An **E-CORE** Quick Guide to

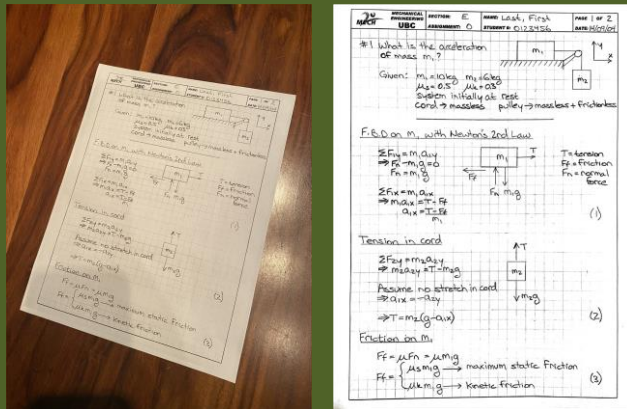# Document Scanning Solutions

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This guide provides recommendations on tools and methods for students to scan documents for online submission of assignments and exams. To continue the conversation on this topic, visit the Student Scanning Discussion Forum thread.

Primary Considerations

The primary considerations in selecting a scanning solution include

- **Speed** at which you can scan and assemble a multipage pdf document
- **Ease of use** during the scanning process to properly capture each page (see below)
- **Quality** of the final scanned product
- **Protection** of your privacy and data: can you use the tool without an account? do you control where your files are stored?

Left: image direct from phone camera. Right: pdf automatically produced by scanning tool (Adobe Scan in this case) for same image; note the cropping, realignment, and contrast enhancement in the pdf.
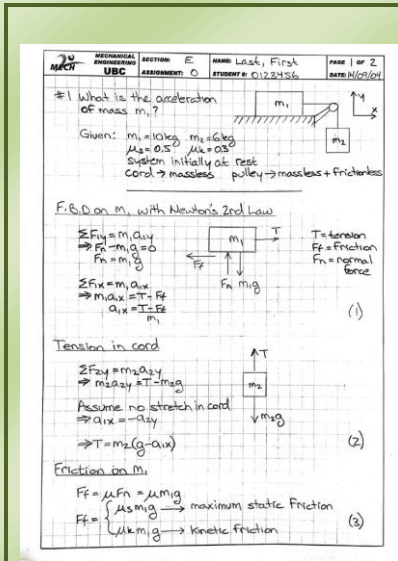
Some Scanning Tools to Consider

These common scanning tools are all free (other than the computer scanner) and offer similar functionality and operation.

Apple Notes (iOS devices) and Dropbox also have built-in document scanners with similar features and functionality. Using a phone camera image directly is not recommended due to lower quality and speed, and the extra work to assemble multipage documents.

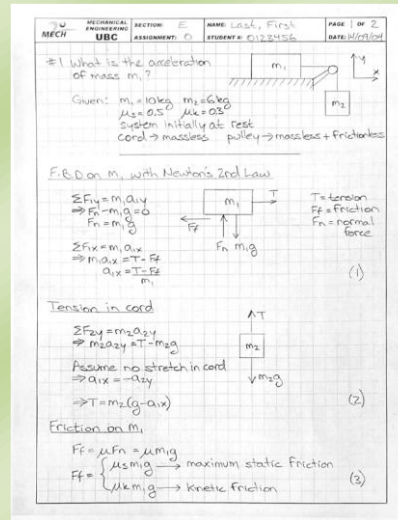| Tool	iPhone, Android, computer	Automatic crop and align	Default pdf quality	Typical scanning speed	Operation in poor conditions	Touch-up tools and filters	File output ease and options	Privacy protection	Notes
Adobe Scan	🍎🤖	✓	●	◉	◉	●	◉		Requires signing up for an Adobe ID. Documents stored on the cloud.
Microsoft Office Lens	🍎🤖	✓	◉	◉	●	◉	◉	✓	Excellent page detection; a Microsoft account adds many output options.
Genius Scan	🍎🤖	✓	◉	○	•	●	●	✓	Can struggle to detect pages, especially in non-ideal conditions
Computer scanner	🖥	✓	●	● / •	—	●	●	✓	Flatbed scanners (slow) and sheetfeed scanners (fast) have high quality but low portability and are not free.

Legend: ● Excellent ◉ Good ○ Fair • Poor
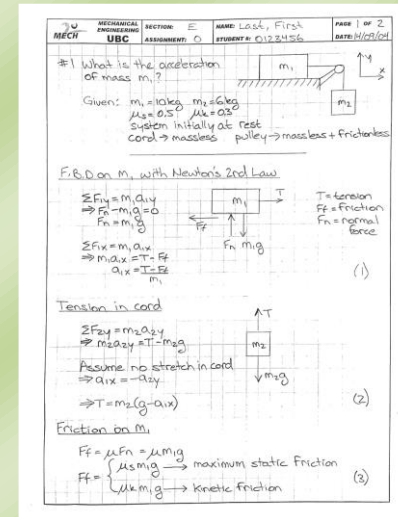
Tool samples and features of a good scan

Adobe Scan

Overall best quality. Strong contrast with bright background, good alignment, and good cropping.
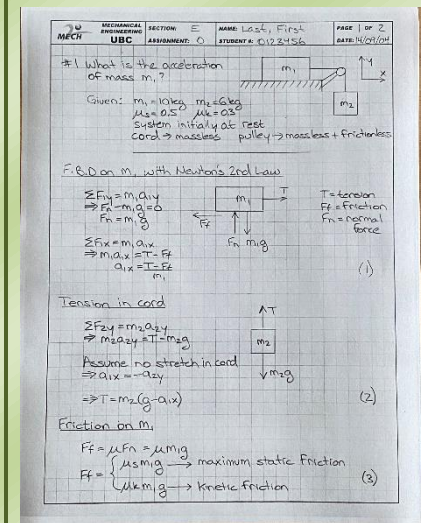

Microsoft Office Lens

Good quality. Good contrast, alignment, and cropping. This page was detected correctly even when on a white background.
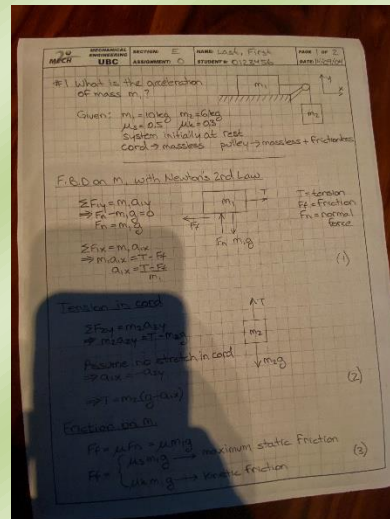

Genius Scan

Good quality. Good contrast, alignment, and cropping, but page had to be pressed flat and isolated on a dark background to capture this scan.

Photo

Fair quality. Sharpest image, but with fair contrast, greyish background, and minor cropping issue on right. Multiple pages would still need to be assembled into a document.

Examples to avoid

Please do not submit scans like these. Both are very difficult to read, the left one due to the shadow from the phone and the right one due to the poor contrast and poor focus. In addition, the poor alignment and cropping make the one on the left appear much less professional.