



Institute of  
Biomedical  
Science

## **RULES FOR CONDUCTING EXAMINATIONS**

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## **Introduction**

This document explains the rules and regulations relating to the Institute of Biomedical Science (IBMS) examinations. It describes the requirements that must be adhered to before, during and after the examination and the role that the invigilators play in ensuring the smooth running of the examinations. It also describes the procedures and processes for special consideration and mitigating circumstances.

## **Invigilators**

Invigilators are responsible for conducting a particular examination session in the presence of the candidates in such a way that upholds the integrity of the Institute's examination and assessment process. They ensure that the examination is conducted according to these instructions in order to:

- ensure all candidates have an equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities
- ensure the security of the examination before, during and after the examination
- prevent possible candidate malpractice
- prevent possible administrative failures

Invigilators should be familiar with these instructions and give all of their attention to conducting the examination properly and so therefore should not carry out any other task (for example, reading a book or undertaking other work) in the examination room.

## **Head of Examinations**

The Head of Examinations will ensure that candidates are provided with a clear itinerary for the examinations in sufficient time to allow them to make suitable arrangements and, if appropriate, to apply for reasonable adjustments to the examination that they are entering.

The information provided will also include details of where this document can be located on the Institute website, the need for candidates to bring an appropriate form of identification with them on the day of the examination and the provision of an emergency contact number for the lead invigilator in the location that they are sitting the examination for use should the candidate encounter problems getting to the examination on the day.

## Responsibility of Invigilators - Prior to the Examination

On receipt the lead invigilator should check the examination papers and accompanying materials carefully. The invigilator should notify the Institute immediately if there are any problems such as;

- it appears that the parcel or one of the packets has been opened during transit and therefore there may have been a breach of security
- the material has been significantly damaged in transit;
- there are any differences between the materials received and the delivery details that will have previously been communicated by the Head of Examinations

Once the materials have been checked they should be stored securely until the day of the examination(s).

## Responsibility of Invigilators - Day of the Examination

On the day of the examination invigilators must ensure that:

- All display materials (such as diagrams, projected images and wall charts) which might be useful to candidates **are not** visible in the examination room. Invigilators must take particular care with examinations held in laboratories and libraries.
- A reliable clock is visible to each candidate in the examination room and that they have previously ensured that it is in good working order and shows the correct time.
- A board/flipchart/whiteboard should be visible to all candidates showing the actual start and finish time of each examination and any other relevant information.
- Drinking water and cups are available at the front of the room.
- A notice reading 'Quiet – Examination in progress' is placed outside the examination room and that the following posters are also placed prominently displayed:
  - Warning to candidates
  - No mobile phones(See Appendix A)

- The seating arrangements prevent candidates from overlooking (intentionally or otherwise) the work of others. Wherever possible this will mean that:
  - all candidates should face in the same direction
  - each candidate should have a separate desk or table big enough to hold question papers and answer booklets. If candidates are not working at individual desks they must be far enough apart so that their work cannot be seen by and contact cannot be made with other candidates
  
- Candidates have brought with them an appropriate form of identification such as a recent photograph (e.g. passport, driving licence, hospital ID card). This should be checked during the registration period on the examination day. Candidates who fail to produce identification will not be permitted to sit the examination on the day.

## Resources for the Examination

In the examination room candidates must not have access to any written information, material or equipment other than those stated in the instructions on the question paper or the specification for that examination as this may give them an unfair advantage. The use of calculators is allowed only where clearly marked on the examination paper and these will be provided by the Institute.

Potential technological/ web enabled sources of information such as:

- iPods;
- iWatches;
- mobile phones;
- MP3/4 players;
- wrist watches which have a data storage device;

are **not** permitted.

This means that;

- ideally, all unauthorised items are left outside of the examination room
- any unauthorised items that are taken into the examination room must be placed out of the reach of the candidate (and not under their desks) before the examination commences. This would normally be at the front of the examination room or a similar arrangement that enables invigilators to control access to the items. Any electronic device **must** be switched off during the examination to avoid disturbing candidates during the examination.

Valuables such as wallets and keys may be retained by each candidate at the discretion of the invigilators.

If candidates have any unauthorised material in an examination (whether or not they intend to use it) this may be considered as malpractice. In such circumstances the invigilator will write up the incident using the report form in Appendix C.

