



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

**Undergraduate
Medical Education**

Assessment Procedural Document

Purpose

This document serves to complement the process of Progress and Promotion outlined in the Progress, Promotion and Appeal Regulations. Students should familiarize themselves with the content of both documents and understand the expectations of assessment at each level of training. In case of a conflict between the two documents, the Progress, Promotion and Appeal Regulations take precedence.

This document is reviewed on a regular basis to reflect these changes and keep students abreast of what is happening for their specific year of graduation. Students should review the unit syllabi so they understand how each unit, elective or clinical educational experience will be assessed.

Table of Contents

1. GENERAL PROCEDURES 2

1.1. DEFINITIONS/GENERAL..... 2

1.2. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS 2

1.3. CASE-BASED LEARNING TUTORIALS 3

 1.3.1. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION..... 3

 1.3.2. TUTORIAL ASSESSMENT 3

 1.3.3. SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION..... 3

1.4. EXAMINATION RULES..... 3

 1.4.1. GENERAL 3

 1.4.2. CONDUCT..... 3

 1.4.3. DEFERRAL OF EXAMINATIONS..... 4

 1.4.4. SUPPLEMENTAL EXAMINATIONS 5

 1.4.5. APPEALING EXAMINATION PROCESS 5

 1.4.6. ACCOMMODATIONS 5

1.5. REMEDIATION..... 5

1.6. LEAVES OF ABSENCE 5

 1.6.1. LEAVE AND TIME OFF FAQ 5

1.7. EXAMINATION PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULED EXAMINATIONS..... 5

 1.7.1 NOTIFICATION 5

 1.7.2 PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULING BEFORE THE START OF AN EXAMINATION 6

 1.7.3 GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINATION INTERRUPTIONS..... 6

 1.7.4 PROCEDURES FOR TEMPORARY INTERRUPTIONS 6

 1.7.5 PROCEDURES FOR INTERRUPTIONS EXCEEDING 30 MINUTES 6

 1.7.6 POST EXAM PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULED EXAMINATIONS 7

2. YEAR-SPECIFIC PROCEDURES 7

2.1. SKILLED CLINICIAN OSCE EXAMINATIONS 7

 2.2.1. MED 1 AND 2 SUMMATIVE END-OF-UNIT EXAMINATIONS..... 7

 2.3.1. FORMATIVE END-OF-UNIT EXAMINATIONS..... 8

 2.3.2. COMPREHENSIVE CLERKSHIP EXAMINATION 8

 2.3.3. ITERS IN MED 3 8

 2.4.1. ELECTIVES..... 8

3. CONTACTS 9

4. APPENDICES

 APPENDIX A – GUIDELINES FOR WRITING IN-PERSON EXAMS

 APPENDIX B – GUIDELINES FOR WRITING REMOTELY PROCTORED EXAMS

1. GENERAL PROCEDURES

Wherever a Policy or Regulation is referred to in this document, it can be accessed through the following link:

<https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/undergraduate/current-students/policies-regulations.html>

1.1. DEFINITIONS/GENERAL

Feedback: Following each end-of-unit examination and before the release of the results of the examination, the student unit representative will have an opportunity to meet with the Unit Head/Clerkship Director to provide feedback on the examination. This meeting may occur in person, virtually, by phone or through email correspondence.

Feedback following Direct Observation: This involves oral and/or written feedback provided by someone observing you doing something. This might be taking a history, doing a physical examination, presenting cases on rounds, or performing a skill.

Examination Grades: All examination results are reviewed by the Exam Review Committee and presented to the Progress Committee for approval. The grades will be released within 15 working days from the end of unit examination, or end of rotation, whichever is later.

Formative assessments (F): These assessments are intended to provide students with feedback that will allow them to make changes and improve before the final assessment. Results on formative assessments do not go on the student transcript.

Mastery assessments (M): These are the final assessments of the anatomy/histology learning objectives. Failing to meet the standard to pass will require a repeat of the assessment until the standard is met. Failure on a Mastery assessment does not count toward the total number of failures allowed in an academic year.

Summative assessments (S): These are the final assessments of the unit, rotation or elective. These pass/fail results determine if you have passed a unit.

