

**Programmes and Assessment  
(Examinations and Progress)**

STUDENT EDUCATION SERVICE



**UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS**

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# Operational Guide for the Examination Assistant Role

## Introduction

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the online training session available for Lead and Support Invigilators. As an Invigilator, you are responsible for ensuring that examination procedures are followed so that the academic integrity of the University is not compromised. You should have successfully completed the Invigilation Training (both parts and their quizzes) before attempting this training.

If at any stage you are unsure of the correct procedure, the sub-office is always around to help.

Any enquiries regarding this document, invigilation or examination procedures should be directed to [examinations@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:examinations@leeds.ac.uk).

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## 1. Aims and Objectives

### **Aim:**

To provide you with the rules, regulations and operating directives required to act as a University of Leeds Examination Assistant.

### **Objectives:**

By the end of this training session you should fully comprehend what is expected of you as an examination assistant and be able to perform professionally.

The Examinations Office to be able to allocate trained Examination Assistants in an increasingly required specialist role.

### **Why do we need Examination Assistants?**

- To ensure that all University examinations are conducted in accordance with the University of Leeds rules and regulations.
- To provide candidates with every opportunity, within the rules, to complete their examinations.
- To ensure all candidates are treated in a fair and consistent manner.
- To enhance the experience of candidates who require assistance in examinations both temporarily and permanently.
- To make sure the examinations operate smoothly.

## 2. The Roles of Amanuenses/Readers/Prompters in Special Circumstances Examinations

Amanuenses, Readers and Prompters are there to help candidates in Special Circumstances examinations.

### **Amanuenses:**

An amanuensis is a person employed to write on behalf of a candidate in an examination.

### **Readers:**

A Reader is a person employed to read on behalf of a candidate in an examination.

### **Prompters:**

Prompters in examinations assist candidates in monitoring the passage of time and therefore help them to manage their time more effectively. The specific details of the duties will be agreed between the candidate and the Prompter beforehand.

Amanuenses, Readers and Prompters are allocated by the Examinations Office and should sign in at the Special Circumstances Sub-office in the same way as Invigilators.

**During the examination, you are the representative of the University and must uphold the rules and regulations set out for you by the Examinations Office.**

## 3. Professionalism and Attitude

Anyone employed by the University to work during an examination session must work with a professional attitude and must not, at any time, undermine the integrity or security of the question papers.

Examination Assistants should ensure they arrive at the examination venue in good time before the beginning of the examination.

Examination Assistants must be aware of the way in which they behave towards the candidate.

Examination Assistants need to be aware that some candidates may experience stress due to examinations and should be able to recognize and deal with this situation appropriately and empathetically. The sub-office can be contacted for further assistance.

Examination Assistants should also be aware of the fact that a candidate who they may be allocated to, could have a severe disability and should be confident in their ability to work as professionally as they can with that candidate as well as with all of the other candidates they are allocated to.

Data protection legislation means that we are not able to give you exact details of the candidate's disability in advance, so be prepared for a range of disabilities.

The Examinations Office try, wherever possible, to match the Examination Assistant's specialisms with the subject of the examination being taken by the candidate.

Some candidates may want to meet their allocated Examination Assistant in advance, this will enable both the candidate and the helper to become more familiar with one another and discuss any queries or issues. The Examination Assistant will be paid for this.

**Some possible scenarios to be prepared for:**

- Obsessive compulsive disorder, candidate may move things around, do particular things during their break.
- Wheelchair user who has a carer.
- Visually impaired candidate may have a dog with them - if you have a dog allergy please let us know!
- Candidate with a broken arm, they won't be accustomed to using an Amanuensis and may therefore feel particularly uncomfortable.
- Dyslexic candidate, you may be tempted to correct their English, you must not do this. The script will be flagged to the marker as being completed by a dyslexic candidate and this will be taken into consideration.

Skills as Examination Assistants as an amanuensis and a reader will be assessed prior to becoming Examination Assistants.

You should make yourselves aware of the Examination Assistant duties described below.

