



Student Guide to Exams: 2020/21 Semester 1 assessment period

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It is strongly recommended that you download a copy of this guide, to use if you go offline. Check back to our [Exams and Assessments](#) page to make sure you have the most up-to-date version.

Contents

Version history	2
Introduction.....	2
‘Inspira’	2
Exam schedule and timings	3
Accessing exam papers	4
What if I am having difficulties?.....	4
Digital exams	4
Types of digital exam	5
Academic integrity (including plagiarism and cheating)	5
Alternative arrangements for exams (Disability Access Plans)	6
Extra time.....	6
Assistive software	6
Exam support worker	7
Preparing for your exams	7
Familiarise yourself in advance with how to upload your assessment.....	7
On the day of your assessment: key points	8
Key activity.....	8
Create your own exam conditions.....	8
How to submit your exam	9

Issues submitting your exam.....	9
Technical issues and queries	9
Before the assessment window opens.....	9
Once the exam has started.....	9
What to do in the event of a technical failure	10
If you think you've spotted an error in the exam.....	10
Your wellbeing during exams	10
Further sources of wellbeing support	11
Further sources of exams support	12

Version history

This is Version 1.1 of this guide, and includes the following updates

Section	Update
'Inspira'	information about when exams will be listed on the Inspira dashboard

Introduction

This guide provides you with information on what you can expect during the Semester 1 2020/21 assessment period and provides advice on how to approach your assessments. Please also refer to any guidance provided by your department.

Our central webpage [Exams and assessments](#) will be updated regularly with information for your exams.

'Inspira'

For the 2020/21 academic year, assessments have been designed so that they can be taken digitally. Most exams will be delivered through a system called [Inspira](#).

Inspira is an assessment platform that is used to plan, design, deliver and mark exams. It supports many question and answer types, and allows anonymity for students taking exams. More information about Inspira, instruction videos, and access to the system can be found via our [Exams & Assessments](#) webpage.

You shouldn't worry if you can't see all of your exams listed on your Inspira dashboard straight away. Exams for each unit will begin to appear gradually over the course of

December and January, and you should see your exam listed 72 hours prior to it starting. If this isn't the case, please contact your Programme Administrator as follows:

- Students in departments in the Faculty of Engineering & Design should consult the [Faculty Student Centre pages on the self-service portal](#)
- Students in departments in the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences should consult the [team contacts web page](#)
- School of Management students - undergraduate students should email bsc@management.bath.ac.uk and MSc students should consult the [team contacts web page](#)
- Students in departments in the Faculty of Science should consult the [team contacts web page](#)

If your exam is taking place on Moodle, you can find specific [guidance on preparing and submitting assessments](#) as well as [instructions for submitting your exam attempt](#).

Exam schedule and timings

The semester 1 exam period for the 2020/21 academic year runs from Monday 11 January 2021 to Saturday 23 January 2021.

Your exam timetable is available on our webpage [Semester 1 exam timetable for 2020/21](#).

Your exam's window will open at a specified time between 9am and 5pm Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), Monday to Friday. The deadline to submit will fall between 9am and 5pm (GMT) on a Monday to Saturday. You can find this information in the exam timetable.

In most cases you will be able to work on your exam at any point during the exam window but should only need to spend the time recommended on your paper to complete the exam.

In some cases, however, your exam will be set for a more limited time period and timed from the point that you start it. If this is the case, your Department will explain this to you before your exam. If you have a Disability Access Plan extra time may be arranged for you (see the section [Alternative arrangements for exams \(Disability Access Plans\)](#))

If you are based outside of the UK, you should plan your exam attempt around your local time zone, as it falls into the GMT window.

Please bear in mind that you may have two exams in the same 24-hour period. However, you will be able to start work on your exam at any point during the assessment window. You will need to manage your time accordingly to make time for sleep, meals, caring or family responsibilities, exercise etc.

(See also [Preparing for exams](#)).

Accessing exam papers

You will only be able to access exam papers for the units on which you are registered in SAMIS. You should [check your SAMIS record](#) before the assessment period. If you do not think you are registered on the right units, contact your Director of Studies as soon as possible.

All exams will be on Inspira unless your unit convenor or Department has notified you separately that they will be on Moodle. You'll be able to log in to Inspira prior to the start of your exam to see the dates and times they are scheduled, as well as exam instructions (the 'rubric') and any additional guidance. Your Department will provide you with any further information specific to your exams.

Inspira can be used with a regular web browser. The two most recent, stable versions of the following web browsers are always supported:

- Microsoft Edge
- Mozilla Firefox
- Google Chrome
- Apple Safari (for macOS X)

This only defines the recommended browsers. Other browser versions and vendors that follow modern web standards can also be used.

