



School of Mathematical Sciences

Exam Guide for Students 2025/26

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1. Formats of final exams

This exam guide applies to exams for Mathematical Sciences modules: those with module codes beginning MTH. If you are taking exams for modules run by other Schools, then please consult the staff in those Schools for exam guidance.

The majority of final exams for the 2025/26 academic year be held in-person on campus. Only a relatively small number of modules will hold online final exams.

Exams last for either 2 hours or 3 hours (with extra time as arranged for students with Examination Access Arrangements). Specifically:

- For modules MTH4xxx, MTH5xxx and MTH6xxx, the exam will last 2 hours (with the exception of MTH6112 and MTH6155, which will last 3 hours).
- For modules MTH7xxx, the exam will last 3 hours.

For online exams, there will be an additional 30 minutes to scan and upload your solutions.

(Note: this applies to exams held in the January, May and August examination periods. Some modules will have tests during the semester – please check with the module organiser for the duration for these.)

All the exams are designed to be completed comfortably by the set deadline. Additional information on the various exam formats are below. For details pertaining to a particular module, please contact the module organiser.

2. In-person paper exams

These are invigilated exams that will be held in a designated room on campus. Please note that some exams are held in parallel in different rooms, so make sure to check your exam timetable in advance and to go to the correct exam room as indicated (make sure you know where the room is before the day of the exam). The exam itself will be in paper form, and you will write your solutions either on the exam paper itself or in a separate answer booklet (depending on the module).

- Make sure to arrive at the exam room on time. **If you arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of an exam, then you will not be permitted to enter the exam room.**
- Make sure that the exam paper you receive has on the first page the module code and name of the exam you are expected to sit (e.g. "MTH4400 Applied Calculus"). If this is not the case, please immediately notify an invigilator.

All the in-person exams will be **closed-book**: you will not be allowed to bring any notes or other resources into the exam room. Some exam papers will contain an appendix containing useful formulae and information – please check with the module organiser.

No additional resources beyond the above (e.g. mobile phones, hidden material or writing) will be allowed, and any that are found will constitute an assessment offence.

Whether calculators are permitted for the exam will depend on the specific module:

- If calculators are prohibited, then using one will constitute an assessment offence.
- Otherwise, you will be able to bring a **basic non-programmable calculator** with you to the examination room. (See [Appendix B](#) for details on which calculators are allowed.)

The QM+ page for each module will say whether a calculator is allowed in the exam.

If you run out of space in the main answer booklet, then let the invigilator know, and they will provide a supplementary answer booklet. **Make sure that all booklets that are used are available for collection by an invigilator at the end of the assessment – the invigilator should provide a tag to fix the booklets together.**

Please remember:

- Take spare pencils and pens to the exam; the invigilators cannot provide these.
- Follow the instructions given on the exam paper and by the invigilators.
- Write legibly.

3. In-person IT lab exams

Some modules will have an in-person invigilated exam where you work at a computer in one of the campus computer labs. The exam itself will be online, given as a QM+ quiz or via another platform.

- Make sure to arrive at the exam room on time. **If you arrive more than 30 minutes after the start of an exam, then you will not be permitted to enter the exam room.**

As with paper exams, you will not be allowed to bring in any notes or other resources, and no calculators are allowed. The online resources that you are allowed to use will depend on the particular module, and you will receive instructions. Often the internet access on the computer will be locked down to prevent you from accessing unauthorised material.

Note: Chat rooms, forums, mobile phones, and other communication tools are strictly prohibited.

The invigilators may provide paper for you to do rough work, but you will submit your attempt via the computer. Calculators will not be allowed in the IT lab.

In short, you should complete the exam in the same manner as you would an online exam, with the only difference being that you will be in an invigilated IT lab.

4. Online exams

A few modules will have an online final exam. These are exams that you attempt from home via your own computer. These will usually be available on the module's QM+ page in the form of a QM+ quiz. These can take several forms.

4.1 Online handwritten exams

These are online exams for which you will submit handwritten solutions (as a PDF file). Usually these will be similar in style to an in-person exam paper, but modified to take account of the fact that you will have more resources available. The exam will be presented as a QM+ quiz, with a single question containing both the exam paper and a portal to upload your solutions.

