

### **P3. PREPARATION AND CONDUCT OF EXAMINATIONS**

For students on programmes and awards validated by the University of Plymouth this section of the CAPR has been agreed by the University (as the awarding institution) as meeting its requirements for academic assessment and the conduct of examinations. The shaded sections below form GSM London regulatory and policy framework as applied to Plymouth University and GSM awards.

Related guidance and codes of practice can also be found at the [QAA Code of Practice, Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality](#): Chapter B4 Enabling Student Development and Achievement and Chapter B6, 'Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning'.

#### Purpose and scope

3.1 This section of the Consolidated Academic Policies and Regulations (CAPR) explains how student may undertake work-based and placement learning (WBPL), and provides a framework and guidance for programme teams who organise and manage this learning.

#### Definitions

3.2 'Examination' or 'exam' means a formal assessment that takes place at a specified venue, on a specified date and at a specified time, with a prescribed time is allowed for its completion. It may take the form of a written response to written questions, though 'written' may include other media. It is conducted under exam conditions.

3.3 'Candidate' means a student taking an assessment including examinations, coursework, or practical tests.

3.4 'Examination and Assessment Office' means the team at each College centre that has designated responsibility for administering assessments and examinations.

3.5 'Exam concession' means a reasonable adjustment made for exam purposes. Full details are available in the College's 'Guide to Reasonable Adjustments'.

#### Introduction

##### *Overview*

3.6 It is important to the College to maintain the standard and quality of its awards, and to ensure that students receive the productive and challenging education and learning experiences they desire.

##### *Principles*

3.7 All the College's examinations are in one (1) of the following modes:

(a) Unseen paper

An unseen paper means the candidate is unaware of the detailed text of questions or assignments in the exam paper until the invigilator officially declares that the exam has begun. The College will make candidates aware of the paper's structure beforehand, together with any materials the College may reasonably expect them to provide for the exam (e.g., pens, ruler). The paper must prescribe the exam's

date, time and duration, and give a sufficient and unambiguous rubric that leaves the candidate in no reasonable doubt about what the exam requires.

(b) Seen paper

The College may set a seen paper that allows the candidates time outside the exam itself to prepare answers to specific questions or assignments that will comprise the exam paper. If the College sets a seen paper, the module leader must ensure candidates are aware of the nature of the paper and distribute it and any materials (such as case studies) to candidates before the exam. Candidates must be given a specific date before the exam on which the College will give them the seen paper.

(c) Open book

In an open-book exam, candidates can have available in the exam room specified texts/notes they may use as a basis for questions or assignments set. The questions or assignments should in all other respects follow the definition of an unseen paper. The module leader must ensure all candidates get appropriate (e.g., unannotated) texts and are aware of the nature of the texts and notes (including, for example, the number of A4 sides) they are allowed to take into the exam room.

*Format of examination papers*

3.8 The following details apply to all coursework briefing papers and exam papers:

- (a) The title of the programme or course must appear on the front page.
- (b) The module title, level and credit value must appear below the programme or course title.
- (c) The weighting of the exam as a proportion of the total summative assessment must be stated.
- (d) If the paper is one (1) of two (2) or more in the same assessment period, this must be clearly stated.
- (e) The exam's date and time must be indicated, together with how long it lasts.
- (f) The total number of questions, exercises or assignments available on the paper must be clearly stated.
- (g) The paper must give clear instructions as to what the candidates must do in the exam, using a form of words that is unambiguous in any reasonable interpretation.
- (h) If questions are available on more than one (1) sheet of paper, or on the back of one (1) sheet, this must be clearly and boldly stated by the words 'Please turn the page'.
- (i) After the final question, the words 'End of paper' must appear.

NOTE: A template for exam paper front pages is available from the Examinations and Assessment Office. The module leader is responsible for ensuring that the template used is the most up to date.

3.09 All exam papers must be submitted to the Examinations and Assessment Office at least twenty (20) working days before the exam date. Module leaders must submit both the first-attempt paper and

the resit paper at the same time. For unseen papers, the resit paper should comprise different questions to the first-attempt paper.

3.10 Paper copies of the exam papers should be placed in a sealable envelope, with details of the exam clearly shown on the front of the envelope.

3.11 After submitting the papers to the Examination and Assessments Office, the module leader is responsible for checking that the papers are correct.

#### Examination timetable

3.12 The exam timetable must be published at least three (3) weeks before the exam session starts. The published timetable of exams should be followed. If there have to be variations, these must be approved by the Academic Registrar.

