

EXAMINATION ATTENDANTS - GRADE 1

Note/Glossary:

- *Attendants* – refers to 'Examination Attendants'
- *UAP* – refers to 'Unacceptable Academic Practice'
- *Superintendent* – refers to University Superintendent of Examinations
- *Assistant Superintendent* – refers to University Assistant Superintendent of Examinations

JOB DESCRIPTION - EXAMINATION ATTENDANTS

During university examinations in the main examination venues, Examination Attendants are responsible for the supervision of the areas external to the examination halls and also certain aspects of the half-daily preparation and running of the examination halls. A range of duties are involved associated with the general conduct of the examinations and with specific aspects of the examination processes.

Attendants should have a good general education, at least to 'O' level. Previous work experience in Aberystwyth University's House Services department would be regarded as an advantage, but is not essential. Pastoral aspects are crucial, so Attendants require an assured but sympathetic manner in dealing with students under stress.

Induction for Attendants will be managed by the Superintendent of Examinations, though numbers of staff with this role are small, so new appointees are normally dealt with on a one-to-one basis. Existing Attendants will be routinely advised of any significant changes in examination procedures and relevant University Regulations

All Examination Attendants are responsible ultimately to the University Superintendent of Examinations, but – on a half-daily basis – to the Assistant Superintendent of Examinations in charge of their allocated main examination venue for each morning or afternoon examination session.

In main venues, attendance is required at least 50 minutes in advance of each half-day session, and will end as indicated by the Assistant Superintendent, but in most cases circa one hour after the end of the longest examination in the venue in question. Work timing sheets must be checked and signed each half-day by the relevant Assistant Superintendent. Working times include permitted rest breaks.

GENERAL DUTIES & REQUIREMENTS

Before, during and after each examination, anything that the Superintendent or an Assistant Superintendent requires, but including:

- Prior to each half-day, clearing the general circulation areas outside the venues, updating session-related notices and re-checking toilet facilities.
- Being vigilant at all times. Observing examinees.
- Circulating regularly in the waiting areas. May need to carry out litter-picking to maintain a clean and safe environment.
- Responding to information queries or requests from examinees.
- Reacting to information or administrative requests from the Assistant Superintendent.
- Dealing with pastoral incidents or student support requirements as they arise.
- Dealing with examination-administrative paperwork as required.
- Being part of the examination team which maintains all rules and prohibitions relating to books, papers, materials or equipment including those specified in examination paper rubrics. This includes personal dictionaries and all forms of small electronic device, unpermitted calculators, mobile telephones, smart watches and Bluetooth accessories.

- Being aware of all possibilities relating to Unacceptable Academic Practice. Taking action as appropriate and as instructed. Protecting evidence, completing relevant reports and providing other documentation. The Sports Cage offers particular advantages for Attendants in observing the incidence of possible cases of Unacceptable Academic Practice in the main hall.
- Monitoring examinee visits to toilets, liaising with University Invigilators and the Assistant Superintendent as required.
- Monitoring permitted food and drink, removing items as necessary.
- Always being aware of what is happening with and near to other examination team colleagues, so as to be able to render assistance quickly.
- Par excellence, examination administration in the venues requires good teamwork. All members of the examination team must contribute to a smoothly-operating, minimum-problem process. Working together, and with University Invigilators, under the instructions of the Assistant Superintendent, to achieve all necessary elements in the total process and targets.
- Being flexible and prepared to deal with one-off situations. Providing cover for sick or absent colleagues and being prepared to move venue if so requested.
- May be asked to assist with both the initial setting up of examination rooms by House Services, including moving items of furniture, and with clearing up the same items after the final day of examinations.

