

Procedure for the provision of student access to their examination scripts

Summary

The Procedure outlines the requirements around student access to their examination scripts. The accompanying guidance documents, one for staff and one for students, provide more information about how this access might be provided and associated responsibilities.

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Contents

Procedure for the provision of student access to their examination scripts	1
1. Introduction	3
2. Scope	3
3. Access to exam scripts	4
4. Purpose of access to exam scripts	4
5. Confidentiality	4
6. Reasonable Adjustments	4
7. Guidance for schools on implementation of the Procedure	4
8. Information for Schools to provide to taught students on viewing examination scripts	8

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University of Bristol is committed to providing a mechanism for a taught student to access and view their exam script(s) on request. The aim of this provision is to enable students to reflect on their exam performance and to consider how they might improve their preparation for future assessments. This principle was put in place after a pilot study and in response to student feedback.

2. Scope

- 2.1. The Procedure for the provision of taught student access to their examination scripts (“Procedure for student access to exam scripts”) applies to all registered students enrolled on a taught programme of study that leads to a formal award or credit-bearing unit, and supports the delivery of the [Policy on the return of feedback to students on their work](#).
- 2.2. Students studying at partner institutions should follow the student access to exam scripts policy at their home institution.
- 2.3. The Procedure covers scripts emanating from, but not limited to, written, unseen examinations held in the University assessment periods (i.e. TB-1 assessment period, TB-2 assessment period and Reassessment period). Students are not obliged to take up this opportunity.
- 2.4. Normally, students must be able to view all their exam scripts; exceptions to this include but are not limited to:
 - Multiple choice questions (MCQs) and their answers
 - Extended matching questions (EMQs) and their answers
 - OSCE, spot tests or exams of a similar format
 - Exams where, for good reason, limited question banks are used
 - Exams run by professional bodies where the professional body prohibits access to scripts
- 2.5. Where a student is not permitted to view their exam script, or where it is not appropriate or useful to the student to provide access to scripts, a school¹ should identify and publicise those examinations where it would not be possible/appropriate for students to view their scripts, providing the reasons why.

¹ Reference to “schools” in the document refers to schools or departments as appropriate to the local circumstances

3. Access to exam scripts

- 3.1. It is at the school's discretion as to how students are given access to their examination scripts, such that it is manageable. Some schools may wish to routinely provide this provision at a cohort level, whilst other schools may offer the provision for individual students on request. See section 7 for further guidance on methodologies used to provide student access to exam scripts.
- 3.2. Schools should integrate access to exam scripts into a wider strategy for providing feedback on examinations, for example by providing cohort-based exam reports and/or individual breakdown of marks. It is important that all students are aware of the provision and the circumstances under which they can take it up.
- 3.3. 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
 - share, publish or otherwise disseminate 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](#).

4. Purpose of access to exam scripts

- 4.1. The aim of this provision is to provide students with useful feedback on their exam performance so that they can understand the strengths and weaknesses of their work. The purpose is not for students to query the academic judgement of the marker(s) or the mark allocation.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1. Students are only permitted to view their own exam scripts and are not permitted to view the exam scripts of other students.

6. Reasonable Adjustments

- 6.1. Under the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments will be made to the Procedure for student access to exam scripts to prevent any student from being at a substantial disadvantage because of a disability.

7. Guidance for schools on implementation of the Procedure

Background and rationale

- 7.1 The University has in place an institutional-level expectation that taught students should be able to access and view their exam scripts on request.
- 7.2 For students, the academic benefits of access to exam scripts include:
- The ability to familiarise themselves with their work (providing a reminder of both the questions and their answers);
 - The opportunity to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of their exam answers and to identify where they went wrong or what they did well in;
 - Feed-forward opportunities whereby they can consider how to improve their preparation/revision strategies, exam technique and identify the areas in which they need to focus ahead of the next relevant assessment in their unit or programme.
- 7.3 The expectation is for schools² to provide access to exam scripts using one or more of the suggested methods in this document.

