Assessment during COVID-19 restrictions
Information for students

Maynooth University
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad

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Types of assessment

As you are all aware, the normal university examinations in May have been cancelled, and will be replaced with alternative assessments. The alternative assessments will be designed by each department to fit the content and aims of the module, but as a general guide the main types of alternative are:

Assignment: This means a task that you are set and that you submit by the agreed date. In doing assignments we normally assume that you can read books and articles, refer to notes and do other reading. As always, the assignment should be your own work, and you should use the appropriate referencing when using the work of others. If there are any specific restrictions on the use of external sources, they will be made clear in the instructions for the assignment.

Timed exams: This means an exam that you do remotely, but at a set time. Where these are used, you should treat them like examinations, and not use external sources during the exam, except where it is specifically allowed in the instructions. See the section on timed exams for more information.

Take home exams: This is an assessment that you do remotely, but you have a longer time to do it. It could be one full day, or a number of days. We are not expecting that you will work on this constantly for the time allowed. The instructions will give you an indication of how much time you should spend on the work, but you can organise that time as you wish. The exam will normally give word limits and you should stay strictly within those limits. You may normally use readings and notes when doing a take home exam, and the instructions with the exam paper will make clear if there are any exceptions.

Each Department will provide you with the specific information about assessments relevant to your modules. Please check Moodle and your University email account regularly for updates.

Registration: If you are not registered for a module you will not be able to take the online assessment. If you are not sure that you are properly registered, please check that your module registration is up to date via the Student Web:

https://studentwebauth.maynoothuniversity.ie/live/

If you need to change your registration record you should contact the Student Records Office immediately, noting the process for late registration at


Deadlines

Some of you will find that you have two assessments due on the same day. This is something we cannot avoid. Because of the range of subjects and subject combinations, it is inevitable that many of you will have assignments with deadlines on the same day.

You should not have two timed exams at the same time. Remember the timed exams are set at a fixed time and you are given a number of hours to complete them (max half a day). You are expected to work on these for most of the time window, and so you should never have a clash of timed exams. If you find that you have a clash, please contact the exams office.
For all other assessments, you are not expected to work on the assessment all of the time, and it is not a problem if two assignments have the same deadline. This requires that you manage your time and arrange to get one of the assignments done early. One of the key challenges is to manage your time in the remaining weeks of the semester. Just as you would in a written exam, you should divide the time between the tasks you are set, making sure that each gets a fair share of time. You should be careful not to allow one assessment to take a disproportionate amount of time, as this will have an impact on what you can do in the other assessments.

**Academic integrity**

It is very important that the work you submit is your own work, and reflects your understanding of the topic. By submitting work, you are declaring that the work is your own work, and was done in accordance with the guidance above and the specific instructions for the assignment/exam.

Online assessments and exams are university exams and subject to the University's exam regulations, plagiarism policy and all other student regulations. The University may use Turnitin or other software to check for plagiarism. A breach of examination rules is a serious issue and can incur penalties, including the awarding of a mark of zero for an entire module.

Once the assessments have been submitted, we plan to call some students to a video interview. Some students may be selected randomly for interview, and we may also call students where we have any suspicion that the work might not be their own. The purpose of the interview is to give the student an opportunity to explain their answers. The marks may be adjusted after these interviews.

If you are called for interview after the exams, this does not mean we suspect you of wrong-doing. We will call some students to interview as a quality control measure. The interview will focus on the work you have submitted. To prepare for the interview, you should read the material you have submitted, and make sure that you are familiar with it.

We know that this will be extra work for some students, but we think this is an important quality control measure, to make sure we can stand over the marks and grades we award.

**Academic Standards**

Departments have been asked to mark the assessments in the context of the unusual conditions since 13 March. This means the we understand that the teaching since March 13\(^{th}\) has been done remotely, that you have had only online access to library facilities and other supports, and that you have had no access to laboratories. While you still need to demonstrate that you understand the material, the marking will be adjusted as far as is reasonable to recognise the context.
**Timed exams:**
If you have been told that your modules will use timed exams, this section will provide some extra information. The information in this section applies to Timed Exams **ONLY**.

1. As far as possible the timed exams will be scheduled in the normal exam period, from 15^{th} - 30^{th} May (incl. Saturdays).

2. We will have 2 exam sessions per day. The first will be in the morning, any time from 9.00 to 13.30, and the second will be in the afternoon (any time from 14.00 to 18.30).

3. You may have two exams in the same day.

4. The exams office will produce a schedule of timed exams and this will be available on the exams office website by late April, as usual. [www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams](http://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/exams) You will also be told of the exam by the Department managing the exam, through Moodle.

5. Each exam will be managed and administered by the Department, so please contact the Department running the exam for any questions.

6. The exams may start at uneven times like 9.10, or 9.20. We are doing this to spread the load on the computer systems, and reduce the risk of technical problems.

7. We have already extended the duration of the exams, usually by one hour, to allow for difficulties in internet connection. So if you see an exam scheduled for 4 hours, this is typically a test that you should be able to complete in three hours. This is designed to reduce the stress that might arise if you have a delay in downloading or uploading the paper.

8. If you are registered with the Disability Office, and are allowed additional time in exams you will also be given extra time in these timed exams.

