

# Information on Marking, Retention, and Disposal of Examination Scripts/Assessments in the context of the General Data Protection Regulations and Freedom of Information

## Background

The objective of this document is to support University staff in the management, retention and disposal of examination scripts/assessments in the context of both General Data Protection Regulations<sup>1</sup> and Freedom of Information legislation. A student has the right to request access to these records and to receive a copy on request following finalisation of the examination process. Typically such access is facilitated through the formal consultation days noted on the Academic Calendar; however a module co-ordinator may make alternative arrangements directly with a student at their discretion. If a member of staff receives either a Data Subject Access request or a Freedom of Information request, it should be referred in the first instance to the appropriate University Officer.

Data Subject Access Request: <https://www.dcu.ie/ocoo/data-protection.shtml>

Freedom of Information Request: <https://www.dcu.ie/foi/contact.shtml>

## 1. Management of Examination Scripts

- 1.1 Invigilators will ensure that they collect a script from each candidate at the conclusion of all examinations and return them to the Registry. Where candidates leave the examination hall early, their script is collected immediately.
- 1.2 Invigilators will check that the number of scripts collected tallies with the number of students recorded present at the examination. Where there is a discrepancy, scripts are checked against the list of students attending to account for the discrepancy, which is then reported to the Student Awards team in the Registry.
- 1.3 Module co-ordinators, whose names are noted on the front of the examination paper, should present themselves, with their ID cards to the Invigilator or the Registry to collect the examination papers in accordance with directions issued by the Registry. They will be asked to verify the number of scripts and to sign for the scripts collected. No scripts will be issued unless the module co-ordinator can identify themselves. Scripts may only be collected directly from the venue where the examination is taking place in one venue only.
- 1.4 Module co-ordinators are responsible for the security of the scripts once they have collected them. Where scripts are sent to external examiners, the responsible liaison should keep a record of such scripts sent and ensure that all are returned and recorded. The delivery method should be carefully selected to ensure the scripts are protected from any potential data breach.
- 1.5 Module co-ordinators will upload their results via the secure on-line exam mark entry system. Examiners will receive a report of the overall module result and should check this against their records either prior to or during the Internal Review Process. Any errors should be identified to Faculty Administration prior to submission of broadsheets for the Progression and Award Board.

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<sup>1</sup> European Court of Justice defines examination scripts as personal data in its ruling of 20 December 2017

## **2. Marking of Examination Scripts/Assessments**

- 2.1 Module co-ordinators should be cognisant that the candidate has the right to request a copy, or view the script/assessment and examiner comments and annotations under both General Data Protection Regulations and Freedom of Information legislation .
- 2.2 Markers should indicate, in some appropriate way, that each page of the script/assessment has been read.
- 2.3 The mark awarded for each question or section of question should be shown separately.

## **3. Consultation with Students**

- 3.1 Scripts/assessments may not be viewed by a third party.
- 3.2 Students are only permitted to access and view their own scripts and marks. Module co-ordinators do not have to deal with a group request on examination or assessment.
- 3.3 If examination scripts/assessments are discussed with a student, this should be conducted on campus and the student should be given time to examine the script/assessment and engage in discussion.
- 3.4 If a module co-ordinator is unavailable during the specified consultation days, alternative arrangements should be made directly with the student or through the School Office.

## **4. Retention of Examination Scripts and Assessments**

- 4.1 All University staff should ensure the safe retention of examination scripts/assessments while they are under their control.
- 4.2 Following finalisation of the examination process, examination scripts/assessments should be retained, preferably in a centrally administered, secure, fireproof location for a period of twelve months after the date of the latest Progression and Awards Board at which the examination result is included; or for twelve months after the date of any appeal of the module result within which the exam was included, whichever is the longer period. This period may be longer due to local requirements, for example, to meet the obligations of professional bodies.
- 4.3 While a copy of an examination script may be provided to the student, the original must always be retained by the University.

## **5. Disposal of Examination Scripts and Assessments**

- 5.1 All examination scripts should be shredded or otherwise destroyed by confidential means. Each module co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that his/her scripts and assessments are destroyed in line with faculty procedures. Every faculty should provide a system for the periodic destruction of examination scripts.

**Registry**

**Approved by Academic Council 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018**