You will be able to use your notes and internet resources. **You are not allowed to communicate with anyone else during the exam, or to ask for help. Use of AI tools (such as ChatGPT) is forbidden.**

The solutions that you submit must be handwritten. In particular:

- The most common method is to submit a scan of your handwriting as a PDF file.
- You are allowed to submit work that was handwritten onto a tablet (such as an iPad).
- On the other hand, **typed solutions are not allowed and may be rejected or penalised** (unless they are exceptionally allowed under exam access arrangements).

Your submission must be as a **single** PDF file. In particular:

- Other formats besides PDF will not be accepted.
- You will not be able to submit multiple files.
- See [Appendix A](#) for instructions for scanning your handwritten work into a single PDF file.

You will have to complete your exam within the allocated time slot (either 2 hours or 3 hours, depending on the module) and you will have an additional **30 minutes** to scan and submit your handwritten solutions. **Please consider that the additional 30 minutes to scan and submit include the time needed to upload your solutions to QM+. Uploads from a domestic internet connection can be slow, so you are encouraged to start uploading your solutions as early as possible.**

4.2 Online quiz exams

These exams are set up as standard quizzes on QM+, which you have likely encountered in your coursework. These contain the usual question types supported by QM+ (such as multiple choice or numerical-answer questions).

- Quiz questions are answered within the quiz itself and hence do not require file submissions.
- You can do the quiz questions in any order. In particular, you are free to go back to earlier questions that you have already worked on.
- Please consider that some questions might allow **more than one correct answer**. Please always read carefully the instructions provided.

4.3 Hybrid online exams

Some QM+ quiz exams may be **hybrid**, in that they contain standard quiz questions (such as multiple-choice) but also written components. For these written components, solutions must be submitted either as a handwritten PDF document or as text within the quiz (depending on the module). In the former case, the basic rules [above](#) apply:

- **The submission must be handwritten** (on paper or tablet), not typed.
- **The submission must be as a single PDF file.** (See [Appendix A](#) for instructions.)

If your online quiz exam has a handwritten component, you will have to complete your exam within the allocated time slot, and you will have an additional **30 minutes** to scan and submit your handwritten solutions. **Please consider that the additional 30 minutes to scan and submit include the time needed to upload your solutions to QM+. Uploads from a domestic internet connection can be slow, so you are encouraged to start uploading your solutions as early as possible.**

5. Submitting your solutions for online exams

To upload a PDF file for a handwritten part, you can do one of the following:

- Drag-and-drop the file into the upload window.
- Click to choose the file using the file picker.

You should then see your file in the upload window. By right-clicking on the file, you can download it again to check that it is the correct one, and you can delete and replace it if necessary.

When you have finished all the questions, you can submit by clicking “*Finish attempt...*”, followed by “*Submit all and finish*”. (Note: Even if you do not explicitly do these steps, your attempt will still be automatically submitted at the deadline.)

- *You will only have one opportunity to submit your assessment.*
- You will not have the chance to alter your submission afterwards, so make sure everything is in order before you click to submit. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to organise and submit your solutions.

Immediately after submitting, you should be able to see your attempt for a few minutes.

- In particular, you can see the responses you gave to all the exam questions.
- For handwritten parts, you can also see any PDF files that you uploaded. Here, you should *check again that you have uploaded the correct file(s).*

It is your responsibility to make sure that the uploaded file is the correct one. If you notice a *technical* error at this point (e.g. corrupted file uploaded), then you should immediately send the correct version to se-sms-student-submission@qmul.ac.uk. We can take this into account, provided your e-mail (with the PDF file) is received *before the deadline* (see [Section 2.3](#)).

- *There will be no additional grace period for e-mail submissions, so please make sure your e-mail submission is received prior to the deadline!*

The combination of timed exams and single PDF submissions, along with the high-stakes nature of final exams, gives cause for some understandable concerns. Please note the following:

- All the exams are set so they can be completed comfortably within the provided time period, and their structure and format is in line with past exams for the same module. The extra 30 minutes at the end of the exam period in online exams with handwritten components are meant to be used **exclusively for scanning and submitting your solution**.
- There are relatively straightforward methods for scanning your handwritten solutions into a single PDF file. You are encouraged to install and test any scanning software you plan to use **well before the exam**. See [Appendix A](#) for some additional details.
- Issues arising from *unexpected* tech-related incidents (e.g. QM+ errors) *may* be taken into consideration **exclusively if the problem is known to be due to QM+, and has been verified and confirmed by the QMUL IT Services team. Any other technical issue (e.g. interruption of your internet connection, laptop crashing, etc.) are not considered excusable technical issues, in accordance with Academic Regulations.**

Submission deadlines and backup

[This part applies only to online exams with handwritten submissions or handwritten components.](#)

Students sitting an online exams must submit their solutions through QM+, or through the online portal where the exam is held. Once a solution is submitted to QM+, it is considered **final and authoritative**.

