



College Collections

A guidance note for Undergraduates and Tutors

1. Introduction

College Collections are learning opportunities. They provide an opportunity for students to draw together the material they have learnt while studying the topic(s) they are taking Collections in. They also provide students with invaluable practice in working under examination conditions.

Collections need to be treated seriously and students are expected to prepare thoroughly for them. However they are not University exams, and do not contribute to a student's degree result. In most cases, if Collections do not go well there will be feedback and time to help students make any improvements necessary.

2. Timing

College Collections are held at the beginning of every term on Thursday and Friday of Week 0. Students are therefore required by the *Student Regulations* (section 7) to be back in residence in Oxford no later than 5.00pm on Wednesday of Week 0 each term.

Students are expected to sit College Collections at the times set by the College Office and their tutors. Where a student will be or has been prevented by illness or other urgent cause from doing so, they should inform their Organising Tutor (and the College Office) in advance or failing that as soon as it is practical to do so.

3. Frequency

Students should expect to sit a Collection at the beginning of each term for each subject that they studied the preceding term unless they took University examinations) the preceding term or they have been informed otherwise by their Organising Tutor(s).

4. Timetabling

Timetables giving details of the Collections set for each student will be made available by the College Office at least one week prior to the Collections. In practice, a draft timetable is released several weeks earlier in order for students to check what Collections they are expected to sit.

5. Format and Setting

The form of collection papers is for the tutor setting them to decide. Collection papers may be specially written or a past University exam paper may be used.

Students should expect to be set questions which diligent study the previous term combined with an appropriate level of vacation work should enable them to answer and which will help prepare them for their University examinations on the work concerned.

Collections will be offered in different modes, mirroring as closely as possible the format of the relevant University examination. The different modes of Collections available currently are:

- a. In-person handwritten
- b. In-person typed
- c. Online open-book (typed)

6. Conduct during Collections

Collections are an integral and serious part of the College's academic life. Students are expected to demonstrate the same high standards of general behavior as are expected during University examinations. Failure to meet such standards (including any cheating, collusion or engagement in any other form of academic dishonesty) is a breach of both the College's *Student Regulations* (section 14) and the *Academic Expectations and Disciplinary Procedures*.

While there are occasions (particularly for in-person typed collections and online open-book collections) where the College cannot absolutely ensure students' academic honesty, to act in any other way would be – in the long term – against a student's own best interests because they are depriving themselves of examination practice and accurate evaluation of their performance.

In-person collections will be invigilated and gowns (but not sub fusc) should be worn during collections, as stated in the *Student Regulations* (section 18). Students are expected to attend in-person collections in good time (arriving at least 5 minutes early), with appropriate resources (but no other materials) and to behave throughout their Collections in ways which do not disturb other students.

7. Examination adjustments

Insofar as it is possible, a student's examination adjustments, where already agreed by the University, will be applied for Collections. For example, students with confirmed amounts of extra writing time or permission to type papers which would otherwise be handwritten will have those adjustments in place for Collections.

8. Standards

Collections are a preparation for University examinations and consequently the standards of performance that students are expected to achieve (at least a 2i) or obliged to achieve (at least a 2ii) by the College's *Academic Expectations and Disciplinary Procedures* are the same as the College expects for University examinations. If a tutor decides to require a different standard of performance it must be communicated to students in advance of the Collection concerned.

9. Marking

Unless otherwise specified by the College's *Academic Expectations and Disciplinary Procedures*, collection papers will normally be single-marked by the tutor setting them.

Tutors are expected to:

- a. return marked collection papers to students at least by the end of 4th week and preferably by the end of 3rd week of the term in which the collections are taken.
- b. provide a reasonable and sufficient level of feedback to enable students to understand the level of their achievement and how it might be improved.

10. Links with the College's *Academic Expectations and Disciplinary Procedure (AEDP)*

A poor collection mark alone – where the reason for the underperformance and how to remedy it was known and understood by both student and tutor – would not *normally* generate a First Formal Warning under the *AEDP*. However, following a poor collection mark and the required discussion an Organising Tutor may ask the student to resit a collection paper at a later date.

The *AEDP* makes provision for Special (S.4.4) and Final Collections (S.5.3). Special conditions in the *AEDP* regarding double-marking and markers pertain to Final Collections.

The *AEDP* also mentions collections or written work which may be set prior to return following intermission on medical, welfare or academic grounds. These and any other non-standard collections, for example resit collections set by Tutors, or even Special or Final Collections, may be set at times and under conditions other than those specified in this note and may have different acceptable standards to those of standard Week 0 Collections. Students set such collections would of course be informed of the conditions involved in good time, usually at the time they are set.

11. Collection Prizes

- a) A prize of £30 will be awarded for the equivalent of first-class performance in at least one collection paper and at least 2i standard in any other papers.
- b) Tutors have discretion to decide what constitutes an appropriate standard in any given subject. The scheme may also be used to reward and encourage outstanding performance in other types of academic assessment such as formal presentations. (but only where such assessments are not actual summative University assessments).
- c) Recommendations for prizes should be sent to the College Office by the week 4 deadline, liaising with external tutors as necessary and with the expectation that all collection papers will have been marked before then.
- d) Students can only be awarded one Collection Prize each term.

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