Guide to Take-at-Home Exams: General Information

The purpose of this Guide is to provide General Information about the take-at-home examinations. This document should be reviewed in conjunction with the Technical Guide and will provide you with all of the information required to enable you to complete the exam. Both these guides will be available in your Student Portal at https://learning.online.hw.ac.uk.

For postgraduate students studying Regulation 34 programmes, standard in-person exams have been replaced with take-at-home exams for the remainder of the academic year. This change has been made as part of the University’s response to the Coronavirus.

What is a take-at-home exam?
A take-at-home exam is an exam which you take in your own space (e.g. at home), by downloading the question paper and uploading your answers via the internet (we will shortly provide you with a Technical Guide on how to do this). The exam is taken under ‘open book’ conditions, meaning that you have access to your notes, course material, the internet and any other resources you may wish to consult.

The exam will be time-limited, but rather than having, for example, two or three hours as for a standard exam, there will be 24 hours between the exam paper being made available to you, and the deadline for submitting your completed exam script. You aren’t expected to spend 24 hours working on your answers, this time is provided to give you time to access the paper, write your answers, and submit your completed script. For all exams, there will be a maximum word limit for each question or the exam as a whole, to help you manage your time. All examination papers will be designed to be completed in a similar timeframe as those you normally sit in an examination centre.

Frequently Asked Questions
We understand that these arrangements may be unfamiliar and confusing for some students. Below is a set of FAQs. More detail on the requirements, operations and standards for Take-at-Home exams is provided in the Take at Home Exams Requirements and Guidance course, which all students are being enrolled on in advance of the examinations. You will find this course in your student portal.

- **How many take-at-home exams can I attempt in the 24 hour period?**
  - Students will be permitted to register for no more than two exams in a given 24 hour period as per the published exam timetable.

- **Will the take-at-home exam be in the form of an e-assessment exam previously offered by Edinburgh Business School?**
  - No. The take-at-home exam will not be conducted using the e-assessment platform.

- **Can I work with other students to do the exam?**
  - No. The exam script must be your own work. You are expected to undertake the exam on your own and without collusion, i.e. without assistance from other people; without collaborating or discussing with anyone else; without sharing answers (including on social media). Normal processes (e.g. Turnitin) will be used to check that submissions do not draw from other people’s work in an inappropriate way. More information on Turnitin can be found here https://help.turnitin.com/Home.htm
  - If staff have reason to think that you have collaborated with other students, this will be treated as academic misconduct. Information about how the University responds to evidence of academic misconduct can be found here: https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/plagiarism.htm

- **Will there be a maximum word count for my exam script?**
  - For all exam papers a maximum word count will be specified, either for the whole exam or per question.

- **Where should I take the exam?**
You should try and find a quiet space where you will not be disturbed. A bedroom or study is ideal, but a quiet space in a shared room may also be suitable. You may find headphones useful for blocking out external noise.

**How long is the exam expected to take?**
- Although 24 hours are provided for you to access the exam paper, complete the exam and submit your exam script, there is absolutely no expectation that you spend all that time on the exam. For an exam that was originally scheduled to be three hours long, it would not be anticipated that it would take more than one or two hours more than the original time to complete (this allows additional time for consulting notes, textbooks or for working on calculations).
- The 24-hour assessment period is to allow time for you to access and download the exam paper, consult any reference material if that is appropriate to your type of exam, check your responses and prepare and upload your script (please remember to keep a copy of your submitted exam script for yourself). How long you spend on the exam is up to you, but for all exams there will be a maximum permitted word count which will help to guide time spent. For numerical-based questions, you are encouraged to spend no more than two hours in addition to the original time for the unseen exam.
- You are not required to complete the exam in one sitting and you are free to take breaks as required. Please bear in mind that you may have more than one exam in a day, therefore you will need to manage your time accordingly to make time for sleep, meals, caring / family responsibilities, exercise etc.

**How should I prepare for the exam?**
- You should prepare for the exam in the normal way, by working through and revising the course material. In addition, you may want to prepare your notes, textbooks, handouts, website bookmarks etc. to make it easier to use them during the exam. You should also plan in advance to make sure that you have a quiet place to take the exam. Advisers in the Effective Learning Service are available to help with revision through online appointments and webinars, their contact details are [here](#). Tips and advice on revision can be found [here](#).