#### 4. The Duties of an Amanuensis

The principle duties of an Amanuensis are:

1. To write in the script book(s)/ blue question paper provided, during the time allowed for the examination, answers to questions **exactly** as directed/dictated by the candidate.
2. The candidate is normally allowed only the stated examination time unless extra time has been agreed with the Centre for Disability Studies/Examinations and Progress in advance. The amanuensis should check the front of the envelope containing the question papers and script books for additional information.
3. The Amanuensis should ask no questions, even as to the spelling, nor make any comment while the candidate is dictating his/her answers.
4. It is the candidate's responsibility to state appropriate punctuation, (e.g. comma), a new paragraph, the spelling of a specific terminology or an author's name etc.
5. The candidate must not in any way consult with the Amanuensis about his/her answers, and the Amanuensis must not in any way give advice to or try to influence the candidate.
6. Persons appointed to act as an Amanuensis should, ideally, know enough about the subject or subjects of the examination to be familiar with vocabulary, spelling, etc.
7. It is the candidate's responsibility to check the work produced, within the time allocated for the examination. They are permitted to read and make corrections to their work.
8. Persons appointed as an Amanuensis should be independent and objective.
9. The candidate should have the opportunity to meet the Amanuensis, if possible, in advance of an examination in order to discuss arrangements and the mechanics of the task ahead. It is essential that the Amanuensis understands the candidate's speech and if there any issues, this should be made clear before the commencement of the examination.
10. It is the candidate's responsibility to provide all writing materials, however, the Amanuensis may wish to use their own pens/pencils for reasons of ease and comfort.

11. The candidate is allowed to take a clear bottle of water without labels into the examination room.
12. The Amanuensis must be patient and aware that the candidate may not require their help for the entirety of the examination.
13. The Amanuensis must be careful to not try and influence the candidate by prompting them or pressurising them, i.e. you must not sit with your pen poised as if to say 'hurry up' to the candidate.
14. The Amanuensis is entitled to a 15-minute break during examinations should they require it, (this is not included in the overall duration of the examination). This must be taken at a time convenient to the candidate, and always after the completion of an examination question, never in the middle. The amended end time should be added to the candidate's envelope.

The amanuensis also acts as an Invigilator. For longer examinations, the sub-office will arrange for someone to check on venues where Amanuenses are on their own to see if cover needs to be provided should they need to take a break. If there is a large number of these examinations an Invigilator will be allocated specifically to move between venues and provide cover where needed.

**Remember: In all situations the candidate has the right to read and/or write their examination themselves.**

## 5. The Duties of a Reader

The principle duties of a Reader are:

1. To read the questions and instructions to the candidate exactly as given on the question paper, as often as is necessary.
2. When the candidate has finished his/her answers, to read aloud what has been written or allow him/her to read what has been written.
3. The candidate is normally allowed only the stated examination time unless extra time has been agreed with the Centre for Disability Studies/Examinations and Progress in advance. This information should be displayed on the front of the envelope containing the question papers and script books.
4. The Reader should ask no questions relating to the candidate's understanding of the examination.
5. The candidate must not in any way consult with the Reader about his/her answers, and the Reader must not in any way give advice to the candidate.
6. Persons appointed to act as a Reader should, ideally, know enough about the subject or subjects of the examination to be familiar with vocabulary, spelling, etc.
7. It is the candidate's responsibility to check the work produced, within the time allocated for the examination.
8. Persons appointed as a Reader should be independent and objective.
9. It is the candidate's responsibility to provide all writing materials.
10. The candidate is allowed to take a clear bottle of water without labels into the examination room.

**Remember: In all situations the candidate has the right to read their examination themselves.**

## 6. The Duties of a Prompter

**The principle duties of a Prompter are:**

1. The Prompter should alert the candidate at regular intervals that have been agreed beforehand between the Prompter and the candidate, e.g. every 10 minutes.

2. On each alert they should tell the candidate how much time has elapsed since the beginning of the examination.
3. The Prompter should alert the candidate as to when they should be moving from one task to another, e.g. when a prearranged amount of time has elapsed.
4. The Prompter might inform the candidate that they should have finished the planning for the first question and begin the writing process.
5. After another prearranged amount of time the candidate might be prompted that they should be finishing writing for the first question and begin the proofing process, and so on.

The specific transitions that the candidate will need to be prompted for and the specific timings will need to be agreed beforehand between the candidate and the Prompter.

**Remember: the Prompter should not provide any other information or assistance.**

## 7. Frequently Asked Questions on all roles: What do I do if...

### 1. I can't make it?

If there is any reason as to why you cannot work on a particular day then you need to let the Examinations Office know as soon as possible so that someone else can be contacted to work in your place.

