

# **Exam procedures**

# What is this Procedure for?

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## **Why does the University have these procedures?**

At Staffordshire University, your learning will be assessed in a variety of ways but formal exams is a common way for you to demonstrate your learning. Exams allow us to evaluate your learning at the end of a period of study and are designed to assess your recollection and analysis of information. You can read about other types of assessment and our processes in our [Assessment setting, marking and review procedures](#).

It's important that you prepare for an exam knowing exactly what is expected of you and what you can expect from us and we use these procedures to outline this information and to ensure fairness for all students in exams. We'll use them to take action if we have concerns that a student has had unfair advantage, or caused unfair disadvantage to other students in an exam.

These procedures apply to all of our taught courses.

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# What can you expect of us?

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## **What is an exam?**

At Staffordshire University an exam (or examination) is usually a formal, summative assessment. This means that it contributes to your progression and your final grade – you can find more information on summative assessment in the University's [Glossary](#).

Exams are associated with individual modules and you will usually undertake an exam(s) at the end of a module. The assessment details for each of your modules will be outlined in the module handbook.

Exams might take place either online or on campus, they might be 'open book' or 'closed book', but they are usually completed within a time limit, with all eligible students taking the exam at the same time and under the same controlled conditions. Exam questions or tasks are usually unseen to assess your recall and analysis skills when applying your learning. If an exam is 'open book', you will have access to some of your learning materials

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for reference. This is different to a 'closed book' exam in which you are not permitted to access any resources. You will be told if your exam is 'open book'.

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**When will exams take place?**

We know that you'll do your best if you complete your assessments as close to the learning as possible so exams usually take place at the end of a module. The majority of courses have exams at the same time and these weeks are published in the [academic calendar](#) but it's important to check your module handbook as some programmes/ Schools have their own exam schedule. The timetable for each of the shared exam periods will be made available to you well in advance of exams starting.

In-person exams usually begin at 10.00am or 2.00pm. This may be different if your exam is online. Wherever possible we'll try to ensure that you are only scheduled for one exam a day but this won't always be possible. Resit exam periods are usually shorter, so if you have to resit an exam during that time, you may need to sit two exams in a day. You won't normally be expected to sit an exam at a weekend or on a UK Bank Holiday. Exam lengths vary depending on the requirements of the module.

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**Where do exams take place?**

If your exam is taking place on campus then it will be scheduled into the most appropriate venue – this might be a specialist space such as a laboratory, or a large space that can be turned into an exam hall, such as the LRV or Sports Centre on the Stoke campus.

If your exam is taking place online, we'd strongly encourage you to make sure the space you use is as quiet as possible and comfortable with reliable access to the internet.

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**Who is involved with exams?**

Lots of people are involved with writing and marking your exam papers and you can read more about our assessment processes generally in our [Assessment setting, marking and review procedures](#).

For all on campus exams, invigilators will be present to support you and ensure that the exam runs smoothly. An invigilator is someone who supervises students in an exam. Your module leaders and tutors will invigilate exams supported by members of staff from across the university to make sure there are enough invigilators to support all of the students in the room.

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The invigilators' priority is to ensure that all exams are conducted in a fair way for all students. They also make sure that the regulations are followed throughout an exam. This means we can provide you, other universities, professional bodies, and your future employers with assurance that our exams regulations are robust and exams are conducted fairly. It is important that once you enter the exam room, you follow the invigilator's instructions. The Chief Invigilator has overall responsibility for the exam room.

We will also monitor online exams to ensure that they are fair and that the regulations are upheld. The way we will do this will vary and it will be different to how we monitor in person exams but you will be advised on this by your module leader.

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**I'm studying at a partner institution, who will timetable my exams?**

Most of Staffordshire University's partner institutions will timetable their own exams. However, on some programmes, exams will need to be scheduled at the same time for students on campus and those studying with a partner institution. If this is the case and you are studying with one of our international partners, please be assured that we will take the time difference into account to give all students the best opportunity to succeed.

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**I have a Learning Support Statement - what support is available for me?**

If you are registered with the [Student Inclusion Team](#) we will advise you of the reasonable adjustments in place for your exam. For in person exams, these may include undertaking the exam in a separate room, having extra time or access to a reader or scribe. The measures in place for you will be determined by the Student Inclusion Team service and may be different for online and in person exams.

