

Code of Practice on the Conduct of Formal Written Examinations

Approved by the Academic Regulations Committee on
3rd December 2020



This Code of Practice applies to all types of Higher Education programme, including part time provision, collaborative provision and block provision and should be read in conjunction with:

- 1 UCB Academic Regulations,
- 2 Assessment and Moderation Quality Cycle
- 3 The Conduct and Invigilation of Examinations
- 4 Student Code of Conduct for Examinations

This Code of Practice is intended as an information guide for all students studying on Higher Education programmes at University College Birmingham. The Code will inform students of their arrangement for examinations and the classification and publication of results. This Code of Practice is also intended to inform members of staff of the roles and responsibilities in facilitating the arrangements of examinations within the University.

1. Formal Written Examinations

This Code of Practice is intended to apply only to undergraduate and postgraduate examining.

A formal written examination is defined for the purposes of this document as a time-limited assessment undertaken by a student at a previously specified time, date and venue based upon written responses to a question paper.

This document also covers examinations which are conducted away from UCB campuses, including examinations conducted abroad by agents or partners or partners of UCB and examinations conducted online.

This document does not apply to any form of assessment which does not contribute to the overall mark for the module.

2. Examination Timetables

The Examinations Unit produces examination timetables prior to each exam period. These are published to students via the UCB Portal, student timetables and published to staff and University wide circulation.

Dates for the publication of examination timetables and dates of Examination Periods, a set number of days during which examinations will be scheduled, are provided to students at induction, and are published on the UCB website and UCB Portal. Some examinations may be timetabled outside of the examination period, this will be communicated at the start of the semester.

For students who have been permitted additional time or provision for examinations details of their personal timetable with alternative exam venue will be published on their student dashboard.

It is the responsibility of each individual student to make sure that they are aware of the date, time, duration, and venue of each of their examinations and to prepare for and to arrive in good time for each sitting.

It is also the responsibility of each student to raise any queries or concerns with the Examinations Unit and ensure that adequate preparation has been made in order to attend the exams.

Each timetable shows:

- day and date of exam
- start and finish times of exam
- title of exam
- exam location

Where a lecturer has queries or concerns with the data contained in the timetables, these should be raised immediately with the Examinations Unit.

Where it is necessary to make a change to the arrangements for an examination after the final timetable has been published, those students who are due to sit the relevant examination will be notified. This notification will be provided in sufficient time to allow any necessary adjustment to patterns of revision, travel arrangements etc.

3. Aims in Timetabling Examinations

When producing a timetable, the Examinations Unit aims to schedule all University examinations so that each candidate is able to attend all exams in their programme of study; this is also in accordance with any constraints highlighted by academic members of staff. In timetabling the following criteria is used:

(i) exam clashes are avoided and provision for clashes is made, where a clash occurs, and the timetable cannot be altered

(iv) exams during a Sabbath or a holy day are avoided where possible for candidates who have been approved as requiring exemptions on those dates

(v) for health or access reasons, exams are held in a designated room for candidates who have been approved as requiring attendance in such a room for exam purposes

The complex nature of examination scheduling, together with the limited time available for examinations, may lead to student having two examinations on the same day. This cannot be avoided, and no adjustment of the timetable will be undertaken.

All students studying a module requiring an examination assessment must ensure they are available to attend an examination on each day of the entire published examination period, in case of last minute changes to the timetabling of the exams.

Where any of the above is not arranged in a timetable, the Examinations Unit should be contacted immediately. Every effort will be made to schedule exams as indicated

above, but the University reserves the right to hold exams as per a 'best fit' timetable if no alternatives can be arranged.

Where the clash is unavoidable, advice on necessary procedures will be provided. This may involve the student taking the exam at a different time and completing an Affidavit form (see appendix A). Where students need to sign an affidavit because of a clash of exams the following policy is to be adopted.

- If a minority of students on a programme need to sign an affidavit, then the examination is rescheduled after the date of the original exam
- If a majority of the students on a programme need to sign an affidavit, then the date of the examination is changed to suit the majority.

Students attending a period of University organised industrial work placement or work experience will be given coursework in lieu of any examinations they may need to take whilst on placement. If a period of placement is finished before any scheduled main or resit examination, then the student will be expected to return to University for the examinations. Any student who does not attempt the exam will have been deemed to have failed unless supported by valid extenuating circumstances.

