20b. MARKING OF ILLEGIBLE EXAM SCRIPTS

20b. 1 Prevention:

- Students are encouraged to seek help from Study Advice should they find handwriting long exam answers difficult.
- Tutors/Lecturers should advise students that exam scripts are handwritten and that it is their responsibility to answer the questions in a clear and legible way.
- This warning is also printed on the front of every pink answer booklet used for central examinations.

20b. 2 In the first instance of finding an illegible script:

Markers are recommended to seek a second opinion, if practical. If a script is genuinely illegible, then:

- The School should contact the student directly and ask them to come in to type up their exam answers on a computer. This is referred to as ‘making a fair copy’.

At this point the student has waived the normal exam answer anonymity. The write up should be monitored by staff or an invigilator to ensure that no additional notes or variation is made from the original text. Ideally this should be carried out as soon as possible after the issue is raised, but the student may have further exams which need to be avoided when booking rooms and/or invigilators for this purpose. The department must cover the cost of the invigilator if no departmental staff member is available. (The Exams Office can recommend suitably trained invigilators if necessary).

The student may not be aware that their script is hard to read, so this should be disclosed sensitively. Highlight the possibility that they could benefit from visiting Study Advice team in the Library - see http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/studyadvice/sta-home.aspx

If the student suspects that they have a Specific Learning Difficulty (like Dyslexia), recommend that they book an appointment with the Disability Advisory Service in the Carrington Building.

- Explain in writing that this is a warning to take greater care in future, and that this opportunity to ‘make a fair copy’ will not be offered again. In other universities the penalty can be that the script receives zero marks.

20b. 3 If the same student produces a further illegible script:

If the student was not aware of the problem with the original script at the time, then treat as above. However, if the student has received notification before and has already
used their opportunity to make a fair copy in the past, then it is up to the School to decide how the script should be marked – i.e. crediting only where content is clear. Again, suggest the student seeks additional help from Study Advice/Disability.

20b. 4 Special Arrangements:

Some students will be granted the opportunity to use a PC to type their answers, or an Amanuensis (scribe) to handwrite their answers, but these are both special arrangements which are only granted in advance of the exam period by the Examinations Office and/or Disability Advisory Service Specialist Teacher Assessor based on a specific, evidenced physical or learning disability (or sometimes a temporary injury).

http://www.reading.ac.uk/disability/about/DyslexiaSLDs/do-dyslexiaandslds.aspx

In very exceptional circumstances, there may be a student whose special arrangements for exams include the opportunity for the student or an amanuensis (scribe) to make a fair copy of their scripts. In this case, this will be decided in advance of the exam period and the Disability and/or Examination Representatives within the department will already be aware of this arrangement.

http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/student/exa-special.aspx