ROLES IMMEDIATELY BEFORE DAILY EXAMINATIONS

- On arrival, prior to the half-day session, laying out any further required examination resources.
- Dealing with individual student anxieties in the waiting area outside examinations, as required, if necessary involving other examination staff including the Assistant Superintendent. Offering advice as appropriate.
- Monitoring students making their way towards the examination hall to ensure that they understand, appreciate and are observing the examination rules, including those in relation to allowed 'materials' and possibly to 'Unacceptable Academic Practice'. If UAP, quickly involving more senior and experienced examination staff.
- Together with the University Invigilators, carefully observing students entering examinations and removing from them unpermitted clothing, bags, ancillary equipment and any other illegal material.

ROLES DURING DAILY EXAMINATIONS

- Monitoring all activity and movements in the external circulation and waiting areas. Being vigilant at all times. Observing and monitoring examinee activities, particularly in relation to toilet visits.
- Dealing initially with all external communications from individuals and departments. Reacting to related information or administrative requests from the Assistant Superintendent.
- Attendants are conscious of the stress associated with the examination environment, and will look to deal initially with associated pastoral incidents or student support requirements as they arise.
- Ensuring that students follow university rules on times of arrival and departure from the examination venue, particularly in relation to late arrival and early departure. Sometimes, under cover of a toilet visit, students will seek to evade early departure rules.
- Being aware of all possibilities relating to Unacceptable Academic Practice. Taking action as appropriate and as instructed by the Superintendent, but normally involving more senior examination staff. Protecting evidence, completing relevant reports and providing other documentation as requested. Observations from the balcony in the Sports Cage offer a

particular opportunity for Attendants in observing the incidence of possible cases of UAP in that main hall.

- Being responsible for students taken out of the main hall for whatever pastoral reasons, including being responsible for students admitted to the Sick Bays provided in all venues.
- Completing 'Incident Reports' on any relevant untoward matters, as prescribed.
- Prevent and detect fire in university examination buildings, to include investigating alarm activations. Monitoring and ensuring that Fire and Fire Alarm Regulations are followed. Working co-operatively with examination team colleagues as necessary.
- In addition, Attendants may from-time-to-time need to:
 - Initially deal with late-comers
 - Ensure quietness and good order in the circulation area outside the examination hall
 - Check early leavers who appear to be departing overly-rapidly
 - Prevent instances of theft carried out by mainly early-departing examinees

ROLES AFTER THE DAILY EXAMINATIONS

- Opening external doors at the end and observing students leaving. Assisting fellow examination team members in ensuring that items (including scripts) are not taken illegally out of the examination hall.
- Clearing up the examination hall and facilitating preparation for the next half-day session.
- Laying out required examination resources for the next half-day session – answer books, graph paper, attendance slips, etc.

OTHER DUTIES

Under the direction of the Superintendent of Examinations, assisting to:

- Comply with relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, including but not limited to:
 - (i) Fire Safety. Attendants are the designated 'first response' staff in examination venues, in relation to fire alarms and possible evacuation of the venue (see next point)
 - (ii) Health and Safety. Will actively monitor possible issues and report to the Superintendent
 - (iii) Manual handling
 - (iv) Data Protection
- Exceptionally, in the event of a need to consider emergency evacuation of the examination hall (most likely when a fire alarm sounds), be aware of the delayed-response protocol to be observed and co-operating with colleagues in the examination team in ensuring that this happens. The Superintendent will have ensured that all Invigilators are reminded of the protocol previously dealt with during induction. Understanding the importance of initially retaining all students in the examination hall, of keeping them calm for the specified time, and of ensuring an ordered and unhurried evacuation, as instructed.
- Clean designated areas to include communal and carry out litter picking to maintain a clean and safe environment.
- Report faulty or damaged equipment and potential hazards to the Superintendent or their nominee.
- Maintain supplies of specified examination resources

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

Examination Attendants should be:

- Hopefully, experienced in other areas of AU House Services. This is regarded as a bonus, but is not essential.
- Fully committed to working in a front line service role, and being part of a team.
- People who exude confidence and assurance, but who understand when to seek guidance from more senior or experienced examination staff.
- Of a friendly, sympathetic and helpful disposition.
- People with evident enthusiasm and the ability to get on with other people of all ages and experience, both colleagues and examination candidates.
- Able to deal with unexpected situations in an appropriate and unflustered fashion.
- People who are flexible, both in terms of which part of the overall job role that they will undertake, and occasionally where they might be asked to work. This includes flexibility in relation to lunchtime periods and to unanticipated departures from expected working hours.
- An ability to communicate in both Welsh and English is desirable for this post, continuing the University's commitment to deliverance of a bilingual service to our customers.

