

Guidelines for students using scribes/amanuensis.

- **How does a scribe differ from a note taker?**

Unlike a note taker in lectures, a scribe will not interpret the information being given. They will write exactly what is dictated to them. This means that the student will need to dictate punctuation and instruct the scribe when to:-

- end a sentence
- use a heading
- use a sub-heading
- end a paragraph

You will also need to speak clearly, and not too quickly. You should check that your scribe is happy with your dictation speed. You may need to pause to think during the exam. This is fine – your scribe will not expect you to be dictating constantly throughout the exam.

The scribe will rely on you for direction as to what to do throughout the exam, and may ask a question to clarify instructions if they are unclear as to what you mean. They will not, however, discuss the question or your answer.

Another name for a scribe is an 'amanuensis'. This term is often used in Study Aids and Strategies Reports or Needs Assessment Reports

- **What should I take into the exam?**

Your scribe will not know exactly what is expected in your subject.

You may also want to take a bottle of water, as you will be using your voice a lot during the exam, and your throat may become dry.

- **Where should I sit?**

You may want to be able to read what your scribe has written at stages during the exam, in which case seating position can be important. If your scribe is left-handed, you should sit to their right. If they are right-handed, you should sit to their left. In this case, you should explain what you are doing and why to your scribe.

If you do not want to read what is being written during the exam, you should make sure you sit in a position where the scribe can hear you clearly.

- **Where will my exam take place?**

You will not sit your exam in the same room as other candidates but be in a room on your own.

- **How many people will be in the examination room?**

There will be two people in the room – you and your scribe. Your scribe will also act as the invigilator and ensure that the University regulations are observed.

- **Can I make rough notes?**

As with any other exam, you are allowed to make rough notes, which must be handed in with your paper. You may want to make the rough notes yourself or you may dictate them to your scribe. In this case, you should explain to your scribe your preferred format for rough notes, for example:-

- if they should use bullet points
- if they should use headings and subheadings

You may find it easier to complete the front sheet of your answer book(s) yourself, however your scribe will do this if it is difficult for you.

- **How should I prepare?**

If you have not used a scribe before, you may find it helpful to practise dictating answers from past exam papers to a friend, family member or onto tape.

You may be required to draw a graph or table during your exam. Think about how you will approach this in your exam. For example, if you want to dictate the graph, think about how you will direct your scribe clearly so that they can draw it correctly. Alternatively, you may decide to draw any graphs or tables yourself.

It is important to bear in mind that your scribe will probably not be a specialist in your subject, and therefore may not know how to spell some of the technical vocabulary used on your course.

This means that your scribe may need to ask you how to spell words during the exam. Think about whether you want them to do this as the need arises, which may interrupt your flow, or whether you want them to guess the spelling of the word and mark it on the paper for you to return to at the end of the exam. You should tell your scribe which method you prefer before the exam.

Your scribe will not be told why you need to use a scribe in your exam. They will therefore not know if you, for example have dyslexia, and will certainly not assume that you have difficulty spelling your course's technical vocabulary.

- **Do I get extra time for using a scribe?**

As it is widely accepted that using a scribe slows down the process of writing, you will be given 15 minutes extra time for every hour of the exam in order to compensate for this disadvantage.

- **What should I do when I have completed the exam?**

When you have completed the exam, you should read through your answers, as in an exam where you have not used a scribe. You should ask your scribe to make any necessary amendments.

If you have asked your scribe to mark spellings of which they are unsure during the exam, you should work through these, providing the correct spelling as necessary.

Summary box:

- **An amanuensis is here to write/type for you in your examination**
- **An amanuensis must write/type exactly what you say**
- **An amanuensis can draw maps, graphs and diagrams, but can only draw exactly what the student tells him/her to draw**
- **If there are communication problems between the amanuensis and the student, which you may feel have affected your performance, you should report this to Student Administration after the exam.**
- **An amanuensis cannot give any help with answers**
- **An amanuensis cannot suggest when an answer is finished**
- **An amanuensis cannot tell you which questions to choose**
- **An amanuensis cannot tell you when to move onto the next question**
- **An amanuensis cannot tell you which questions to do first**
- **An amanuensis can read back what he/she has written/typed, but only if asked by the student**
- **An amanuensis can change what has been written/typed, but only if asked by the student**
- **If the student is allowed rest breaks, the amanuensis cannot write/type in those breaks**

Please feel free to contact the Disability & Dyslexia Services (FW151/ 01784 444634) if you have any questions.