1.2. PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS

As outlined in section 2 of the Progress, Promotion and Appeal Regulations and in the Professionalism Policy, students must meet professionalism standards for the undergraduate program to be promoted from one year to the next and to graduate from the undergraduate medical program.

1.3. CASE-BASED LEARNING TUTORIALS

1.3.1. ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Attendance at tutorials and other group learning activities, such as team-based learning sessions or PIER sessions, is mandatory. If there are any absences, anticipated or unanticipated, students must notify the Undergraduate Medical Education (UGME) office and their tutor(s) as per the Progress, Assessment, and Appeal Regulations.

1.3.2. TUTORIAL ASSESSMENT

Tutors assess students on their comprehension, integration and application of knowledge, professionalism, participation, facilitation of others' learning and preparation for tutorials. Students receive a formative assessment halfway through each unit, and a summative assessment at the end of the unit. Given the length of the units, there are two formative assessments in Professional Competencies 1 and 2.

1.3.3. SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION

The end of unit tutorial summative assessment forms will normally be completed by tutors within 10 working days after the completion of a unit. Ideally the tutor should meet with each student in his/her group to review their assessments. Students must pass their tutorial assessments, review, and sign their assessments to successfully complete a unit. Students who fail their tutorial assessment or for whom tutors have identified concerns in the narrative part of the assessment, must meet with the Associate Dean, UGME, or Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick (DMNB), as appropriate, and undergo remediation work as outlined in the Progress, Promotion, and Appeal Regulations.

1.4. EXAMINATION RULES

1.4.1. GENERAL

Students in the undergraduate medical curriculum must abide by the rules of academic integrity for Dalhousie University. Cheating, disobeying administrative staff during an examination, or any other unprofessional behaviour related to examinations will be addressed in accordance with Dalhousie University's academic integrity process and the Associate Dean.

1.4.2. CONDUCT

The following apply to all examinations in the undergraduate curriculum:

- All belongings (phones or equivalent, backpacks, hats, etc.) are to be left at the front of the room or in personal lockers.
- All cell phones and smart watches, or their equivalent, must be either off completely or in 'airplane mode' and placed at the front of the room for the duration of the examination.
- Students must bring their Dalhousie Student ID to the examination.
- If scrap paper is provided during an examination, it must be returned to the invigilator at the end of the examination.
- Students must follow all the invigilator's instructions and not begin the exam before instructed.

- When instructed to stop the examination, students must comply immediately.
- For specific details on required conduct for in-person and remotely proctored examinations please consult the following documents in the appendix of this document: Guidelines for Writing In-Person Exams; and Guidelines for Writing Remotely Proctored Exams.

1.4.3. DEFERRAL OF EXAMINATIONS

A student who is experiencing personal or health problems that may interfere with academic performance should, as early as possible and **before** the end-of-unit examination, identify these problems to the Assistant Dean or Director of Student Affairs. If an illness is involved, documentation by a physician may be required. Deferrals based on illness or personal difficulties require the support of the Student Affairs Office. Students must submit an Examination Deferral Request Form, which can be found on UGME's Policy page. Further instructions on how to complete and submit this form are detailed within the form itself. Note that any contact with the Student Affairs Office is confidential, therefore contact with that office is not considered to be official notification.

If exam deferrals are part of an accommodation plan that is approved by the Student Accessibility Centre, a meeting with Student Affairs is still required to discuss the deferral request. Medical documentation of an acute exacerbation of a chronic illness may still be required for the deferral to be supported.

The request must be submitted prior to the commencement of the end-of-unit assessment. The Associate Dean UGME or DMNB may allow a deferral at any time before the examination in the event of unforeseen circumstances. The Progress Committee will be informed of all deferrals granted to students.

All deferred examinations will be written within a defined period at the end of the academic year as posted by UGME at the beginning of the academic year.

In determining the deferred examination format, the Unit Head or Clerkship Director will, in consultation with the Committee on the Assessment of Student Performance (CASP) and/or Associate Dean UGME or DMNB:

1. Administer a different exam, based on the same objectives; or
2. Use another method to assess the student.

A student who fails a deferred examination will be required to complete a supplemental assessment at the end of the academic year. Deferral dates will be posted by UGME at the beginning of the academic year and specific date/time will be provided to the student after the results of the deferred exams are known. Normally, each summative examination may be deferred only once. Students, except those in a repeat year, may defer only one examination in a single academic year. In exceptional circumstances, consideration may be given to deferral of more than one written examination or allowing a student in a repeat year to defer one summative assessment.