TRAINING

- New appointees must attend an induction session run by the Superintendent of Examinations.
- Existing Examination Attendants will routinely be advised of any significant changes in examination procedures and relevant University Regulations.

KEY ELEMENTS

1. COMMUNICATIONS

Effective **verbal communication** is an important element in the discharge of this role.

Two types of verbal communication are necessary at the point at which students are entering the examination hall:

- a) Drawing attention of examinees to standard procedures and examination rules. Communication must be clear and emphatic, because people entering examinations are definitely not concentrating on examination procedures, are frequently pre-occupied and often are neither co-operative nor prepared to listen.
- b) More complex aspects, such as the various aspects of Unacceptable Academic Practice, need both to be carefully watched for, and pointed out individually to potential transgressors (which are surprisingly common). This requires sensitivity and always individual treatment, probably taking a student aside, but very much bearing in mind that – while the rules must be enforced and a clear explanation given of the relevant problem – we would not wish to upset the student's equilibrium at such a crucial juncture. This may very well require calling upon more senior examination staff.

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Though Attendants may very well be having to **present written information** to examinees, it will usually be in the form of documents written by the Superintendent or by other departments in the University. Their role is fundamentally not about creating paperwork, but about dealing face-to-face with students.

The main situation in which Invigilators must **communicate in written form** is in reporting Unacceptable Academic Practice. However, it is much more likely that – though possible cases of UAP might be initially observed or uncovered by an Attendant – the Assistant Superintendent at the venue and University Invigilators will be quickly drawn into the resultant action. In certain cases, nevertheless, a clear and unambiguous report on UAP might be provided by an Attendant involved in a case of alleged UAP. Where appropriate, Attendants are asked to make notes at the time and then compose a report, which process requires thoroughness and attention to detail. It must be borne in mind that such reports, while going initially to the Superintendent, will pass on to AQRO and to the academic department involved, and will form a principal line of evidence where cases of UAP are pursued in either a departmental inquiry or through the University's UAP panel. As part of this process, the Superintendent will normally talk with the Attendant(s) involved to elucidate details within such written reports. Such reports are of huge importance to the students involved, as their academic future – and possibly further – might very well be affected by the outcome of a UAP case.

Though occurring less frequently, the Superintendent will also seek a written report from Attendants in three other situations: A) In the very rare cases of complaint by students. B) In equally rare instances of Fire Alarms, Health and Safety accidents or other incidents occurring in the venue. C) Where corroboration of cases of illness and indisposition have occurred.

2. TEAMWORK AND MOTIVATION

Examination operation is certainly one of the situations within the University where teamwork is at its most vital. Though Attendants are not actually in the examination room, they are most certainly part of the examination team, and the successful completion of the aims and objectives for that examination session (AM or PM) depend wholly on all individuals playing their allotted part and on the whole team functioning as a unit. The primacy of teamwork is both emphasised and discussed during induction sessions for new Attendants.

- The objectives for a half-day session will be well understood by some new Attendants, but others may require more detailed instruction.

