This guidance document only applies to those undergraduate and taught postgraduate students on programmes based at Bailrigg campus.
# Table of Contents

1. **Introduction** ......................................................................................................................... 3
2. **What are Open Book Exams?** ........................................................................................... 3
3. **How to Prepare for the Exam** ............................................................................................. 4
4. **Remember the Rules** ........................................................................................................ 5
5. **Practise taking an online assessment** ................................................................................ 5
6. **Studying for your Exams** .................................................................................................... 6
7. **What to do during the Examination** .................................................................................. 6
8. **How Long will I have to complete my Assessment?** ....................................................... 7  
   A. Restricted Time Period Open Book .................................................................................. 7  
   B. Timed, Single Sitting Exams ....................................................................................... 8  
   C. Timed Quiz ............................................................................................................... 8  
   D. Take Home Exams ..................................................................................................... 9
9. **What happens if I need additional time?** .......................................................................... 9
10. **Penalties for late exam responses** .................................................................................... 9  
    What to do on the day of the Exam? ..................................................................................... 10  
    How to submit your exam response ..................................................................................... 11
11. **Your wellbeing during exams** .......................................................................................... 11
12. **Getting help** .................................................................................................................. 11
13. **Frequently Asked Questions!** ........................................................................................... 11  
    1. What if I have Technical Problems? .................................................................................. 11  
    2. What if there is a Factual Error in the Questions? ............................................................ 12  
    3. What if I have mitigating circumstances? ....................................................................... 12  
    4. What if I am ill or have an emergency? ......................................................................... 12  
    5. What if I miss my exam? ............................................................................................... 12  
    6. What if I haven’t submitted my exam before the end of the allotted time? .......... 12  
    7. What if I upload the wrong file? .................................................................................... 12
14. **10 tips for sitting an exam** .............................................................................................. 12
15. **When the exams are finished** .......................................................................................... 13
1. Introduction

The University has introduced remote examinations for Part I/Part II and PGT students, although some in-person examinations will be required for Medicine (MBChB) students.

Your departments will ensure you are aware of the type of exam that will be used in each module and offer support on how to complete these assessments. All resit examinations will take the same format as the first-sit examinations.

A set of educational safeguards are also in place to protect Lancaster University undergraduates from the detrimental impact of COVID-19 in 2020-21. A set of guidelines are currently being developed for taught postgraduate students.

Assessments and exams for postgraduate taught programmes are typically administered locally by your departments. For that reason, your department will offer advice on formats, preparation and scheduling.

Whilst the content and academic effort required will be similar to any conventional exams you may have taken previously, the way in which you prepare for, and sit these exams, may be less familiar.

This guide contains essential information so you can prepare practically and mentally – please read it carefully before taking your exams.

2. What are Open Book Exams?

Open book exams allow you to access your own learning materials during the time allocated for that exam. You will be able to refer to your notes and other resources that you have available to answer the questions. An open book exam aims to assess your critical application of the module materials. It will test your understanding of what you have learnt and your application of that knowledge.

Having access to your notes may sound like an easier assessment, however the exam will require your full attention and will call for the same amount of preparation as traditional exams.

When you take your open-book exam, you will complete the exam questions remotely, sat alone within the University or your own home, outside Lancaster. You will use an internet-connected computer to log into the Moodle virtual learning environment to download your exam paper and submit your response. You cannot use your mobile phone to do exams, or the Moodle mobile app.

You will be given precise instructions by your department about how to a) present your answers to the exam and b) how to submit your work once you have completed the exam questions. For most exams you will be required to type the answers to the exam questions, but in other exams, particularly for questions that may require you to include calculations, or particular symbols or equations, you may be asked to hand write the answers. Information about how to upload your finished exam answers will be provided by the department.

Take time to read through the examination guidance provided for the exam in advance. It should have information about date, duration, submission requirements.

