

Revised Exam Question Rubric

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Background

Some of our Honours and MSc exams have the rubric: **Answer QUESTION 1 and one other question. Question 1 is COMPULSORY..**

I have heard colleagues say that a few students answer multiple questions, in the hope for better scores. Also I hear that we have been marking all answered questions and recording the best score.

Taking the best of the scores disadvantages students who followed the instructions. It also creates more marking work for us. There is also the risk that a student might argue (unsuccessfully) for extra marks, which wastes more time.

At the moment there are apparently a few instances of this behaviour each year, but there is a risk that more students will answer extra questions if the story gets out.

I think that we should tighten the rubric to prevent this, and to also give a clear rule for markers if a student does answer extra questions.

Proposal

Change the rubric to state:

Answer QUESTION 1 and one other question. Question 1 is COMPULSORY. If you answer more than one of the other questions, cross out all except the one that you want marked. If more than one of the other questions remains, only the first answer will be marked.

If there are only 3 questions (the most common case), then this can be simplified to:

Answer QUESTION 1 and either QUESTION 2 or QUESTION 3. Question 1 is COMPULSORY. If you answer both QUESTION 2 and QUESTION 3, cross out the one that you do NOT want marked. If both QUESTION 2 and QUESTION 3 remain, only QUESTION 2 will be marked.