

READER FOR EXAMINATIONS - GRADE 3

Note/Glossary:

- *Superintendent – refers to the University Superintendent of Examinations.*
- *IER is 'Individual Examination Requirements'.*
- *Administrator refers to the appointed Departmental Administrator*
- *UAP – refers to 'Unacceptable Academic Practice'*

JOB DESCRIPTION – READER FOR EXAMINATIONS

Readers are responsible for conducting university examinations in individual rooms in departments, for individual students with particular personal requirements, including:

- Learning difficulties
- Physical disabilities
- Injuries
- Illness, including those that require isolation
- Other medical reasons, including stress and panic symptoms

A range of duties are involved associated with the general conduct of the relevant individual examinations. It should be understood that the role of Reader almost always subsumes the role of Invigilator for those examinations, so that the Reader is operating 'with two caps on'.

Readers should have a proven education, ideally to degree level (or equivalent). Previous experience of invigilating university or other higher education examinations would be regarded as highly desirable, though is not strictly essential, as training is given. Experience in dealing with students with a variety of learning needs, disabilities and medical conditions is also regarded as highly desirable. Pastoral aspects are crucial to this role, so a Reader requires an assured but sympathetic manner in dealing with individual students under stress.

New appointees must attend an induction session with the Superintendent of Examinations. Student Support will also ensure that appointees are made aware of all protocols relating to the types of students involved, providing instruction and training as required. Existing Readers will be routinely advised of any significant changes in examination procedures and relevant University Regulations

All Readers in examinations are responsible ultimately to the Director of Student Support, but also – on a half-daily basis - to the Superintendent of Examinations, and work closely with the Departmental Administrator managing an examination for a particular candidate. Half-day sessions allocated to individual Readers will have been determined by the Support Work Administrator (in Student Support), and offered to each Reader in advance, acceptance of the assignments being required.

In departments, attendance is required at least 20 minutes in advance of each half-day session, and will end as dictated primarily by the additional time allowance associated with the student involved (together with any permitted rest breaks actually taken). Work timing sheets must be checked and signed each half-day by the Departmental Administrator.

GENERAL DUTIES & REQUIREMENTS

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Read to the candidate, on request:
 - The entire or any part of the examination paper

- Any part of the candidate's answers
- Additionally, for students with visual impairments:
 - Inform candidate of obvious presentation errors
- In all exams, a Reader is required to:
 - Read accurately, including the exam rubrics
 - Enable the candidate to identify which bit of any visual material relates to which question (if relevant)
 - Help a visually impaired candidate using tactile maps, diagrams, graphs or tables, so they obtain the information available to sighted candidates
 - When reading multiple choice papers, each option should be stressed equally, so that you do not indicate whether any answer is clearly correct or incorrect.
- If asked, a Reader may also:
 - Spell out a word in the question paper
 - Give information about time remaining
 - Read the punctuation
- The Reader shall not:
 - Read the questions before reading the exam rubrics
 - Explain the meanings of words or questions
 - Give additional information around any text or graphic details e.g. diagrams
 - Refuse to read anything written even though you may have read it several times already
 - Give factual help or offer suggestions to the candidate
 - Advise the candidate on how to organise responses

RELATED REQUIREMENTS

- When also carrying out the role of Invigilator, ensure examination regulations are adhered to - such as reporting incidents like noise disturbance or cheating (UAP).
- If requested, liaise directly with individual students prior to examinations and partake in practice sessions.
- Understand and be flexible to the needs of students with disabilities and specific learning differences in a higher education environment, and to the boundaries that need to be observed.
- Be aware of the University's confidentiality policy and respect the confidentiality of the student.
- Work closely with members of the Accessibility Service Team within Student Support Services and the student's department and Examinations Administrator, as relevant.
- Engage in training relevant to the role and occasional supervision/ team meetings, where appropriate.