If you mix up the dates, for example, and do not turn up then the Examinations Office will contact you to find out why you did not show up. If you realise that you have done this please contact the Examinations Office as soon as possible.

### 2. I go to sign in at the sub-office but my name isn't on the list?

If this happens, you will need to speak to the Sub-office Manager in the sub-office. The manager will contact the Examinations Office. The records kept in the Examinations Office will be double checked and work duties will be confirmed and the signing in sheet will be amended if necessary. The amended signing in sheet will be passed to the member in the Examinations Office who organises payment.

### 3. The candidate doesn't attend the examination?

If this happens, you should wait for the first 60 minutes to pass and then report back to the Special Circumstances Sub-office. You may be allocated to a different duty.

Please complete the seating list as appropriate, complete an Absent sheet, put inside the candidate's envelope and write the word 'Absent' on the front of the envelope.

### 4. What should I do if the candidate arrives late?

Examination regulations state that if a candidate arrives within the first 60 minutes of the examination then they will be admitted but will not regain any extra time and the late candidate procedure should be followed. If they arrive after the first 60 minutes the candidate should not be allowed to start the examination.

### 5. The candidate acts inappropriately towards me during the examination?

Tell him/her it is not appropriate and inform the sub-office as soon as possible so that (a) the candidate's parent school can be informed and (b) your work time table can be amended, if required (e.g. swap with another amanuensis).

Please be aware that duties are allocated on a same gender basis where possible.

### 6. The examination is very long and I want to catch up on some reading?

No, you cannot do this. You are expected to maintain attention at all times. You can prepare by reading questions ahead, thinking of likely vocabulary.

### 7. I want to make personal phone calls during the examination?

No, you cannot do this. You would disturb the candidate. You are expected to maintain attention at all times.

### 8. It is noisy outside which makes it difficult to concentrate?

Alert the sub-office if it is affecting your concentration/performance, as the candidate should, if it is affecting theirs. Where possible you should inform the sub-office as it may be appropriate for the candidate to be accommodated in a different venue.

**9. The candidate wants to write their own answer?**

This is fine. But because the candidate is happy for part of the time, or for this examination, do not assume you are not needed at other times. Stay 'on duty'.

You should make a note on the candidate's envelope of when you are writing and when the candidate is writing, e.g. 'Amanuensis writing', or 'candidate writing'.

**10. Either the candidate or I need the toilet?**

Plan ahead, don't leave it to the last minute. If you cannot wait until your break or the end of the examination, alert the sub-office as someone should remain in the examination venue with the candidate and question paper and this should be at a suitable time with least interference with the candidate's thought processes.

If the candidate needs the toilet then he/she should be escorted by you. The candidate does not get additional time.

However, for a candidate who has the requirement 'Access to toilet' written on the front of their envelope, a note should be made on their envelope of the time the examination was stopped and re-started.

You should find out where the nearest toilet is before the examination starts.

**11. The candidate hasn't enough time and so starts speaking very fast?**

The candidate should have been allowed extra time in consideration of the process of using an Amanuensis. Don't get flustered too, but maintain a steady pace. Let the candidate know if they are making it harder for you to work.

**12. The candidate needs to do rough work?**

That's fine - they should do it in the script book provided. Anything which is not intended to be marked by the examiner should be crossed out.

**13. The fire alarm goes off?**

Be guided by the fire alarm procedures. Check the candidate has heard the alarm.

**14. I need a break but the candidate is in the middle of a question?**

Plan ahead, so this won't happen. Alert the candidate and agree a break at an appropriate point between questions.

**15. I feel ill?**

Plan ahead if possible, don't leave it to the last minute. If it becomes clear you may not be able to complete the duty, or maintain work quality, alert the sub-office before it is too late. It may be possible for you to continue whilst another Amanuensis or Reader is located.

**16. I don't understand what the candidate says?**

Meet beforehand, relax. Be honest, the candidate is likely to be familiar with this situation, but their speech may be less clear with anxiety.

**17. I can't read the question/the candidate doesn't understand me?**

Stay calm. If it is a short individual question, aggravated by the anxiety level of the candidate, it may help to return to it later. If the candidate's performance may be compromised or the candidate might complain, rightly or wrongly, always take an accurate note of the problem and report to the sub-office as appropriate.