- Attendants will be well aware of their place in the examination administration and that their efforts are part of meeting the overall objectives laid down by the University and by the Superintendent.
- Members of the small team of Attendants (2 or 3) may well assign particular jobs between themselves without the input of their Assistant Superintendent, realising that time is frequently of the essence, most of all in one of the larger examination venues. This calls on both experience and a recognition that the work is team-related.
- Teamwork is clearly paramount in getting a set of examinations under way, as close as possible to the scheduled start time. There are - on the one hand - many aspects of the total operation to be accomplished simultaneously, but - also - this is the time when a small problem with an individual student can have a negative effect on time-keeping, and must be solved expeditiously without detriment to the rest of the students. This is one of the times to see teamwork at its most effective.
- Notwithstanding the previous point, at no time in the examination session is teamwork more vital than at the end of the half-day session. Once again, there are security operations to be completed in terms of the students exiting the hall, things that must be checked. It must also be understood that the one situation, above all, to be avoided in an examination venue, is a 'lost' script - happily, this happens almost never, but it is down to teamwork and following procedures that such a claim can be made. University Invigilators in particular know this and will collect in and account for all expected scripts meticulously; counting large numbers of scripts, particularly with multiple answer books for one paper, will produce miscounts, a fact which ensures that invigilators take great care and work together at this point in the operation. However, in case of discrepancies, it may be that Attendants will also be required to assist by checking the piles of seemingly-unused answer books just collected in, and by looking through all 'rejected' paperwork, including abandoned question sheets or booklets.
- In the area of Unacceptable Academic Practice, it is always the case that several people need to work together to detect, observe and expose students who are cheating, and then to deal with the situation in the manner laid down by the Superintendent. Particular care has to be taken to ensure that disruption to other students is minimised.

3. LIAISON AND NETWORKING

In the context of examination logistics, liaison with both the Assistant Superintendent and with other members of the invigilation team is a natural and continuous process, throughout the working day. Attendants will be allocated to each of the four main venues, so they are a constant presence in each of those venues, unlike the Invigilators - who daily rotate around the venues. However, the Attendants will function as part of the larger examination team and will soon come to know the personalities and characteristics of the working colleagues with whom they will be liaising.

There is no external liaison or networking considered to be a requirement of the role.

4. SERVICE DELIVERY

The service provided by the examination team, including Attendants, is only broadly understood by people who have not worked in such an environment. Outline details of the post are in the summary job description provided as an introduction to this role profile. This is not, however, service delivery in a situation of minimal initial scrutiny and low pressure - as may perhaps happen in an office environment, centrally or within an academic department - and where deficiencies can be identified and rectified without too much anxiety. Being an Examination Attendant involves service delivery of a very customer-facing nature, sometimes under pressure and always in a very 'charged' environment. Anything untoward is likely to be magnified by the situation, and will almost certainly need to be rectified immediately, with measures probably

needing to be taken to compensate in some way, either to a particular individual or to any other students who might be affected.

The level of readiness is high. During induction, Attendants have it made clear to them that they must be alert and attentive throughout the working day. There is a clear definition of things that might in some way distract them, and which they must never do during the working day. Also that standards of behaviour must never be compromised.

5. DECISION MAKING PROCESSES AND OUTCOMES

Decision-taking for Attendants is within a number of frameworks:

- An established procedure within which they must play a part, as a member of a team. Many such procedures will be directed by the Assistant Superintendent in charge of the relevant examination venue, and there is limited scope for individual decision-taking and initiative. This most obviously occurs prior to and subsequent to each half-day session, when either preparations for the examination are being made or there is a large amount of post-examination work to be completed.
- An Attendant might be required to undertake a number of roles:
 - Outside the examination hall, in the 'waiting area', offering advice and assistance where necessary.
 - In terms of monitoring the entry of candidates into the examination hall, being mindful of the observance of a significant numbers of rules and prohibitions. There is scope for individual ways of dealing with situations that arise, as always when inter-acting with people, in this case students sometimes over-focussed on just themselves and their anxieties and in a very charged environment.
 - In terms of monitoring both examinee visit to the toilets and also early departures from the venue.
- Particularly in the second category immediately above, Attendants may need – on the one hand – to quietly and unobtrusively remind students that they should be either doing something or not doing something, or – on the other hand – violation of a serious University regulation (most notably the Unacceptable Academic Practice Regulation) may require an established way of managing such a situation to be invoked, but nevertheless be handled with reference to the severity of the infraction and also being mindful of the impact on other students.

