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From: The Undergraduate Office

**To:** All candidates for Preliminary Examination in History  
All candidates in Joint Schools with History

31 May 2024

**Information to:** All tutors in History  
Chairs of Joint Schools

**CANDIDATES SHOULD READ THIS CIRCULAR VERY CAREFULLY**

## PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION IN HISTORY 2024

### A. EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

#### 1. Timetables

You can view the Exam Timetables online at:

<http://www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic/exams/timetables>

You will also be able to see your individual personal timetable on eVision. If you think there is an error in your personal timetable, please contact the undergraduate office at once on [undergraduate.office@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:undergraduate.office@history.ox.ac.uk).

*Any candidate who arrives more than 30 minutes after the beginning of an examination will not be admitted.*

#### 2. Academic Dress

Candidates should wear sub-fusc and academic dress to all in-person examinations. Read more about what constitutes [sub-fusc and academic dress](#).

#### 3. Personal Belongings

You **MUST** bring:

- i. Pens/pencils (Exam Schools will not be able to lend stationery if you forget to bring it). You should bring these for typed exams too, to make notes on the rough workings paper provided (as required).
- ii. Your University card
- iii. Calculator (If your exam permits one – check with your department if unsure) NB: spare calculators will **not** be provided if you forget yours

- iv. Mobile phone (if you are sitting a typed exam). The only authorized use of a mobile phone in the exam room is for logging into Inspira before a typed exam. Once you have done so, you will be required to turn the mobile phone off and leave it visible on the desk for the duration of the exam.

We advise that you bring these items in a **clear** pencil case or **small clear bag**

In addition, you **MAY** wish to bring:

- v. Water – this must be in a clear bottle and be non-carbonated
- vi. Individual timetable (paper copy)
- vii. In-ear ear plugs (but **NOT** headphones)
- viii. Tissues – these must be removed from the packet and made available for inspection if required.

Do **NOT** bring:

- ix. Bags, rucksacks, etc.
- x. Smart watches, cameras, or similar electronic devices
- xi. Mobile phone (**unless you are sitting a typed exam**)
- xii. Unauthorized material (including revision notes) or equipment relevant to the exam
- xiii. Good luck charms and items
- xiv. Non-clear bottles / any drinks other than still water (except with prior approval)

You may bring, with a **SIGNED LETTER FROM COLLEGE**:

- xv. Silent blood testing kits for diabetic students
- xvi. Glucose drink (e.g. Lucozade)/ Glucose tablets (e.g. Dextro energy tablets)
- xvii. Insulin syringes/supplies/Asthma inhalers/Epi-pen
- xviii. Over-the-counter and/or prescription medicine
- xix. Small unobtrusive snack (please note nuts **may not** be taken into the exam)
- xx. Medical aids (e.g. wrist splint/support, back support pillow, ice pack)
- xxi. Coloured overlays

#### **4. At the Examination Schools**

- i. Access to the exam venue will be from 30 minutes before the start of the exam (i.e. 9am for a 9:30am exam or 2pm for a 2.30pm exam). If you arrive before that time then you will need to wait outside, so you may want to time your arrival accordingly. You should arrive no later than 15 minutes before the start of the exam. Please be aware of any signage which directs you to specific entrances, such as the quad gates.
- ii. Waiting area: You will be asked to wait in a designated waiting area or marquee until approximately 15 minutes before the start of the exam, when the exam rooms will be called. On some exam days the waiting area can become busy, so should you wish to avoid this then we suggest timing your arrival accordingly. Whilst in the waiting area please be respectful of other students.

Within the waiting area there will be lists of candidates – in alphabetical order by surname – and details of which room and desk you have been assigned. Once the rooms have been called follow the signage to your room. There will be lists outside each room to help you remember your desk number. The entrance lobby of Examination Schools is not open; you must go around the side of the building into Merton Street and through the iron gates. A marquee will be set up over the garden quad. Inside it will be notice-boards displaying candidates’ names alphabetically. Find your name and next to it you will see the room number where you will sit your exam (this will not be the same room every day). You wait in the marquee until your room number is called by a member of the Exam Team staff.