## Resources for Candidates with Special Arrangements

The Institute recognises that the Equality Act of 2010 covers a number of protected characteristics which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. When developing qualifications and designing assessments and examinations, the Institute makes every effort to consider the needs of all candidates, including those with disabilities or specific difficulties.

A candidate does not necessarily have to be disabled (as defined by the Equality Act) to be entitled to reasonable adjustments to assessment. Equally every candidate who is disabled will not necessarily be entitled to, or need, an adjustment to assessment as these candidates may have developed coping mechanisms which reduce or remove the need for reasonable adjustments. This means that, in line with the Equalities Act and the guidance issued by The Equality and Human Rights Commission unlike treatment which amounts to direct discrimination, which is not justified, the Institute's treatment of a disabled person does not amount to disability related discrimination if it can justify its action.

In response to 'The Act' the Institute will make reasonable adjustments that will help to reduce the effect of a disability or difficulty that places any candidate at a substantial disadvantage in the assessment situation. It is important to recognise that adjustments may not be considered reasonable if they:

- affect negatively the reliability, validity comparability of the assessment
- invalidate the assessment requirements set out in the specification for the qualification, such as the demonstration of the application of a particular competence standard
- affect negatively the practical conduct of the assessment
- provide an unfair advantage to the candidate compared to candidates undertaking the same or similar assessment without adjustments.
- involve unjustifiable costs

Examples of reasonable adjustments include but are not limited to:

- allowing extra time
- supervised rest breaks
- changing the organisation of the assessment location

- use of mechanical, electronic and technological aids- includes coloured overlays, low vision aids, tinted spectacles and amplification equipment
- assessment materials in enlarged
- use of ICT/ electronic devices for responses

In order for a reasonable adjustment to be applied candidates must notify the Institute in writing of their requirement. The Institute will consider each application on its merit, on a case-by-case basis and any adjustments must be approved and set in place prior to the examination commencing.

The lead invigilator is responsible for ensuring that any agreed any reasonable adjustments are in place before the examination commences.

### **During the Examination**

Candidates may not enter the examination room until instructed to do so by the lead invigilator. This will normally be 10 minutes before the scheduled commencement of the examination.

The examination is treated as being in progress from the time that candidates first enter the room until all the examination scripts have been collected therefore candidates will be under examination conditions from the time that they enter the room in which they will be taking their examination. At the beginning of the examination, the lead invigilator will inform candidates:

- that they must place all restricted materials in the designated area and that this is the final chance to do so and that failure to do so may lead to disqualification
- of the importance of reading the instructions on the front of the examination paper
- that they are not permitted to leave the examination room during the **first 30 minutes** or the **last 15 minutes**
- that they must write their candidate number on the answer sheet where indicated and should write in blue or black ink



- that they must not use correcting pens, fluids or tape; erasable pens or highlighter pens in your answers (although candidates are permitted to use them to highlight questions, words or phrases within the question paper as this may help candidates to address the question(s) being posed)
- that they are not permitted to communicate in any way, ask for help from or give help to another candidate while they are in the examination room
- of the emergency arrangements
- that the Institute operates a 'fit to sit' policy and that therefore a mitigating circumstance claim will not normally be considered for any poor performance in the examination concerned if a candidate proceeds with the examination
- when they may start the examinations

Appendix B is a suggested wording for the lead invigilator in the examination room.

Should it appear that there is an error on the examination paper, the lead invigilator should be informed immediately and will, if possible, refer the query to the relevant examiner. The lead invigilator will note the time that the query is reported and any time lost will be added on to the end of the examination. If it is not possible to contact the examiner, the lead invigilator will inform the candidates that they should disregard that question and that appropriate adjustments will be made during the marking and moderation process. A report will be written by the lead invigilator (Appendix D) and sent to the Head of Examinations for consideration by the Chief Examiner of the discipline concerned and the Examination Board.

Invigilators may permit a candidate to leave the examination room to visit the toilet however the candidate must be accompanied by an invigilator. Candidates wishing to leave the room should raise their hand to request permission to do so. Candidates should inform an invigilator if they feel unwell. Where necessary, the lead invigilator will arrange for a first aider to attend.