It is important to note that an open book exam does not mean that you are able to talk to other students or work collaboratively. It remains an individual assessment that you must complete alone.
Exam adjustments outlined in Inclusive Learning and Support Plans (ILSP) relate to traditional face-to-face exams. The Disability Service have worked with colleagues to determine how and where reasonable adjustments will be applied to Open Book exams. This guidance outlines how some of these adjustments apply to the different types of Open Books exams. For more detailed information please refer to https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/student-and-education-services/disability/2021-exam-adjustments/

3. How to Prepare for the Exam

It is important that you prepare and study for your open book examination, just as you would for an exam that you would have previously sat in person, in an examination hall.

**You will not have time to extensively review your notes or undertake wide-ranging reference searches during your exam. You should not use the examination time to prepare information to answer the question paper.** See https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/library/learn-independently/Preparingforonlineopenbookexams.pdf for further guidance on preparing for Open Book exams.

Before the exam it is important to, as far as possible, find a space in which you can concentrate fully on your assessment, which is quiet and free from interruptions. It is recommended that you have the following before starting your assessment:

- A way to monitor your time, e.g. regular alarms to alert you
- Your notes, and other resources
- Drinking water and snacks, etc.

In preparation for the exam write down important facts, key information, formulas and data on a separate sheet to have to hand during the exam. Organise your key reference materials for the topic in advance and use highlighters, tabs, sticky notes to help you retrieve the information quickly. Remember, more isn’t always better – focus your preparation on a few useful references or resources. Please see https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/embrace-digital/students/exams--quizzes/ for additional advice.

**Please check your examination timetable carefully to ensure that you are aware of the time, date and format of your examination. All times referenced within this guide, and on the Moodle exams site, are British Summer Time (BST). If you are in a different country at the time of your exam, you will need to check what time this translates to locally.**

**Please switch on your computer 20-30 minutes before the exam is due to start to make sure that there is time to deal with any issues e.g. updates that need to be uploaded, that might hinder you starting your exam at the correct time. You may wish to consider checking for updates and completing a restart prior to your exam, so it is important that you leave sufficient time for this. This is particularly important for timed, single-sitting exams.**

**Try to limit the number of applications you are using on your computer during your exam in order to preserve memory. It is recommended that you only use applications that you require to complete your work.**
4. Remember the Rules

All examinations have regulations associated with them as shown below. Please read these regulations carefully and make sure you fully understand the implications of not adhering to them.

*The penalties for collusion or plagiarism are significant and will be stringently applied. Turnitin will be used for all submitted papers.*

1. You are expected to complete the exam independently and not confer with anyone during the examination. You should not have a support worker with you during the exam unless this has been authorised and organised by the Disability Service.
2. You must not make copies of any of the test questions (either written or screenshot).
3. You must not share the details of this assessment with anyone.
4. You must not approach or ask anyone for support with this assessment.
5. The answers you provide must be your own work and by submitting your answers you are confirming that it is your own work.
6. Remember the University’s rules on plagiarism and academic malpractice [https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/student-based-services/asq/marp/Academic-Malpractice-Regs.pdf](https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/media/lancaster-university/content-assets/documents/student-based-services/asq/marp/Academic-Malpractice-Regs.pdf)
7. If you are undertaking a professionally regulated degree programme, you’ll also be bound by their code of conduct.

You should not speak to anyone about the assessment for the duration of the entire examination period (eg 23-hours for a restricted time period assessment). Even if you have finished your exam, and submitted the answer, you do not know whether anyone else has. A student may tell you that they have submitted an answer when they have not. Sharing any materials or talking to students about the exam within that 23-hour period is considered to be an academic offence.

5. Practise taking an online assessment

To ensure you are ready for online assessments, it is really important that you become familiar with the technology and process involved, and to ensure everything works with any assistive technology you may be using.

You will be told by your department what form your assessment will take and they will work with you to ensure you fully understand what is required to complete your assessment successfully. Where you have an exam adjustment, for example additional time, your department will outline how this will be applied for your online assessments.

Access to a Moodle site where you can practice submitting answers to relevant different forms of assessments will be provided shortly, along with detailed guidance from your department. If you discover any accessibility issues please alert your department as soon as possible.