GENERAL EXAMINATION DUTIES & REQUIREMENTS

Before, during and after each examination, anything that the Superintendent of Examinations requires, but including:

- Exercising general supervision. Being vigilant at all times. Observing the examinee.
- Responding to general information queries or requests from the examinee.
- Reacting to general information or administrative requests relayed from the Administrator.
- Dealing with pastoral incidents or student support requirements as they arise.

- Filling in all required examination-administrative paperwork accurately.
- Maintaining all rules and prohibitions relating to books, papers, materials or equipment including those specified in examination paper rubrics. This includes personal dictionaries and all forms of small electronic device, unpermitted calculators, mobile telephones, smart watches and Bluetooth accessories.
- Being aware of all possibilities relating to Unacceptable Academic Practice (UAP). Taking action as appropriate and as instructed. Protecting evidence, completing relevant reports and providing related documentation.
- Monitoring examinee visits to toilets, being mindful of UAP implications.
- Monitoring permitted food and drink, removing items as necessary.
- Significant attention to individual student needs and requirements, according to them information supplied by Student Support.
- Keeping quiet, except when involved in specific duties.

GENERAL ROLE IMMEDIATELY BEFORE EXAMINATIONS

- On arrival in departments, liaising with the Departmental Administrator in relation to the requirements of the individual student (including extra time allowances), to the examination paper requirements and to the necessary resources.
- Dealing with the candidate's anxieties in the waiting area outside the examination room, as required, if necessary involving the Departmental Administrator. Offering advice as appropriate.
- The Reader should make themselves aware of examinee needs and characteristics which it has been felt appropriate to divulge to examination staff (which will be imparted through the Departmental Administrator), and be aware of possible manifestations of these.
- Ensure that the candidate understands, appreciates and is observing the examination rules, including those in relation to allowed 'materials' and to 'Unacceptable Academic Practice'. Explaining procedures as necessary. This is a crucial part of the half-day, as the candidate – preoccupied with himself/herself and his/her anxieties – may need to be reminded of rules and prohibitions.
- In consultation with the Departmental Administrator, removing from the candidate unpermitted clothing, bags, ancillary equipment and any illegal material.
- Repeating to the candidate entering the examination room rules on mobile telephones and other small electronic devices, removing illegal devices as appropriate.
- Duties may include making start and end announcements, by agreement with Departmental Administrator.

GENERAL ROLES DURING EXAMINATIONS

- Recognising impending problems of significance to a candidate under stress; taking ownership of problems or impending problems, providing a solution where possible. Appreciating when to involve the Departmental Administrator or Superintendent.
- Collecting an attendance slip from the candidate. Completing relevant examination documentation.
- Producing a detailed written report on any matter associated with alleged Unacceptable Academic Practice, according to the instructions of the Superintendent.
- Completing an 'Incident Report' on any relevant untoward matter, as prescribed.
- Understanding the key priorities in the examination process. Responding to any unforeseen event or change in priorities positively.
- Seeking to resolve problems quickly by working cooperatively with the Departmental Administrator.

- Responding promptly and accurately to either an examinee or to a Departmental Administrator who request information or a service. This will usually involve routine tasks within the examination process, but also sundry one-off inquiries from an examinee.
- Taking responsibility and being flexible. On occasions the Reader may need to explore the needs of a candidate to provide an appropriate service, or vary how procedures are applied in response to the specific special needs of that candidate.
- Taking decisions with the Departmental Administrator about one-off modifications of the examination process. Recognising when such situations arise associated with a sick, stressed or occasionally troublesome examination candidate.
- Varying the particular duties according to the exact requirements of the candidate and to the invigilation assignment.

GENERAL ROLE AFTER THE EXAMINATIONS

- Ensuring that items (including scripts) are not taken illegally out of the examination room.
- Collecting in from the examinee such completed scripts as have been indicated by the Departmental Administrator.