A candidate who completes the examination before the end of the time allocated, or who does not wish to proceed with the examination, may leave the examination room early provided it is within the time restrictions stated above. Before leaving a candidate must hand in his/her script and all other examination material and the time of departure will be marked on the script. These candidates **will not** be allowed back into the room.

Any candidate who leaves the examination venue (other than in an accompanied, temporary absence) for any other reason will not be re-admitted.

Examinations must be conducted in a manner conducive to the maximum performance by each candidate. The lead invigilator may order from the examination room any candidate who unreasonably disturbs the examination and thereby prejudices the performance of other candidates.

Candidates are not permitted to consume food during an examination. Drinking water will be provided in the examination room but candidates may also bring their own bottled water to the examination.

Candidates arriving late for an examination may be permitted to enter the examination room and proceed with the examination up to **30 minutes** from the start of the examination. The lead invigilator also has the discretion to admit candidates arriving later than 30 minutes if satisfied that the late arrival was caused by factors outside the candidate's control and if no person has already left the examination room. Any candidate that the lead invigilator does allow to enter the examination room after the start time of the examination should be allowed the full time for the examination provided that adequate supervision arrangements are in place.

## **Malpractice in Examinations**

Invigilators who suspect malpractice during examinations must after the examination write up their suspicion on the invigilator report sheet, including the details of the examination, the candidate(s) involved, the nature of the malpractice and the timing of events (see **Appendix C**).

The invigilator must inform the candidate(s) that they suspect them of cheating and the matter will be reported to the discipline Institute's Head of Examinations. The matter will then be referred to the Examination Board for a decision regarding the sanctions that will be imposed on the candidate concerned.

The candidate will be allowed to complete the examination, unless in the opinion of the lead invigilator, he/she is causing a disturbance to other candidates.

Any items brought to the examination desk without permission will be confiscated immediately and will be handed in to the lead invigilator for the remaining duration of the examination. Items such as electronic devices should be returned to the candidate at the end of the examination but items such as revision notes should be

retained by the lead invigilator and should be included as evidence with the invigilation report.

The candidate's script will be endorsed with a note giving brief details of the nature of the occurrence and the time of the event.

## **Emergencies**

Invigilators must take the following action in an emergency such as a fire alarm:

- Stop the candidates from writing.
- Collect the attendance register and evacuate the examination room in line with the instructions given by the appropriate authority.
- Advise candidates to leave all question papers and scripts in the examination room and to leave the room in silence.
- Make sure that candidates are supervised as closely as possible whilst they are out of the examination room to make sure that there is no discussion about the examination.
- Make a note of the time of the interruption and how long it lasted.
- If the emergency is resolved and the examination room can still be used allow the candidates the full working time set for the examination.
- Make a full report of the incident (using the form in Appendix D) and of the action taken and send this to the Institute Head of Examinations.

## **Post-Examination**

At the end of the examination the lead invigilator must:

- tell the candidates to stop writing and remind them that they are still under examination conditions and that they may not leave the room at the end of an examination until given permission to do so
- allow candidates who arrived late, and were allowed the full working time to do their examination, to continue until the extra time allowed has passed;
- instruct candidates taking written examinations to:
  - make sure that they have put all the necessary information on their scripts
  - fasten all pages with the treasury tag provided

Invigilators must:

- collect all the scripts before candidates are allowed to leave the examination room
- establish that the number of scripts collected matches the number of candidates as shown on the attendance register

## Mitigating Circumstances in Examinations – Special Consideration Process

According to the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) special consideration is given in mitigating circumstances where:

‘.....temporary illness, temporary injury or other indisposition at the time of the assessment.....has had, or is reasonably likely to have had, a material effect on a candidate’s ability to take an assessment or demonstrate his or her normal level of attainment in an assessment.’<sup>1</sup>

This procedure recognises the fact that on occasions the performance of a candidate in an examination may be affected adversely by circumstances beyond their control and it provides a mechanism by which candidates can notify the Institute of such circumstances and how these might be addressed by the Institute.

The Institute operates a ‘fit to sit’ policy which means that a candidate who sits an examination deems themselves fit to do so. Candidates will be reminded by the lead invigilator before the commencement of each examination of this fact and that as a result a mitigating circumstance claim **cannot normally** subsequently be considered for poor performance in the examination concerned. It is the responsibility of the candidate to determine whether they are fit to participate in the examination or if a mitigating circumstance claim should be submitted for non-participation.

