University Policy on the provision of taught student access to their examination scripts

University of
BRISTOL

Summary			
The Policy 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.			
Scope - This document applies to:			
All University of Bristol taught students and taught units.			
For applicants entering in:	N/A	Applies to academic year:	2019/20 onwards
Document Control			
Owning team	Academic Quality and Policy Office		
Division	Education Services		
Lead contact	Academic Quality Manager, Sam Jones		
Type	Policy	Status	Approved
Asset number	n/a	Version	v1
Approved by	University Learning and Teaching Committee	Date current version approved	October 2019
Date current version published	October 2019	Date first published	October 2019
Revision schedule	Every three years	Next review date	2022
Superseded documents	• Access to examination scripts – annex to the Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes (*www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/assessment/exam-script-access/*) • Guidance for organising student access to exam scripts (*www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/academic-quality/documents/guidance-exam-script-access.pdf*) • Requesting and using exam scripts (*www.bristol.ac.uk/media-library/sites/academic-quality/documents/student-proforma-access-to-exam-scripts.docx*)		
Related documents	• Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes		
Keywords	Exam script, exam paper, feedback		

Policy on the provision of taught student access to their examination scripts

1.   Individual taught students may request and subsequently be able to see their own examination scripts. 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.

2.   The provision 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.

3.   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[1] should identify and publicise those examinations where it would not be appropriate for students to view their scripts, providing the reasons why. (See Annex 1, 5.3).

4.   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.

5.   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.

6.   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. 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 o r 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.   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.

Annexes to this Policy:

Annex 1 - Guidance for schools on implementation of the Policy

Annex 2 - Information for taught students on viewing examination scripts

Annex 1 to the University Policy on the provision of taught student access to their examination scripts

Guidance for schools on implementation of the Policy

1.   Background and rationale

1.1   For some years, the University has had in place an institutional-level expectation that taught students should be able to access and view their exam scripts on request. This principle was put in place after a pilot study and in response to student feedback.

1.2   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.

1.3   The expectation is set out in University policy on access to exam scripts, whereby schools[2] provide access to exam scripts using one or more of the suggested methods in this document (see 5.3).

2.   Which scripts should students be able to see?

2.1   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.

2.2   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

Where a student is not permitted to view their exam script, then the school should make this clear to students with the reason why (see 5.3).

3.   How should students be given access to their scripts?

3.1   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:

i.   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;

ii.   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;

iii. 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 (see 6.1). Where schools decide that photographs will not be permitted, they should justify this to students.

B.   Scripts are returned to students

    i. Exam scripts are scanned and either:

        a. the scanned version is electronically (and securely) released to the student,

        b. the scanned version is stored securely, and the original script is released to the student.

    ii. 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.

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

4.   When should students be given access to their scripts?

4.1   Exam scripts should be made accessible as soon as possible; scripts from the January exam period should normally be made available to students in late February/early March, while those from the May/June and Aug/Sept exam periods should be made available in October in the following academic year. Schools should ensure students are aware whether the marks are provisional or final when they view their exam scripts.

4.2   Schools should consider how students who are re-sitting exams can be given access over the summer period to the scripts from the exams they failed, so that they can best prepare for the re-sits.

4.3   Any scheduled opportunities (as described in 3.1.A) 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 SSLCs 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.

4.4   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.

5.   What are the school responsibilities?

5.1   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.

The Institutional Principles for Assessment and Feedback include the statement that: *"Feedback will be provided on all assessment where practicable"*, which is elaborated upon in the '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.

5.2   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.

5.3   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.

Full details of information for students is provided in Annex 2.

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

5.5   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.   What are the students' responsibilities?

6.1   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.

6.2   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.

Annex 2 to the University Policy on the provision of taught student access to their examination scripts

Information for taught students on viewing examination scripts

This document provides information on the purpose and process by which you may view your examination script/s and how you 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 Policy refers to your completed exam booklets that contain your 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. January, May/June and August/September).

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 January exam period, scripts will normally be available in late February/March.
- For the May/June and August/September exam periods, scripts will normally be available in October.

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 of 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.