

Expectation and guidance for the provision of undergraduate student access to their examination scripts

1. Introduction

1.1 Following a two-year pilot, Senate agreed in October 2017 an institutional-level principle that undergraduate students should be able to access and view their exam scripts on request. The pilot was instigated in response to feedback from students that they would find this facility helpful.

1.2 The outcomes of the pilot reinforced the academic benefits of the provision, where students saw it as a way of improving their exam technique (cutting out silly mistakes, presentation of argument), improving their understanding of what the marker was looking for and to evaluate for themselves what they had written.

1.3 This guidance document is written for staff to help support the arrangement and organisation of this access by schools. This may be provided by schools for exam scripts emanating from the January and Summer 2018 examination periods, where a school is in a position to do so, but will be fully implemented for the 2018/19 academic year onwards.

2. Expectation

2.1 An institutional expectation has been established that individual undergraduate students may request and subsequently be able to see their examination scripts. This covers scripts emanating from, but not limited to, written, unseen examinations held in the University examination periods (i.e. January, Summer and August/September). Students are not obliged to take up this opportunity.

2.2 It is at the school's discretion as to how the expectation is met and the provision is arranged, such that it is manageable. Some schools may wish to prioritise resource into routinely providing this provision at a cohort level, whilst for other schools (and its students), this may not be an imperative and will so offer the provision for individual students, on request.

2.3 Additionally, it may not be appropriate or useful to the student to provide access to scripts emanating from all forms of written examination; therefore, a school should identify and publicise those examinations where it would not be appropriate for students to view their scripts, providing the reasons why, if necessary.

2.4 Schools may, and are encouraged to, integrate access to exam scripts into a wider strategy for providing feedback on examinations (if it has not done so already), for example by providing cohort-based exam reports and/or individual breakdowns of marks (see section 6 for further information). Regardless, it is important that all students are aware of the provision and the circumstances under which they can take it up.

3. Purpose

3.1 The purpose of enabling students to access their exam script, as part of the feedback process, is to help them:

- Familiarise themselves with their work (providing a reminder of both the questions and their answers);

- Identify where they went wrong / right (for themselves and in relation to any feedback received);
- Feed-forward – to improve preparation/revision, exam technique and identify the areas in which they need to focus ahead of the next relevant assessment in their unit or programme and enhance their understanding of the subject.

3.2 The purpose of this provision is not for students to query the mark allocation. As outlined in the University Examination Regulations, any disagreement with an academic judgement, including the mark awarded for any individual component of any assessment, will not constitute a ground for appeal. It neither constitutes ‘feedback’ in itself.

3.3 Students should also be reminded that any annotations on an exam script are purely made for marking purposes and are not points of feedback, which is provided by other means.

3.4 Information to students on the scope of the provision, how it may be used as a means to reflect upon their work, and their responsibilities and the conditions for release is provided in a proforma document that schools may wish to publicise to their students: www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/exam-script-access/.

3.5 Schools may also wish to arrange a preparatory session for its students to explain the purpose and arrangements for access.

4. Suggested methodologies

4.1 Schools should manage the arrangement of this provision; however, some preferred methodologies where students request to see their exam script, within two categories, follow:

A. Students can view the original script within a controlled environment

- An open session on a specified time and date is scheduled where exam scripts are available for viewing in a controlled space and students can just turn up without prior notification;
- Students submit a request to see their exam script/s by a stated deadline; the script is then prepared and provided to the student in a controlled space at a scheduled time and date;
- Students are able to request to discuss and talk through their exam script with an appropriate member of staff (e.g. personal tutor or unit director).

B. Scripts are returned to students

- Exam scripts are scanned and either:
 - the scanned version is electronically (and securely) released to the student
 - the scanned version is stored securely, and the original released to the student
- Exam scripts are photocopied, and a copy is handed to the student.

*The University’s **Print Services** provides a facility whereby they can either scan exam scripts and save them to a shared network folder or photocopy the exam script, returning both to the school. Please contact Print Services as soon as possible to confirm copying or scanning requirements, including volume and timescales, but as a guide the following costs will apply:*

Scanning: £30 per hour

Copying: black and white – 5p for single sided, 8p for double sided; colour – 17p and 31p

Large-scale scanning may also be provided by a contracted external scanning service: [Restore](#). Further information on the process for scanning physical files, such as exam scripts, is available from the [IT Services web page](#) (UoB only). Scanning requests typically take 1-2 weeks to be fulfilled.

4.2 On the basis that all assessment is for learning, students should have the opportunity to access their work to facilitate the effective use of feedback and encourage self-reflection. As described above, access may extend to a school permitting a student to retain their script or an image of it; this encompasses the ability for students to photograph their script under category A, unless there is good reason otherwise (e.g. the script contains the questions, which are derived from a limited bank). All instances of a script (or copy of) being released to a student are covered by specific conditions for its use (see 5.5).

5. Arrangements

Scheduling

5.1 Exam scripts should be made accessible following the relevant meeting of the faculty board of examiners where the marks are agreed, but as soon after the examination as possible such that it can help inform the next learning activity and assessment. The availability of scripts will normally relate to the exams held in the most recent examination period; it will be at the discretion of the school to consider requests to make available exam scripts from previous exam periods.

5.2 Any scheduled opportunities for students to see their exam scripts should be at a time and day that is accessible for the students. Schools/departments should discuss with course reps, in SSLCs and/or with Academic Societies as to when this should be. Within this, students should be given sufficient time to review their script.

5.3 The availability of the facility and arrangements for accessing scripts should be well publicised to students at appropriate times of the year.

Responsibilities

5.4 In organising access to the exam script, schools should ensure students are made aware of:

- the methodology adopted by the school and subsequent arrangements for access (see section 4)
- the purpose of accessing their script or their script being released to them (see section 3)
- their responsibilities in handling and using their script appropriately (see 5.5)

5.5 In order to safeguard exam scripts and their use, students must not remove, mark or modify an original script unless they are explicitly released to them. Additionally, the provision of access and/or release of a script to a student is purely for their own educational use; students must not share or publish their scripts, answers or the exam questions. Any breach of these conditions will likely be considered a disciplinary offence under the University's Student Disciplinary Regulations.

5.6 Students should be directed to speak to the relevant member of academic staff, if they still have further queries about their performance in the examination.

Retention

5.7 As referenced in the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes, examination scripts need only be retained in the case of appeal and therefore would not normally be kept for longer than a year following graduation.

6. Feedback on examinations

6.1 The provision of generic feedback on the performance of a student cohort overall, highlighting good approaches and common errors/mistakes or a short summary of personal feedback on an individual's performance is encouraged for all students, and not just in combination with viewing an exam script.

6.2 Students should be able to understand what they got right and what they got wrong, such that they can improve their learning, in all forms of assessment. The Institutional Principles for Assessment and Feedback include the statement that: *"Feedback will be provided on all assessment where practicable"*, which has been elaborated upon in the recently approved 'Framework for the return of feedback to students on their work':

Students will be provided with feedback on their work; however, the nature of the feedback will depend upon the purpose of the assessment. Feedback should always be provided on assessment that provides a developmental opportunity within a unit. An exception would be for those 'final' summative assessments of learning where feedback will not serve to inform or support future learning for the programme; however, it is still considered good practice to provide feedback in order to help students understand their awarded mark.

6.3 Not only may such provision moderate the number of students who might wish to take up the opportunity to view their scripts, but for those who do attend, the academic value of viewing their script will be at its highest when considered alongside their mark and feedback on their work, even if it is cohort-based.

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Available electronically from: www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/exam-script-access/