



# **Spring 2021 Student Guide to Examinations**



**All students sitting University of Stirling exams should read this guide carefully before undertaking any exams.**

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## 1. Introduction

Examinations (exams) form a core element of the University of Stirling's student assessment arrangements. As such, exams are formally arranged and operated and students are required to take exams in line with these formal arrangements.

The purpose of this guide is to provide University of Stirling students with useful information on how exams are organised and run at the University, and to offer answers to frequently asked questions. It has been prepared by the Academic Registry – Timetabling, Exams and Graduation team and if you have any comments on the guide or queries that the guide does not address, please feel free to contact us at [ask@stir.ac.uk](mailto:ask@stir.ac.uk).

## 2. Construction of the Exam Timetable

Whilst exam timetables are always prepared with the aim of avoiding a student having more than one exam on the same day, the complex nature of examination scheduling means that unfortunately this cannot always be avoided.

All students should expect to have exams on consecutive days. Whilst every effort is made to spread exams, the large number of module combinations in some subjects means that students may have two exams on consecutive days.

If you find that an exam timetable contains a clash of exams for you, i.e. two exams timetabled simultaneously on a morning or afternoon session, you should report this to the appropriate Faculty Examinations Officer immediately.

## 3. Student Availability

As a student, you are required to be available to attend exams on any day (including Saturdays) throughout each of the exam diets.

## 4. Publication of the Exam Timetable

It is your responsibility to ensure you know the date, location and start time of all your exams. Misreading the timetable is not an acceptable reason for a student being absent from an exam or commencing the exam late.

For the main Autumn and Spring exam diets a draft timetable is published followed by a final version. The timetables can be accessed [here](#).

Please note that changes can be made to a draft timetable and therefore the final timetable may be different. You should ensure that you recheck your exam details after the final timetable has been produced.

## 5. Types of Exams

The Faculty responsible for the module will be in touch with more details on your exam assessment. This will include details on how to access the assessment, the length of time you have to undertake the work, and how to submit your work.

The University operates different types of exam:

### 5.1 Unseen Exams

An unseen exam is an exam where the student does not know what questions are going to be asked and is required to answer questions based upon what they have learned over the course of their academic study.

### 5.2 Seen Exams

A seen exam is one in which the exam paper is pre-released to you, in advance of the exam date. Students therefore have an opportunity to decide which questions to answer, consult lecture notes, lecture handouts, etc. and then plan and draft an answer in advance of the exam. Having prepared an answer, students can then reproduce essentially the same content during the exam.

### 5.3 Open Book Exams

In open book exams, students are permitted to bring books and other materials into the exam, and use these resources during the exam.

### 5.4 Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) Exams

In MCQ exams students will usually have to select the correct answer(s) to a given question from a small number of options.

### 5.5 Audio/Visual Exams

For some film and media exams you may be required to watch a film clip at the start of your written exam. This clip may be played more than once during the exam. Please refer to your module handbook for further information.

### 5.6 Objective Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs) – Nursing Students

This assessment takes place within a simulated clinical environment where a nursing candidate is provided with a scenario involving a patient (patient may be an actor) and is required to demonstrate their clinical skills and decision making. The student may be required to use clinical equipment or to record findings using clinical documentation or to provide a written assessment. The student is observed during the assessment by two markers who agree the final mark together. The OSCE may also be recorded.

## 6. Before an Exam

- Please make sure to check the timetable and make sure you are aware of all arrangements relating to your assessments.

- Please ensure that in advance of your exam you have identified a quiet space where you will not be disturbed. Check that you have access to appropriate IT and that you have Wi-Fi access.

**Information on sitting exams remotely and submitting alternative assessments can be found on Canvas.**

## 7. Illness during an exam

If you become ill during an exam preventing you from completing the assessment and you do not submit the exam you will be given an opportunity to defer. However, you are required to notify the module coordinator immediately that you have left the exam due to ill health.

You are only expected to see a doctor if medical assistance is required.

## 8. Cheating (Academic Misconduct)

The University of Stirling takes cheating of any form very seriously and there are a range of academic penalties that can be applied to students who are found to have been cheating.

- ⚠ **Please read and follow the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) [Academic Misconduct Policy](#) to ensure that you do not cheat in an exam, intentionally or otherwise.**
- ⚠ **You must not seek advice or contributions from any third party, including friends or family. To make use of unfair means in any exam, or to assist another student to make use of such unfair means, is a University disciplinary offence.**

## 9. Exam Adjustments for ARUAA Students

If you have an ARUAA (Agreed Record of University Access Adjustments) you will have agreed your exam adjustments with the Accessibility & Inclusion Service. You can also check your exam arrangements by logging onto your student portal and clicking on the 'My ARUAA' link. ARUAA students should check exam arrangements before the start of the exam diet to ensure they are correct. No exam arrangements can be changed during the exam diet. By sitting your exam you are confirming that your arrangements have been met.

### 9.1 Computers

- In MS Word (answer document) you can make any required adjustments yourself, e.g. font, page colour, spell checker.

- You can open Texthelp Read&Write software on your PC, to support reading/proof reading.