3.13 Candidates are responsible for ensuring they know the date, time and venue of all exams they are due to sit.

3.14 The College will regard a candidate who does not sit an exam and fails to provide adequate mitigating circumstances as having failed the exam.

3.15 Candidates who sit exams are declaring themselves fit to do so. The College will not consider applications for mitigating circumstances if they sit the exam unless they are taken ill during it and the invigilator verifies this.

#### Examination venues

3.16 Rooms in which exams are conducted must give candidates appropriate conditions. The College must pay proper attention to such things as heating, lighting, ventilation and noise.

3.17 The College must conduct practical exams under appropriate conditions that enable all candidates to complete the tasks required of them.

3.18 Display material (e.g., maps, diagrams, wall charts) that may help candidates must not be visible in the exam room. Particular care must be taken for exams held in laboratories or libraries.

3.19 A reliable clock must be visible to all candidates in the exam room.

3.20 The seating arrangements must prevent candidates overlooking, intentionally or otherwise, the work of others. In particular, the minimum distance in all directions from centre to centre of each candidate's desk is 1.25 metres.

3.21 Wherever possible, for written exams:

(a) candidates must face in the same direction;

(b) each candidate must have a separate desk or table large enough to accommodate question papers, books, maps (as appropriate) and answer booklets;

- (c) when candidates are working on a drawing-board set on an easel or other non-horizontal surface, they should be arranged in an inward-facing circle or similar pattern;
  - (d) if candidates sit their exam in a language laboratory, they should each have a screened booth.
- 3.22 Any candidate suffering from an infectious or contagious disease must take the exam in a separate room in which all regulations can be applied.
- 3.23 Other exams may be held in the exam room at the same time, provided this does not cause undue disturbance.

#### *Examination concessions*

3.24 If a candidate is unable to take an exam on a particular day for legitimate reasons (e.g., religious observance) and the programme leader is informed of this at an early opportunity, the College may arrange for the candidate to sit the exam at another time.

3.25 In the case of an unseen or open-book exam, the College will provide an alternative paper and the exam must be sat no later than the following day.

3.26 The College can accommodate candidates who need extra time to complete an exam due to adequately documented medical or other reasons (e.g., dyslexia or physical disability). They should normally be examined at the same time as other candidates, but the College may provide an alternative room to avoid disruption.

3.27 The amount of extra time the College allows for such a candidate should normally be informed by the reasonable adjustments agreed with Student Support or based on an educational psychologist's report or access centre report if there is an identified learning need. The maximum extra time the College allows is normally 50% of the standard examination time ([Students Needing Access Support](#)).

3.28 To avoid disrupting others, candidates who need the services of a reader, scribe or word processor should be accommodated in an alternative room. The examination should normally take place concurrently with that held in the main room.

3.29 The College regard the script of a candidate using the services of a scribe or word processor as being in the candidate's own writing. The scribe should record all text verbatim without correcting syntax or spelling. The scribe may ask the candidate to spell any words that may reasonably be regarded as technical (for example, medical terminology). See also the detailed instructions for exam concessions in 'Instructions to invigilators' in Appendix 3.

3.30 If candidates believe they need exam concessions, they are responsible for giving evidence to support the request; this can be a doctor's letter, diagnostic report or needs assessment report. The candidate must meet Student Support to review this evidence and complete a Reasonable Adjustment Agreement that will record the specific support arrangements needed. The Reasonable Adjustment Agreement should be completed at least two (2) weeks before the exam date. The Examinations and Assessment Office will not make exam concessions without a signed Reasonable Adjustment Agreement.

#### *Using calculators*

3.31 The College assumes that electronic calculators are permitted in an exam unless specifically stated otherwise.

3.32 If electronic calculators are allowed, the College should inform candidates in advance that:

- (a) the calculator must be of a size suitable for use on the desk at which the candidate will sit the examination;
- (b) the calculator must have an integral power supply (battery or solar powered);
- (c) the calculator's working condition is the candidate's responsibility;
- (d) the College will not normally regard a fault in a calculator as justifying special consideration to the candidate;
- (e) during the exam, candidates must not have with them calculator cases, instruction leaflets or similar materials;
- (f) calculators must never be borrowed from other candidates during an exam;
- (g) programmable calculators may not be used or taken into the exam room;
- (h) candidates must clear information or programmes (or both) stored in the calculator's memory before the exam. Retrieving information or programmes (or both) during the exam is a breach of the regulations;
- (i) candidates must not use the calculator function on a mobile phone, PDA or other multi-media device as a calculator in an examination.