- iii. Toilets: During the period the waiting area is in use, you will have access to the toilets, though you will not be able to take belongings out of the waiting area. Once the exam rooms have been called you may use the toilets on your way to the exam rooms. During this time the toilets can be very busy and queues can form. We recommend that you go before arriving at the exam venue. Once you have entered the exam room you are not permitted to leave until 30 minutes into the exam.
- iv. Your exam desk: The exam desks will be laid out with the desk numbers in the corner, so you should be able to find your assigned seat. What you find on your desk will depend on the format of the exam.

Exam Format	What will be on your desk
Hand-written	Exam paper Script booklets Any other materials listed on the cover of the exam
Typed	A computer Instructions for how to log into Inspera on the computer Paper for rough working Any other materials listed in Inspera

Check that your desk contains the materials you are expecting. Raise your hand to attract the attention of the invigilator if:

- anything is missing from the desk
- you have an exam paper you are not expecting
- you have problems logging into Inspera
- you cannot see the correct exam in Inspera
- you don't have the rest time / extra time you were expecting in Inspera

**Do not turn over an exam paper, or press 'start test' in Inspera, until you are told to do so by the invigilator.**

- v. Candidate number: For handwritten exams, you will need to know your candidate number in order to complete the front of your script booklet(s). You can check your candidate

number on **student self-service**, as well as on your **individual timetable**, and will be able to write this information down to bring with you to the exam room. If you realise at the start of your exam that you do not know your candidate number, an invigilator will be able to assist with providing this information. Please note that your candidate number is **not the same** as your student ID number.

For typed exams, your candidate number will be shown within Inspira.

To ensure your exam response can be marked anonymously, you **must not** write or type your name or student number anywhere within your exam script or exam response.

- vi. ID Checks: all candidates should bring their University card with them as ID. This should be placed face up on the desk at the start of the exam, where it can be checked by the Invigilator.
- vii. Paper errors: if you think there is an error within an exam question, you should state this at the top of your answer, along with your understanding of the exam question. You should then continue to answer the exam question as best you can. It is not possible to query the content of an exam question during an exam.
- viii. Leaving your desk: During the exam you should raise your hand to get the attention of an invigilator if you want to leave your desk for any reason. Once you have started the exam, you are not permitted to leave your desk in the first or last 30 minutes of the exam. However, if you feel unwell during this time, raise your hand to get the attention of an invigilator. If you need to leave the exam due to illness, you may return to the exam once within the remaining exam duration if you feel better and wish to do so. However, if you need to leave a second time you will not be able to continue the exam. If you are unable to complete an exam due to illness, your college will be able to advise on next steps.

Candidates sitting a typed exam are not permitted to remove their mobile phone from the examination room if leaving their desk temporarily during the exam.

- ix. When the exam is finished, please wait until an invigilator informs you that you can leave the exam room. You should ensure that you take your pens and stationery with you, along with your University Card. You should **not** remove from the exam room any script booklets, University electronic devices, Inspira response sheets or rough work.

For a handwritten exam, you may usually take away the printed exam paper although some papers are not permitted to be removed from the exam room.

- x. Leaving the building: Once out of the exam room, please leave the building as quickly and quietly as possible. Though your exam may have finished, there will be other candidates still taking papers, and you should try not to disturb them while still in or close to the exam venue. Please do not wait for friends until you are away from the building to help keep the exam environment as quiet as possible.

### 5 a) Examination instructions for hand-written exams

- i. Please check that the question paper on your desk is the paper you are expecting to take, and if not, alert the Invigilator immediately.
- ii. **No paper may be taken into the examination room.** Candidates will be issued with two booklets at the beginning of each examination. Supplementary booklets will be issued by the Invigilators on request. Rough notes should be made in one of the booklets. **ALL** booklets, whether containing working notes or fair copy, **must be secured together by the treasury tags provided and handed in.** It is the responsibility of the candidate to mark the rough notes booklet clearly as such. No paper (except the question paper) may be taken out of the examination room.
- iii. **You MUST NOT write either your own name or the name of your College on your script.** Write only **your candidate number**, the **School** for which you are entered (i.e. 'History' or 'Ancient and Modern History' or 'History and Modern Languages' or 'History and Economics' or 'History and English' or 'History and Politics') and the **number** and a short title for the paper that you are taking (e.g. 'OS3: Early Gothic France').
- iv. **If you complete more than one booklet**, write your number and the short title of the paper at the top of the second and any subsequent booklets. All answer booklets must be secured together by the treasury tags provided.
- v. You **MUST NOT** write in pencil.
- vi. If you think there is an error in the exam paper you should state what you think the question was supposed to say within your exam script.
- vii. At the end of each examination session the Invigilators will announce procedures to ensure the secure collection of scripts. Candidates are **required to wait** in their seats and follow these instructions.
- viii. Submitting hand-written scripts: Please make sure that you cross through any rough notes before the end of the exam, otherwise they may be marked by an examiner. Please ensure that you fill out the covers of all the script booklets you have used with your candidate details – candidate number, date, exam, and the question numbers that you have answered. Any script booklets containing rough work should be attached and submitted with your answers.