4. The Examination Paper

For paper-based examinations, the production of the examination question paper, which shall be of the duration and format specified in the module specification and the Definitive Document is the responsibility of the module leader for that module. The Examinations Unit process exam question papers as provided by Module leaders. This involves checking, printing, keeping secure and releasing (according to the exam timetable) the examination papers.

Exam Question Papers and grading schemes should be submitted by email to the Examinations Unit using the Examination pro forma by the dates

indicated by the Examinations Unit each semester. Each exam paper must include:

- the **Module Code, Title** and **Duration** of the exam clearly written on the first page;
- the **Rubric*** for the paper and the **Number of Pages** constituting the paper (the first page may be a title page only or contain the first question. Irrespective of its use, this page should be numbered as page 1);
- a **List of Materials** necessary to completing the paper (i.e. log tables, graph paper, dictionary, special maps, diagrams, etc.) indicated at the top bottom of the title page (see ** below);
- **Directions for Completing** the exam and space for the student to enter name and student number where necessary;
- text in single-line spacing on one side of page only;
- clear, unambiguous questions and directions;
- as few pages as is commensurate with clarity;
- each page numbered
- the **Module Code** for the paper typed on every page;
- marks allocated for each question on undergraduate or postgraduate papers

**The rubric is the directions to examination candidates concerning the contents of the paper and how to respond to each question.*

*** Where materials are necessary to complete the paper, lecturers are asked to indicate if they would like the Examinations Unit to supply these or if they are intending to provide these directly to the examination room themselves. A note indicating either option should be attached to the paper at the time of submission to the Examinations Unit.*

Detailed guidance in producing an examination paper can be found in the Assessment and Moderation Quality Cycle.

Deadlines for the receipt of papers apply to allow each paper to be ready in order for submission to the relevant External Examiner for final approval and comment in accordance with the Code of Practice on External Examining. Lecturers are urged to contact the

Examinations Unit immediately when any potential difficulty in meeting the deadline is recognised.

The contribution of each examination paper to the determination of the Final degree classifications will be notified to students in advance of the examination sitting. Weighting of the examination shall be published to students in the Module Delivery Scheme in order that students know the extent to which the examination contributes to the overall module mark.

Module Leaders must review each question paper to ensure that the final version is not subject to textual error or is drafted in a way which is likely to require clarification during the sitting.

Where an amendment to an exam paper has to be made at the start of or during an exam, this information must be relayed to the Examinations Unit. The relevant details will then be notified to all students sitting the exam in an alternative venue.

5. Arrangements for examination sittings

The arrangements for examination sittings are outlined below and are detailed The Conduct and Invigilation of Examinations.

UCB will provide suitable examination conditions for students sitting formal written examinations:

A Each examination venue will be laid out with desks arranged in a manner which will ensure that each student's work cannot be read by other students.

B The possibility of external noise disturbance will be minimised through appropriate liaison between the Examinations Unit and the relevant parties.

The Examinations Unit will administer alternative examination venues for students with additional support requirements.

The Examinations Unit will appoint to each examination venue a team of invigilators to ensure that the examination session is conducted in a proper manner and in accordance with the published guidelines.

An Examination Officer and lecturer for the subject being examined will normally be available at the start of all examination sessions and for the initial ten minutes reading time to resolve any queries that may arise before the start of an examination. This requirement does not apply to overseas sittings.

All desks in the main examination venues will be numbered. Seating details for each examination taking place will be added to the examination timetable before the start of each examination period. Copies of the seating lists for each examination will be placed outside each examination venue before the examination is due to start. You must obtain your seat number before you enter the examination venue and you must sit in the seat allocated to you. Each student will be provided with the appropriate materials on which to answer examination questions. This includes anonymous answer booklets and multiple-choice answer sheets (if applicable) when the student is not expected to answer the question on the question paper.

Students must comply with the Student Code of Conduct for Examinations. Failure to do so shall constitute an examination irregularity, as detailed in the Code of Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.

All students shall follow all written and oral instructions during the examination. Failure to do so shall constitute an examination irregularity, as detailed in the Code of Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct.

Students will be required to provide evidence of their identity during the sitting. This will usually be done by displaying their UCB Identity Card on the desk. Where there is uncertainty over the identity of a student during the sitting, their ID will be checked using the photograph the student record. Repeated failure to present valid evidence of the student's identity in different examination sittings will constitute an Examination Irregularity.