If you aren't able to attend the exam or you no longer require the adjustments then you must let the Student Inclusion Team know straight away.

If you haven't already advised us of a disability (including learning differences and mental health needs) or you haven't been contacted about the adjustments in place for your exam but you think you are eligible for support, you'll need to contact the Student Inclusion team immediately so that we can put measures in place to support you.

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**I'm feeling worried about exams**

We know that exams can be daunting and that you may be feeling anxious ahead of this time. Your wellbeing is really important to us so there is lots of help and advice available from our student support teams on how to look after yourself

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**– what support is available?**

and from [Academic Study Skills](#) on how to academically prepare for exams.

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## What do we expect of you?

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**What do I need to do to prepare for an exam?**

We want everything to go as smoothly as possible for you in the exam and we know that you are more likely to succeed if you are well prepared. This includes familiarising yourself with the practical details of exams, as well as revising and academically preparing for your exams.

Make sure that you are clear on what is going to be assessed in your exam, look at past papers and work out a revision schedule. You are responsible for your own learning, so you need to tell us as soon as you can if you don't understand something, or if you have any questions. If you are unsure about something that you've learned, or about the exam, talk to your module tutor.

Attendance at exams is compulsory and you will need to be organised to make sure you know when and where your exams are. The time, date and venue of each exam will be published in the final exams timetable well in advance of the exams. Occasionally we may be required to make changes to the exam timetable so it's important that you check it regularly for any updates.

You may be scheduled for a morning and afternoon exam on the same day but if you have been scheduled to sit more than one exam at the same time, this would be a clash and would urgently need resolving. We work hard to ensure that the final timetable works for all students on all courses and that there are no clashes but if you do have any concerns then you should contact someone from your course team immediately.

If your exam is online then make sure you know how to get help if you have a technical problem on the day. You should also familiarise yourself with the guidance on downloading your exam paper and uploading your work at the end so that you don't lose any time in the exam working this out and you are able to submit your answers on time.

For some exams there will be a registration and/or exam fee. This will be outlined in your module handbook and we'll let you know how to pay in advance of the exams. These fees will be

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sent directly to the relevant external organisation so this can't be refunded by the University if you don't sit the exam.

You should make sure that you are aware of what you are allowed to take to exams, and the exam rules well in advance - these are outlined below.

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### **What do I need to do on the day of an exam?**

We know you are more likely to reach your potential if you are feeling calm and well prepared. It's really important that you manage your time on the day of the exam to make sure you are ready to begin the exam on time, feeling as comfortable and ready as possible.

If your exam is taking place on campus then you'll need to bring your photo student ID card with you – this will need to be displayed at your desk throughout the exam. If you have lost your student card you'll need [to request a replacement](#) in advance of the exam period.

Make sure you arrive at the exam well in advance, we recommend at least 15 minutes ahead of the start time. If you are late you would normally be admitted into the exam room up to 30 minutes after the exam has started, but you won't be able to make up for any time lost because of lateness.

Make sure you don't bring anything into the exam room that you shouldn't, like unauthorised revision notes, your phone, or any other devices that access or store information. If you bring any of these by mistake, you should tell an invigilator immediately and you'll be advised of where to leave them. Please note that items can't be stored securely so we'd strongly advise that you leave valuables at home.

You are welcome to bring a soft drink and small packet of sweets with you and, if they are permitted for your exam, an authorised dictionary or calculator. Only dedicated calculators with the single function of calculation can be used - you mustn't bring a multi-purpose device. You will need to make sure your dictionary or calculator has been checked by an invigilator before using it in the exam.

Please ensure you don't bring anything to your desk that could be covering revision notes – invigilators may check anything that is on your desk for this reason. You should also make sure that your hands are clean of any writing or symbols.

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**What rules do I need to follow during an exam?**

To make sure that no student has had an unfair advantage or causes unfair disadvantage to other students in an exam, we'll ask you to follow the exam regulations throughout.

If your exam is taking place on campus an invigilator will let all students know when you can enter the exam room and will brief you on any other information – such as where to leave any bags and whether you need to complete any attendance paperwork.