Which scripts should students be able to see?

- 7.4 Schools should provide access to exam scripts for all the units they own, when requested, including those taken as optional or open units by students outside the school.
- 7.5 Where a student is not permitted to view their exam script, then the school should make this clear to students with the reason why.

How should students be given access to their scripts?

- 7.6 There are two methodologies which schools are advised to use to provide students access to exam scripts. Schools have the discretion to use the methodology which best suits their circumstances.

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

There are a number of possible ways in which this can be put in place:

- 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. This may be a scanned copy of their script viewed electronically or the original physical script;

² Reference to “schools” in the document refers to schools or departments as appropriate to the local circumstances

- 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 an opportunity to discuss and talk through their exam script with an appropriate member of staff (e.g. personal tutor or unit director).

It is at the school's discretion whether they allow students to photograph their scripts at these sessions. Use of any images of the scripts are covered by specific conditions for its use. Where schools decide that photographs will not be permitted, they should justify this to students.

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 script is released to the student.

Physical exam scripts are photocopied, and a copy is given to the student. Scripts can be copied by Print Services, or by an approved external provider such as Restore.

Individual exam scripts may be uploaded to BlackBoard and made available upon request.

When should students be given access to their scripts?

- 7.7 Exam scripts should be made accessible as soon as possible; scripts from the TB1 assessment period should normally be made available to students early in TB2, while those from the TB2 assessment period and Reassessment period should be made available early in TB1 in the following academic year. Schools should ensure students are aware whether the marks are provisional or final when they view their exam scripts.
- 7.8 Schools should consider how students who are re-taking exams can be given access over the summer period to the scripts from the exams they failed, so that they can best prepare for reassessment.
- 7.9 Any scheduled opportunities for students to see their exam scripts should be at a time and day that is accessible for the students. Schools should discuss with course reps, in Student Academic Representation Forums (SARFs) and/or with Academic Societies as to when this should be. Within the scheduled sessions, students should be given sufficient time to review their script.

- 7.10 Where possible, it is good practice to link access to exam scripts to personal tutorials so that students have the opportunity to speak to their personal tutor soon after they have viewed their scripts. The tutor can help the student reflect on their exam performance and discuss any specific academic support needs.

What are the school responsibilities?

- 7.11 In addition to providing access to scripts, schools are encouraged to provide generic or individual feedback on the performance of the student cohort overall or individual student feedback, highlighting good approaches and common errors/mistakes. Further information is provided in the [Policy on the return of feedback to students on their work](#).
- 7.12 Schools should gather feedback on and monitor the uptake of access to scripts in their school to maximise the usefulness of access and its uptake.
- 7.13 Schools should ensure students are given information on access to their scripts by providing a statement on the unit Blackboard site and/or handbook which includes details on:
- what exam scripts they will have access to, and which they will not, with a brief rationale for the latter;
 - when and how they will be given access to their exam scripts;
 - why reviewing their scripts can provide them with useful feedback and how it fits with other feedback the school provides on exams, e.g. any generic feedback from the exams and mark breakdowns;
 - their responsibilities for the use of their scripts;
 - who they can talk to if they want further feedback; normally, students should be directed to the Unit Director, but units with very large cohorts may put other arrangements in place.

Details of general information for Schools to provide to students on exam script access is provided in section 8.

- 7.14 Schools may also wish to arrange a preparatory session for their students to explain the purpose and arrangements for access to scripts.

- 7.15 As referenced in the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes, examination scripts need to be retained in line with the [University Records Management and Retention Policy and Retention Schedule](#).

What are the students' responsibilities?

