

Transcription of illegible examination scripts 2021

Transcription process

1. Examiners deem script(s) or particular questions within script(s) to be illegible.
2. Examiners send script(s) to candidate's college, indicating which questions are illegible.
3. College reviews script(s) and may challenge the Examiners' decision: if so, script(s) are referred to the Proctors for final decision. If Proctors find script(s) to be legible, they will return them to the Examiners for marking. If Proctors agree that all or part of the script(s) is illegible, they will return them to College.
4. If script(s) to be re-typed, College should organise this in-house.
5. College notifies student that one of their examination scripts* is deemed to be illegible and that it will need to be transcribed. *Student is not to be informed of which script(s) are deemed illegible in advance of the transcription session.
6. College arranges typist and invigilator; seeks Proctors' approval (via eas@admin.ox.ac.uk); liaises with student about time/date of dictation exercise; deals with any payment arrangements (e.g. charges student); when script(s) dictated, returns to Examiners with typescript.

Transcription arrangements

1. The typist should be a member of the college or departmental staff not involved in the examining of the subject area, or a graduate student providing there is no conflict of interest with the candidate transcribing. They are not required to have attended invigilator training.
2. The typist will type from the candidate's dictation using a computer either in the same room as the student or via a secure communication method, such as Teams.
3. The candidate should not be told in advance which scripts have been deemed to be illegible. The candidate must not bring with him/her, or be provided with, a copy of any examination paper for the purposes of the dictation and typing exercise.
4. The candidate must dictate the contents of his/her script/s to the typist without asking for their advice or help. The details of the paragraphing, punctuation, etc. must be dictated to the typist and must be reproduced unchanged in the typescript; no attempt may be made to amend even minor errors of spelling or syntax. If the candidate is unable to read any part of his/her own handwriting, the word or words should be omitted from the typescript and replaced by [illegible] or else a straight line for each word which cannot be read. Any crossings-out present in the manuscript should be denoted by [word/words deleted] in the typescript.
5. The candidate must read from the script line by line, ending each line with the words 'new line'. The typist must type the script line by line adding a return at the 'new line' instruction.
6. After dictating each script (or each answer, or other convenient section of the script), the candidate must check the typescript or handwritten copy and mark on it any inaccuracies. The candidate must not ask the typist or invigilator for advice or help in interpreting his/her handwriting. Further word-processing to produce fair copies correcting inaccuracies is not allowed. It is the candidate's responsibility to ensure that the typed material to be submitted to the Examiners reproduces exactly what had been written in the script by hand (the Examiners will have both versions to compare page-by-page, and are instructed to report any discrepancies to the Proctors).
7. The responsibility of the typist is to take down what the candidate dictates and to provide him/her with typescript (on which the candidate can mark any inaccuracies). The typist must not offer advice or help to the candidate. Extra copies should not be made and computer disk copies of an examination typescript should be wiped as soon as the script has been printed and confirmed.
8. The typist may allow one or more rest-breaks (e.g. taking account of requirements for VDU operators not to spend too long at the screen).
9. The transcription session may last up to four hours. After four hours the session must be brought to a close, whether the examination script has been fully transcribed or not in order that all parties may rest.
10. The candidate and typist should receive copies of the scripts just before the first transcription session with the typist and candidate by a secure method, such as SharePoint.
11. The candidate and typist may be provided with all exam scripts identified as illegible at their first transcription session.
12. The exam scripts shared with the candidate and typist should be those provided by the department. The candidate must transcribe exactly what was submitted as the exam script.

13. The exam scripts should be handled in a secure way, such as SharePoint or other tools deemed secure by IT. The exam scripts should be shared as read only with both the candidate and typist, and the typist only to be given access to upload read only copies of the typed exam scripts to this location. This location may also serve as the secure method to share transcribed exam scripts with the department.
14. The candidate should be able to view the typed scripts, but not to edit them. If minor edits are noted the candidate may provide these via email, such as saying "exam A495950, Page 3, Line 40, second word should say XXX". If the candidate reports that there are major discrepancies to the typed scripts the examiners may view and compare the scripts initially. If there are no major discrepancies identified then this should be picked up with the candidate. If there are major discrepancies then this will need to be picked up with the typist.