We'll ask you to be silent once you enter the room until you leave at the end of the exam – even if you have finished answering the questions or your exam has finished. Once you enter the exam room you'll need to follow the invigilators' instructions to ensure the exam is fair for everyone undertaking it.

It's really important that you follow the Chief Invigilator's directions for completing the front of your answer paper to make sure that your work can be marked. The Chief Invigilator will tell you when you can begin the exam and you mustn't open your paper or begin working until then.

You'll be provided with official exam paper for your answers and any workings out which you'll need to leave in the room, with any other equipment provided, at the end of the exam. Your answer paper will not normally be returned to you. Please make sure your writing is clear enough for your work to be assessed – if the examiner cannot read your answers, your paper may not be marked.

If you need more stationery, need to go to the toilet, if there's a problem with your paper or you're feeling unwell then raise your hand and an invigilator will come to help you. You mustn't leave the room without the permission of an invigilator and you won't be able to leave in either the first hour or the last 30 minutes of the exam, unless you need to go to the bathroom or in the event of an emergency. If you leave the exam room without the permission of an invigilator, we will assume you have withdrawn from the exam and you won't be able to return to your desk to finish the exam. If you need to temporarily leave the exam room, you'll be accompanied by an invigilator.

If you think you have finished answering all of the questions and tasks in the exam paper and have time to spare, it's a good idea to read through your responses and check the paper to make sure you have seen all of the questions.

If you choose to leave the exam early then you must make sure that your answer paper has been collected by an invigilator first.

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Once your paper has been submitted and you have left the room you would be unable to return, even if there was time remaining in the exam.

The Chief Invigilator will announce the end of the exam and ask you to stop writing immediately. Once all the papers have been collected, you'll be advised that you can leave the room.

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## What if something goes wrong?

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### **What if I can't attend an exam?**

If you're unwell or experience a personal emergency and aren't able to sit an exam – or have any other exceptional reason for not attending, you'll need to let us know immediately and apply for [Exceptional Circumstances](#). Talk to us as soon as you can so that we can advise you – either your Personal Tutor or a member of your Course Team will be able to help in the first instance.

If you're absent for any other reason, then unfortunately you will fail the exam and the standard Academic Regulations will apply.

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### **What if I don't pass an exam?**

We always want you to pass assessments at the first attempt but if your work hasn't met the standards we set then you will normally be given the opportunity to resit an exam. For most modules, this will usually be scheduled for the next exam period.

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### **What if I think I have broken the exam rules?**

If you think you have breached the rules of the exam then you should inform an invigilator immediately. If you don't do this, or you knowingly break the exam regulations, you may be subject to an academic conduct investigation. You can read more about this in the University's [Academic Conduct Procedure](#) but breaches of the regulations include:

- Seeing, or trying to see, a copy of the exam paper in advance of the start of the exam
- Having or using an unauthorised dictionary or calculator
- Having or accessing unauthorised revision notes or other learning materials during the exam
- Copying, or attempting to copy, another student's work
- Communicating, or trying to communicate, with another student during an exam
- Getting, or trying to get someone else to undertake the exam for you
- Undertaking, or trying to undertake, the exam on behalf of another student



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If an invigilator believes that academic misconduct has happened they will make a note in your exam answer book and remove anything from your desk that relates to their concerns. You will be permitted to continue with the exam but the incident will be referred to the Academic Conduct Panel for investigation. If you feel that a decision on your academic conduct is wrong, you can appeal. You can find more information in the [Appeals Procedure](#).

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**What if there's a disruption to an exam?**

It's really important that all students are able to concentrate and perform to their best ability in an exam. If an invigilator feels that a student's behaviour is causing an unreasonable disturbance to other students in the room then they will make that student aware of this with a warning. If the disruptive behaviour continues then the student will be required to leave the exam room. They won't be permitted to return and complete the exam.

If a fire alarm sounds during an exam, the invigilator will instruct you to evacuate the building as normal and gather at the usual assembly point for that area of campus. You should exit the room without talking and it's important that you leave everything on your desk and in the room. You should remain at the assembly point with the invigilators and return to the exam room immediately when you're told it's safe to do so.

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## Other Stuff

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**How will my work be marked and where can I access my results?**

All formal exams will normally be marked anonymously by your module team. Please refer to our [Assessment setting, marking and review procedures](#) for general information on how we assess you and let you know about your results.