**Practise Scanning Content if needed:**

If you will have a need to submit exam notes, sketches or diagrams, etc. as part of your exam response (and you cannot copy and paste these into your document), you should practise embedding such artefacts into a word document.

We recommend you use the Microsoft Office Lens app for scanning purposes; the app is available (for free) via the App Store or Play Store. Detailed instructions on how to do this are available in Lancaster
Answers – https://answers.lancaster.ac.uk/display/ISS/Microsoft+Office+Lens+help. Contact your department in advance if access to this app is problematic for you.

6. Studying for your Exams

Your module lecturers will provide any required specific guidance before you complete your exam. As a general rule, ensure you prepare and revise as you would normally for a traditional exam.

In an open book assessment, you will be able to access your own notes and other resources, such as your usual Moodle site, but remember you will have limited time during the exam to review/modify your notes, or read additional sources of information.

Therefore, it is important to make sure any notes you make during revision clearly identify what is your own work, and what has been taken directly from other sources. In a typical exam format that you may have done previously, it would be usual to make notes from your reading and revision, and that can include specific text that someone else has written. This would normally not be a problem as you would not have those notes available to you in the exam.

However, for an open-book assessment, where your notes are available for you to refer to, you may inadvertently include exact copies of the words from your notes within your exam answers. **It is therefore really important when making revision notes to make sure that you are very clear which elements are your own words, and which are the words of other people. If you don’t, you could inadvertently commit plagiarism.**

Remember we expect any work you submit to be entirely your own work. If you are unclear about the exact definition of plagiarism, or the University’s rules and regulations about plagiarism please refer to the following web pages https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/student-and-education-services/exams-and-assessment/regulations/plagiarism/

Your exam answers will be submitted to plagiarism detection software, and if your work is found to use the words of other people, or your own words that you have previously submitted for coursework in any module, your assessment will be deemed to be plagiarised, which can carry severe penalties, and significantly affect your assessment outcome.

7. What to do during the Examination

Manage your time

Take time to read through the exam paper carefully and apportion time to each section/question. Make sure you have a way of monitoring time (have a clock visible and set regular alarms).

You may want to answer the questions that you are familiar with first, and then complete those questions that may need further consultation with other reference materials later. Be concise, accurate and thorough and leave yourself some extra time at the end for reviewing and proofreading your answers.
Important information specifically about timed, single sitting exams

All timed, single-sitting exam papers will have an additional 30 minutes of time available at the end of the exam period to upload your answer to the Moodle site. This is to make sure that if you have any problems with uploading you will still be able to submit your answer within the time allowed. For example, if the exam is meant to be completed within 2 hours you will have 2 hours and 30 minutes to upload your answer. Make sure to submit your work before the allotted time is up – don’t leave it to the very last minute in case any problems arise.

DO NOT try and keep writing until the end of the 2 hours and 30-minute period. If you submit work after 2 hours and 40-minutes because you had wifi problems in the last ten minutes, it will be considered late. You must stop after the two hours and try to upload your answer.

Where appropriate (for timed, single sittings and Moodle Quizzes), if you have an ISLP, the appropriate additional time will be added to your allotted time to enable you to take the agreed breaks/extra time you require. For example, if you have an ILSP that provides 25% extra time, for a 2-hour exam, you will have 2.5 hours to complete the question paper and a further 30 minutes to upload your answer to Moodle. For restricted time period exams (where you are given 23 hours to complete an exam) this is considered an inclusive assessment type, which does not require additional extra time.

Make sure you!

- Read through the whole paper before you start to familiarise yourself with the number and types of questions.
- Follow the naming protocol, as directed by your department, for saving and submitting your work. Do not include your name on your file, or in the filename, to preserve anonymity.
- Include a bibliography/reference list if required. This will not count towards the word limit.

8. How long will I have to complete my assessment?

At Lancaster, assessments will be in one of the following formats: Restricted Time Period open book exam, a Timed Single Sitting open book exam, a timed Quiz or a Take Home exam.

A. Restricted Time Period Open Book

All restricted time period exams will start at 14.30hrs (BST) and end at 13.30hrs (BST) the following day.