OTHER DUTIES

Under the direction of the Superintendent of Examinations assisting to:

- Comply with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, including but not limited to,
 - (i) Fire Safety
 - (ii) Health and Safety
 - (iii) Data Protection
- Exceptionally, in the event of a need to consider emergency evacuation of the examination room (most likely when a fire alarm sounds), being aware of the delayed-response protocol to be observed and co-operating with colleagues in the invigilation team in ensuring that this happens. The Administrator will have ensured that all Readers are reminded of the protocol previously dealt with during induction. Understanding the importance of initially retaining the candidate in the examination room, of keeping them calm for the specified time, and of ensuring an ordered and unhurried evacuation, as instructed.

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL

- GCSE English Language (Grade C or above), or equivalent.
- Competent reader with a clear, articulate voice, reading at normal speed.
- Good understanding of punctuation.
- Sufficient skills to cope with the area of work being followed by the student including any technical jargon.
- Excellent and clear communication and listening skills.
- Reliable, punctual and respecting professional boundaries at all times.
- Able to work on own initiative, independently.
- Having a positive attitude towards equality and access for people with disabilities and specific learning differences.

HIGHLY DESIRABLE

- Evidence of education to degree (or equivalent) level.
- Previous experience of reading for examinations or taking notes in an education environment.

- Experience in the subject area required for reading.
- Familiarity with HE examination procedures

TRAINING

- New appointees must attend an induction session run by the Superintendent of Examinations.
- Existing Readers will routinely be advised of any significant changes in examination procedures and relevant University Regulations.

KEY ELEMENTS

1. COMMUNICATIONS

Effective **verbal communication** is a central element in the discharge of this particular role.

1. Two types of verbal communication are necessary at the point at which students are entering the examination rooms:
 - a) Drawing attention of examinees to standard procedures and examination rules. Communication must be clear and emphatic, because people entering examinations are definitely not concentrating on examination procedures and are frequently pre-occupied.
 - b) More complex aspects, such as the various aspects of Unacceptable Academic Practice, need both to be carefully watched for, and pointed out individually to potential transgressors. This requires sensitivity, very much bearing in mind that – while the rules must be enforced and a clear explanation given of the relevant problem – we would not wish to upset the student’s equilibrium at such a crucial juncture.
2. Again, during the examination session, Readers will find themselves in a position where they must succinctly, clearly and quietly explain things to examinees:
 - To do with procedures and ways of operating.
 - In relation to difficulties that individual students may experience or perceive.
 - In relation to University regulations and possibly to breaches of those regulations.Verbal communication comes to fore in all these cases.

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Though a Reader may very well be having to **present written information** to an examinee, it will usually be in the form of documents written by the Superintendent. Their role is certainly not about creating paperwork, but about dealing face-to-face with students.

The main situation in which a Reader must **communicate in written form** is in reporting Unacceptable Academic Practice. A clear and unambiguous report on UAP must always be provided by those Readers involved in cases of alleged UAP – that is, the Reader who uncovered any such transgressions or were drawn into dealing with such situations. Readers are asked to make notes at the time and then compose a report which covers all aspects of the situation, which process requires thoroughness and attention to detail. It must be borne in mind that such reports, while going initially to the Superintendent, will pass on to AQRO and to the academic department involved, and will form a principal line of evidence where cases of UAP are pursued in either a departmental inquiry or through the University’s UAP panel. As part of this process, the Superintendent will always talk with the Reader involved to elucidate details within such written reports. Such reports are of huge importance to the students involved, as their academic future – and possibly further – might very well be affected by the outcome of a UAP case.

Though occurring less frequently, the Superintendent will also seek a written report from a Reader in three other situations: A) In the very rare cases of complaint by students. B) In equally rare instances of Health and Safety accidents or incidents occurring in the venue. C) Where corroboration of cases of illness and indisposition have occurred. These must be done promptly, while details are still clear in the Reader’s mind

2. TEAMWORK AND MOTIVATION

Examination invigilation is certainly one of the situations within the University where teamwork is at its most vital. However, Readers in departments are less evidently members of a team, and it is with the Departmental Administrator that they must work most closely. Nevertheless, the primacy of teamwork is both emphasised and discussed during induction sessions for all new examination staff.