1.4.4. SUPPLEMENTAL EXAMINATIONS

If a student fails a summative assessment, they must meet with the Associate Dean UGME or DMNB to review any concerns. They are eligible to take a supplemental examination. A Med 1, 2 or 3 student may fail only a maximum of two summative examinations in an academic year (including written and OSCE). If a student fails more than this, they are in repeat status as outlined in the UGME Progress Regulations.

Successful completion of the supplemental examination will allow the student to be promoted to the next year. A student who fails the supplemental examination is eligible to apply to repeat the year as outlined in the Progress, Promotion and Appeal Regulations.

1.4.5. APPEALING EXAMINATION PROCESS

Should a minimum of 67% of students who wrote a particular examination believe the examination process (not content) was unfair, a written submission may be made to the Examination Review Committee within 5 working days of the writing of the examination. All students supporting the submission must sign the written submission. The Examination Review Committee will review the submission and will make recommendations to the Progress Committee. The subsequent decision of the Progress Committee is final.

1.4.6. ACCOMMODATIONS

Students requiring accommodations for certain needs, as outlined in Dalhousie's Student Accommodation Policy, must arrange this in advance of sitting an examination. They must seek the assistance of the Student Affairs office.

1.5. REMEDIATION

The Associate Dean UGME or DMNB can identify students at risk for poor performance who will be required to complete remediation. Examples of circumstances where remediation will be required are set out in section 3.1 of the Progress, Promotion, and Appeal Regulations. How the remediation plan will be developed is outlined in section 3.2 of the Progress, Promotion, and Appeal Regulations.

1.6. LEAVES OF ABSENCE

Students on any leave of absence must be reviewed by the Progress Committee prior to re-entering the undergraduate medical program. If deemed necessary by the Associate Dean UGME or DMNB, they must come before the Progress Committee in person. They must provide documentation of their readiness to return and the supports they have in place.

1.6.1. LEAVE AND TIME OFF FAQ

[UGME Leave and Time Off FAQ_Sept2024_FINAL.pdf \(dal.ca\)](#)

1.7. EXAMINATION PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULED EXAMINATIONS

1.7.1 NOTIFICATION

The Undergraduate Associate Dean or Designate will determine if an exam requires rescheduling, which may occur before or after the official exam start time. Notifications

for cancellations will be communicated via DalMedix. The site-specific Associate Deans or Designate will make the final decision on rescheduling, considering factors such as the length of the interruption, its severity, and how many students have completed the exam. This decision will be made in consultation with site-specific managers, the Assessment Specialist, Med IT, and Invigilators. Once a rescheduling decision is made, site-specific managers will inform relevant staff, including Coordinators, Med IT, and the Assessment Specialist, via email. Class representatives may also share rescheduling information through their communication channels. Coordinators will notify affected students via DalMedix within two business days, and when rescheduling details are confirmed, they will be posted in One45 and shared through DalMedix. Coordinators or managers will document the changes in One45 and DalMedix. Additionally, Coordinators will email students writing at the Accommodation Centre and inform the Centre of the new exam schedule. During exams, communication between sites is managed through MS Teams channels.

1.7.2 PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULING BEFORE THE START OF AN EXAMINATION

If a pre-planned closure occurs on a written or lab exam day at one campus, exams must be rescheduled for all campuses. However, if an OSCE exam is rescheduled at one site, exams may proceed at the other sites. Coordinators at the affected site(s) will reschedule exams as soon as possible, taking into account room availability, invigilators, conflicts with other events, and student availability.

1.7.3 GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR EXAMINATION INTERRUPTIONS

In the event of an unplanned examination interruption, the lead invigilator, in coordination with MedIT and the site-specific manager, will manage the immediate response. The site-specific Associate Dean or designate will be promptly informed of the disruption by the on-duty manager, prioritizing safety over timeliness. Invigilators at the affected site will instruct students to temporarily cease writing and hide their laptop screens, while students at unaffected sites may continue their exams. Students are expected to adhere to in-person or remote exam guidelines throughout the disruption.