9. If you have other exam accommodations, please contact the Disability Office disability.office@mu.ie to discuss whether they can be provided in a remote exam.

10. If you are unable to submit your answer on time, please submit it as soon as you can. The system will put a time-stamp on your submission, and the Department can then decide how to deal with the late submission.

11. If you know in advance that you will unable to complete a timed exam, please contact the Professor/Lecturer leading the module, and explain your difficulty. In some cases, an alternative may be available.
Technology
Most assignments will be managed through Moodle, and you should make sure that you are familiar with Moodle and have practiced using it on the machine you will use during assessments.

Most assignments will be submitted in a typed format. You should ensure that you are familiar with the word processor (MS Word or equivalent) on your computer, and that you know who to save files. You should make sure to save copies during any long assessment, to avoid the risk of losing your work if there is a power cut or computer crash.

In some cases Departments will ask you to hand-write your exams and scan or photograph them. This may be the preferred option where the answers will need to include formulas and symbols.

If you do not have access to a computer, please contact the department and explain your situation. They may be able to allow you to hand-write your work and submit a photograph of it. However this should be used as a last resort, and may not be allowed in all modules.

Internet: As far as possible, Departments will use assessments that you can download, work on offline and then upload. However there will be some cases where online quizzes or other “live” activities are used.

You will also need a reliable internet connection, particularly during timed exams. If you are in a house with other users sharing the connection, you may be able to ask them to switch off when you are doing assessments. Live gaming, videoconferences and video streaming are all heavy users of data and can cause your connection to slow down.

Some of you may be accessing the internet through the mobile phone network, either by using your phone (tethering or hotspot) or by using mobile broadband. To improve your connection you should turn off other apps that use the connection.
August re-sits

We normally have a re-sit exam in August from almost all of the written exams. This gives a second opportunity for anyone who missed the exam because of illness or other unavoidable difficulty, or anyone who did not pass the exam.

This year we plan to have re-sit examinations in August for both first semester and second semester modules. If for some reason it is not possible to have re-sits, we will replace them with alternative assessments.

Resit caps: In a small percentage of modules there is a cap on the re-sit exam. This means that if you do the re-sit the maximum mark you can get is fixed (usually at 40%). For this year, all the resit caps are removed, for both first semester and second semester modules.

Module condition caps: Some modules have a module condition, and the module mark is capped at 35% if the condition is not met. These caps will remain in place. If you have not met a module condition, you should contact the relevant Department to ask about your options.

Fees for re-sit: We have decided to waive the fees for re-sit examinations this summer. This means that if you are properly registered for a module this year, and you need to re-sit in August, there will be no additional charge.

Rules for resit

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>First attempt (January or May)</th>
<th>August Resit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your first mark is below the pass mark (40%)</td>
<td>The August re-sit mark will normally be used in calculating the annual result. If your August mark is lower that the first attempt, we will use the first attempt. This may be important if the first attempt was good enough to allow compensation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your first mark is above the pass mark.</td>
<td>If you pass you cannot normally resit, except in final year, where you can resit up to 15 credits. However if you think you underperformed you can ask permission to resit. If you resit a module that was passed, the result is the resit mark or the pass mark, (40%) whichever is higher. This means that there is some risk in resit in a passed module. In some exceptional cases we may waive this rule.</td>
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Deciding to wait until August.
Some of you may be wondering if you should skip the assessments in May, and wait until the August assessment. If you really cannot do the assessment in May, this could be a sensible option. This might arise if you are ill, if you are caring for someone who is ill, or if you have no access to a computer or an internet connection. However, in most cases it is better that you take the assessment in May if you can. If you do well in even some of them, you will have less to do in August.
### Some re-sit FAQ

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can I re-sit a module I did not pass in the first semester?</td>
<td>Yes, we will have re-sits for first and second semester modules.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Do I need to register to re-sit?</td>
<td>Yes. Even though there is no fee, you will need to register. We need to know how many people are taking the re-sit to prepare exam papers, timetable etc. Information about how to register for re-sits will be available on the exams office website when the results are available in June.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I wait and do my exams in August.</td>
<td>Yes you can. You can also do some modules now and leave other modules until August. However this should be a last resort, as it is better to do the assessments now if you can.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If you decide not to take an assessment in May, there is no need to inform us in advance. You can register for the re-sit and take the alternative assessment in August.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I try the assessment now and pass, can I re-sit to improve?</td>
<td>Re-sit to improve is not normally allowed, except in final year when you can re-sit 15 credits of modules you have passed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>However this year, if you feel you have not done yourself justice at the first attempt you can apply for permission to re-sit a passed module. If we can see that your result is out of line with previous results, we will allow you this opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Note that if you re-sit a module you have passed your result could fall. The result we will use is the re-sit mark, or the pass mark, whichever is higher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Information on how to apply will be circulated when the results are available in June.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If I have done some of the assignments and not all, do I need to do them</td>
<td>No, in the August re-sit the department will carry forward the results from the work already completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I have a module with a mark capped at 35%, what can I do?</td>
<td>This is probably because you did not meet some module condition, which might be an attendance requirement, or passing a specific part of the module. You need to contact the Department to see if there is any way to recover from this.</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>If not, this may block your progression in the subject.</td>
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