As general guidance, it is expected that for restricted time period exam you have a period of time (23hrs) to consider the exam questions and an exam duration time (e.g. 3hrs) in which to answer the exam questions.

Students MAY take the entire restricted time period (23hrs) to complete the exam. However, the exam questions have been designed so that you CAN complete the questions comfortably within the exam duration time and you are strongly advised to manage your time so that you complete all your answers with the exam duration time (e.g. 3hrs)

You can access your exam online, log off to complete the exam and log on again to submit. Remember you must submit the completed paper via Moodle within the restricted time period (23hrs).
You are expected to spend the same amount of time as you would for an invigilated in-person exam to read the exam paper, plan your answers, and type (or handwrite – when specified) your response. Students who ordinarily have extra time allocated for in-person exams will be able to take the extra time needed to complete the exam. The exam duration time (e.g. 3hrs) must be reserved to work with the new format and technological steps involved such as reading the instructions in Moodle, opening or downloading the exam paper at the start, and then submitting your response. **Do not wait until the very end of your restricted exam time to start submitting your response as you may go over your allocated time and incur a penalty.**

### B. Timed, Single Sitting Exams

For the timed, single sitting exam you will start your exam at **09.30 (BST)** and you will have a **restricted timed exam duration** which can be between 1-4hrs. You MUST complete the exam in the 1-4hr time period (make sure you know the specific times for each of your exams by checking your exam timetable).

As described above, you will have an additional 30 minutes available for timed, single sitting exams in which to upload your completed paper to Moodle.

**Do NOT use the 30 minutes upload time as additional time to try and add further information to your exam questions.**

A late submission will result in a mark of **ZERO.**

For example: EXAM100 2.5 hrs + 30 mins. The exam will start at 09.30(BST) and end at 12noon (BST). You will have 30 mins to upload your submission. The submission deadline will be 12.30 hrs (BST).

### C. Timed Quiz

As general guidance, it is expected that for a timed quiz you will normally have a restricted time period (23hrs) during which you can start the quiz, and an **exam duration time** in which to answer the quiz questions.

For a timed quiz you will normally be able to start your exam from **14.30hrs** (BST) on the given date (unless you are notified otherwise by your department). **You can start the timed quiz** at any time within the restricted time window of 23 hours but once you start you **MUST** complete the exam within the time period allotted, which **WILL** include any additional time you are entitled to if you have an ILSP. For example, if the quiz is designed to be completed within 1 hour you could start the quiz at 14.30 and complete it by 15.30; if you start the quiz at 16.30 you would need to complete it by 17.30.

**A countdown timer will begin from the moment you click ‘start attempt’.**

**Important Information:** Once you start the timed quiz you will **only** have the allotted exam duration within which to complete the quiz and you will be given a countdown during the quiz. The quiz will automatically submit your answers at the end of the allotted exam duration, or at the end of the restricted period, whichever comes first.

Your department may have two short parts to your exam which could include a quiz as Part A and a written answer section as Part B. **Your department will advise you if this is the case.**
Some departments will allow your Part A and Part B to be completed at any time within the 23-hour period allocated for your exam. Other departments have allocated a time-slot for you to complete a written element. In these situations, your quiz (Part A) will typically be available from 14:30 (BST) on the timetabled date. The timed, single sitting (Part B) will be available for a set period starting at 09:30 (BST) on the following day.

Please make sure that you know the specific times for each of your exams by checking your exam timetable.

D. Take Home exam

An alternative format for the open book exam is the option where you are provided with the exam questions prior to sitting the formal exam and/or asked to complete the assessment as a ‘take-home’ exam.

The ‘take-home’ exam is taken over a period of time that may vary from 24hrs to 1 week.

The department will provide guidance on the amount of time you are expected to spend working on your take-home exam, and any associated word count that may be required.

Your department is responsible for administering take home papers, following University Guidance. This form of examination will not be visible in the normal exam timetable, but your department will inform you about the actual assessment paper, and timings and deadlines that need to be adhered to.