- The objectives for a half-day session will be well understood by most Readers, both as a result of their training but also their accumulated experience. The Reader must work closely with the Departmental Administrator on some of these objectives.
- Readers will be well aware of their place in the examination administration and that their efforts are part of meeting the overall objectives laid down by the University and by the Superintendent.
- Teamwork is clearly paramount in getting any examination under way, as close as possible to the scheduled start time. There are - on the one hand - several aspects of the total operation to be accomplished simultaneously, but - also - this is the time when a small problem can have a negative effect on overall time-keeping, and must be solved expeditiously by working with the Administrator.

In the area of Unacceptable Academic Practice, it is always the case that examination staff need to work together to detect, observe and expose a student who is cheating, and then to deal with the situation in the manner laid down by the Superintendent

3. LIAISON AND NETWORKING

There is no external liaison or networking considered to be a requirement of the role.

4. SERVICE DELIVERY

The service provided by Readers is only broadly understood by people who have not invigilated in such an environment. Outline details of the post are in the summary job description provided as an introduction to this role analysis. This is not, however, service delivery in a situation of minimal initial scrutiny and low pressure, but service delivery of a very customer-facing nature, under pressure and in a very 'charged' environment. Anything untoward is likely to be magnified by the situation, and will almost certainly need to be rectified immediately, with measures probably needing to be taken to compensate in some way to the examinee in question.

Readers do not normally set the standards or define the nature of the services offered, but they are certainly amongst the staff with the responsibility for undertaking the processes involved and maintaining the standards of service expected. It is important to reinforce that Readers operate largely without supervision, so have to maintain standards simply through their own integrity.

The level of readiness and attention to detail required is high. During induction, Readers have it made clear to them that they must be alert and attentive throughout the working session and also actively invigilate at all times. There is a clear definition of things that might in some way distract them, and which they must never do during the working day. Also that standards of behaviour must never be compromised

5. DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

Decision-taking for Readers is in two situations :

- Some procedures will be directed initially by a Departmental Administrator, but once that person departs from the examination room, there is scope for individual decision-taking and initiative. This most often occurs during the long duration of an examination half-day session, which can be up to 4 hours (with extra time on 3 hour examinations).
- Readers may need - on the one hand - to quietly and unobtrusively remind students that they should be either doing something or not doing something, or - on the other hand - violation of a serious University regulation (most notably the Unacceptable Academic Practice Regulation) may require an established way of managing such a situation to be invoked, but nevertheless be carefully handled with reference to the severity of the infraction.

Decisions may have impacts totally confined to the conduct of the particular examination, and effectively forgotten immediately afterwards. But decisions may have greater ramifications and an impact beyond the examination hall. Two examples would be:

1. The way that an Unacceptable Academic Practice violation is dealt with will have implications for both the handling and possibly the pursuit of the case subsequently. This might potentially contribute to how academic departments and institutes can deal with and prosecute cases of UAP subsequently, both in departmental contexts and also within a University Committee of Inquiry (in the most serious cases). Cases of UAP have to be handled both correctly and considerately, as the possibility exists that later outcomes will affect the student's degree result, their continued study in the University and conceivably their whole life.
2. It is essential that Readers go about their work correctly and in a sensitive fashion. There is a balance to be struck between examinees being aware that they are being observed and monitored, but also on the Reader/invigilator operating unobtrusively. Though such situations are not common, the Superintendent very occasionally has to deal with complaints either about Readers who have not got the balance quite right and might have compromised an examinee's ability to get on effectively with an examination, or where the process and observance of the 'rules' might have ultimately assumed a greater importance than the fact that this examination matters very much to the person being examined.