Candidates **will** be eligible for special consideration if performance in the examination is materially affected by adverse circumstances beyond their control.

These include:

- temporary illness or accident/injury at the time of the examination
- bereavement of a partner, child or close member of the family at the time of the examination
- domestic crisis arising at the time of the examination
- serious disturbance during an examination
- other accidental events at the time of the examination such as being given the wrong or defective examination paper or failure of practical equipment
- failure by the Institute to implement previously approved access arrangements

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<sup>1</sup> A guide to the special consideration process – General and Vocational Qualifications, Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), 2015

Candidates will **NOT** be eligible for special consideration if the performance in the examination is affected by:

- any long term medical condition for which the candidate is already receiving reasonable or appropriate adjustments
- bereavement occurring more than six months before the assessment, **unless an anniversary has been reached at the time of the assessment or there are on-going implications** such as an inquest or court case;
- non-serious domestic or personal inconveniences, such as moving house, job interviews, weddings, religious festivals, failed travel arrangements, holidays or financial issues
- minor disturbance in the examination caused by another candidate(s), such as a mobile phone ringing;
- misreading the exam itinerary and/or failing to attend at the right time and in the right place;
- misreading the instructions on the examination paper and answering the wrong questions
- general examination related stress or anxiety

### **Process for dealing with mitigating circumstances**

Candidates must submit any claim for mitigating circumstances no later than one month after the examination unless the problems encountered by the candidate justify the lateness of the claim as well as the claim itself.

All claims for mitigating circumstances will be dealt with by the appropriate Examination Board which meets to ratify the results before they are released. In considering the claim the Board will consider:

- the severity of the mitigating circumstances, and the reasonableness that it might have affected performance;
- the evidence provided to support the claim;
- whether the circumstance was foreseeable by the candidate or was avoidable

It is recognised that the arrangements for mitigating circumstances must ensure fairness to all students including those who do not submit mitigation and therefore candidates will not normally be given the benefit of the doubt where the case is unclear, or where the supporting evidence does not adequately support the claim.

Candidates who apply for mitigating circumstances must in all cases substantiate their claim through the provision of original official independent documentary evidence which must include the dates during which the circumstances applied.

Copies of documentary evidence, other than officially certified copies of death certificates, will not be accepted.

In the case of evidence relating to medical conditions, this must take the form of a medical certificate or doctor's letter that is either obtained by the candidate at the time of the illness or evidence that makes it clear that the candidate was unwell at the time. The certificate should state the time and duration of the illness and include a clear medical opinion. A note from the doctor indicating that the candidate told them they were unwell will **not** normally be accepted.

The Institute reserves the right to check the authenticity of all documentation submitted as part of a mitigating circumstances claim and any candidate who submits documentation that is found not to be authentic will be dealt with in accordance with the Institute's Code of Conduct.

In cases of serious disturbance during the examination, wrong or defective examination paper (such as a question on a paper being incorrect due to a typographical error) or failure of practical equipment candidates will **not** be required to submit a claim for mitigating circumstances. In these situations the lead invigilator in the examination will be responsible for notifying the Head of Examinations at the Institute of the nature of the disturbance and the time(s) at which it occurred.

The Head of Examinations will then contact all the candidates concerned via email to confirm that the issue has been reported and will then liaise with the Chief Examiners for the subject (if appropriate) and the Examination Board in order to reach a judgement on the adjustments, if any, that should be made to the results of the candidates concerned.

### **Possible outcomes for upheld mitigating circumstances**

It is not the general policy of the Institute to adjust mark or grades where a submission by a candidate for mitigating circumstances is upheld, but instead to provide an opportunity for the candidate to demonstrate their academic ability unhindered at the next earliest opportunity. This re-sit will not incur a fee for the candidate concerned as the fees from the affected examination(s) will be carried over.

In situations such as serious disruption during the examination or a failure in the examination paper special consideration will normally be given by applying an allowance of marks to each component (paper) affected with the size of allowance

depending on the circumstances. In this situations when the results for the examinations are released the Head of Examinations will ensure that the decision regarding any adjustments of the Examination Board is clearly explained in the results letter.

In all cases the Institute's Examination Board will make the final decision and will not enter into a discussion with the candidate concerned as to how much special consideration will be allowed.