#### *Using dictionaries*

3.33 Candidates whose first language is not English, or who have an identified additional educational need recorded in their Reasonable Adjustment Agreement, may use a dictionary in an exam, subject to the course leader's prior agreement, unless the assessment's purpose is to test competence in a language.

- (a) If use of a dictionary has been agreed, it must be paper-based
- (b) The College prohibits subject-specific dictionaries and dictionaries whose content includes more information than simple translations.
- (c) Dictionaries translating from English to a foreign language, foreign language to English or foreign language to foreign language are permitted unless the assessment's purpose is to test competence in a language.
- (d) Candidates eligible for them must provide their own dictionaries.
- (e) The candidate must complete a 'Request to use a dictionary in an examination' form and submit it with the dictionary to their programme leader at least fifteen (15) working days before the exam. The course leader will decide whether or not to authorise the use of the dictionary by inspecting the

dictionary and completing the relevant section of the form. The course leader will submit the dictionary and form to the Examinations and Assessment Office at least ten (10) working days before the exam. It will be stored with the exam paper and placed on the candidate's desk for use in the exam.

#### *Mobile phones*

3.34 Candidates must not have mobile phones or personal multi-media devices with them during an exam. Mobile phones must be switched off and left at the designated place usually the back or front of the exam room. The Invigilation Team will direct students as appropriate.

#### *Invigilation arrangements*

3.35 The College must appoint enough invigilators to ensure that the exam is conducted in line with the following requirements:

- (a) Normally, two (2) invigilators should be present for the first forty (40) candidates and then at least one (1) more invigilator present for every additional thirty (30) candidates.
- (b) A sole invigilator must be able to call for help easily without leaving the exam room or disturbing the candidates. Invigilators may be changed during the exam, provided the number in the exam room does not fall below the number prescribed and the change does not disturb candidates.
- (c) Normally, a tutor who has prepared the candidates for the subject of the exam during that academic year should not be the sole invigilator at any time during the written exam in that subject.
- (d) Only in exceptional circumstances, and with the Academic Registrar's prior approval, may an individual who is also a student invigilate an exam.
- (e) For practical tests, there should normally be one (1) invigilator to every twenty (20) candidates. In these exams a lecturer of the subject must also be present in the exam room at the start of the test and as necessary thereafter to deal with technical difficulties that may arise, including safety matters, and to help with invigilation in general.
- (f) In exams where questions or passages have to be read to a group of candidates, an invigilator must be present in addition to a reader.

NOTE: If the services of a reader are being provided for an individual candidate, the reader should not also act as the invigilator. However, the reader must not be the lecturer responsible for writing the exam paper or someone with a personal relationship to the candidate, such as relative, friend or peer. Similarly, if the candidate has the services of a reader and scribe, the same person can act as reader and scribe if this person is not the lecturer or relative, friend or peer of the candidate. In such circumstances, or where the reader or scribe (or both) is the candidate's usual study support assistant, a separate invigilator will be needed.

- (g) Arrangements must be such that each candidate in the exam room can be observed by an invigilator at all times.

3.36 The College's detailed 'Instructions to Invigilators' must be available to each invigilator in the exam room. Invigilators should also be familiar with the College's 'Student Guide to Written Examinations' and any regulations and instructions specific to the papers or subjects (or both) being examined.

Invigilation arrangement: at the start of the examination

*Identifying candidates*

3.37 Invigilators must be satisfied of the identity of every candidate attending each exam session. They must ask all candidates to place their student ID cards on their desks, clearly visible to invigilators. If candidates do not have their student ID cards, they must provide some other form of photo ID. The Examinations and Assessment Office will also provide a printed attendance list with photos. Additional ID checks may be carried out by the College from time to time.

*People present*

3.38 Only authorised people (e.g., candidates, invigilators and Examinations and Assessment Office staff) are allowed in the exam room.

3.39 Module leaders may be present in the exam room at the start of the exam to answer any queries. But they must leave once the exam is under way unless they are also acting as invigilator.

*Question papers, stationery, materials and other equipment*

3.40 The invigilator should ensure that:

- (a) the official exam stationery for the particular subject exam is issued to candidates and that no other stationery, including paper for rough work, is provided;
- (b) candidates take into the exam room only those articles, instruments or materials that are expressly permitted in the question paper's rubric, stationery list or syllabus for the subject being examined;
- (c) if unauthorised materials have been taken into the exam room, they are placed out of candidates' reach before the exam begins;
- (d) if there is an objective test and individual pre-printed answer sheets are available for each candidate, the invigilator gives each individual answer sheet only to the candidate whose name appears on it and the sheets relate to the subject and component concerned.

