

Examinations Policy

This policy covers summative examinations in support of Senate Regulations, from September 2018. This policy has been updated (August 2020) to reflect assessments taken At Home on WISEflow.

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 for 'On Campus' exams, 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.
- The University will not reschedule an exam or assessment because of a religious celebration day due to the variety of faiths and the need to run exams in accordance with the University set academic calendar. This provides a consistent approach for all students. If the student feels that they are not able to sit the exam on the scheduled day, or that their performance has been affected, they should submit Extenuating Circumstances.

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.
- 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.
- For 'At Home' exams, an allowance of extra time may be added to mitigate any technical problems. Students should be advised that this is for uploading documents and not extra time to complete the exam.

5 Venues 'On Campus'

- 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 the 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 therefore 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 Student Wellbeing Team. 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 Wellbeing and examinations teams 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 for 'On Campus' exams 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 'On Campus' as well as reasonable adjustment for disability or injury.
- Where an 'On Campus' 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 an 'On Campus' 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.
- 'At Home' exam reasonable adjustments will be limited to extra time to complete the examination and papers in alternative formats. Some students may be entitled to remote support from Wellbeing staff.

7 Invigilators/ People in the room

Academics

- Paper authors are required by [SR 4.12](#) to be present in the 'On Campus' main examination venue for the first half hour of an examination they have written to answer any queries. The author(s) shall further remain contactable for the duration of the examination. For 'At Home' exams, the paper authors are required to be contactable during normal working hours for the duration of the timed examination. 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 invigilators with enhanced technical training.
- Technical support staff will be available to support students for 'At Home' exams via the WISEflow chat and examinations telephone services. This service should be available to students during normal working hours.

Any staff attending examination venues 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 examination question papers must show a front cover detailing: college, department, paper author, module code and title, date and examination period. For 'At Home' exams contact details for academic and technical support must be listed on the examinations cover.
- All additional material (such as tables, cases, graph paper, candidate notes and references) and permitted equipment or materials (other than standard stationery 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 background colours for papers.
- To mitigate risk when hosting Digital Examinations 'On Campus', 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 'On Campus' University examinations will normally be answered using University answer-books or the University's digital assessment platform. Answer-book design will ensure sufficient candidate information is obtained, anonymity is preserved and opportunities for misconduct are minimised.
- Candidates undertaking paper examinations should carry out any rough workings within their answer-books, crossing out but not deleting any work they do not wish to be viewed by the examiner.
- At the end of an 'On Campus' 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

On Campus Exams (and those sat at other approved exam centres)

- 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.
- [Senate Regulation 6](#) defines academic and non-academic offences that may be committed in the course of an examination and any concerns about conduct will be investigated in accordance with the Academic Misconduct or Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedure as appropriate;
- Candidates are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and honest manner during examinations.
- Candidates who are suspected of behaving inappropriately before, during or after an examination will be reported to their College or the University's Investigating Officer as appropriate to consider if action should be taken under Senate Regulation 6 and the Academic Misconduct and/or Student Disciplinary Procedure.
- The [BUL Candidate Guide for 'At Home' Digital Examinations](#) outlines how candidates are to conduct themselves and what they are permitted to have in their possession whilst seated at their desk in the examination venue, and during the course of the examination.

At Home Exams

- Candidates are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate and honest manner during examinations.
- You are not permitted to use the services of any agency or person(s) providing specimen, model or ghostwritten work in the preparation of the work submitted for open book examinations.
- You are not permitted to give assistance to others either by giving them help to access the paper or in providing specimen, model or ghostwritten work to other candidates submitting for open-book examinations.

- Papers that have been submitted in the wrong format may not be marked and the exam may be given a mark of 0/Grade of F.
- [Senate Regulation 6](#) defines the academic and non-academic offences that may be committed in the course of an examination and any concerns about conduct will be investigated in accordance with the Academic Misconduct or Non-Academic Disciplinary Procedure as appropriate.
- The [BUL Candidate Guide for 'At Home' Digital Examinations](#) outlines how candidates are to conduct themselves during the course of an “At Home” examination.

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 5 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 main 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 for ‘On Campus’ examinations, 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.
- Attendance information for ‘At Home’ examinations can be acquired from WISEflow completion data.

Venue Observation Sheet (VOS)

- There shall be a VOS completed for any ‘On Campus’ 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.

Exam Observation Sheet (EOS)

- There shall be an EOS completed for any ‘At Home’ examination session where there has been a general technical disturbance to some or all candidates. 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 'On Campus' 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.
- For 'At Home' exams an SOS sheet shall be completed for any students who report experiencing technical problems which prevent them from successfully completing the exam within the allocated time period. Students wishing to claim Extenuating Circumstances (EC) are responsible for completing an EC application within 5 working days of the exam. Further guidance is provided [here](#).
- A summary of SOS forms shall be made available 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.
- Students should receive a copy of the SOS form within 5 working days of the exam.

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.
- A summary of AQS forms shall be made available for college panels and boards to review.

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 'On Campus' room capacities and layouts comply with safety legislation and guidelines.
- Emergency procedures for 'On Campus' examinations 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 [the examinations webpage](#):

- [BUL Candidate Guide for 'At Home' Digital Examinations](#)
- [BUL Candidate Guide for 'On Campus' Digital Examinations](#)
- [Recommendations for WISEflow Exams](#)
- 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 Venue Observation Sheet
 - EOS Exam Observation Sheet
 - EDS Exam Details Sheet
 - SOS Student Observation Sheet
 - AQS Academic Query Sheet
- Plan form layouts of main examination venues in the Sports Hall and Indoor Athletic Centre