Example guidance notes for students dictating their examination answers to a recording device

These guidance notes are meant for students who are audio recording their examination answers. They include tips on: preparing for the examination; organising and dictating answers; and producing good-quality recordings. In your capacity as invigilator, you may find it useful to know what guidance the University has given students in this area. You might also want to work through these notes as a way of making sure that the examination goes as smoothly as possible.

1. Recording Device

(i) Make sure that you know how to operate your recording device (e.g. digital recorder). This is particularly important if you are borrowing it just for the examination.

(ii) If you aren't used to recording for long periods of time, then it would be worth practising beforehand (with the Specimen Exam Paper, for example).

(iii) The recording device should be checked before the examination to make sure that it is working correctly. Record a few sentences of speech and play them back to yourself to check that (a) the microphone is working and (b) your voice can be heard clearly.

(iv) It is also worth checking that the recording device is working during the examination. As a quick check, at the end of each question, replay your last few sentences. If these have been recorded, then it is safe to assume that the rest of the answer has also been recorded.

(v) If your recording device is battery-operated, make sure that you have a supply of new batteries, just in case the old ones 'run out'.

2. Organising Your Answers

(i) Many examinations include questions which require well-structured essay-type answers. Very few students answer such questions well without any preparation at all. Some find it useful to make notes or essay plans to allow them to decide on the structure and content of their answers. This is just as important for students audio recording their answers.

(ii) It is much better to spend time preparing and structuring your answer than to try to include points in the recording as you think of them. Otherwise, your answers could become very hard to follow and/or could wander off the subject.

(iii) You can make notes either in a separate folder on your recording device or in an answer book. If you use an answer book, make sure you cross through your notes afterwards if you do not want them to be marked, and return all answer books with your recorded answers at the end of the examination.

3. Recording Your Answers

In recording your answers you should pay particular attention to the following points:

(i) At the beginning of each recording, you should record your module code (e.g. E206, M101, etc.), Personal Identifier and Examination Number, but not your name.

(ii) Make sure that your voice can be heard and try not to turn away from the microphone when speaking. Otherwise, the microphone might not pick up your voice.

(iii) Try to speak clearly and not too quickly.

(iv) Try to include remarks ('signposts') to indicate to the transcriber which question (or part of a question you are answering). Comments such as "Question X, Part Y", "End of Question X", etc. are very helpful. It is also helpful to include remarks which indicate major punctuation (full stops, new paragraphs, etc.) and to spell out any special words or names. Please remember that the transcriber is unlikely to know anything about your module.

(v) Try not to leave the recording device running whilst thinking about your answers. A long break in the recording could be misread by the transcriber as the end of your answers.
4. At the End of the Examination

(i) So that we can readily identify all of your work, make sure that all items containing recordings are labelled with your module code, Personal Identifier and Examination Number, but not your name.

(ii) Similarly, make sure that all relevant details are entered correctly on the front of your answer book, and that a note is made of how many recorded items (such as cassettes, folders on the digital recorder) have been used.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Please remember that....

.... because someone else will have to transcribe your answers, it is in your own interests to make sure that your recording is as clear and well-organised as possible.