**Guidelines for Splitting Examinations in Irish Universities**

**1. Understanding the Need for Split Exams**

**Purpose:**

* Split exams are designed to support students whose disabilities or health conditions make it challenging to endure standard, extended exam periods due to physical or mental fatigue. Splitting the exam into multiple sessions allows these students to perform optimally and equitably.

**Learning Needs Plan Statements:**

* A Learning Needs Plan is a formal document developed through the university's Disability Services in consultation with the student, which is then approved by the relevant academic policy or body. This plan outlines the necessary accommodations, including the potential for split exams.

**2. Criteria for Splitting Exams**

**Eligibility:**

* Students eligible for split exams will have this specified in their Learning Needs Plan, based on comprehensive assessments by health professionals and considering the student's course requirements and inherent academic standards.

**Adjustments Specified:**

* The Learning Needs Plan may include adjustments like exams split over multiple days, with mandatory breaks between sessions or different subjects. This is usually a non-standard agreement in consultation with the course director and dean of undergraduate & postgraduate studies.

**3. Administrative Procedures**

**Notification and Coordination:**

* The Examinations Office typically will be notified of this decision and co-ordinates the needs as specified in the non-standard Learning Needs Plan. Course Coordinators are responsible for preparing and submitting the necessary materials according to the established timeline.

**Scheduling:**

* Exams should be scheduled to accommodate the split as detailed in the Learning Needs Plan, ensuring there are appropriate breaks and that each session is held on suitable days to manage the student's needs effectively.

**4. Exam Paper Preparation**

**Structure and Balance:**

* Divide the exam into sub-papers that are as equal in length and difficulty as possible. Ensure that the marks allocated are proportionate to the effort required for each sub-paper.

**Documentation:**

* Provide detailed cover sheets for each sub-paper, specifying the marks and time allowed for each section, including any allocated reading time.

**5. Security and Integrity**

**Conducting the Exam:**

* Where feasible, the student will sit the first sub-paper alongside peers completing the full exam. The student will sign a statutory declaration to maintain confidentiality and not discuss the exam content until all sessions are completed.

**Access to Sub-Papers:**

* Students will only have access to one sub-paper at a time to maintain exam integrity.

**6. Additional Considerations**

**Unequal Splits:**

* If it's impractical to split an exam into equal parts (e.g., a paper that doesn’t evenly divide into logical sections), consult with Disability Services to explore alternative arrangements or adjust the duration and content of sub-papers appropriately.

**Transparency and Fairness:**

* Ensure that the format and marking structure of the exam and each sub-paper are clearly communicated and consistent with standard practices.

**7. Student and Staff Communication**

**Information Dissemination:**

* Regularly update students and staff about the procedures and rationale for split exams through university communication channels.
* Provide clear instructions on whom students should contact for further information about their specific arrangements.

**8. Feedback and Continuous Improvement**

**Review and Adaptation:**

* Gather feedback from students and staff involved in split exams to refine the process.
* Adjust policies and procedures based on this feedback to continuously improve the fairness and effectiveness of the accommodations.

These guidelines are tailored to meet the specific needs of students requiring split exams at Irish universities, ensuring that all students have equitable access to assessment opportunities in line with their academic potential and health requirements.