

Adapting Exams and Promoting Academic Integrity: Best Practices for Remote Instruction

Prepared by the Institute of Teaching and Learning, University of Akron

Promote academic integrity

- Discuss the importance of honesty and ethics with your students, either as part of a lecture or in a Brightspace announcement. Provide examples of why integrity is essential in your own scholarly research and why it will be important in their careers. Clearly communicate your expectations by describing the behaviors you *want* to see. Avoid an accusatory tone, and appeal to students' best selves. Trust can provide a strong incentive for academic honesty.
- Incorporate an academic integrity statement at the beginning of exams that students must re-type or accept. (i.e., "I affirm that I have followed the University of Akron's Student Code of Conduct and have neither given nor received assistance during this exam"). Tell students in advance that this will be part of their exam.

Consider alternatives to traditional exams

- Many faculty are creating "**take-home**" exams with open-ended questions that allow students one or more days for completion. Others are assigning **final projects** that require students to demonstrate mastery of course materials. **Oral Presentations, oral exams, or recorded videos** can be effective for small classes.
- If you decide to replace your exam with an alternative, keep expectations reasonable and communicate them clearly to students. Limit the scope of the projects; provide page-length requirements for take-home exams; and keep oral presentations or exams brief. Students should be able to complete the assignment in approximately the same amount of time it would take to study for and take a traditional exam.

Design the best exam for the context

- Assume all exams are open-book, open-note, and open-internet exams. Use this as an opportunity to rethink your questions to require more critical thinking.
- Avoid definition or factual recall questions. Consider using case studies, real-world scenarios, or problems that require students to integrate and apply course materials.
- In courses that require students to solve problems, incorporate some questions in alternate formats to discourage cheating. Add a randomized question that requires students to explain the "why" behind their calculations in the previous question. Provide a solution with an embedded mistake, and ask students to explain the error. Ask a question that requires students to customize their answers.

- If you are giving your exam in Brightspace, consult this guide for [Increasing Test Integrity](#). Strategies include using timed exams, shuffling questions, randomizing questions within groups, preventing students from going back to previous questions, and locking down the browser.
- Consider giving your exam during a 24-hour window on the day of your [scheduled exam](#). Our student survey shows that many students need flexibility: many are sharing computers and internet bandwidth with family members, and many are working in essential jobs where their hours have increased in response to the pandemic.
- If you must give a synchronous exam, be sure to follow the [final exam schedule](#). Give students plenty of advance notice with the date, time, and technical requirements for the exam. Be prepared to give make-up exams for those who have essential work or family conflicts during the planned time and for those who have technical difficulties.

Preparing Students for Exams

- Remind students of the [Credit/No Credit policy for Spring 2020](#).
- Advise students that open-book, open-note exams ask more challenging questions, so they will need to study and review as much as they do for traditional exams.
- Be clear about the resources students can use. If students are not allowed to consult with each other over their phones, be sure to tell them this is prohibited.
- Know which of your students require accommodations, and be sure to provide them.

Promoting Academic Integrity During Exams

- Be available for questions. Let students know how they should contact you if they need clarification or have a question. If you are giving a 24-hour window, let them know when you will be available.

For more information and support, contact:

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