort involved.
- Venues provided for candidates who require adjustments will be indicated on their individual online examination timetable.
- A standard deadline, one week before the start of an examination period, will be agreed for all adjustment requests or associated appointments. This will include seeking a loan laptop for a digital examination as well as reasonable adjustment for disability or injury.
- Where a Digital Examination is in place, it will be the student's responsibility to either bring a suitably prepared laptop, or to follow instructions to make a loan request for a laptop for the examinations they are taking. The University will maintain a stock of laptops but a student arriving unprepared for a Digital Examination may not be able to sit it.
- Other reasonable adjustments sought after the deadline will be limited to a seat away from the main cohort and any additional time as agreed by the Wellbeing Team.

7 Invigilators/ People in the room

Academics

- Paper authors are required by [SR 4.12](#) to be present for the first half hour of an examination they have written to answer any queries. It is expected that examination papers are error free as a result of the pre-examination, quality assurance process. Where a student raises a query, they should inform the invigilator who will note it and report it to the college which will ensure that it is considered during the marking and examination panel process.

College Administrators

- The examinations team shall maintain a list of college contacts for examinations; this should be updated on a regular basis.
- These contacts will work in partnership with the examinations team to help delivery on a number of key administrative activities, before, during and after each examination period.

Invigilators

- For all venues, invigilators will be trained, provided and managed by the examinations team. These shall be recruited externally where possible to avoid conflicts of interest but at peak times it is realised that we may have to fill positions with research students. Training will include support for AN students and to provide digital examination administration.
- Invigilators roles will vary depending on venues, cohorts and administrative needs, and how this affects responsibilities.
- Invigilators for examinations scheduled outside the main University examination period should be provided by the corresponding college using the pool of trained invigilators managed by the examinations team.

Technical Support Staff

- For all digital examination venues, technical support staff will be available in addition to invigilation staff, and managed by the examinations team. These shall normally be recruited from the student body and will be appropriately trained.

Any staff attending examinations must be aware of the need to ensure candidates are not distracted or disturbed. In particular, use of mobile devices (other than those used to manage an examination) should not be used, and any discussion or extended conversation should be moved out of the venue.

8 Secure Materials: Question Papers and Examination Answer books

- All summative University examination papers will normally be prepared and will be managed and printed via the University's digital assessment platform, so as to provide security, version control and delivery of paper or digital copy to the examination venues. This will aid security and reduce waste, and spare copies will no longer need to be provided for AN students.
- All additional material (such as tables, cases, graph paper, candidate notes and references) and permitted equipment or materials (other than standard stationary such as pens, pencils etc.), must be listed on the examination cover. Items not listed will not be provided or allowed, whilst items listed and not provided by colleges will be chased.
- For Digital Examinations, the single source for the examination paper should normally be the electronic version so as to enhance security, avoid discrepancies between electronic and paper versions and to improve the efficiency and operation of handling papers. In exceptional cases it may be appropriate to provide single sheets of supporting material to students, for example tables of data to be analysed, which would need to be viewed simultaneously while completing the examination answer. Digital Examinations allow students to magnify papers to an appropriate size for their needs, and accessibility features can be used to change the colours of papers.
- To mitigate risk when using Digital Examinations, on-demand facilities will be available to reproduce paper versions of the examinations in the unlikely event of failure of the Digital Examination system. While this may delay the examination for a short period it is a more proportionate response than maintaining paper backups for all examinations which will represent enormous waste. It must be noted that as academics make full use of Digital Examination features such as the inclusion of multimedia and interactive questions, it will not always be possible to produce paper versions of these examinations.
- All summative University examinations will normally be answered using University answer books or the University's digital assessment platform. Answerbook design will ensure sufficient candidate information is obtained, anonymity is preserved and opportunities for misconduct are minimised.
- Candidates undertaking paper or digital examinations should carry out any rough workings within their answers, crossing out but not deleting any work they do not wish to be viewed by the examiner.
- At the end of an examination invigilators shall ensure collection of all question papers and answer books and, where not required for marking, paperwork will be confidentially destroyed.
- All question papers and digital scripts shall be kept, according to the relevant [Record Retention Schedule](#), in a secure electronic archive following the examination period.

9 Rules and Regulations

Candidate Conduct

- Candidates will not be allowed to enter the examination venue after the published start time.
- Candidates are not permitted to leave the venue before the end of their examination. During the first hour and last 30 minutes of an examination, any candidate with an exceptional requirement to leave the venue will be asked to wait.
- [SR 6](#) defines collusion and cheating.
- Candidates are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and honest manner during examinations.
- In specific cases of misconduct, (e.g. where a mobile device is found on a candidate), an agreed formal letter with a first warning will be given to the candidate at the end of the examination, and followed up with an emailed copy. This will be recorded so that colleges are informed, and so that any further incident can be reported alongside a note of the first warning.
- The Candidate Guide outlines how candidates are to conduct themselves and what is allowed to be brought into the examination venue.

Extenuating circumstances

- Outlined in [SR 4.26 – 4.42](#) and guidance can be found [here](#).
- Extenuating circumstances claims need to be made in accordance with the regulations. Supporting evidence must normally be submitted no later than five working days after the examination.

The examinations team shall report on any such instances as outlined below in records and reports, and where possible provide evidence, to inform the department and where necessary the relevant boards.

10 Records and Reports

All records relating to examinations, held by the examinations team shall be retained for 12 months before being confidentially destroyed.

Timetable

- Shall be finalised and published no less than four weeks ahead of the first examination of the period.

Seating plans

- Shall be published to department administrators four weeks prior to the first examination of the scheduled period. All updates and amendments must be made within the first week of this publication. Seating plans shall then be considered finalised.

Attendance Register

- Attendance shall be taken, candidate identities checked and reported back to the college in a timely manner.
- Any late arrivals and all departures from the examination room prior to its finish shall be recorded.

Venue Observation Sheet (VOS)

- There shall be a VOS completed for any session where there has been a general disturbance to candidates during a specific examination session. This will be made available to all colleges with candidates affected by the disturbance.

Examination Details Sheet (EDS)

- There shall be an EDS completed for individual modules and in each location for the module, to give basic counts for the examination and a report of any unusual incident or interruption. The record shall be made available to college staff.

Student Observation Sheets (SOS)

- A SOS shall be completed by an invigilator or relevant member of staff when there is a concern over a student's behaviour or well-being and, where appropriate, will provide supporting evidence. The record shall be made available to college staff.
- A summary of SOS forms shall be sent to colleges and agreed department contacts by the examinations team. The college's subsequent follow up actions shall be reported back to the examinations team.

Academic Query Sheet (AQS)

- An AQS will be completed if a candidate raises a question concerning a question paper. It will also record any further enquiries from other candidates regarding the same query, alongside any contact with the academic department and any related action.

11 Health and Safety Issues

- The examinations team and colleges will work in conjunction with Estates, Operations and the Health and Safety office to ensure room capacities and layouts comply with safety legislation and guidelines.
- Emergency procedures will be agreed with Health and Safety, and where appropriate with Security. Relevant guidance will be given, to invigilators and in turn to candidates, at the start of each main University examination session.

Appendices

These appendices are available via [Welcome to Examinations](#):

- Candidate Guide
- Staff Guide -
Academic and
Administration
- Invigilator Guide

These appendices are available from TAG (Timetabling and Awarding Group), Examinations team, Examinations@brunel.ac.uk:

- Forms - VOS, EDS, SOS, AQS
- Plan form layouts of main examination venues in the Sports Hall and Indoor Athletic Centre