## 9.2 Late arrangements

If your agreed exam adjustments cannot be met for a specific exam diet (e.g. if you have missed the deadline date) your exam adjustments will be recorded and marked as late for this exam diet. Your exam adjustments will then be put in place for the next exam diet. If you are late in seeking to establish exam adjustments, and feel that you could be disadvantaged by not receiving adjustments, you can complete a form to send to the relevant Faculty Chief Examiner. You can get the form required for this from the Student Services Hub. The form must be authorised by an Accessibility & Inclusion Accessibility Advisor or Duty Advisor before it is submitted to the Chief Examiner.

You may also choose to apply to [defer](#) an exam/exams, if you have missed the cut off date. You can complete a deferral application via the [Portal](#).

## 10. Regulations

Students should familiarise themselves with University regulations:

- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Attendance and Engagement Policy](#)

## 11. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 11.1 Illness / Extenuating Circumstances

*What if my exam preparation is affected by illness or other extenuating circumstances?*

You are expected to take the exam anyway but can apply for [Extenuating Circumstances](#) in this scenario. You should apply for these before the exam diet and be aware that independent supporting evidence will be required in time for the Exam Board meeting.

*What will happen if illness or other extenuating circumstances prevent me attending the exam?*

If you are ill on the day of an exam or have encountered other extenuating circumstances e.g. bereavement, disability related reasons and are unable to sit your exams, you can apply to defer them. Please refer to the University Policy on [Deferred Exams](#).

If you need to apply to defer your exam(s) you should use the Apply for “Exam Deferral” link from your Portal home page. Please be aware that independent supporting evidence is required with every deferred exam application.

*What if I'm unable to sit an exam due to short term injury or have suffered an injury which impedes my ability to write?*

If you have a short term injury or temporary illness which will have an impact on your ability to sit an exam e.g. broken arm, dislocated shoulder then you should contact the Faculty to discuss your options for the module exam(s) effected. Whilst the University will seek to assist students, in certain circumstances it may not be appropriate to offer an alternative assessment to an exam. Where the Faculty have been unable to offer an alternative form of assessment then you will be advised to apply to [defer](#) your exam(s).

**⚠ Any arrangements agreed with the Faculty for short term injury or illness will only apply for the current or forthcoming diet only and MUST NOT be used as an interim period if you have missed the Accessibility & Inclusion deadline for long term arrangements.**

*What if I am pregnant and due to sit exams?*

If you are due to give birth near to or during an examination diet you will not be prevented from taking an exam.

If your midwife or doctor advises against sitting an exam then you should apply to [defer](#) your exam for which supporting medical evidence is required.

## **11.2 Students with an ARUAA**

*Can I apply for an Exam Deferral on the grounds of disability if I have an ARUAA?*

Yes - please refer to the University Policy on [Deferred Exams](#).

If you need to apply to defer your exam(s) you should use the Apply for "Exam Deferral" link from your Portal home page. Please be aware that independent supporting evidence is required with every deferred exam application.

ARUAA students wishing to apply for deferral on the grounds of disability who do not wish to share their medical evidence with anyone other than the Accessibility & Inclusion Team, should contact the Student Hub for a supporting statement to be provided by an Accessibility Adviser. The supporting statement will be sent electronically to you and you should attach this to your online deferral form.

## **11.3 Religious Commitments**

*What should I do if I wish to observe a religious commitment during an exam?*

Examinations occur throughout the year, and can take place Monday to Saturday. The University recognises that the exam timetable might clash with religious observance.

University exam diets are published in advance on the University website. You should alert Registry to any dates that your religious observance might clash with University exams. You can do this by completing the 'Religious Observance Form' and submitting to [ask@stir.ac.uk](mailto:ask@stir.ac.uk).

Though the University will consider your request, constraints placed on the timetable might make this impossible given the logistics of scheduling a very large numbers of exams involving hundreds of students within a limited exam period.

Where clashes with religious observances have been unavoidable you should contact your religious leader to obtain a special dispensation in order to attend your exam. If dispensation is not authorised by your religious leader then you should submit proof of religious observance requirements e.g. a letter on headed paper from your place of worship in order to support your application to [defer](#) your exam.

### *What if my exam is scheduled during Ramadan?*

The University does not deem the event of Ramadan to be a legitimate extenuating circumstance or reason for claiming extenuating circumstances for exams. The exception to this is where fasting significantly affects your health and/or you have a medical condition which may impair your performance or prevent you from attending an examination.

In such exceptional cases:

- if you attend the exam, you will need to provide documentary evidence to support your claim for extenuating circumstances to be submitted to the Faculty Examination Board.
- if you are unable to attend the exam, you should apply to [defer](#) your exam.

## 12. Useful Contacts

We understand some students are struggling with the effect of Covid-19 and aim to be as flexible as possible while maintaining academic standards. We want you to succeed so do seek our help. If you are struggling, speak to your personal tutor for advice if you do not know what to do. Your tutors and Student Learning Services can offer academic support and the Student Hub can offer support in a range of areas including mental health and wellbeing, accessibility advice and financial advice.

Service	Email
Academic Registry – Timetabling, Exams and Graduation team	<a href="mailto:ask@stir.ac.uk">ask@stir.ac.uk</a>
Student Services Hub	<a href="mailto:ask@stir.ac.uk">ask@stir.ac.uk</a>
Student Learning Services	<a href="mailto:sls@stir.ac.uk">sls@stir.ac.uk</a>

**On behalf of the Academic Registry - Timetabling, Exams and Graduation Team - good luck in your exams.**