## Appendix A



**NO IPODS, iWATCHES,  
MOBILE PHONES,  
MP3/MP4 PLAYERS**

**NO POTENTIAL  
TECHNOLOGICAL /WEB ENABLED  
SOURCES OF INFOAMTION**

Possession of unauthorised items, such as a mobile phone, is a serious offence and could result in

**DISQUALIFICATION**

from your examination and your overall qualification.

**This poster must be displayed in a prominent place outside each examination room.**



## WARNING TO CANDIDATES

1. You **must** be on time for all your examinations.
2. You **must not** become involved in any unfair or dishonest practice in any part of the examination.
3. You **must not** sit an examination in the name of another candidate.
4. You **must not** have in your possession any unauthorised material or equipment which might give you an unfair advantage.
5. Possession of a **mobile phone** or other unauthorised material is **breaking the rules**, even if you do not intend to use it, and you will be subject to penalty and possible disqualification.
6. You **must not** talk to, attempt to communicate with or disturb other candidates once you have entered the examination room.
7. You **must** follow the instructions of the invigilator.
8. If you are in doubt speak to the invigilator.

## **Appendix B - Lead Invigilator Announcements**

These are suggested announcements to be made by the lead invigilator to ensure a smooth examination.

### **As candidates enter the room:**

Please switch off mobile phones, iPods, iPads, MP3 and MP4 devices. You are allowed a bottle of water during the examination.

Remove any revision notes etc from your pockets and place with your personal belongings and please leave these with your bags and coats at the XXXXXX of the hall and take a seat as quietly and quickly as possible.

Once you enter the examination room you must remain silent until you have left the examination room.

*(In cases where multiple exams are taking place in one venue – Please ensure you are sitting in the correct seat for your particular examination).*

Do not turn over the question paper until you are instructed to do so.

### **When candidates are seated**

In the event of a fire, exits are located XXXXXXXX. If we are forced to leave the hall please stay with the group and refrain from talking about the examination until the decision regarding it is communicated to you.

Please fill in the front of the answer book making sure you include all required information.

If you do not have water with you and require some during the examination please raise your hand and an invigilator will bring you some.

Any student believed to be conferring or using unauthorised material or notes will be informed of the suspicion and this will be reported to the Examination Board for disciplinary action.

If you require any assistance, including an additional answer paper, please raise your hand and speak to an invigilator but note that we cannot give assistance on the meaning or interpretation of questions.

Please do not disturb your fellow candidates in any way.

Clocks are located (*identify clocks*). This exam will last XXXX hours. You must not leave the examination room until 30 minutes of the examination has elapsed.

I will announce when 1 hour is remaining and when 15 minutes are remaining. No one is allowed to leave the examination room during the last 15 minutes of the examination.

If you complete the examination early, please raise your hand and on the invigilators will collect your question paper and answer books before you leave the hall.

The time is now \_\_\_\_, the examination will end at \_\_\_\_ . You may now turn over your question papers and begin.

**15 minutes before the end of the examination**

There are 15 minutes remaining. No-one is allowed to leave the hall until instructed to do so at the end of the examination.

**At the end of the examination**

The time is \_\_\_\_, you must stop writing.

If you have used more than one answer book, please join together with the tag provided.

Check that you have completed the front of your answer booklet correctly.

You are not allowed to remove any examination papers or answer booklets from the room.

Remain seated and silent until all papers have been collected and you have been instructed to leave the hall.

## Appendix C - Invigilator Malpractice Report Form

Report form
Examination title:
Date of original report:
Details of who is reporting the incident (include job title):
Candidate number(s) and name(s) of those involved in alleged malpractice:
Description of the nature of the suspected malpractice, including details on how it was discovered, by whom and when:
Details of any supporting documentation:

## Appendix D – Exam Room Incident Log

Report form
Examination title(s):
Date of original report:
Details of who is reporting the incident (include job title):
Candidate number(s) and name(s) of those involved:
Description of the nature of the incident, and the actions taken by the invigilator(s):
Details of any supporting documentation:

## References

In compiling these rules the Institute has used the following documents for reference:

General and Vocational Qualifications- Instructions for conducting examinations- 1 September 2015 to 31 August 2015- Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) (2015)

A guide to the special consideration process – General and Vocational Qualifications, Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ), 2015

Regulations for the conduct of examinations, City and Guilds, March 2013