**Invigilators will collect scripts from candidates at their desks**, please wait patiently until that process is completed and you are instructed to leave by an invigilator.

### 5 b) Examination instructions for type-written exams

- i. Most in-person, typed exams will take place on a Chromebook. The Chromebooks have touchscreens, with a built-in trackpad.

- ii. Candidates sitting in the Doctoral Training Centre's (DTC) computer suites will use a desktop computer.
- iii. These exams are closed-book, invigilated exams, so access to applications and websites outside of Inspira will be restricted during the exam.
- iv. The exam will be completed on Inspira. This is a cloud-based digital assessment platform, used by the University for multiple formats of examination and for coursework submissions.
- v. You will log into Inspira using your University Single Sign-On (SSO), which involves a Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) step. **You are required to bring a mobile phone to the exam to complete this step.** Other methods of authentication are not possible within the exam room.

Please therefore ensure you know your SSO username and password, and that you have registered your mobile phone as an authentication method for MFA using the instructions linked below:

[MFA setup and management | IT Help \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

- vi. Prior to the exam, you should also check that no alarms are set on your phone for the time you will be in the examination room. After you have logged into Inspira, please turn off your phone.
- vii. If you have not completed an exam on Inspira before, we recommend watching the introductory video guide. You can also view this [in MS Stream](#).  
You can also [log into Inspira](#) and access the available **demo tests** whenever you want. From the Inspira dashboard, go to the 'Demo tests' tab. Answers to a demo test are not saved, and you can attempt a demo test an unlimited number of times. Closer to the date of your first exam, you will be provided with a **practice test**. When available, it can be accessed under 'My Tests' in Inspira. The questions may not be subject-specific, but the practice test will reflect the layout of your exam (or set of exams).

- viii. Alternative arrangements for typed exams:

For general information on exam adjustments, please see the [exam adjustments webpage](#). The information below is specific to computer-based exams and only applies to students with approved adjustments.

**a) Extra time**

If you are entitled to extra time, this will be added to your exam duration within Inspira. If you have extra time of up to 15 minutes per hour, and no other adjustments that require you to sit in your college, you should expect to sit computer-based exams in the main venue. The seating plan will be designed to minimise disruption to candidates who are sitting papers with a longer exam duration than others and/or are entitled to extra time.

**b) Use of a word processor**

If you have an adjustment to complete your exams on a word processor, you may have (in the past) sat your exams separately to your peers, in a computer room. In an in-person, computer-based exam, all students are provided with a computer on

which to type their answers, and you should therefore expect to sit these exams in the main venue (unless you have additional adjustments that require you to sit your exam in your college). All candidates in the main venue will complete their exams using the word processor in Inspira, and a spelling checker will be turned on by default for all candidates.

**c) Rest time**

If you are entitled to rest time during your exam, this will be added to your exam duration within Inspira. If you are entitled to extra time and rest time, your additional time will appear in Inspira as a single combined value. You are expected to manage your extra time within the exam autonomously. The invigilator will, however, ask you to raise your hand should you need to leave your desk; for example, to stretch during a rest break.

**d) College sitting**

If you sit your exams in college, you will be provided with a University Chromebook on which to complete your exam (as described above). This will be set up in the exam room before your exam. If you have an approved exam adjustment to use your own computer (for example, because you require use of assistive technology), you should bring this device with you to the exam room.

**e) Students with a Specific Learning Difference (SpLD)**

For students with a Specific Learning Difference (SpLD), you do not need to attach an Inclusive Marking Guidelines (IMG) form to your work in Inspira. This will be managed by your department after your exam response has been submitted.