Students will be reassured that they will not be penalized for lost time during the disruption. Invigilators will document key details, including the nature and timing of the interruption and the number of students who have completed the exam, and they will assist in communication with the students. These details will be reported to the Managers and the Assessment Specialist promptly. Invigilation staff will also inform students about the rescheduling policy and the next steps to follow.

1.7.4 PROCEDURES FOR TEMPORARY INTERRUPTIONS

In the case of a temporary interruption lasting less than 30 minutes, efforts will be made to resolve the issue and resume the exam promptly. Invigilators will ensure that all students have the same amount of time to complete the exam, with the duration of the interruption added to the remaining exam time.

1.7.5 PROCEDURES FOR INTERRUPTIONS EXCEEDING 30 MINUTES

If an interruption exceeds 30 minutes and resuming the exam is not feasible, the site-specific Associate Dean or Designate will determine if the exam should be discontinued and rescheduled. For written and laboratory exams, affected students must submit their results to the ExamSoft portal (green screen) before leaving the exam room. Students can either accept their existing results or choose to retake the entire exam. Those opting for a retake will have their initial results deleted, and

a new exam will be issued for the rescheduled date. Invigilators will document individual student decisions within two business days. For written and lab exams, an internet connection is required to upload results to the ExamSoft portal, and technical support will assist any student unable to upload their results. During OSCE exams, students may leave the room and complete unfinished stations at a later time.

In the event of a major emergency that endangers student safety, immediate action will be taken, following the Dalhousie Crisis Master Plan. If evacuation is necessary, students will be instructed to leave their computers and belongings at their workstations and exit the room. Exams disrupted by a significant emergency will be rescheduled in accordance with the relevant policy.

1.7.6 POST EXAM PROCEDURES FOR RESCHEDULED EXAMINATIONS

i. Notifications

The unit-specific coordinator will reschedule exams as soon as possible, considering factors such as student, invigilator, and facility availability. Communication with students regarding rescheduled exams is the responsibility of the unit-specific coordinator.

ii. Scoring & Reporting

When an interruption prevents students from completing their examination as a complete cohort (all students), the Associate Deans can decide whether to permit scoring and grade release. In these cases, grading can proceed as long as 90% of the sample data is collected. In circumstances where the outstanding examination results exceed ten percent of the cohort sample, the grading and scoring of results must be delayed until all students can complete the exam.

iii. Student Well-Being & Concerns

Any student experiencing stress and frustration due to unplanned disruptions will receive additional support from Student Affairs. Student concerns about the disruption may be communicated to Student Affairs via [insert contact details] or the campus-specific Associate Deans.

2. YEAR-SPECIFIC PROCEDURES

2.1. SKILLED CLINICIAN OSCE EXAMINATIONS

Skilled Clinician is a longitudinal unit extending over the four years that provides students with the skills of professionalism, communication, history taking and physical examinations. Students are assessed by their tutors, peers and in an end of year OSCE examination. All four OSCE examinations are summative. The pass mark is determined using a method of standard setting called the Borderline Linear Regression method. For more information, please see the BLR document on the Brightspace Assessment page.

2.2. MED 1 AND 2

2.2.1. MED 1 AND 2 SUMMATIVE END-OF-UNIT EXAMINATIONS

The end-of-unit summative examinations test knowledge, comprehension, and application. As students progress through the four years, there is increasing application of knowledge. A range of questions will be used; some of which are intended to be more challenging, and which we know not all students will get correct.

Students will receive feedback on their performance in several ways. End-of-unit marks will be

presented in an individualized report that depicts one's performance on the entire examination, the components (raw score and class average), and one's standardized scores. The latter depicts the scores with a mean of 80 and a standard deviation of 8. Additionally, for the computer-based multiple-choice examinations using ExamSoft, students will receive the titles of the questions for which they were not successful. Success on an examination will be determined by a standardized score of 65 or higher. If a student's performance is below this standard and they are eligible, the student must write a supplemental examination, and if they fail this, they are in repeat status as outlined in the Progress, Promotion and Appeal Regulations.

