Examination Guidance for the Computer Science Tripos

Some tips to help your exams go smoothly.
Produced by Student Admin 2017
Going to the examination

- Identify the location of the exam early
- Take your exam number with you
- Take pens, pencils and possibly coloured pencils, calculator
- Arrive 10 minutes early
- Find the correct desk
- Spend at least 10 minutes at the beginning of the exam reading the paper and choosing questions
When answering questions

Do:

• Write on both sides of the paper.
• Check your handwriting! It is OK to write in any coloured pen or pencil you choose but **YOU** are responsible for making sure your script can be read by the examiners.
• Read the rubric on the front of the paper carefully.
• If you spot an error in the questions, let the examiners know as soon as possible. If the examiner has already left, tell the invigilator.
• Ensure that each question starts on a separate sheet of paper- we allocate different questions to different markers!
• Write the relevant question number on every sheet.
At the end of the exam

• Bundle up your questions separately and attach a blue cover sheet to each question attempted. List every question you have answered on EVERY cover sheet then circle the number of the question attached.
• Don’t put your name on the cover sheet or any scripts since the marking process is anonymous.
• Your candidate number has 4 numbers and a letter.
• Desk number will be on the desk where you are sitting.
• Paper number is the exam paper you are taking.
• The ‘Section’ letter is not required.
• Make sure every piece of paper has the right question number written at the top.
COVER SHEET

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CANDIDATE

CANDIDATE’S EXAMINATION NUMBER
(on desk ticket)

9876A

DESK NUMBER
(on desk ticket)

18

EXAMINATION
(e.g. Tripos and Part)

Computer Science Tripos

Subject/Paper No. and Title

Paper 1

SECTION
(where applicable)
Read carefully any instructions on the question paper.

**Write on both sides of the paper unless there is a different instruction on the question paper.**
Start each answer on a fresh sheet.

Fasten your answers securely together in numerical order with the tag provided, with this cover-sheet on top.

Write your Candidate Number, your Desk Number, the examination, the title of the subject/paper and the numbers of the questions answered in the spaces provided.

Before you leave your desk check through your unused script paper to see if you have left any written answers in amongst the sheets.

Candidates are expected to write legibly; those who do not may find themselves at a grave disadvantage.

It is forbidden to remove any writing-paper, whether written on or not, or blotting paper, from the examination-room.
Miscellaneous

• Wear something comfortable (no formal dress required)
• “comfort stops” are allowed but expect an attendant to escort you
• Leave your mobile phone at home (or risk a fine!)
• Only official calculators are allowed. If in doubt - ask student admin to check yours or they can be purchased from student admin.
• No paper is allowed in or out of the exam room (except the exam paper itself)
• Report any errors on the exam paper to the invigilator as soon as possible
• If you are ill, tell your Tutor as soon as possible
Exam Rubrics

Part IA:
Paper 1 and 2 and 3 will be divided into four sections. Candidates will be expected to answer one question from each of Sections A, B and C and two questions from Section D.

Parts IB and II:
Papers 3 – 9 are not divided into sections. Answer any five questions on each paper.

For further details see:
http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/teaching/exams/formcond.pdf
Your Answers...

• Questions are mostly broken down into labelled sections and your answer should follow that structure, repeating the labels.

• The number of marks allocated to each section of a question indicates the expected effort required to answer it. Although appropriate answer styles vary from question to question, if asked to discuss a topic for five marks, the examiners likely expect that you will make five distinct points, perhaps as separate sentences or list items.

• Both you and the marker will find it helpful if you underline the key phrase of each point when giving a prose or essay style answer.
Read the question carefully...

- Make sure you fully address a question part. For instance, if a question asks for the definition of a term and also asks why it is used, split your answer into two halves.
- Especially watch out for sections of a question that finish by quickly asking about a subsidiary or related point: often candidates carelessly neglect to pick up such extra marks.
Maximise your marks

- Examiners try to keep questions short. Sometimes differing assumptions over what is unsaid will lead to alternative answers. To get full credit, you should just state any reasonable assumptions and answer on that basis. Explicitly stating that you do not know what was implied will receive more credit than giving the impression you did not appreciate the distinction.