### A Series of Fact Sheets for Staff

# How to Split an Exam

This fact sheet is to assist Academic members of staff who are required to split examinations for specific students in their units.

To ensure consistent terminology in this fact sheet, the whole exam is split into *sub papers*.

What is a LAP and how are adjustments on the LAP determined?

A Learning Access Plan application (LAP) is the formal document that is developed through Disability Services. It is developed in conjunction with the student and is then sent to College for approval by the relevant Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching (ADLT). Once it has been approved by the ADLT(s), Disability Services then sends this finalised LAP to the student.

The LAP details the specialist services, study and assessment accommodations available to that specific student with a disability and/or ongoing health condition (including mental health).

Recommendations are made based on advice from the student’s treating health professional, assessing individual circumstances, and addressing course outlines and inherent academic requirements.

Why would a student need a split exam?

Some students with disability or health conditions may require flexibility in the scheduling of their exams. Extended focused periods of two or three hour written exams may not be possible for some students due to their disability or health condition, proving too physically or mentally fatiguing. Splitting such exams into more than one session will be a more suitable arrangement for these students, in order for them to show their academic potential. This applies for both centralised examination periods and within-school examination periods. **The focus of this fact sheet is on written examinations only and on exams split over days (not within the same day).**

The student’s LAP will have an adjustment stating that they will require one of the following:

***Arranged by Examinations Office:***

• F1 Split paper where possible

• F4 Split paper for 3-hour exams only

• F5 Subject papers may be time-tabled on consecutive days but at least one day’s break between different units

• F6 Student requires one day’s break between sections of paper, and at least one day’s break between different units

If one of these codes appear on the student’s LAP, then the Examinations Office will advise you that the exam needs to be split into sub papers.

Should I know why the student needs a split exam?

Not really - the Disability Adviser has already made a recommendation to the College that this is necessary. It has already been determined that extra resting and/or extra writing time during a full-length paper is not realistic or fair. It is appropriate to have a copy of the student’s LAP and in some situations, the student will have already discussed this with you during the semester.

It should be noted, that the Disability Adviser does not make these decisions lightly. It is usually recommended in conjunction with strong supporting medical documentation and after lengthy conversation with the student. It is then considered by the ADLT of your College as it needs to be a College approved document.

Advice about the need for a split exam and timing

• The exam timetable is released four weeks before the central examination period commences.

• Generally, the Exams Office will make requests to Unit Coordinators for split exams about five weeks before the examination period commences.

• Unit Coordinators will need to upload split exam papers as per the usual time-frame and process.

• The different sub papers of the exam will need to be appropriately named for ease of clarification.

Splitting the paper into sub papers – Marks and allowed time

* Ideally your exam can be split into equal length sub papers, or as close to equal as possible.
* There should be an equal, or as close to equal, amount of marks for each sub paper.
* You will need to provide separate cover sheets for each sub paper that detail:
  + Total amount of marks for each sub paper
  + Amount of time for each sub paper, including portioned reading time (eg 7.5 minutes for each if two sub papers).
* You will need to advise the Exams Office how you want the paper split and on which days you want the student to sit each sub paper.
  + Your cover sheets and separate file names will advise the Exams Office of the above.

When does the student sit the split exam and how secure is it?

• Where practical, the student will sit the first sub paper at the same time as their colleagues complete the full paper.

• The student will always sign a statutory declaration documenting they will not talk to their peers about the exam.

• The student ONLY EVER sees one sub paper at a time.

o The student **WILL NOT** see the subsequent sub papers on the first day.

Extra exam times as per the approved LAP

For centrally managed exams, do not worry about the extra timings that are detailed in the approved LAP. The Exams Office will calculate how much extra resting and/or writing time should be granted for the student for each sub paper.

Should the student know what is contained within each sub paper?

• A student sitting a split exam cannot receive any more information about the exam than their colleagues who complete the exam in one sitting. This approach will determine what content, if any, is appropriate to reveal.

* It would be expected that the format and marking structure of the exam and the sub papers is made clear as per usual practice.

• As per their colleagues, a student will be expected to study for all the relevant semester’s content in preparation for the sub papers.

If the student wants further information about the split?

• The Exams Office will provide information about the dates and amount of time on each day for each sub paper.

• If the student wants specific information about sub paper format or content, they will be referred to the Unit Coordinator.

What if I can’t split the exam equally by time?

There may be times where it is not practical to split the paper into equal sub papers. For example,

• a 3-hour paper with three equally allotted sections, may result in:

o Sub paper one – 2 hours writing time & 10 minutes reading time.

o Sub paper two – 1 hour writing time & 5 minutes reading time.

• Where this may occur, it is recommended to contact the relevant Disability Adviser and discuss suitable options

o This may require the Disability Adviser to contact the student about sitting differently timed sub papers.

o The Disability Adviser may need to clarify what day would be better to sit the longer sub paper, especially when fatigue is a factor.

• The marks and time for each sub paper need to be reflected on the cover pages of the sub papers.

What if I can’t split the exam equally by content?

There may be some formats of exams that cannot be split fairly. An example of this might be a two hour exam, with four questions from eleven topics covered from the whole semester’s content.

**Possible Options:**

* The Unit Coordinator needs to ensure the split exam is appropriately blue printed to reflect the semester content fairly.
* It may be that an alternative splitting format be considered that better reflects the nature of the learning outcomes examined.
* In consultation with and approval of the ADLT, the UC can replace the exam with an alternate assessment.

Student responsibility regarding early disclosure of need for split exams

Every student who applies for a LAP is advised of the need to appropriately distribute the document within a required time and discuss with you their needs at the start of the semester. This provides early opportunity to discuss the splitting of an exam and raise any issues of concern with Disability Services.

## Contact details

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