9. What happens if I need additional time?

Additional time will be provided for students taking timed, single-sitting papers, or quizzes, who have approved alternative exam arrangements such as extra writing and/or rest time. You will know already if you have approved adjustments as these details will be on your Inclusive Learning and Support Plan (ILSP). If you have approved extra time you’ll be able to submit your exam response in Moodle later than the ‘standard’ stated duration. The time that is identified in your personal exam timetable will have any additional time automatically incorporated into it.

Open book exams that are restricted time period exams of 23 hours duration are designed to be fully inclusive, and will not have additional time available to account for ILSPs or other approved exam arrangements.

If other adjustments are needed because of disability-related accessibility issues, your Department and the Disability Service will work with you to ensure accessible assessment arrangements.

10. Penalties for late exam responses

IMPORTANT: You must not leave it until the last minute to submit your exam response in Moodle.

You have additional time added to your exam duration to enable you to download your exam paper at the start and submit your exam response at the end without encroaching on your writing time.
Penalties will be applied if you submit your exam response later than the times detailed in your exam timetable and including later than specified in agreed alternative arrangements.

You should upload your exam response within the time allowed. Please be aware

- If you access the exam paper later than the published start time (and you do not have an agreed alternative start time) you will still need to finish and submit your exam response within the published timeframe or be considered to have submitted late.

- If you access the paper on time but upload your exam response after the published timeframe (and you do not have an agreed alternative arrangement in place), you will also be considered to have submitted late.

- If you believe you have a good reason for submitting late, you should submit an exceptional circumstance notice to your relevant department. All timed, single-sitting, exams have an additional 30 minutes for uploading when you have finished the assessment, however if your internet connection or computer fully crashes, then an exceptional circumstances notice should be sent to your department, who will review evidence such as Moodle logs and document properties when preparing the case to be heard by the exam board. Exceptional circumstances cannot be applied to a situation where you have delayed submission until the very last moment of the 30 minutes available to you for upload.

The Exam Board will use the exceptional circumstances form to consider whether to waive penalties.

If you do not have exceptional circumstances, then a late submission of any type of assessment will lead to an F4 (0%) being awarded for that exam.

What to do on the day of the Exam?

It is very important that you understand that your exam will start at the specified time. You will not be able to access the exam paper or submit your answers until the specified time. This will be the equivalent of an invigilator saying ‘You may turn over the exam paper now.’

Before submitting your exam answers, you must first make sure your work meets each of the requirements in the list below:

- Please make absolutely sure you upload the correct document and that all pages are included as you expect them to be as you will not be able to change this after the deadline.
- Your exam response must be submitted within the duration (hours and minutes) stated in the timetable. If you have approved alternative examination arrangements, please refer to the duration already communicated to you.
- Your exam response should be identified ONLY by your student identification number which is on your Library University card.
- Your exam response should not contain any other pieces of information that could identify you to the marker of your paper (especially your name).
- Save your exam response in the format designated by your department e.g. as a word document, or as a PDF.
- The department will inform you of the format you should use for the file name for your submission.
How to submit your exam response

For the restricted time period open book exam and the timed single, sitting open book exam you are strongly advised to ONLY submit your answers once you have completed the whole exam paper, following the exam upload instructions provided by your department.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have submitted the correct version within the time allowed.

For the timed quiz, remember that the quiz will automatically submit your answers at the end of the restricted time exam duration or at the end of the restricted period, whichever comes first. It is your responsibility to check your exam timetable, so you know the time allowances for all your examinations.

For all exams you are strongly advised to monitor your time (have a clock visible and set regular alarms)

11. Your wellbeing during exams

Navigating exams can be difficult, but the University is committed to supporting you as you engage with the process. It is important that you look after your wellbeing prior to attempting your exams and you may find the following site helpful https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/embrace-digital/students/digital-wellbeing/.

Your particular exam-related issues and challenges may be the same as those of your peers or they may be different. But whatever it is that makes the exam experience difficult for you, we would like to support you to address the challenges of exams as effectively as you can, so that you can feel proud of yourself and positive about how you approached the process.