*Starting the examination*

3.41 The College regards an exam as in progress from the time the candidates enter the room until all the scripts have been collected.

3.42 Before allowing the candidates to start work, the invigilator should:

- (a) ensure they all have the correct question paper;

- (b) ensure they are all seated in line with any prescribed seating arrangements;
- (c) check they all have the materials they need (answer booklets/sheets, pens/pencils and question papers) to enable them to complete the exam;
- (d) inform them they are all subject to the exam regulations;
- (e) warn them all that any unauthorised material must be handed in or left in their bags at the back or front of the room;
- (f) draw to all the candidates' attention the instructions printed on the front of the question paper;

(NOTE: The invigilator must not offer any advice or comment on the work of the candidate. Any statement made about the instructions may only take the form of a translation of the instructions into other languages if this is needed and the necessary expertise is available.)

- (g) ensure that details of any error notices are brought to the notice of all candidates;
- (h) remind all candidates they should write in blue or black ink or ball pen;
- (i) inform all candidates they should enter only their student code and not their name on their answer booklets and supplementary answer sheets where applicable, and complete other details as required;
- (j) inform all the candidates that, unless the question paper says otherwise, all work – including rough work – must be done in the answer booklets provided;
- (k) inform all candidates they should cross through any rough work to show it is not part of their answer;
- (l) remind all candidates that by sitting the exam they are declaring themselves fit to do so;
- (m) announce clearly to the candidates when they may begin to write their answers, specifying the time allowed for the paper(s).

3.43 The invigilator should not give any information to candidates about suspected errors in the question paper unless an error notice has been received.

3.44 The invigilator should remind candidates they are forbidden to communicate in any way with, seek help from or give help to another candidate while in the exam room.

Invigilation arrangement: during the examination

#### *Supervising the candidates*

3.45 Invigilators must supervise the candidates at all times while the exam is in progress and give complete attention to this duty.

3.46 During a practical exam, the College recognises that candidates may have to move about to some extent and invigilators may have to give spoken instructions. Such movement and instructions must be limited to what is essential to achieve the exam's objectives.

*Late arrival of candidates*

3.47 A candidate who arrives after the scheduled exam start time but within the first 30 minutes may enter the exam room and sit the exam. Anyone arriving more than 30 minutes late may not sit the exam.

3.48 Additional time is not allowed at the end of the exam to compensate for late arrival.

*Leaving the examination room*

3.49 Having started the examination, a candidate may not leave the exam room (except in an emergency) during the first hour.

3.50 Candidates who leave the exam room temporarily must be accompanied by an invigilator or other member of staff.

3.51 Candidates who finish their work and are allowed to leave the exam room early must hand in their work before leaving. Early leavers must not be re-admitted.

3.52 To avoid disrupting others, candidates may not leave the exam room within the first hour or in the final 30 minutes of the exam.

3.53 Candidates may not remove question papers from the exam room.

*Breaches of examination regulations*

3.54 In line with the College's Academic Misconduct policy, breaches of exam regulations include:

- (a) breaching the exam-room rules in a way that could give an unfair advantage;
- (b) obtaining or seeking to obtain access to exam papers before an exam;
- (c) failing to comply with an invigilator's instructions.

3.55 An invigilator who suspects a candidate has breached exam-room rules or other requirements regarding conduct must, preferably in the presence of another invigilator or other member of staff to act as witness to the action taken:

- (a) confiscate any unauthorised material in the candidate's possession;
- (b) endorse the candidate's script on the front cover with a note of the time when the alleged breach was discovered. In the case of suspected collusion, the invigilator should endorse the script of each candidate involved. If possible, the invigilator should get another invigilator to countersign the endorsement as a witness;

- (c) where relevant, issue a new exam answer booklet to the candidate(s) in question, clearly instructing them to continue (not restart) the exam;
- (d) inform the candidate(s) in question, at the end of the exam, that a report of the incident will go to the Chair of the relevant Board of Examiners;
- (e) give brief details of the incident on the invigilator's report; and
- (f) report the allegation to the Examinations and Assessment Office, which will inform the programme leader.

#### *Irregular conduct*

3.56 Invigilators may expel a candidate from the exam room, but should do so only when they feel this is essential or when the candidate's continued presence would disrupt others.

3.57 The programme leader must ensure that the Board of Examiners receives a report of all cases of irregularity or misconduct in connection with the exam, as notified by the invigilators.