**Can I consult the internet when I'm doing the exam?**
- Yes. You can consult any notes you've made on the course, any course material, any books or articles, any internet source, and anything else you find useful. When using internet sources, it is important to think critically about the information you are using, e.g. the reliability of the author, and the validity of the claims being made.
- As with any assessment, plagiarism – passing other people’s work off as your own – is strictly forbidden. In particular the verbatim use of past examination papers, solutions or any other course content is forbidden and will be picked up by our internal processes.
- For all written questions, you must reference material as you would for coursework. If in doubt about referencing you can find guides [here](#). Normal processes (e.g. Turnitin) will be used to check that submissions do not draw from published work in an inappropriate way. The University’s standard procedures for dealing with academic misconduct will still apply in the case of take-at-home exams. Guidance on plagiarism, and information about how the University responds to evidence of plagiarism, can be found here: [https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/plagiarism.htm](https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/plagiarism.htm)
- For numerical-based questions, referencing is not applicable and therefore not required for completing your exam.

**Will the exam paper look different to a normal exam paper?**
- No. The exam paper will be in the form of a PDF downloadable exam paper. If applicable, the usual statistical tables and formula sheets will be provided as part of this PDF.
- There may be some changes to examination formats – check individual course forums for the latest information on the exam format.
- Even where changes are being made, the course learning outcomes remain the same and you should continue to study in the normal way.

**Will the exam be marked differently from a standard exam?**
- The exam will be marked according to the marking scheme prepared in advance and approved by the course’s External Examiners. See the enclosed programme level performance descriptors at the end of this document for more detail on the performance expectations at different bands.
- For written questions, you will have access to your notes and course material etc., therefore it will be marked more like a piece of coursework rather than a normal ‘closed-book’ exam. You should therefore provide references when and if appropriate (but you don’t need to reference lecture/tutorial notes and accompanying slides etc).
- For numerical-types of exam questions, your completed script will look more like a standard exam response, since, for example, referencing is not appropriate for calculation-based questions. Calculation aspects of the paper may have fewer marks available than in previous papers, with higher marks than usual available for the interpretation, discussion and evaluation of the calculations you have been asked to perform. As usual the marks available for each question and sub question will be specified on the examination paper.

- **What happens if I can’t take the exam?**
  - As usual there will be no academic penalty for not sitting the examination but you will be required to pay your exam fee again if you do not take the exam as scheduled.
  - There will be a dedicated exam support service available during the 24-hour exam period, and you should contact them if you have any problems during the exam period, for example problems accessing the exam paper. Contact details for the exam support service will be provided in the Technical Guide closer to the examination period.
  - If due to illness you are unable to take your examination you can submit a medical certificate, following the normal procedure as specified in your student handbook.

- **How will the Mitigating Circumstances policy apply for these exams?**
  - If you believe that your performance has been adversely affected by illness or other extenuating circumstances, you should notify Edinburgh Business School as soon as possible. In addition you must submit a completed Mitigating Circumstances Application Form along with a medical certificate or other appropriate documentary evidence within five working days of the examination taking place. The School will not be able to consider any mitigating circumstances without this information. Evidence will be reviewed by the Chair of the Mitigating Circumstances Committee and the Committee will subsequently make a recommendation to the Board of Examiners. In determining what constitutes mitigating circumstances, the School abides by the University’s Mitigating Circumstances Policy. The Mitigating Circumstances Policy and Application Form are available at: https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm
  - The difficult context for these exams will be taken into account for all students by Boards of Examiners in reaching their decisions.

- **What happens if I submit my completed exam script after the deadline?**
  - Late submissions due to problems with technology (e.g. internet access) or other legitimate mitigating circumstances (e.g. illness) will not be penalised. Guidance on applying for mitigating circumstances is provided in previous section. The Technical Guide will provide contact details if you are experiencing IT problems which are likely to result in late submission.
  - Late submissions that are not due to problems with technology or accepted mitigating circumstances will be treated as ‘absents’. If you think that you will have difficulty submitting your completed script on time, you should get in touch with us as soon as possible.