Each examination session will begin promptly. Where an examination is also being held overseas in a different time-zone, the Examinations Unit will ask the host organisation to schedule the examination sitting at a time which will minimise the possibility of a breach of the security of the examination.

Students must ensure that they write legibly in their examination answer books. If it is necessary because of illegibility to arrange for a transcription of the script to be produced in advance of marking, the student will be liable to UCB for the direct costs involved in this work.

Registered students whose first language is not English will be permitted to use a standard, un-annotated and unmarked dictionary during their examinations unless the question paper rubric specifically prohibits their use. This should only cover English and the student's first language. Technical, annotated or electronic dictionaries will not be permitted. An Invigilator may inspect any dictionary during the course of an examination.

Students must leave all question sheets and answer books provided during an examination sitting in the examination venue when the student leaves the venue.

Candidates are only permitted to use a calculator if stated on the Examination paper. If a calculator is required for an examination, one will be issued by the University at the examination venue. No calculator, other than the one issued by the University may be used during examinations, unless written permission has been given in advance by the Examinations Unit.

During an examination, candidates are not allowed to use a mobile phone or any mobile device as a calculator.

The use of electronic devices such as, but not limited to, mobile phones, smart watches, smart glasses, tablets and personal audio equipment is not allowed in the examination venue and could be regarded as cheating for which penalties apply. The Examinations Unit reserves the right to refuse the use of a device in an examination. You are not allowed to wear a watch during University examinations. The University will ensure that there is a clock visible in each examination venue. Invigilators will also give a 10 minute warning before the

end of the examination to enable students to manage their time. If a student is in any doubt over the suitability of a device for calculation, they must consult the Examinations Unit before the exam.

6. Extenuating Circumstances and Examinations

Where a student does not or cannot attend an exam, he or she should immediately provide a written explanation through completing an extenuating circumstances form available from the Registry and on UCB Portal. Evidence supporting the absence, such as a medical certificate, must be included. Full details can be found in the Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances.

We will take every step to make sure that your examinations take place, even if specific venues have to be changed due to the impact of severe weather. In cases of severe weather, updates regarding the timetabling or cancellation of examinations will be published on UCB Portal, Canvas and the university website.

7. Students with additional requirements

The Examinations Unit will work with the Academic Skills Centre to provide appropriate support to students who require reasonable adjustments for examinations. Full details are articulated in the Code of Practice on Reasonable Adjustments for Student in Examinations.

Examinations arrangements for students requiring reasonable adjustments or arrangements

We are committed to providing reasonable adjustments for examinations for students with disabilities, specific learning difficulties, long term health issues/impairments and/or any temporary medical condition or injury that will affect performance in examinations. The purpose of these arrangements is to make sure that everyone is able to meet their learning outcomes and to compensate for the restrictions imposed by any disability, without affecting the validity of the examination.

ASC will administer the identification of all Students who require extra time or other resources in examinations and will confirm this fact to Examinations Unit in a timely manner. Students are also advised to check the arrangements for their exams and contact the Examinations Unit if there are any concerns. Full details are articulated in the Code of Practice on Reasonable Adjustments for Student in Examinations.

Students who have confirmed their requirement for extra time/specific provision for examinations will be sent a personal timetable with details of extra provision and alternative provision via the student portal.

Students with a temporary incapacity

The Examinations Unit requires a minimum of 48 hours' notice before any temporary alternative examination arrangements can be put in place. Medical evidence needs to be submitted to the Examinations Office at the time of the request.

Alternative forms of assessment

Alternatives to examinations should be considered where all possible accommodations have been explored but where the Student is still unable to undertake examinations due to a disability. Before implementing any alternative form of assessment, advice should be sought from ASC.

8. Security of Examination Papers

Arrangements will be made with the UCB Security team for the collection and delivery of the papers from the Examinations Unit.

Following the conclusion of each exam, invigilators will return the collected scripts, attendance slips and additional candidate forms to the Examinations Unit. Exam scripts cannot be taken directly from the exam room by any other persons. Upon checking of the examination scripts and attendance slips module lecturers will be contacted by their

examination officer to collect their scripts for marking after the completion of the exam together with instructions of when scripts need to be returned.