You must complete and upload your exam attempt by the submission deadline.

What if I am having difficulties?

If your study is being disrupted by COVID-19 related or other circumstances, please do seek out [support and advice](#) as soon as possible.

You should engage with your assessments as much as you can, and to try and complete them if you feel able to do so. Our [no-detriment measures for 2020/21](#) are focused on assessment attempts and are in place to support you. If you are facing significant disruption and you feel that you are unable to take your exam in January, you can [defer the attempt](#) to the supplementary assessment period. You can find out more about this and the process you must follow to defer an exam in [our guide](#). If you do submit your examination but you feel your performance was affected you could apply for [Individual Mitigating Circumstances \(IMCs\)](#).

Digital exams

On-campus exams have been replaced with online exams.

While the submission window for these exams is longer than an on-campus exam could be, these exams are designed to be completed within a short time period, such as two hours. We strongly advise you to revise as you would for an assessment taken under standard exam conditions, even though it feels a bit different. Your exam will only relate to content that has been covered in your unit.

See [Preparing for your exams](#) for further advice.

You must attempt your exams on your own, in an appropriate space (such as your own home), within the time period specified on the exam schedule. You are responsible for finding the most appropriate space in which to take your exam. It should be:

- Private, without any other person present unless required for reasons set out in a Disability Access Plan.
- Free from distraction, disturbance and disruption.

Types of digital exam

The following question types may be used during Semester 1 exams.

- Multiple choice – Choose one answer from several alternatives.
- Multiple response – Choose more than one answer from several alternatives.
- Essay – Longer texts with the opportunity to use formatting such as tables, LaTeX, special symbols and mathematical symbols.
- File upload - Answer the question by uploading a PDF file. For example, you hand-write an answer on paper, take a photo of it and upload the final answer as a PDF file in the question.

Your department will provide you with information on the format.

In an open-book exam, you are allowed access to your textbooks, notes, and other resources. However, you mustn't seek assistance from any person, persons or organisation, or speak to other students about the exam during the submission window for the exam unless your exam paper explicitly states this is allowed. For further information see [Academic Integrity](#).

Once you have finished, you will submit your work as instructed on your exam paper. You can also find instructions for submitting assessments through our [video guides](#) and PDF guides.

Academic integrity (including plagiarism and cheating)

When you registered at the University you agreed to read and to abide by the University's [Regulations for Students](#) and your programme handbook, both of which include the references to, and penalties for, unfair practices such as plagiarism, fabrication or

falsification. Your exam paper includes a rubric with instructions for completing the examination. Here, you will also be reminded of the requirement for academic integrity.

For open-book exams you may refer to your own course and revision notes and look up information in offline or online resources, for example textbooks or online journals. However, you may not communicate with any person, persons or organisation, or speak to other students about the exam, before the submission deadline, unless explicitly permitted to do so in the instructions on your exam paper.

By submitting your exam attempt, you agree to the [University's academic integrity declaration](#) and confirm the work is your own. The use of the work of others, and your own past work, must be referenced appropriately. Your department will be able to provide you with further advice about the approach for your subject area.

Written work may be analysed by the University's plagiarism detection software, Urkund. We take assessment offenses very seriously and there are significant academic penalties. Seek advice from your Director of Studies before your exam if you are unsure as claims of inadvertence or ignorance will not be accepted as a basis for mitigation of a penalty.

If you are in any doubt about the rules for referencing please refer to the University's [academic integrity training](#).

Alternative arrangements for exams (Disability Access Plans)

Some students are entitled to alternative exam arrangements due to disabilities or long-term health conditions. These are set out in an agreed Disability Access Plan (DAP).

Extra time

For many students the open-book exam format will provide a longer period for you to attempt your assessment and negate your previous requirements for alternative exam arrangements such as extra time, rest breaks or a specific type of venue.

However, in cases where your Department has told you that your exam is time-limited within the 24-hour submission window, additional time will be added to your exam time.

If you would like to review or discuss your support requirements ahead of the exams period, please contact the [Disability Service](#) as soon as possible.

Assistive software

If you are using any assistive software (e.g. screen reader, text-to-speech etc.) you should familiarise yourself with how it works with Inspira before the exam period. It is important that you establish your own way of working ahead of the exams so that you are relaxed and confident when they begin. [Assistive Technology](#) can help you identify any specialist equipment you might need (See also [Preparing for your Exams](#)).

Exam support worker

You may have an entitlement to an exam support worker (e.g. reader/scribe/prompter). If you are taking up this support, we advise that you have a practice session prior to the exam period to familiarise yourself with the new process.