6. PLANNING AND ORGANISING RESOURCES

In large measure, the planning and organisation of resources is carried out by either the Superintendent or by a Departmental Administrator. Though the Reader – who is operating without supervision for most of the working day – must always ensure that appropriate and sufficient resources are available for the required operations of that half-day, if necessary drawing the attention of the Administrator to any particular needs.

7. INITIATIVE AND PROBLEM SOLVING

While senior examination staff might hope to be able to anticipate all the situations that will arise in all types of examination venue, characteristics which Readers/invigilators themselves must display in abundance are personal initiative and an ability to solve problems as they arise – a natural ability to 'think on one's feet' and to react appropriately.

Departmentally, there is only one Reader/invigilator, working alone. The lines of communication can be stretched and – though there may again be laid-down procedures or the Superintendent will have indicated verbally how the Reader should proceed in various situations – there is nevertheless a greater degree of both independence and initiative that the Reader/invigilator would be expected to manifest. Routinely dealing with his or her own problems, except in cases of clear uncertainty or in relation to more significant incidents.

8. ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

[Not applicable]

9. SENSORY AND PHYSICAL DEMANDS

There are indeed quite serious demands made upon all categories of examination staff, but it would be difficult to characterise them as 'physical demands', even though long hours spent in an examination venue are very personally testing – more so than anyone who has never experienced such an environment from the invigilation perspective could imagine. Concentration and vigilance certainly takes its toll, particularly if the examination staff work every day.

As indicated, 'Sensory and physical demands' doesn't quite cover the Reader role, but neither does the 'Work Environment' where other aspects of the stresses and strains of examination venues can be examined. What is crucial is that the dedicated demands of the role are recognised wherever they are included in this role outline.

10. WORK ENVIRONMENT

Again, this 'characteristic' doesn't quite fit to pressures with which, and the environment within which, the Reader has to operate, but there is nowhere else to say what needs to be said, so it once again vital that what is written under (9) and (10) is taken on board and included in the analysis for which this role profile outline is written.

The examination environment is something quite unlike any other within the University. And yet it is an integral and unavoidable component in what the University does above all else – educates and trains students and awards degrees. In truth it is a part of the teaching process, not just an administrative adjunct. The skills required are not directly teaching skills, but they are most certainly not akin to the 'Administrative and Secretarial' skills into which mould the University is probably attempting to pour this particular job role. The job is about people, not things, and people in a very singular environment – the examination room.

Teaching, including lecturing, is – amongst many other things - about conveying information and imparting skills and techniques in situations of fairly low stress. Students in lectures and practicals may be critical and demanding of their teachers, but they are receptive and wishing to learn. Students in examinations are wholly different creatures, enduring a situation in which they find no pleasure, with a series of human reactions which relate directly to this:

- Examinees are under sometimes severe pressure, and thus almost all get stressed, everything from general unease up to full-on panic. Readers and all types of invigilators have to deal with these symptoms.
- Examinees are pre-occupied and often self-absorbed, and not in the best frame of mind to listen to what is being said to them, important as this might be.
- They are forgetful, sometimes exhibiting behaviour that they would objectively know to be incorrect or inappropriate, and reacting testily or adversely when this is drawn to their attention.
- Unfortunately, there are some occasions when the 'drawing of their attention' is not in the context of a simple reminder, but when things have gone too far and a University regulation has already been breached. Examination staff find no pleasure in such an avoidable situation and go out of their way to ensure that vital information is communicated repeatedly to students.
- Some students do not 'make mistakes' but perpetrate deliberate cheating or breaking of the University Unacceptable Academic Practice regulation. Readers/ invigilators are trained in how to deal with such situations, but they involve difficulty and emotions on both sides.

Bearing in mind all the above observations, it would be appropriate to describe the work environment in any examination room – large or small - as extremely 'charged', not at all a comfortable set of conditions. But this is the normal working situation for up to 8 hours per day for a Reader/invigilator. This should be recognised.