Decisions may have impacts totally confined to the conduct of the particular examination, and effectively forgotten immediately afterwards. But decisions may have greater ramifications and an impact beyond the examination hall. Two examples would be :

1. The way that an Unacceptable Academic Practice violation is dealt with will have implications for both the handling and possibly the pursuit of the case subsequently. This might potentially contribute to how academic departments and institutes can deal with and prosecute cases of UAP subsequently, both in departmental contexts and also within a University Committee of Inquiry (in the most serious cases). Cases of UAP have to be handled both correctly and considerately, as the possibly exists that later outcomes will affect the student's degree result, their continued study in the University and conceivably their whole life.
2. It is essential that Attendants go about their work correctly and in a sensitive fashion. There is a balance to be struck between examination candidates being aware that they are being monitored, but also on the examination staff as a team operating unobtrusively. Though such situations are not common, the Superintendent very occasionally has to deal with complaints either about examination staff who have not got the balance quite right, or where the process and observance of the 'rules' might have ultimately assumed a greater importance than the fact that this examination matters very much to those being examined.

6. PLANNING AND ORGANISING RESOURCES

In large measure, the planning and organisation of resources is carried out by senior examination staff: The Superintendent is responsible for the macro-organisation of resources, both in the lengthy period leading up to the examinations and – on a daily basis – ensuring that appropriate resources of all types are provided for each of the main venues. The Assistant Superintendents are in continuous control of their own venues, ensuring always that appropriate and sufficient resources are available for the required operations on that day, and disposing those resources around the venue.

However, Attendants do have to plan resources in certain situations:

1. Ensure that the supply of examination resources such as answer books, attendance slips, envelopes, specialist graph paper, and so on, are adequate both on daily basis and over the complete examination period for the venue in question.
2. Organise 'rejected' paperwork for eventual disposal, once it has been decided that no part of that paperwork is required or still needs to be checked for missing scripts, part-scripts, multiple choice booklets or questionnaires.
3. In maintaining the cleanliness and good order of both examination rooms and associated waiting and circulation areas, maintain an adequate supply of rubbish sacks and boxes.

7. INITIATIVE AND PROBLEM SOLVING

While senior examination staff might hope to be able to anticipate all the situations that will arise in all types of examination venue, characteristics which examination staff, including Attendants, must display in abundance are personal initiative and an ability to solve problems as they arise – a natural ability to 'think on one's feet' and to react appropriately. In practice, a sizeable part of the long working day is examination staff waiting for things to happen and then quickly dealing with whatever has occurred.

8. ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH

Difficult to see how this characteristic could relate to the role of an Attendant. The Superintendent alone accumulates statistics, reports them and draws conclusions for the University. There is nothing else in the very dedicated examination process which could remotely require analysis and research.

9. SENSORY AND PHYSICAL DEMANDS

There are indeed quite serious demands made upon all types of examination staff, but it would be difficult to characterise them as 'physical demands', even though long hours spent in an examination venue are very personally testing – more so than anyone who has never experienced such an environment from the administration and invigilation perspectives could imagine. All the more so as the standards now laid down are much more taxing for staff than was ever the case in years gone by.

As indicated, 'Sensory and physical demands' doesn't quite cover the range of activities in and around an examination hall, but neither does the 'Work Environment' where other aspects of the stresses and strains of major University examination venues can be examined. What is crucial is that the demands of the role are recognised wherever they are included in this role profile outline.

10. WORK ENVIRONMENT

Again, this 'characteristic' doesn't quite fit to pressures with which, and the environment within which all examination staff operate, but there is nowhere else to say what needs to be said, so it once again vital that what is written under (9) and (10) is taken on board and included in the role analysis for which this role outline is written.

The examination environment is something quite unlike any other within the University. And yet it is an integral and unavoidable component in what the University does above all else – educates and trains students and awards degrees. In truth it is a part of the teaching process, not just an administrative adjunct. The Attendant role is about people, not things, and people in a very singular environment – the examination venue.