Submissions that are uploaded later than the set deadlines detailed below, or that are missing altogether when the deadline expires, will score a zero. Notice that generic IT issues do not constitute sufficient grounds for EC claims.

The Faculty of Science and Engineering has recently put in place a new policy regarding late submission of solutions for **online exams**. According to this policy, submissions for online exams are acceptable up to **10 minutes after the total exam period has expired, but those submissions will be penalised by withholding 10% of the marks available in that exam**. For instance, if an online exam which is marked in a scale 0–100 has a duration of 2 hours + 30 minutes (for scan and submit), a student can still submit their answers up to 2 hours and 40 minutes from the start of the

exam, but their submission will undergo an automatic deduction of 10 marks (10% of the total marks) if they submit after 2 hours and 30 minutes and up to 2 hours and 40 minutes, included. In this example, any submission received within the **2 hours + 30 minutes** will not undergo any such deduction. Any submission received **after 2 hours and 40 minutes will not be considered and will score zero.**

As an additional precautionary measure, in the rare and quite improbable case of a massive failure of the QM+ infrastructure, the students have the **voluntary option of sending via email a backup of their submissions for online exams, including the file to be submitted.** Those email backups **must be sent from the student's official QMUL account, must contain exactly the same PDF file which has been submitted through QM+, must indicate the Student ID and Module code and name, and must be addressed to se-sms-student-submission@qmul.ac.uk.** If you decide to send in a backup email of your submission, you must do that **after** you have successfully completed your submission through QM+, and your backup email must be received by the School within the set exam deadline. Such backup emails **do not constitute a submission and are not to be considered as a replacement of a QM+ submission.** If the QMUL IT Services confirm that QM+ was working correctly at the time when submissions were expected, all the backup emails will be discarded immediately after the exam deadline has expired, without any further consideration. If a student fails to submit through QM+ for whatever reason, and that reason is not due to a QM+ failure as ascertained by the QMUL IT Services, **their exam will score a zero**, irrespective of whether they have sent a backup submission via email or not.

6. Queries about the exam paper

Examiners will not be answering queries about the exam at any point in the exam period.

- If you have a query about the paper (e.g. you think there is a mistake or a typo), please signal this to the invigilator, who will decide whether forwarding the query to the examiner is indeed necessary. In any case, you should make a note in your solution of any suspected inaccuracy or typo in the exam paper, and answer as best you can. The examiner will then take this into account when marking.

7. Extenuating circumstances (ECs)

Some general points about extenuating circumstances (ECs) are as follows:

- The process of applying for ECs is the same as before, for coursework and midterm tests.
- Make sure that your claims are submitted by the EC deadline.
- If an EC is granted, then you will have the opportunity to take the exam as a first-sit during the late summer resit period in August.
- The Education Services Team have sent information about ECs regularly, but if you have additional questions, then you should submit a query via AskQM.
- **Please consider that travel delays are not normally considered sufficient ground for EC claims. Students are responsible of making appropriate travel arrangements on the day of the exam, and of reaching the exam room in time.**
- **In general, personal IT-related issues are not acceptable as a ground for EC claims, as per Academic Regulations.**

Online exams only: IT-related issues that are considered unexpected and that are due to the QMUL IT infrastructure will be taken into account collectively for an entire cohort sitting an exam. However, having to defer an exam because of tech-related issues is still unpleasant, and the School and the College will put in place all the required measures to ensure that online exams will not be disrupted by IT issues.

In general, IT-related issues due to QM+ which can interfere with the upload of your solutions might be taken into account only in the case that such issues have been verified and confirmed by the QMUL IT Services team. Any other kind of technical issues (e.g. interruption of your Internet connection, laptop crashing, loss of files, etc.) are **not** considered excusable technical issues, in accordance with QMUL Academic Regulations. You are responsible for making sure that your internet connection works properly for the duration of the exam, that your laptop has a reliable source of power for the entire duration of the exam, that you saved the correct version of your files, and so forth. EC Claims based on "IT Issues" are not excusable and will in general be rejected.