9. Overseas and off-campus examination sittings

In exceptional circumstances students whose permanent home address is outside the UK (excluding block students) may be permitted to take resits in their home country. However, all students taking an exam as a first attempt must take the exam at UCB. All students who have been found guilty of misconduct in an examination must take all exams for the remainder of their programme at UCB.

Please note that students who are permitted to take the resit examinations abroad must pay UCB a fee for the arrangement of the exam on application (£100) and will also be responsible for paying any fees levied by the hosting institution overseas. The application form can be found in Appendix B.

Overseas sittings are NOT available to students going on holiday or working overseas, or students registered on the Erasmus/Exchange programme.

Overseas examinations are subject to approval by the Examinations Unit and cannot be guaranteed.

Overseas examinations must normally be sat with the British Council. Students are responsible for making initial contact with the British Council to gain permission to sit their exams. Once a contact has been made the Examinations Unit will start making arrangements with them on the student's behalf.

In the event that the British Council is not able to accommodate the examination sitting(s) the student will be responsible for confirming 2 alternative venues. The Examinations Unit will then contact these venues and will nominate the most appropriate venue once approval

has been given. If a suitable alternative venue cannot be found students will be required to sit the examination(s) at UCB.

Please note that UCB will be unable to refund the arrangement fee if you are prevented from taking your examination(s), once you have made the initial request as costs for administration will have occurred well in advance of your scheduled examination.

Host organisations running overseas examinations must be able to arrange the examination concerned in the time period required and conduct the examinations in accordance with UCB policies. Where a time difference exists between UCB and the host organisation, UCB will require the timing of any overseas examinations to be as close as possible to the UK sitting to ensure the security of UCB examination procedures are not breached.

It is the responsibility of the student to contact the host organisation for information about the examination arrangements.

The host organisation has the right to refuse to conduct an examination sitting if the charge has not been paid. The host organisation will be responsible for notifying the Examinations Unit of any exams they have cancelled as a result of any unpaid charges.

The Examinations Unit will forward to the host organisation by courier the relevant question papers together with UCB examination stationery in time for the examinations.

After the examination sitting the host organisation will be required to collect the completed answer books and question papers and return these, along with any unused material. These must be returned by courier service to the Examinations Unit within twenty-four hours of the sitting. However, if the host organisation is holding a number of UCB examinations a bulk despatch may be returned within twenty-four hours of the final examination sitting.

Any charges levied by the host organisation to cover administrative costs, room and invigilation hire and courier costs for the return of completed examination scripts are payable by the student.

Appendix A – Affidavit Document

AFFIDAVIT FOR EXAMINATIONS TAKEN AT A TIME OTHER THAN THE SCHEDULED DATE

To **Deputy Registrar**

From

Name (<i>in capitals</i>):	
Programme:	
Year and Group:	

I acknowledge that the University has afforded me the opportunity to sit the following examination at a time/venue different to that, which has been officially scheduled.

Subject/Module:	
Duration (hours):	
New Date of Examination:	
Session (morning or afternoon):	
Venue:	

In consideration of the above arrangement, I acknowledge on my honour that:

- (a) I have no prior knowledge of the content of the examination and
- (b) I will not communicate with any other candidate(s) concerning any matters relating to this examination.

Signature: <i>(student)</i>	Date:
In the presence of (BLOCK CAPITALS):	
Signature: <i>(member of staff)</i>	Date:

Appendix B– Request to Sit Examinations Overseas

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE BIRMINGHAM - REQUEST TO SIT EXAMINATIONS OVERSEAS

Please read the accompanying notes before completing this form.

To request to sit a resit examination overseas you must complete this form and return it to the Examinations Unit.

Once your request has been received and approved an email will be sent to you at the email address provided below to confirm.

Student ID No.		Date of Birth:	
Forename		Surname:	
Programme:		Year of Study:	
Contact email:		Contact telephone number:	
Country of Domicile			

I propose to sit the resit examination(s) at the British Council Office in:

British Council full postal address (inc. postcode):

.....

Name of Examination Supervisor in the British Council Office:

British Council Office supervisor's email address:

British Council telephone no: British Council fax no:

Examinations to be sat:

Module Code:	Module Name:	Examination Date:

Student Signature: Date:

Please return the completed form to the Examination Unit together with confirmation of payment to UCB for £100. Late applications will not be accepted.

Please note: The student's personal contact and assessment details will be forwarded to the British Council. If you do not want us to do this, please tick the box.