- 7.16 Students must not remove, mark or modify an original script unless they are explicitly released to them. The provision of access and/or release of a script (or copy thereof) to a student is purely for their own educational use; students must not share, publish or otherwise disseminate 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.
- 7.17 Students should be aware of the purpose of access to exam scripts is to provide feedback and that schools will not permit scripts to be remarked or enter into any other negotiations regarding the marks awarded, unless the student considers there has been a material irregularity in the mark processing. The purpose of this provision is not for students to query the academic judgement or mark allocation.

8. Information for Schools to provide to taught students on viewing examination scripts

This section provides information on the purpose and process by which students may view examination script/s and how they can make the most of this opportunity, should you wish to take it up. The term 'examination script/s' is used in this guidance and in the associated Procedure and refers to the completed exam booklets that contain their responses.

Principle and purpose

Taught students may request and subsequently permitted to see their examination scripts. This access covers scripts emanating from, but not limited to, written, unseen examinations held in the University examination periods (i.e. TB1 assessment period, TB2 assessment period and Reassessment period).

The purpose of providing access to your exam script, as part of the feedback process, is to help you familiarise yourself with your work (questions and answers) so you can reflect on your strengths and weaknesses and identify where you could improve and what you did well in order that you may improve your preparation/revision strategies and exam technique for the future.

Please note that this is not about querying or contesting the marks and schools will not permit scripts to be remarked or enter into any other negotiations regarding the marks

awarded unless the student considers there has been a material irregularity in the mark processing.

Please also be aware that any annotations on an exam script are normally made for marking purposes and are not necessarily intended as detailed feedback.

Arrangements

Schools will let you know the process by which you can request access to your examination script/s, including the method by which you will be able to view them. Access will normally relate to the exams held in the most recent examination period; should you wish to view scripts from previous exam periods, please contact the relevant school who will let you know whether this is possible.

Schools will also confirm the dates within which exam scripts will be available to view:

- For the TB1 assessment period, scripts will normally be available early in TB2.
- For the TB2 assessment period and Reassessment period, scripts will normally be available early in TB1 in the following academic year.

Please be aware that depending on when you are given access to your scripts, the marks may still be provisional.

It may not be appropriate to see some examination scripts – schools will confirm those examinations where this is the case, providing the reasons why.

Your responsibilities

There are two key conditions associated with this provision:

- the provision of access to and/or release of your script and the associated exam questions are purely for your own educational use; you must not share, publish or otherwise disseminate your script/answers or the exam questions;
- unless your original script has been formally released to you, you must not mark or modify it in any way.

Breaching either of these conditions would likely be considered a disciplinary offence under the University's [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#).

Viewing your examination script

Please use the opportunity to view your exam script as a means to reflect upon your performance and identify the areas in which you need to improve. You may wish frame the consideration of your script with the following tips / prompts in mind:

Advice on how to make the most of viewing your exam scripts

- Try to understand the role of the marker when reviewing your answers: use the marking criteria or marking descriptors used for the assessment to help you do this.
- Review your script alongside your mark allocation and any feedback you have received on your examination performance
- Take the time to review what you have written, but don't over-analyse it
- Use the feedback in a constructive way to improve your future performance

Prompts

- What have you done well?
- What will you do better next time?
- On reflection, do you feel you answered the actual question(s) set?
- Did you manage your time effectively in the exam, allocating the right amount of time to answer each question?
- Are your answers clear and well structured?
- Are your answers legible?
- Do your answers show the necessary depth and breadth of knowledge, and critical ability?
- How might this change your revision techniques in future?
- How does this relate to previous feedback you have received on your work?

You might then find it helpful to consider the following questions:

1. What three things would you tell yourself to do differently in your next exam?
2. What three areas/topics do you think you need to work on?
3. What specific thing has pleased you most about your performance in the exam?
4. Are there any study skills resources/workshops you should access (see the [Study Skills pages](#)) or issues you feel you should raise with your Personal Tutor?

Write down your answers to these questions and keep them handy. You may find it helpful to talk them through with your Personal Tutor and/or remind yourself of your answers before you start revising for your next examinations.