2.3. MED 3

2.3.1. FORMATIVE END-OF-UNIT EXAMINATIONS

The end-of-unit Formative examinations test knowledge, comprehension, and application. As students progress through the four years, there is increasing application of knowledge. A range of questions will be used some of which are intended to be more challenging, and which we know not all students will get correct.

Students will receive feedback on their performance in several ways. End-of-unit marks will be presented in an individualized report that depicts the performance on the entire examination, the components (raw score and class average), and one's standardized scores. The latter depicts the scores with a mean of 80 and a standard deviation of 8. Additionally, for the computer-based multiple-choice examinations using ExamSoft, students will receive the titles of the questions for which they were not successful. Success on an examination will be determined by a standardized score of 65 or higher. If student performance is below this standard, they are required to sit a supplemental examination, and if they fail this they would be in repeat status as outlined in the UGME Progress Regulations.

2.3.2 COMPREHENSIVE CLERKSHIP EXAMINATION

The Comprehensive Clerkship Examination is the final written summative examination in Clerkship. Students must pass the examination to graduate. Success on the examination will be determined by a standardized score of 65 or higher. Results will be reviewed by the Progress Committee and remediation for those students who are unsuccessful will be determined based on identified strengths and weaknesses.

2.3.3 ITERs IN MED 3

Throughout the Med 3 year, students receive formative and summative in-training evaluation reports (ITERs) for each clinical educational experience. In addition to the summative written examination, students must pass the summative ITER for each clinical educational experience to pass. If remediation is required, the students must successfully complete the remediation to pass the clinical educational experience. If the student is not successful in completing the remediation, they will be deemed to have failed the clinical educational experience and must meet with the Progress Committee about further assistance and promotion.

2.4. Med 4

2.4.1. ELECTIVES

Students in the Med 4 year participate in a variety of electives reflecting their chosen area(s) of interest. Students are responsible for ensuring their preceptors have access to an In-Training Evaluation Report (ITER) for completion at the end of every elective. When they start their rotations, they should arrange a meeting with their preceptor to review their assessment before leaving the rotation. If the preceptor has any difficulty accessing One45, they can complete a paper ITER. Students must pass all ITERs to graduate. Any issues identified in knowledge,

professionalism or skills must be successfully remediated to graduate as outlined in the Progress, Promotion, and Appeal Regulations.

3. CONTACTS

If there are any questions about the content of this document, please contact the appropriate person from the list below:

Associate Dean, UGME
Dr. Evelyn Sutton
evelyn.sutton@dal.ca

Associate Dean, DMNB
Dr. Julie Copeland
Julie.copeland@dal.ca

Chair, Progress Committee
Dr. Sylvie Ouellette
Dr.sylvie.ouellette@horizonnb.ca

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Dr. Keith W. Wilson
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Assessment Specialist, UGME
Natalie Lutwick, PhD
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Manager, Academic Progress, UGME
Kelly Barnes
progress@dal.ca

Operations Manager, DMNB
Melissa Budd
mbudd@dal.ca

Guidelines for Writing Exams in-person

- To keep noise to a minimum please limit what you bring into the exam room and do not leave bags or personal items at the front of the room.

Be prepared for your exam, bring materials you will need, such as:

- A fully charged laptop meeting minimum system requirements (ipads are not permitted)
- As system requirements change you will be notified by coordinators.
- If you need a loner laptop, please notify MedIT (1 week notice is required)
- Take a mock exam in the days leading up to the exam and after you have updated your computer's system requirements (if this is necessary you will be notified by your coordinators).
- A photo identification. Driver's license or equivalent (i.e. Dalhousie student card)
- Fluids – water is permitted, it's important to hydrate.
- Food is **not** permitted unless an accommodation is in place.
- Ear plugs and noise-cancelling headphones are permitted (please notify the lead invigilator that you will be using ear plugs when you provide your identification at entry)
- Headphones and ear buds are **not permitted**.
- Remove smartwatches, and other wearable technology.
- Dress appropriately, if wearing a hooded sweatshirt please keep the hood down.
- Scrap paper will be provided and must be returned to the invigilators at the end of the examination.
- Ensure your cellphone is set to silent.