- **Will I get feedback on my exam script?**
  - The University’s policy on feedback on exams applies also to take-at-home exam scripts: there is no individual feedback, but generic, whole-course feedback may be provided in due course in the form of solutions and examiner reports.

- **Who should I contact if I have any queries or difficulties?**
  - If you have any queries about your take-at-home exam please contact us at ebs.enquiries@hw.ac.uk
  - More detailed information on the process for downloading and submitting your exams will be provided within the accompanying technical guide.
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<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Clear Fail (&lt;45)</th>
<th>Potential Compensatory Pass (45-49)</th>
<th>Pass (50-59)</th>
<th>Good (60-69)</th>
<th>Excellent (70+)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge, Understanding,</td>
<td>Candidates in this range may display some knowledge but with serious omissions,</td>
<td>Candidates in this range show only a basic grasp of subject matter.</td>
<td>Candidates in this range show an adequate but potentially incomplete knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
<td>Candidates in this range show a broad knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
<td>Candidates in this range show an extensive and detailed knowledge of the subject matter.</td>
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<td>and Application</td>
<td>errors and/or major inaccuracies.</td>
<td>The main issues may be addressed but in insufficient detail. Several minor errors are evident.</td>
<td>Possible omission of some important subject matter and/or the appearance of some minor errors.</td>
<td>Identifies and appraises all of the main relevant issues; generally free of errors and/or misunderstanding.</td>
<td>Identifies all key issues and shows evidence of originality in structure and approach.</td>
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<td>Answers may be poorly focused/badly structured and/or contain largely irrelevant</td>
<td>There may be some effort to apply knowledge to the task but only basic understanding is displayed.</td>
<td>Evidence of some capacity to apply knowledge appropriately to the task, albeit with some errors.</td>
<td>Evidence of considerable strength in applying that knowledge to the task set; a well-organised response.</td>
<td>Demonstrates a highly-developed ability to apply knowledge to the task set</td>
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<td>material. An answer may be unacceptably incomplete.</td>
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<td>Solutions are offered to none of, or a limited portion of, the question set.</td>
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<td>Analysis, Synthesis,</td>
<td>Little or no appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical</td>
<td>Some familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</td>
<td>Evidence of familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</td>
<td>Shows a thorough familiarity with the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</td>
<td>Shows a deep, systematic and broad knowledge of the relevant body of knowledge with critical insight</td>
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<td>and Evaluation</td>
<td>or professional framework</td>
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<td>Little or no developed or structured argument; little or no analysis or critical awareness displayed</td>
<td>Mostly statements of ideas, with limited development of argument. Limited critical awareness.</td>
<td>Good developed arguments, but tending towards statements of ideas. Some critical awareness and analytical qualities</td>
<td>Shows a well-developed capacity to analyse issues, organise material, present arguments clearly and cogently</td>
<td>Shows critical and comprehensive appreciation of the relevant literature or theoretical, technical or professional framework</td>
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<td>Little or no demonstrated capacity for original and logical thinking</td>
<td>Limited evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking</td>
<td>Some evidence of capacity for original and logical thinking</td>
<td>Some original insights and capacity for creative and logical thinking</td>
<td>Demonstrates a highly-developed capacity for original, creative and logical thinking</td>
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<td>Use of Evidence and Relation</td>
<td>Very poor expression of ideas, arguments poorly presented and disorganised.</td>
<td>Poor expression of ideas. Arguments generally inconsistent with evidence.</td>
<td>Clear expression with a few possible areas of confusion.</td>
<td>Clear and fluent expression of ideas; arguments generally consistent with evidence.</td>
<td>Clear, fluent, stimulating and original expression of ideas; an exceptional ability to organise, analyse and present arguments fluently and lucidly.</td>
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<td>to Practice</td>
<td>Little or no use of evidence.</td>
<td>Limited use of evidence.</td>
<td>Arguments or statements adequately but not comprehensively supported by evidence.</td>
<td>Arguments well-supported by evidence.</td>
<td>A high level of critical analysis, amply supported by evidence.</td>
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MBA and MSc Programme Level Performance Descriptors, Based on Heriot-Watt University HAPS Grades Descriptors, Approved by the Learning and Teaching Board (now University Committee for Learning and Teaching), 17 September 2014