

# University Policy on Illegible or Gratuitously Offensive Assessment Submissions

## Preamble

Regulation 19 of the General regulations for Students states that

*You must not include gratuitously offensive material in any work submitted for assessment. If you do so, you are guilty of a breach of this Regulation.*

*You must ensure that work submitted for assessment is legible.*

*Gratuitously offensive work and/or illegible work will be dealt with according to the University Policy on Illegible or Gratuitously Offensive Assessment Submissions.*

Students are therefore expected to present examination or course test scripts in legible handwriting (unless individual arrangements are approved by the Learning and Teaching Committee of Senate for the use of a computer) and should not include gratuitously offensive material in any work (including coursework) submitted for assessment.

## Illegible Work

1. Where a marker finds a section or the whole of assessed work is illegible, they shall mark the parts of the script that are legible (if any) and then refer the whole paper to the Chair of the Board of Examiners responsible for the module concerned.
2. The Chair of the Board of Examiners must either
  - 2.1 confirm that the whole script is illegible; or
  - 2.2 confirm that a section of the script is illegible; or
  - 2.3 decide that the script is legible and ask a second marker to mark the script or work in question.
3. *Minor proportion*

If it is decided by the Chair that the illegible section of a script represents a minor proportion of the script and would not have a material impact on the module mark, a marker should award a zero for that section and proceed to mark the remainder.
4. *Substantial proportion*

If it is decided by the Chair that the illegible section of a script represents a substantial proportion of the whole and/or would have a material

impact on the module mark, the student must be invited to report to their School so that arrangements can be made to have their work legibly transcribed (by reading their answers under examination conditions). If the student does not accept the offer and make arrangements with the School, the marker shall give a mark of zero to the illegible sections of work and proceed to mark the remainder.

5. *Whole of work*

If it is decided by the Chair that the whole of an examination or course test script is illegible (or such a very substantial part that there is little material that can be marked), the student must be invited to report to their School so that arrangements can be made to have their work legibly transcribed (by reading their answers under examination conditions). If the student does not accept the offer and make arrangements with the School, the marker shall give a mark of zero to the script.

6. *Referral*

In all cases where a marker has concerns about the legibility of a script, the student shall be referred to the Academic Adviser for appropriate guidance and advice.

**Gratuitously offensive work**

7. Where a marker finds a section of assessed work contains what they consider to be gratuitously offensive material, they shall (subject to 13 below) mark the parts of the work that do not contain such material (if any) and refer the whole paper to the Chair of the Board of Examiners responsible for the module concerned.

8. The Chair of the Board of Examiners must either

8.1 confirm that the whole of the work submitted for assessment is gratuitously offensive; or

8.2 confirm that a section of the work submitted for assessment is gratuitously offensive; or

8.3 decide that the material is not gratuitously offensive and ask a second marker to mark the script or work in question.

9. *Minor proportion*

If it is decided by the Chair that the gratuitously offensive part of the work submitted for assessment represents a minor proportion of the script or would not have a material impact on the module mark, a marker should award a zero for that section. A marker should award the work a mark worthy of its academic merit notwithstanding the inclusion of the offensive material. If the work submitted has no academic merit and has not met the learning outcomes of the task set, a marker may award zero.

10. *Substantial proportion*

If it is decided by the Chair that the gratuitously offensive section of work submitted for assessment represents a substantial proportion of the whole and/or would have a material impact on the module mark, a mark of zero shall be awarded for this section and a report made to the Head of the relevant School for consideration for disciplinary action under General Regulation 19 (Attendance, engagement, and progress) and/or 14 (professional misconduct or unsuitability) of the General Regulations for Students. The Head of School may then refer the matter to Senate Student Discipline Committee. A marker should award the work a mark worthy of its academic merit and notwithstanding the inclusion of the offensive material. If the work submitted has no academic merit and has not met the learning outcomes of the task set, a marker may award zero.

11. *Whole of work*

In the event that the Chair confirms that the whole of the script is gratuitously offensive (or such a very substantial part that there is little material that can be marked), a mark of zero shall be awarded for the whole of the assessed work in question and a report made to the Head of the relevant School with a recommendation that disciplinary action be taken under Regulation 19 and/or 14 of the General Regulations for Students. The Head of School may then refer the matter to Senate Student Discipline Committee.

12. *Disciplinary action*

If disciplinary action has been taken or is pending as part of the procedure for marking offensive material, any marks awarded for assessments containing offensive material should be confirmed by the Board of Examiners once the disciplinary investigation/action has been concluded.

13. *Effect on staff*

Regardless of any disciplinary action, where a marker is concerned that the offensive material causes him/her undue stress and may influence the marking, the matter shall be referred to the Chair of the Board of Examiners who will review the material and decide whether the material is such that the work should not be marked or that another marker should be asked to mark the work as much as possible. If the alternative marker declines to mark the work on the basis that the work, or part of the work, contains gratuitously offensive material, the work or the relevant part(s) of the work shall be deemed unmarkable and a provisional mark of 0% recorded for those parts of the work that are deemed unmarkable.