You can find support and advice through the Universities wellbeing and support services at the following websites https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/study/why-lancaster/wellbeing-and-support/ and https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/student-and-education-services/counselling-and-mental-health-service/services/

12. Getting help

If your query or issue has not been addressed by this Guide, or by consulting the Exams and Assessment support pages, then please contact your department as soon as possible.

13. Frequently Asked Questions!

What if I have Technical Problems?

Please check that you can access the relevant Moodle site for each of your exam papers well in advance of the exam day; you should have access to these at least a week before the exam, although you will not be able to see the exam paper until the start time on the exam date.

On the day of your exam, if you are unable to download or open your exam paper at this point, or you are having technical problems submitting your exam response, please contact your department as
soon as possible. The department will provide you with details of the appropriate email address to use.

It’s important to get in touch as soon as you encounter an issue. Please try and take screen shots if at all possible, which have timings visible, to send to the contact person.

What if there is a factual error in the questions?

At the start of the exam period an academic will be available to answer any specific questions you may have.

If you discover a factual error during the exam, contact your department as soon as possible, via the designated email address. This will allow the department to inform all students of any corrections required via the announcement forum on the Moodle exam site.

What if I have exceptional circumstances?

If you believe your academic performance has been seriously affected in some way then you can submit an exceptionalcircumstances application via your programme. Details are normally in your programme handbook and/or Moodle.

What if I am ill or have an emergency?

Please contact your department soon as you can for further advice. Contact the support services you would normally turn to in these circumstances, such as a medical doctor, for their advice and support.

What if I miss my exam?

You will need to inform your department as soon as you can that you have missed the exam. If you have good reason for not attempting the exam you may apply for exceptional circumstances.

What if I haven’t submitted my exam before the end of the allotted time?

You MUST submit your work, even if you submit it late.

If you believe you have a good reason for submitting late, including difficulties related to downloading your exam paper or uploading your response, you may apply for exceptional circumstances. Wherever possible please submit evidence to show e.g. computer screen shots, the timing of these difficulties.

What If I upload the wrong file?

Please contact your department as soon as you can via the designated email address for further advice.

14. 10 tips for sitting an exam

1. Try your best to start the exam calmly. You may want to use some of the time before you begin to do some simple relaxation and breathing exercises to calm your nerves.

2. Begin by very carefully checking the instructions on the exam paper.
3. Consider the amount of time you have, decide how best to distribute this to the different sections of the exam and aim to stick to your timings. Three average answers will usually get you more marks overall than two brilliant ones and an unfinished third.

4. Where there is a choice of questions, take some time to consider the potential of each option before making your decision.

5. Once you’ve made your choice, read the question(s) thoroughly, then re-read to make sure you’ve understood and haven't made assumptions.

6. With an essay-based question, plan your answer briefly to ensure a strong, critical argument. Keep this simple, no more than section headings and your basic points and examples. If it’s relevant, you may find it useful to quickly note down any sources or quotes to refer back to.

7. Remember, you don’t always have to answer questions in the order they appear. Some may want to start by getting the more difficult questions out of the way, while others may prefer to build confidence with easier questions first.

8. Throughout the exam, try to stay hydrated.

9. If possible, take regular 'micro-breaks', e.g. a brief pause at the end of writing a paragraph. Try stopping to think for a moment, which can help you assume control and collect your thoughts.

10. Towards the end of your exam, try your best to conclude your essays in some way and find a little time to double-check your answers, if you can.

Remember that you can only do your best on the day. Try not to do a ‘post-mortem’ with other students. There are lots of ways that a question can be answered. Just because you didn’t do it the same way as someone else, does not mean your answer is incorrect.

15. When the exams are finished

Whether it was just one exam or all of your exams, follow these steps to reflect on your experiences and help you prepare for the next challenge:

- firstly, congratulate yourself for taking the exam - it's over and you finished it
- consider what went well
- consider what you learnt from the exam
- celebrate - if you have other exams coming up, treat yourself a little before you get back to revision
- if you've finished all of your exams, firstly remind yourself of your achievement and then do something fun to celebrate
- DO NOT speak to anyone else about the exam until the end of the restricted time period (e.g. 23-hours) is over.