



November 2021

Dear students,

UCL decided early this year to continue with an online approach to examinations in 2021–22 and have recently published updated guidance of what students can expect to experience. The majority of exam-based assessments across the college will be short, time-limited, online exams, intended to align closer with the conditions of an exam hall and return to the style of assessment that has traditionally been set.

In the Department of Mathematics, the arrangements for examinations will be as follows:

**Mathematics honours modules, years 1\* and 2: Two hours in duration.**

**Mathematics honours modules, years 3 and 4: Three hours in duration.**

**Ancillary modules: Two hours in duration.**

[Please note that **the module’s “year” is designated by the module itself, and not the student’s individual year group**. For example, depending on the modules you are taking this year and the degree path you are studying, you may have some 2-hour and some 3-hour mathematics exams. Please refer to the [list of modules with exam duration \(link\)](#) for a detailed list.]

[\*For students taking MATH0002, please note that the exam for this module will be three-hours in duration since this is a 30-credit module taught over two terms.]

### **Non-mathematics modules**

If you are studying any non-mathematics modules (i.e. that do not have a module code MATH#####), you will need to refer to the information provided by the teaching department of that module for details of how it will be assessed.

### **Exam format**

Mathematics exams will be online and open book, so you are free to use your notes, textbooks and (non-interactive) online resources provided on Moodle to help you when tackling the questions. While these exams are open book, students should ensure that they are mindful of the tenets of academic integrity (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity>). All work you submit should be your own, and it is not permitted to collude with others or plagiarise the work of anyone else. Thus work must not be copied from anywhere\* and you must not get advice or help of any sort from fellow students or anyone else during the exam.

[\*In some cases, mostly in modules outside Mathematics, you may need to quote from published sources: in this case you need to be make it clear that it is a quote and provide a reference.]

All mathematics exams will be run via an assessment platform called Crowdmark, which is already in use for coursework in many modules. All students will receive an invitation to create an account, and we will provide further instructional guides for how to upload and submit your work. This is a more streamlined platform than AssessmentUCL, which will make it easier for you to arrange the images of your written work before submitting.

### **Upload window**

All exams will also have **an additional “Upload Window” of 20 minutes** on top of the allocated time to complete your work. For example, if you have a 2-hour exam scheduled, you will have 2 hours and 20 minutes to finalise, collate, and complete the upload and submission of your work. You are strongly advised to start this process at the start of the 20-minute period to ensure that you do not miss the deadline for submission.

### **Technical problems**

Students with a technical issue should in the first instance contact [math.ugexams@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:math.ugexams@ucl.ac.uk), including your name, student ID number, exam details, and information about the problems you are having.

If a student has an unexpected and catastrophic technical issue, you may be eligible to apply for Extenuating Circumstances to retake the exam as a deferred first attempt in the Late Summer Assessment period in August-September. This will be at the discretion of the EC Panel, and evidence may be required to support your case. Please note that extensions to exam durations are not possible (with the exception of students with a SoRA), and it is not possible to request an extension on the basis of technical issues.

### **Exam start time and deadline**

All exams will have a fixed start time and deadline for submission. We expect exams to be timetabled to begin at either 10:00am or 14:30pm, UK time. If you start your exam late but within the timetabled duration, you will be allowed to sit the exam but will forfeit any time already elapsed. You will not be given extra time or be able to hand in late. If you fail to submit your work for an exam, this may be classed as an absence.

### **Extenuating Circumstances (ECs)**

The [Extenuating Circumstances](#) procedures remain in place for 2021/22 for any student who experiences unexpected events which means they are unable to complete the assessment. EC claims submitted before the exam has started are eligible for [Self-Certification](#). Once the exam has started you will not be eligible for Self-Certification and your claim must be supported by appropriate supporting evidence. Any application for Extenuating Circumstances which is approved will result in the exam being deferred to the Late Summer Assessment period (August-September 2022) as an uncapped first attempt. If, in exceptional

circumstances, a Deferral will not provide adequate mitigation for you, the EC Panel may consider offering you another form of mitigation. Full details can be found in the [UCL Academic Manual, Chapter 4, Section 6.9.2: Types of Mitigation](#). You must submit your claim as soon as possible and no more than one week after the exam takes place. Please note: You will not receive a reply during your exam. If you have any queries about this, please contact [math.ugwelfare@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:math.ugwelfare@ucl.ac.uk) to discuss your situation.

## **SoRAs**

Students with a disability or other medical condition may be eligible for Reasonable Adjustments to their exam conditions. You should discuss this with Student Support and Wellbeing (<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing/support-disabled-students>) if you have not done so already. There is usually a deadline ahead of the exam period for SoRAs to be granted. Students with a SoRA for additional time and/or rest breaks will have their individual exam duration extended automatically by the amount of time specified in the SoRA.

## **Date of examinations, progression and re-sits**

The modules MATH0003, MATH0005, MATH0008, MATH0010, MATH0013 and MATH0016 have their examinations in the first week of Term 2 in January. All other Mathematics modules (with the exception of MATH0032 Mathematica and the MATH0084 Project) have their examinations in the main exam period in April-May. We expect your individual exam timetables to be published on or around 28 February.

For more information about rules for examinations, progression, re-sits, etc. please see the Mathematics Department webpages:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/maths/current-students/current-undergraduates/general-rules-and-progression>, and <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/maths/current-students/current-undergraduates/exam-information>,

and the UCL webpage:

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments>.

## **How have these decisions been made?**

We understand that there is an inevitable anxiety that comes with adjustments to the assessment process, particularly during a period that continues to be disrupted due to the ongoing pandemic.

Following the successful introduction of online assessments last year, UCL has listened to your feedback and has been working hard over the summer, and in consultation with the Students' Union, to improve your assessment experience. We have also been gathering feedback from academics and external examiners and have made these to some of our processes to ensure UCL's assessments remain rigorous and meet our standards for academic conduct and integrity.

Student feedback from last year revealed a mixed response to the extended exam format. The return to a shorter exam format addresses concerns for student wellbeing; some

students appreciated the longer timeframe, but many others told us that they felt compelled to work for much longer and use the full allocated duration – this was never the intention. There was also the concern shared by both staff and students that longer or flexible exam durations made cheating and collusion much easier. After the summer exams (and after the late summer assessments), the department's exam board meets to discuss and ratify students' results and ensure that they have been marked fairly. This year is no different.

Please be assured that examinations are set with the intended duration in mind, and we recognise that this is the main concern of students who sat 8-hour exams last year. We are confident in the rigorous processes involved in the setting of exam papers to ensure that all students are given a fair and appropriately challenging opportunity to demonstrate your understanding of the material you have studied, and by the time you graduate, have achieved a valuable degree that reflects those accomplishments.

### **Getting support**

For any queries regarding the above, advice or academic support, contact in the first place [math.ugteaching@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:math.ugteaching@ucl.ac.uk).

Students are also welcome to contact our departmental welfare advisors at [math.ugwelfare@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:math.ugwelfare@ucl.ac.uk) to discuss any personal circumstances affecting you that wish to discuss.

Students experiencing technical issues during an exam should email [math.ugexams@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:math.ugexams@ucl.ac.uk) with your details and a description of the problem you are having.

Best wishes,

Professor Helen Wilson

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