The [Disability Service](#) should be in contact with you about this and can provide further support and advice before and during the exam period. You can contact them if you are unsure about the disability support that might be available to you.

Preparing for your exams

You should [prepare for your exams](#) as you normally would – through sticking to a reasonable revision schedule, accessing [past papers](#) and materials to practice questions etc. Make sure you also look after your mental and physical health by taking breaks, trying to get some exercise and eating as you would normally.

You can find help with your exams and assessments on the [Academic Skills blog](#) produced by the Skills Centre. As well as advice on revision and short presentations on academic writing there is useful advice and tips including:

- [Top ten tips for exam preparation](#)
- [Top tips for taking open book exams 1 – preparation](#)
- [Top tips for taking open book exams 2 - on the day](#)
- [Mastering multiple choice question exams](#)

You can also get help with your writing by booking a [1:1 online academic writing tutorial](#).

Familiarise yourself in advance with how to upload your assessment

You may find that for your exam you are asked to create and upload an assessment in a way that you've not previously been required to do. For example, you will normally need to convert your completed paper into a PDF, create a PDF from your photos of handwritten notes, or create a video for a presentation. Your work must be legible, with each page upright, and all pages in order. If you have been given permission to write all or part of your exam by hand, dark (black or blue) ink must be used.

Before each of your assessment windows opens, it is strongly recommended that you attempt a practice run at creating files in these formats using our [video guides](#) and step-by-step [instructions](#). This will help you feel more at ease during the assessment window and better able to concentrate on getting your exam work complete.

On the day of your assessment: key points

Key activity

A few key things to think about when taking an exam are:

- Punctuality: make sure you are prepared to start and finish your assessment within the times given, and that you have a way to keep track of time – you might find it helpful to set alarms.
- When the 'clock starts ticking': stay calm and take the time to read instructions and the questions carefully.
- Technical aspects: whenever possible test your internet connection and computer in advance. Make sure you have any chargers or cables with you – you might want to use an Ethernet cable if your Wi-Fi is unreliable.
- Alert your family or house-mates to the fact that you are doing an exam. They should avoid distracting you, and may also be able to limit their broadband usage while you are working.

Create your own exam conditions

You should try as much as possible to create a quiet, comfortable space in which to take your assessments. A checklist of things you may find useful to have is:

- A desk or table
- A comfortable chair
- Adequate lighting
- An internet-connected computer with Microsoft Word or equivalent
- An Inspecra compatible web browser (see [Accessing exam papers](#) for more details)
- If you are hand-writing your answers, you will need to be able to scan or photograph pages for submission.
- Heating or cooling arrangements
- A way to monitor your time, e.g. regular alarms
- Your books, notes, and other resources
- Your student number, single sign on (SSO) and password
- Your candidate number, which you can find in SAMIS
- Drinking water and snacks, etc

You should check in advance of the assessment what materials you are permitted to have with you during the exam (e.g. calculators, textbooks, notes etc.) and ensure these are easily accessible.

How to submit your exam

Full instructions on submitting your exam are available via our [video guides](#) which include guidance on accessing a demo test and checking your requirements before your exams.

Inspira saves your work as you're going along, and will automatically submit anything saved at the submission deadline. If you have started your exam and you think you may need to defer please read our guide [What to do if you need to defer your examination](#).

For exams taking place on Moodle, you can find [guidance on preparing and submitting assessments](#) as well as [instructions for submitting your exam attempt](#).

Issues submitting your exam

You should make every effort to submit your assessment by the deadline set on your exam paper. You are not expected to spend the whole of the exam submission window working on your assignment, unless your exam is for a set, timed duration. You will have been given enough time to take account of most distractions or minor issues you might encounter. Therefore, try to complete the assignment in the suggested time and try to upload it well in advance of the submission deadline.

If you think you may be unable to attempt or submit an exam by the deadline, for any reason, contact the [exams helpline](#), who will be able to advise you on the options available to you.

If something goes wrong during the exam, try to stay calm. You will normally have time to resolve any difficulties through the exams helpline that will be available.

If you encounter significant disruption during your exam that can't be resolved, you can [defer the attempt by notifying us before the submission deadline](#).

Please note that if you do not submit your exam by the submission deadline and you have not deferred the exam attempt, non-submission penalties will apply. If your attempt has been disrupted, you should seek advice from your Director of Studies and the SU Advice & Support Centre as soon as possible. You may also wish to consider submitting an [IMC claim](#).

Technical issues and queries

Before the assessment window opens

Contact your Director of Studies, Personal Tutor or Unit Convenor, as appropriate, with any questions about your assessments.

Once the exam has started

You should not normally approach your department. During your exam, [help and advice](#) will be available.

