

SPiR Guidance to Students on 48-hour Take-Home Exams

This document sets out the expectations for 48-hour Take-Home Exams (THEs) adopted as alternative assessments on several SPiR modules due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. **Follow advice from your module convenor**
Your module convenor will write to you to advise you on how to prepare for the THE. Follow this advice carefully.
2. **Study your timetable and plan your time carefully**
 - You have now received an exam timetable showing when your THEs will be available on QMplus. You will be able to access each paper from the time shown. Your assessment must be submitted 48hrs from this time (not from the time that you personally access it).
 - QMUL has tried to space out the exams as much as possible but there is inevitably some overlap due to students' complex module choices and the short exam period.
 - Take note of when your exams are, and ensure you plan your revision carefully. Do not leave it all to the last minute. Finalists may need to revise alongside completing their dissertations.
 - Ensure that you set aside time and space in a quiet environment to complete the assessment. Discuss your requirements in advance with employers/ the people you are living with as appropriate.
3. **IMPORTANT: THE deadlines really are deadlines!**
Due to QMUL regulations, **THEs submitted after the deadline will receive an automatic zero** – i.e. there are no 5-mark per day late penalties as with regular coursework. If you fail to submit, you will be offered an uncapped resit in the late summer.
4. **Read the rubric carefully**
Each THE will have an opening statement explaining the assessment and how you should approach it (a rubric). Read this carefully and follow the instructions.
5. **Spend around six hours completing each 1,000-word THE**
 - Although you have 48 hours to complete the assessment, this does not mean you are expected to spend 48 hours doing it! We recommend that you spend around six hours per 1,000-word assignment, and we will grade these assessments on this basis.
 - So, why do we give you 48 hours?
 - Because THEs will inevitably overlap for some students.
 - To give everyone – regardless of the time zone they are currently in – enough time to access the assessment and fit in the work around their personal circumstances.
 - To provide extra time for those with diagnosed learning difficulties to complete the assessment (as specified in your DDS assessment).
 - To create a buffer between THEs, to allow you time to prepare for the next assessment – and, of course, to stay healthy by resting.
 - Please do not try to use the whole 48-hour period on the assessment. It is unnecessary and you risk making yourself unwell.
6. **Use the special COVID-19 coversheet**
All THEs should be accompanied by a completed [coversheet](#).
7. **Referencing expectations**
 - Unlike unseen timed examinations, where notes/ books are usually banned, THEs are “open book” assessments: you are free to consult your notes, books, articles, etc, including online. However, because you have longer to complete the assignment, you are expected to follow SPiR's referencing guidelines. That means strictly acknowledging when ideas or words are not your own, by citing their source. Any words taken from other sources must be identified

using quotation marks and a citation must be provided. A bibliography listing the sources provided must also be supplied. Do not worry about strictly following the SPIR style guide for formatting references or bibliographies – you will not be penalised for incorrect formatting. But a failure to acknowledge your sources may amount to technical or full plagiarism, potentially constituting an assessment offence. If you have any doubt about how to correctly acknowledge your sources, review the relevant sections on plagiarism and referencing on the [UG](#) and [PGT](#) shared areas on QMplus.

8. Standard academic misconduct regulations still apply

- [QMUL's regulations on academic misconduct](#) still apply to all assessments, including THEs. Those regulations forbid, amongst other things, plagiarism or collaboration in the production of assessed work, whether among students or involving third parties e.g. “essay mills”. Like all coursework submitted online, THEs will be processed through plagiarism-detection software and SPIR has other ways to detect cheating.
- The risk of accidental academic misconduct is substantially greater with THEs than other assignments. Because of the time pressure, some students may be tempted to Google the exam question and try to cobble together an essay from material they find online. Please, please don't do this. This is highly likely to result in technical or full plagiarism, and the consequences could be very grave. This is especially true for finalists, who are expected to know better, and whose assessments count heavily in determining their degree classification. Depending on the severity of the case, plagiarism can lead to a capped resubmission or outright fail on that assignment, on that module, or the whole year, right up to expulsion from the university. Please do not take that risk. Stick to high-quality, academic sources, and rigorously acknowledge your sources (see 5, above).