Students in lectures and practicals may be critical and demanding of the staff with whom they come into contact, but they are receptive and wishing to learn. Students in examinations are wholly different creatures, enduring a situation in which they find no pleasure, with a series of human reactions which relate directly to this :

- Examinees are under sometimes severe pressure, and thus almost all get stressed, everything from general unease up to full-on panic. Both Attendants and Invigilators have to deal with these symptoms.
- Examinees are pre-occupied and often self-absorbed, perhaps unsurprisingly, and not in the best frame of mind to listen to what is being said to them, important as this is likely to be.
- They are forgetful, sometimes exhibiting behaviour that they would objectively know to be incorrect or inappropriate, and reacting testily or adversely when this is drawn to their attention.
- Unfortunately, there are some occasions when the 'drawing of their attention' is not in the context of a timely reminder, but when things have gone too far and a University regulation has already been breached. Examination staff find no pleasure in such an avoidable situation and go out of their way to ensure that vital information is communicated repeatedly to students.
- Some students do not 'make mistakes' but perpetrate deliberate cheating or breaking of the University regulation. All examination staff are trained in how to deal with such situations, but they involve difficulty and strong emotions on both sides.

Bearing in mind all the above observations, it would be appropriate to describe the work environment in an examination hall as extremely 'charged', not at all a comfortable set of conditions. But this is the normal working situation for up to 8-9 hours per day for an Examination Attendants. This should be recognised.

11. PASTORAL CARE AND WELFARE

The point has firstly to be made that examination staff in general, including Attendants, are not there primarily to 'police' the examinations, but to facilitate the students being examined attaining the best possible outcomes in relation to their knowledge and their abilities. They all, without exception, recognise the pressures described under (9) and (10) and regard themselves as having the opportunity to help students do their best. Thus, in terms of pastoral care and welfare, they always behave positively and helpfully (even when uncovering Unacceptable Academic Practice). Pastoral care would be regarded as a core element in the job role.

Students may display evidence of pressure and stress either in general situations, such as in the waiting area – the Attendants' domain - or upon entry to the examination room, or in more specific individual manifestations. Not only must they be treated considerately, but may need personal advice or reassurance on particular matters, even when entering the examination hall and undertaking the basic administrative tasks.

Attendants need to quickly recognise when a situation demands something more than being solicitous and helpful to students. In such situations, taking a student to the venue sick bay may be sufficient, but – more extremely – it may be necessary to a) seek out a first-aid qualified staff member , b) phone for an ambulance, or c) arrange for a student to be taken quickly to

hospital, probably by car. On occasions, it will prove desirable to confer with the Student Health Centre. These kinds of response are more likely to be associated with illness or injury, rather than panic or emotional upset.

12. TEAM DEVELOPMENT

The centrality of teamwork by Invigilators is covered in (2). Team development is very different and likely to be the domain of the Superintendent, who will judge whether additional instruction or training in some new or modified element of the examination process is necessary. This may be imparted in written form – which would be routinely the case - or possibly through a course organised by the Superintendent.

13. TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPORT

Attendants obviously do not teach, *per se*, but are indisputably involved with a core part of the teaching process, that of examining our students. And not in a detached way, but very practically and face-to-face. Though all students will have been examined previously at school or sixth-form college, university examinations and the pressures associated with them, can be assessed as being at a whole new level. By guiding and assisting students in a host of small ways, Attendants are indeed contributing to the students' learning processes and hopefully helping them to produce enhanced results.

14. KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

It will probably not be the case that Examination Attendants will have direct personal experience of university examinations, and the job specification does not require this. However, a proportion of the staff in this role have historically been graduates, who – for whatever combination of personal reasons - are not being employed at the level of their academic qualifications. This has proved incidentally to be advantageous, in much the same way as the University asks that ideally applicants for the role of University Invigilator should be graduates.