If you need to speak to someone *urgently*, please call our Exam Helpline. This is emergency telephone support on +44 (0)1225 387500. The line will be open from 8am to 6pm Greenwich Mean Time (GMT), Monday to Friday, throughout the assessment period and from 8am to 10am Greenwich Mean Time on a Saturday.

What to do in the event of a technical failure

If there is a technical failure with a University system that affects your assessment, for instance with Single Sign-On or InSpera, please wait until the relevant system is available again in order to continue or to submit your assignment. Information on the current status of systems is available at: <https://status.bath.ac.uk/>. We will attempt to notify you that the system is up and running once the problem is fixed.

If you think you've spotted an error in the exam

If you believe you have found an error in the exam questions or instructions, if possible, make a note of the error on your submission and attempt the question or task to the best of your ability. There is no need to notify a member of staff as they will not be able to take any action to rectify the error.

The impact of any errors will be taken into consideration when results are reviewed by the Board of Examiners for Units.

Your wellbeing during exams

We recognise you may be entering into a potentially stressful period during your assessments and, given the current circumstances around COVID-19, this could become amplified, so it is very important you look after yourself. Please find below some recommendations on simple strategies you can implement and access on how to maintain a healthy balance:

Creating a study routine

We are all getting used to new ways of working and studying, so firstly it is important to create a clear dedicated study space that is free from clutter and distractions. Set up a calm and dedicated study environment, and have a daily sweep of this to make sure it is conducive to study. (See also [Create your own exam conditions](#)).

Set a clear plan for the day. Give tasks your full attention, switch off all distractions and have dedicated time to focus on your revision. You could try the 'Pomodoro technique' - where you study in short, sharp bursts with breaks in between.

Focus on self-care

In response to the current pandemic, lots of apps and services from fitness to mindfulness and meditation have been offering free access. Gentle and regular exercise can also provide natural breaks within your day and allow you to recharge and refocus.

As we are spending most of the day in our homes we are never far away from the biscuit cupboard. It is important to try and not overindulge in sugary foods and to try and maintain stable blood sugar levels to facilitate good levels of concentration.

Try to avoid speculation

The news can be a constant source of distraction, and if viewed too much can unhelpfully raise our anxiety levels. Try to follow the news in a time-limited way and avoid continually refreshing screens for updates as this can make you feel 'on-alert' or 'on-edge'. We also recommend sticking to reputable sites and well-established news corporations.

Undertake positive reflection activities

It is very easy at the moment to get drawn into thinking about the bigger picture of this situation and the future with catastrophic thoughts about what is going to happen. We advise bringing things back to the here and now. Think about what you are grateful for, reflect on what has gone well during your day – no matter how small that thing is - and set yourself small achievable tasks, ensuring you do something for yourself just for you each day that you enjoy. This will help centre and promote a more balanced frame of mind, which will contribute towards being more effective and present in the here and now.

Reach out and get support if you need to

We are all individuals who need support at different times and in different circumstances. Please do think about your support network, family or friends and reach out to them where you feel comfortable. You can also arrange a phone or video call with the [Wellbeing Service](#) for support and guidance.

Further sources of wellbeing support

The [Student Services](#) team are available for support.

The [Exam Stress Podcast](#) has general guidance on understanding exam stress, how to manage it and tips to prepare for the exam period.

[Silvercloud](#) is an online self-help platform for wellbeing and mental health which offers secure access to online CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) programmes.

[Read Well](#) provides a selection of over 50 books that can support your health and wellbeing, with topics including anxiety, stress and general development.

[Anxiety Aid](#) is a free online course for Bath students struggling to keep worry and anxiety in check.

You might find headphones useful to block out noise, and we would also recommend turning off any devices (for example, your phone) which might distract you.

If you are taking an open-book exam the additional time will allow you to access and download the exam paper, consult any reference material if appropriate, check your responses and prepare and upload your script. It also takes account of the fact that there may be distractions or possibly minor problems, such as a poor internet connection. How

long you spend on the exam is up to you, but for some exams there will be a maximum permitted word count which will help to guide time spent.

If you aren't based in the UK, you will be able to plan your time to attempt your assessment so that it best fits with your own time zone. **You must still submit your exam by the deadline set in Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).**

Further sources of exams support

During the assessment period, a wide range of support and guidance across the University continues to be available to you. This includes:

- [Exams & Assessments web page](#)
- [Inspera how-to videos](#)
- [Your Director of Studies or Personal Tutor](#)
- [Skills Centre](#)
- [Student Services](#)
- [Wellbeing Service](#)
- [Counselling and Mental Health](#)
- [Disability Service](#)
- [The SU Bath Advice & Support Centre](#)
- [University Library](#)