8. Academic offences

In the interests of academic standards and fairness to all students, it is important that your work is entirely your own. The following sections provide further detail on what is allowed for exams, and what constitutes academic misconduct.

8.1. In-Person Exams

Here, the regulations are simple – *if you are found by an invigilator to be using any resource beyond what is allowed in the exam room, then this will be considered an academic offence.*

For **paper exams**:

- All exams will be closed book, and you will not be allowed to bring any notes.
- Some exams will also require you to bring a **basic and non-programmable** calculator (see [Appendix B](#) for details). Ask your module lecturer for further information.
- *Keep in mind that hidden material and communication devices (e.g. mobile phones) are not allowed. Any use of these will be considered an academic offence, and dealt with appropriately.*

For **IT lab exams**:

- What resources are allowed will differ depending on module, but any such resources will be accessed online through the IT lab computer.
- In particular, *you will not be allowed to bring any paper notes or calculators to the exam.*
- *Use of any communications tools (e.g. mobile phones, chat rooms, forums) in the IT lab will be considered an academic offence.*

8.2. Online Exams

All online exams are *open-book*, which means that:

- Lecture notes and other digital and printed resources from the module are allowed, including past courseworks and worked solutions.
- Textbooks are allowed.
- Internet sources are allowed, *as long as such websites do not refer to the exam questions themselves or their solutions.*

In addition, you may use calculators (of any type) or computer programs, such as Excel.

- For handwritten questions, you must show full working to demonstrate that you understand the solution. This should be part of your PDF submission.

On the other hand, it is an academic offence to ask for, to accept, or to offer help. *You should not communicate with anyone else about the exam or the module contents for the entirety of the period in which the exam is available.* This means that:

- You are not allowed to ask anyone else to answer questions for you or even to give you a hint; you must refuse such help if it is offered.
- You are not allowed to discuss the exam or any related topics with other students (either in person or via online chat groups such as *WhatsApp* and *Discord*).
- You are not allowed to share or post exam questions on online forums (such as *chegg.com* or *bartleby.com*), or to request solutions via paid services.
- You are not allowed to copy or otherwise make use of any solutions to exam questions that are found on any online forum or via paid services.
- You are not allowed to ask questions using AI resources such as ChatGPT.

The above should not be considered an exhaustive list of offences. If in doubt, please ask for further clarification. If still in doubt, please play safe and refrain altogether from indulging in any such behaviour.

For details on academic misconduct and resulting penalties, see:

<https://www.qmul.ac.uk/governance-and-legal-services/media/arcs/Academic-Misconduct-Penalty-Guidance-2023-24.pdf>

A. Instructions for single PDF submissions

This section applies only to online exams with handwritten submissions.

The following subsections describe a number of methods for scanning your handwritten work into a single PDF file. While these steps are fairly straightforward, *it is highly recommended that you test the method you plan to use prior to your exams!*

(There are several other methods beyond what is described below. Of course, you are free to use any method that works for you.)

A.1. Office Lens

Microsoft Office Lens is an app, available for *iOS* (via the *Apple Store*) and *Android* (via the *Google Play Store*) systems, that can be used to photograph and scan documents into a single PDF file.

For more detailed instructions, you can also consult the following links:

- [Article] “Scanning to PDF” (Somerville College, University of Oxford)
 - <https://it.some.ox.ac.uk/scanning-to-pdf/>
- [Article] “How to scan printed documents with the free Microsoft Office Lens app” (TechRepublic)
 - <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/how-to-scan-printed-documents-with-the-free-microsoft-office-lens-app/>
- [Video] “Producing a multiple page PDF in Office Lens” (Mr Smith’s Physics online)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7ET9k01-Zc>
- [Video] “Scanning tutorial: scan a PDF from your phone with Office Lens” (RGB Mathematics)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z7ztz3y8rMQ>

(Keep in mind that different versions of the *Microsoft Office Lens* app will work slightly differently, so the process for your device may be a bit different from what you find in the above.)

