

Examination Guidance for the Computer Science Tripos

Some tips to help your exams go smoothly.

Produced by Student Admin 2019

Going to the examination

- Identify the location of the exam early
- Take your exam number with you
- Take pens, pencils and possibly coloured pencils, (approved) calculator
- Arrive 15 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 of the 5 questions 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 (we can figure it out ourselves)
- Make sure every piece of paper has the right question number written at the top

COVER SHEET



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

Candidate Number

2	3	4	5	A
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Desk Number

18

Examination
(e.g. Tripos and Part)

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Subject / Paper Number
and Title

PAPER 1

Section
(where applicable)

B

Questions Attempted

2	3	6	8	10		
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During the examination

- You must not have any electronic device unless indicated on the question paper
- Read carefully the instructions on the question paper
- Ask an invigilator if you need extra paper
- Write legibly

After the examination

- Complete all the sections above
- Number your pages, and fasten them to this cover sheet with the tag provided
- You may take away your question paper, unless instructed otherwise
- You may not take away any stationery

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:

Paper 4 is divided into two sections. You must answer at least one question from Section B. All other papers 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.

Answer 5 questions (only)

- All questions submitted are marked, but only 5 marks per paper will count.
- Which 5 are entirely at the discretion of the examiners. The marks chosen will obey the sectioning rules (ie 1 from section A etc), and will not necessarily be the highest marks. It is the opinion of the examiners that you are better off spending any extra time you feel you might have by attempting to improve your 5 answers than by starting and submitting an extra question.
- If you do answer more than 5 questions examiners will take the sectioning rules into account when deciding which marks to discard.