

## HPS Guidelines for Online Open Book Exams 2025

When examinations are conducted online, we recommend that students bear in mind the following guidelines:

1. The marking criteria for open book online examinations remain unchanged. For unseen examinations, examiners are looking for evidence of your understanding of the subject, not, for instance, your skills as a researcher. The same will be the case with open book online examinations. As in unseen examinations, answers should be coherent and relevant to the question, so be wary of working with “prepared material” in open book examinations.
2. The exam needs to be completed in three hours with additional time for students with disabilities who have made the necessary application via College. Unlike in previous years, there is no additional window for the completion of the exam.
3. A word limit will be set at no more than 1500 words per question (the only exception is BBS Minor Paper 45: Philosophy and Ethics of Medicine, where the word limit is 1000). References are included in the word limit.
4. You have access to unlimited texts, notes and internet resources during the examinations, but you may not seek help, verbal or written, from another person. There are no formal requirements to use proper references and compile a bibliography. Assessors will look for the same qualities in an answer as for traditional unseen examinations—which does not usually entail extensive citation. It is however good if you can name authors, titles and years of important primary and secondary sources relevant to the question since this demonstrates good knowledge of the subject.
5. Should you be paraphrasing and especially quoting verbatim from a source, it is however necessary that you cite your sources in order to avoid plagiarism. Please read our [plagiarism guidelines](#). Include clear and consistent references that allow your reader to identify the source. You can use short references for that, e.g. Smith, *Body of the Artisan*, p. 182.

For full information, see our [guidance on referencing](#), but note that you are not expected to strictly follow bibliographic conventions as long as the source can be identified.

6. We do not recommend inclusion of images in the answers since these will need to be explained and discussed and this will subtract from the word count.
7. A good answer addresses the examination question and does not cut-and-paste, repeat or regurgitate material, either from lecture notes, lecture recordings, or from a supervision essay.