**f) Use of assistive technologies**

Arrangements will vary depending on the technology used and your specific requirements. If you're expecting to use assistive technologies during your exam, please contact your college office or disability advisor in the first instance.

**g) Alternative modes of completion**

If you have a disability or medical condition which means you need an alternative mode of completion to the one set for your paper, you will need to apply for this through [the exam adjustments process](#).

- ix. Submitting responses in Inspira: When your test has ended (you have used the time allowed), you will no longer be able to edit your exam responses in Inspira. You will be taken to the submission page, where you will be directed to press the 'Submit now' button.

If you decide to leave the exam early, you should check your exam responses very carefully. Once you press the 'Submit now' button, your responses are considered final and you are not be able to return to the test in Inspira.

Any rough workings paper you have used should be left on the desk.

If your exam requires you to draw diagrams, graphs, equations or other content which cannot be entered directly into Inspira, you will be provided with an 'Inspira Response Sheet'. Inspira Response Sheets will not be provided for all exams. They will only be available where your exam board has decided they are necessary. See the ['in-person exams on a computer' webpage](#) for more information. Any Inspira response sheets used will be collected by the invigilator once the exam has finished, and uploaded to Inspira on your behalf.

Please remain seated until an invigilator signals that you can log out of Inspira and leave the room.

**7. Illness or disturbance and Mitigating Circumstances**

If you feel that your performance during an exam has been affected by illness or disturbance, you should complete a mitigating circumstances notice to the examiners. For further details on how to submit a notice, see the [Problems completing your assessment](#) page.

**B. THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION**

**8. Illegibility and intelligibility**

It is the responsibility of candidates to write legibly at all times. **Candidates producing scripts that are difficult to read may disadvantage themselves.** If the examiners cannot easily read parts of your script its mark may be reduced. If an entire script is deemed illegible **the Examiners will require you to return to Oxford after the examination and to pay for the invigilated typing of your script(s).** The Examiners will notify the Senior Tutor of any College so concerned (through whom all administrative arrangements must be made) by 25 June: **no candidate should leave Oxford without giving the Senior Tutor of their College an address where they may be contacted immediately, in case any illegible script needs to be typed.**

You should practise your handwriting under time constraints in advance of the examination. Any candidate who suspects that their illegible handwriting is due to a medical condition should **immediately** seek advice from the Disabilities Office. A formal diagnosis of such a condition may result in Proctoral permission to use a word processor.

You must also write **intelligibly**: do not employ text-speak, non-standard abbreviations, or other deviations from standard written English.

**9. Short-weight and compulsory questions**

Candidates are reminded that in every paper they must observe the rubric at its head in relation to the number of questions to be answered, and to compulsory questions or sections. **The Examiners heavily penalise candidates who omit or fail to complete questions, or who break the rubric in other ways.**

**10. Overlaps between papers**

The Examiners hope that candidates will, where appropriate, connect with each other their study of the History of the British Isles, European and World History, their Optional Subject, and their fourth paper. You should avoid repeating in one paper substantial material you have already used in another. But there is no reason why you should not relate your studies for one subject to questions asked in another, if you think them relevant.

**11. Late changes of Optional Subject**

Any candidate who changes their Optional Subject in the course of Trinity Term, after the submission of their entry form, should liaise as a matter of urgency with their College Academic Office to submit a Change of Option form to the Academic Records Office and that



separate notification is sent to the Chair of the Examiners.

**12. Classification and notification of results**

The Preliminary Examination is not classified and there is no viva voce examination. Candidates will be able to see their Individual Assessments and Year Outcome results via Student Self-Service (SITS-eVision) under 'My Exams', and then on the 'Academic and Assessment Results' page. It is expected, but not guaranteed, that results will be released on Monday 15 July. **Schools and Faculty staff cannot give results over the telephone.**

**13. Queries**

Any questions arising out of this circular relating to the Examination more generally may be directed via a History Tutor of the candidate's College to the Chair of the Examiners ([undergraduate.office@history.ox.ac.uk](mailto:undergraduate.office@history.ox.ac.uk)).

**Examiners**

J. Bennett  
F. Bessard  
G. Garnett (Chair)  
G. Marocci (Secretary)  
L. Wooding  
F. Zaman