Make sure you know what behaviours expected and permitted:

- Talking out loud is not permitted at any time during the examination.
- Washroom breaks are permitted, but please keep them to a minimum. There will be no bathroom breaks permitted for the first 30 minutes of the exam and during the final 30 minutes of the exam.
- If you need to use the washroom, please ensure to hide your laptop screen under the Exam Controls feature > **hide** > in the Examplify toolkit.
- Refer to your examination instructions provided by the lead Invigilator or available in the Examplify tool kit for further information.
- When in doubt, ask your Coordinator or the lead invigilator.

Do not commit an academic offence:

- Do not consult with classmates or any others on the exam.
- Do not share answers.
- Do not copy or distribute the questions after the exam is finished – this includes taking screenshots.

Prior to and during the exam be sure to:

- Close and save any open documents and close down any running programs.
- Disable antivirus software, if applicable.
- Keep your Exemplify program open and operating until you receive the notice that you have successfully uploaded all of your exam files (green screen)
- Check your work for mistakes, once you submit your exam to the portal, you cannot go back.
- You may set an internal alarm in the Exemplify toolkit to remind you when you are nearing the end of the exam time. Invigilators will track the time at intervals during the exam period.
- Keep your screen open at all times during the exam. Please do not close your computer screen at any time during the examination. If you need to leave your laptop unattended for any reason please hide your screen under exam controls > **hide**.

Guidelines for Taking Remote Exams in Exemplify

Moving to remote examinations can be a challenge for many students. We encourage you to prepare for your remote exams as if you were writing in-person. Please review the following guidelines to assist you during the exam period.

Choose a space that limits/removes all interruptions and distractions:

- Inform your family, children, roommates, when you will be writing and your need to concentrate. You will need noise to be kept to a minimum.
- Put your phone on silent. Remove it from your writing location but keep it accessible in case you need to contact technical or invigilator support.
- Choose a well-lit room, away from windows or other bright light sources. Too much or too little light can cause issues with your exam recording.
- If you can lock your room this will help prevent unwanted interruptions while you are writing your exam.

Be prepared for your exam, bring materials you will need, such as:

- Computer and power cord
- Access to reliable internet and power
- Fluids – water is permitted it's important to hydrate. Food is **not** permitted unless medically necessary.
- Ear plugs and noise cancelling headphones are permitted. **Please demonstrate these to the camera when you see your first exam question.**
- Headphones and ear buds are **not permitted**
- Remove smartwatches, and other wearable technology
- Dress appropriately; if wearing a hooded sweatshirt please keep the hood down
- COVID Masks are **not** permitted, the artificial intelligence that powers the monitoring system needs to be able to see your entire face.
- Please ensure that you are not connected to any external (dual) monitors. Your computer should have access to only 1 screen monitor.
- If using MS Surface Pro, disable rear-facing cameras.

Make sure you know what resources, tools and behaviours **Are and Are Not** expected and permitted:

- Talking out loud is not permitted at any time during the examination.
- Just a reminder that there will be **no scrap paper** allowed for remotely proctored exams; please use the notes and calculator tools available in the Exemplify program.
- Washroom breaks are permitted, but please keep to a minimum. There will be **no bathroom breaks permitted for the first 30 minutes of the exam.**
- Refer to your examination instructions provided by the lead Invigilator or available in the Exemplify tool kit for further information
- When in doubt, ask your Coordinators

Do not commit an academic offence:

- Do not consult with classmates or any others on the exam
- Do not share answers
- Do not copy or distribute the questions after the exam is finished – this includes taking screen shots

Be sure to:

- Keep your Exemplify program open and operating until you receive the notice that you have successfully uploaded all of your exam files.
- Check your work for mistakes, once you submit your exam to the portal, you cannot go back.
- Set an internal alarm in the Exemplify toolkit to remind you when you are nearing the end of the exam time. Students are expected to monitor their own time throughout the examination.
- Keep your screen open at all times during the exam. Please do not close your computer screen at any time during the examination.
- Remain in view of your video camera at all times (bathroom exception). If you are having difficulty with your video monitoring, contact Technical Support.
- Click “submit” and keep a record of submission.
- Keep your phone on after the exam for 2 hours, in the event you need to be contacted by Invigilator or Technical Support Specialist.

If you have technological problems, document and report any issues immediately and inform technical support at the numbers provided to you.