Scanning and submitting handwritten (e.g. equations) examination answers
Frequently Asked (and Anticipated) Questions

How can I scan and upload my answers to Blackboard?

Your lecturer may have provided you with information on how to do this. It can be done using a number of possible apps on your phone. One such is Microsoft's Office Lens and this can also connect to your OneDrive account (use your university Office365/email account for this). You can use this to scan multiple pages into one PDF file. This file can be submitted using the Blackboard Student app, or transferred from your phone to your computer and submitted into Blackboard.

Do students have to only use Microsoft Office Lens to scan their answers?

No. We simply suggest this as a freely available app which runs on most phones, which nicely integrates with OneDrive and has a number of powerful features for handling documents. There are other apps available (such as Adobe Scan), and indeed some of the scanning features are now embedded in the core functionality of iOS and newer versions of Android. For iOS13, for example, this is how you can use the Files app The key point is to find something which works and produces legible, decent quality final scanned images, and combines them into a single PDF (preferred file type) for upload/submission.

I know a better way of scanning documents onto my phone. Can I use it?

Yes. See above. Make sure the quality is good, the images clear, properly arranged, and with all the pages scanned!

How good does the scan have to be?

Clear enough to be legible so that your lecturer can mark it as an exam answer-book. Take care that you don't crop off sections, have poor illumination, or miss out pages. The scan does not have to be at the highest resolution settings of your phone's camera (some newer ones have large image sizes) but it must be properly legible and clear. It is also a good idea to number each of your pages, so that when you scan them you can check they are in the right order, and this will help the person marking the paper.

It is your responsibility to ensure that whatever you submit is legible and is complete.

Some suggestions on quality of the scans from a lecturer are here.

I am having problems saving to OneDrive on my phone. What can I do?

This might be because you haven't installed or set up OneDrive properly on your phone. Another possibility is that you have set up a new personal OneDrive account and are using that instead of the one that is provided to you by the University (technically this is 'OneDrive for Business'). But don't worry, there are lots of options for transferring the scanned file. You *can save the scan as a PDF on your phone* and then upload that separately to your computer (via Bluetooth, USB, wifi, other tools), or via the Blackboard app (see below), or via email if necessary either to yourself and then upload that to Blackboard, or to the lecturer (your lecturer will have given you information regarding that possibility, if you need to use it).

I know a better way of transferring my scanned file onto my computer to upload to Blackboard. Can I use that?

Yes. Provided, of course, that you know what you are doing and are sure that it works properly. All that matters is that you can submit a properly scanned copy of your answers to Blackboard, and the exact route you take to do this doesn't matter, provided it works and does not introduce additional complexity/stress for you.

Can I upload the scanned file from my phone using the Blackboard App?

Yes. Provided that you can correctly find the Assignment link on the App to this specific exam, and you know how to find the scanned file on your phone's storage, then this can be a simple method. However, if you are not sure about this or can't get the App running properly on your phone, then please try to upload the file to your computer (or cloud storage such as OneDrive) and submit through Blackboard in the normal way. Your lecturer will have given you an option if you have any problems submitting (most likely asking you to send a copy by email to a specific address).

When I scan my papers the file size ends up being really large and it is taking ages to transfer. Can I change the file size?

Sometimes this can happen if you have a really excellent camera on your phone and it is trying to take pictures at its full resolution. This might be far better quality that is needed just for a simple document scan for an exam (you only need it to be legible and clear, and probably not in full colour either!). If you are using Office Lens on an Android phone when you start it up you can find an option to change the resolution and you can simply reduce this. Doing so might make things look less detailed, however, and don't reduce it to a level in which it is difficult to read your writing!! For the iPhone this option isn't present in Office Lens but you can use the built-in scanner option in the Files app and it tends to save PDFs at smaller file sizes overall. *There are also a number of websites and tools online that can compress PDFs. Many of these are free and work well, but be wary of those that ask for credit cards to sign up for a free trial!*

How can I practice and try out this process in advance of the exam?

Your lecturer may well have organised some 'trial runs' of this process and you should take part in these to get feedback/support targeted to the particular needs of that module/course. There is also a space in Blackboard which has been set up for students to practice uploads. You can search on Blackboard for a module called *Scan and Upload Test Module* then click on 'self-enrol' and you can use that to test out your uploads. It won't give you feedback on the quality of your scan, but it will let you try out the complete process and see that it can work. So please try it out, going through each of the steps you need to scan, transfer, upload, and submit. Do this before your exams to make sure you are familiar with the process for when you have to do it in your actual exam module.

If I have a desktop scanner (or one built in to my printer) can I use that instead of my phone?

Of course. It doesn't matter as long as your scans are clear, legible and saved as a single (multi-page) document (usually PDF).