11. PASTORAL CARE AND WELFARE

The point has firstly to be made that examination staff in general, including all categories of invigilators and Readers too, are not there primarily to 'police' the examinations, but to facilitate the students being examined attaining the best possible outcomes in relation to their knowledge and their abilities. They all, without exception, recognise the pressures described under (9) and (10) and regard themselves as having the opportunity to help students do their best. Thus, in terms of pastoral care and welfare, they always behave positively and helpfully (even when

uncovering Unacceptable Academic Practice). It should be remembered that we specifically ask for applicants for this role to be graduates, so that they can appreciate and sympathise with the pressures of the situation. Pastoral care would be regarded as a core element in the job role:

- Students may display evidence of pressure and stress either in general situations, such as in the waiting area or upon entry to the examination room, or in more specific individual manifestations. Not only must they be treated considerately, but may need personal advice or reassurance on particular matters, even when entering the examination room and undertaking the basic administrative tasks.
- It may also be that, for individuals, pressure builds as the examination proceeds, for variety of reasons, such that they begin to more obviously show signs of stress. Readers and invigilators generally will have been advised in how to deal with such situations, as part of their pastoral remit, and might exceptionally accompany a student outside of the actual examination room while they compose themselves, or – possibly involving the Administrator or the Superintendent – invoke some more specific examinee-centered solution. Cases of panic often require such approaches. In cases of general malaise and an unwillingness to continue the examination, the Departmental Administrator will take charge and know what needs to be done.

Readers/invigilators need to quickly recognise when a situation demands something more than being solicitous and helpful to students. In such situations, it may be necessary to a) seek out a first-aid qualified staff member, b) phone for an ambulance, or c) arrange for a student to be taken quickly to hospital, probably by car. This will normally be done by the Departmental Administrator and, in some cases, the Superintendent will be advised. On occasions, it will prove desirable to confer with the Student Health Centre. These kinds of response are more likely to be associated with illness or injury, rather than panic or emotional upset. A report will normally be written by the Reader involved

12. TEAM DEVELOPMENT

The centrality of teamwork by Readers/invigilators is covered in (2). Team development is very different and likely to be the domain of the Superintendent, who will judge whether additional instruction or training in some new or modified element of IER invigilation is necessary. This may be imparted in written form – which would be routinely the case - or possibly through a course organised by the Superintendent.

13. TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPORT

Readers do not teach, *per se*, but are indisputably involved with a core part of the teaching process, that of examining our students. And not in a detached way, but very practically and face-to-face. Though all students will have been examined previously at school or sixth-form college, university examinations and the pressures associated with them, can be assessed as being at a whole new level. By guiding and assisting students in a host of small ways, Readers are indeed contributing to the students' learning processes and hopefully helping them to produce enhanced results.

14. KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- In searches or adverts for IER Invigilators, Readers and Amanueses, we normally ask for graduates (or, specifically, it is noted as 'highly desirable' that applicants have 'familiarity with HE examination procedures', which can only in fact be gained by being a graduate). In practice virtually all our examination staff are graduates, many of them postgraduates, sometimes University staff with another role. Though one is thus not asking for specific academic subject 'knowledge and experience', what is being sought is experience of the university examining process, even if from an examinee's perspective. This should be recognised in analysing this role.

- It is also noted in the job advertisement as 'desirable' that applicants should have experience of HE invigilation. In practice few new applicants have such experience, so it is very much the case - as pointed out in (12) - that the knowledge and experience of existing examination staff has to be passed on to new team members. This may be designated 'team development' in that context, but we are nevertheless implying that the transfer of existing expertise (knowledge and experience) is an integral part of the role. As indeed it is. That experience may have been gained over many years of carrying out the invigilation role, including as Readers, which incidentally is not in any way currently reflected in enhanced emoluments that the more experienced staff might receive.