3.58 Any breach of the regulations may lead to a candidate's disqualification. The decision on disqualification rests with the Board of Examiners.

#### *Emergencies*

3.50 Invigilators must take the following actions in the event of an emergency such as a fire alarm or bomb alert:

- (a) Evacuate the exam room in line with the instructions given by the health and safety officer responsible for the building.
- (b) Ensure that all question papers and scripts are left in the exam room.
- (c) Supervise candidates as closely as possible while they are out of the exam room to ensure they do not collude.
- (d) After the candidates return to the exam room and before the exam resumes, indicate on the candidates' work the point at which the interruption occurred, if this is feasible.
- (e) Note the time and duration of the interruption in the comments box on the exam pack cover sheet.
- (f) Allow the candidates the working time prescribed for the exam that remained at the point of interruption.
- (g) If there are only a few candidates, liaise with the Examinations and Assessment Office to consider taking the candidates with question papers and scripts to another place to complete the exam.

Invigilation arrangement: at end of the examination

#### *Finishing the examination*

3.60 Ten minutes before the end of the exam, the invigilator should inform candidates of the time remaining.

3.61 At the end of the exam, the invigilator should tell candidates to stop writing.

3.62 The invigilator must instruct the candidates:

(a) to ensure they have entered all the required information on the front of their answer booklets;

(b) to check they have correctly numbered their answers;

(c) to assemble any loose sheets in the order in which they have attempted the questions, and then to fasten them and any supplementary answer sheets to the back of their answer booklets (or as otherwise instructed) with the string or tags provided.

#### *Collecting the scripts (answer booklets)*

3.63 Invigilators should check they have collected a script for all candidates marked as present on the named attendance list and that candidates have used the correct student number. Invigilators should then sort the scripts into the order shown on the anonymous attendance list and mark the list accordingly.

3.64 Invigilators should return the scripts to the Examinations and Assessment Office, which will check them and lock them in a secure cupboard until collected by the module leader for marking.

3.65 All scripts must be collected from the Examinations and Assessment Office in person and signed for. Scripts must not be sent to the module leader by post.

Invigilation arrangement: after the examination

#### *Unused stationery*

3.66 Invigilators must collect all unused stationery in the exam room, check it for loose sheets that candidates may have overlooked, and return it to the Examinations and Assessment Office for storage and further use.

#### *Examination attendance records*

3.67 Invigilators must return the completed named attendance lists, seating plans and script collection records to the Examinations and Assessment Office.

#### Advice and support

3.68 Advice for students on assessment and examination principles, and the associated lower-level College rules, is available from their programme leader or Head of Department. More complex queries may be referred to appropriate individuals.

3.69 Advice for staff on assessment and examination principles is available from their nominated Academic Policy Partner or Head of Department.

3.70 If any staff development needs are identified, these may be discussed with members of the Staff and Educational Development Team.

#### Fees

3.71 No additional fees or charges are associated with this policy.

3.72 The College is not liable for financial or other consequences arising from action under these regulations.

#### Legal and regulatory context

3.73 This policy embodies the College commitment to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code for Higher Education. In particular, it reflects the guidelines in Parts A and B, and more specifically, the indicators outlined in Chapter B6 of the Code, "Assessment of students and accreditation of prior learning" (2011).

3.74 The College may not be bound by the principles in paragraph 3.75 and this policy alone may not provide the procedure to meet all of these principles, some of which may be met by other College policies and procedures.. It uses the principles as guidance only, to help it deal soundly with these matters.

#### Enforcement, monitoring and review

3.75 If any person or body in the College refuses to comply with a request or decision made to enforce this policy, their refusal must be reported to the Academic Registrar, who will take such action to enforce this policy as they think necessary.

3.76 Each year, the College must receive a report that enables it to monitor, identify and act on any shortfalls in how this policy is interpreted and applied.

3.77 Every two (2) years, the College must review this policy to ensure that:

- (a) it remains up to date and continues to meet the expectations of the UK Quality Code, applicable legislation or guidance;
- (b) areas of improvement, or any concerns, raised by students, external examiners, or professional bodies have been addressed; and
- (c) opportunities to reduce unnecessary bureaucracy have been taken.

Schedule (not part of the policies or regulations):

Responsible Officer: Academic Registrar

Approved by: Board of Directors and Academic Board

Version: 2.0

Date: June 2017

Monitoring and Review Body: Academic Regulations and Awards Committee

Effective From: July 2017

Next Scheduled Review: April 2018