A.2. iOS Notes

The basic *Notes* app that can be found on mobile devices running *iOS* (e.g. *iPhone*, *iPad*) can also be used to scan documents to a PDF file.

For more detailed instructions, you can also consult the following links:

- [Article] “How to use the document scanner in the Notes app on iPhone and iPad” (iMore)
 - <https://www.imore.com/how-use-document-scanner-iphone-and-ipad>
- [Article] “How to scan documents and make PDFs using Notes on your iPhone or iPad” (Macworld)
 - <https://www.macworld.com/article/3390539/how-to-scan-documents-and-make-pdfs-using-notes-on-your-iphone-or-ipad.html>
- [Video] “How to scan documents and make PDFs with iPhone or iPad” (TechBoomers)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEQRKnu4yLo>
- [Video] “How to Scan Documents as PDF in Notes App - iPad” (David Williams)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UK11a8GIOcA>

(Keep in mind that different versions of the *Notes* app will work slightly differently, so the process for your device may be a bit different from what you find in the above.)

A.3. Tablet handwriting software

If you are using a tablet to produce handwritten solutions, then this should be fairly straightforward. All the standard note-taking apps (e.g. *Microsoft OneNote*, *Notability*, *GoodNotes*, *iOS Notes*) will allow you to export your handwritten document directly into a PDF file.

For details, see instructions for your favourite note-taking app.

A.4. Using laptops or desktop computers

Of course, if you have access to a digital scanner, then you can use that to scan your documents.

You could also photograph documents using your webcam, though this can be a bit awkward.

- For example, the web app “Create PDFs with a camera” from *PDF24* allows you to do this online from your web browser; see <https://tools.pdf24.org/en/scan-pdf>.

B. Guidelines for Calculators

This section applies only to in-person paper exams that allow a calculator.

Most exams do not allow you to bring your own calculator, as a calculator is not at all needed to complete the exam. If an exam allows calculators, those are normally referred to in the exam papers as “**non-programmable calculators**”. This is a quite generic term to identify all kinds of calculators that can do what any scientific calculator can. In particular, **basic, non-programmable calculators** can perform arithmetic and trigonometric operations, exponentiation, logarithms, and not much more.

Conversely, **advanced, programmable calculators** can normally do a few or many more things, and they have at least one or more of the following features:

1. They are capable of storing text or alphanumeric data input by a user.
2. They are capable of storing, manipulating, or graphing functions entered in symbolic form.
3. They are capable of performing operations such as differentiation, definite integration, algebraic expressions, binomial expansion, symbolic differentiation and the solution to system of equations.
4. They are capable of external communication or Internet connectivity.
5. They display a matrix and vector function key, and/or can perform matrix and/or vector operations.
6. They allow use of the full alphabet from A-Z.
7. They are capable of storing programs or procedures defined by the user.
8. They tend to be bulky and heavy in comparison to basic non-programmable calculators.

If a calculator is capable of doing even one of the 8 things above, then **it is not considered a basic, non-programmable calculator, and it is thus prohibited during exams**. If you do not know whether your calculator classifies as programmable or non-programmable, then check its user manual and make sure that **none of the above functions is made available by the calculator you wish to use during an exam**. If you are still in doubt, then you can ask the module lecturer for more detailed advice. ***In any case, you are responsible for ensuring that the calculator that you bring into the exam room is appropriate and allowed for that exam. Any contravention to this indication will be considered an examination offence, and will be dealt with appropriately.***

The examination invigilator will check your calculator before and during the examination. If your calculator is programmable, according to the definition provided above, then it will be confiscated from you and you will be reported by the invigilator for unauthorised use of materials. This is an academic offence.

If you are still unsure about your calculator on the day of the exam (something you are *strongly encouraged to avoid*), then ask the invigilator *before* the start of the examination. It may be possible to provide you with an alternative calculator if an element of doubt exists.

In the past we used to provide a non-exhaustive list of **allowed non-programmable calculators**. Unfortunately, the complex and rapidly-changing range of calculators available makes this impossible.

The only meaningful thing we can say is: **your calculator is non-programmable and allowed in an exam if it does not have any of the 8 features detailed above. It is your responsibility to check that the calculator you intend to use in an exam is basic and non-programmable. If your calculator can do even one of the 8 things detailed above, it is considered an advanced programmable calculator, and is thus prohibited to bring it into an exam room.**