

# DESIGNING ASSESSMENT ALTERNATIVES

As the COVID-19 situation continues to unfold, it may be appropriate to change some of the assessments for your students. Students can demonstrate learning through many different ways, and we can adapt our assessments to accommodate this.

This document presents:

- Some examples of alternative assessment methods
- Some guiding principles that help you to adapt and deliver alternative assessments

## Examples of Alternative Assessment Strategies

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### ALTERNATIVES TO FORMAL EXAMS

Three alternative approaches that mirror final exams.

- **Takeaway Exams (Open Book):** Students can receive the exam in Brightspace and submit their answers within a [defined time period](#) (e.g. same day/next day) via Brightspace. Students will be working remotely, unsupervised and will have access to resources/books in that time period. Ensure there is appropriate communication to students about instructions on how to complete the exam.
- **Online Quiz:** There are a number of [online quiz options](#) in Brightspace, such as multiple choice, short-answer questions, arithmetic. These can be set-up to be timed like a formal exam. You may need to consider scheduling issues, the time required to learn this tool, and technical support. See Brightspace guide to [Creating and Managing Quizzes](#). See also Student Guide on '[Take a Quiz](#)'.
  - [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#) is a custom browser that locks down the testing environment in Brightspace so that students cannot print, copy, go to another URL, access other applications, or close a quiz until it is submitted for grading.
- **Assignment in lieu of exam:** Instead of an exam, you may choose to give an assignment that aligns with intended outcomes. This can include an essay, report, or problem sheet. Students submit the completed assignment in Brightspace or email on designated date. See Brightspace resource on setting up the [Assignment Tool](#) and [Submit an Assignment](#) (advice for students).

## ALTERNATIVES TO IN-CLASS ASSESSMENTS

The following strategies may be considered as an online alternative to assessments that would generally be carried out in-class and/or through face-to-face interaction. They could also be used as an alternative to the end-of-semester exam if they the learning outcomes.

### **Alternative to hard-copy assignments**

- The Assignment tool in Brightspace can be set-up for individual or group assignments submission. See Brightspace resource on setting up the [Assignment Tool](#) and [Submit an Assignment](#) (advice for students).

### **Alternatives to Conducting Oral Examination**

- Oral examinations should be used with caution, as in particular student and staff need practice to carry these out reliably. See some general advice on [conducting orals](#). If you decide these are appropriate, students and staff can use the following tools to engage in an online oral examination (in one-on-one meetings or in groups).
  - [Virtual Classroom](#)
  - [Microsoft Teams meetings](#)
- Oral assessments should be recorded, for potential access by additional graders or external examiners.

### **Alternative to in-class test**

- Online quiz in Brightspace – there are several different quiz types, such as, multiple choice, short-answer questions, arithmetic (See 'Online Quiz' above).

### **Alternatives to in-class presentation**

- The 'Video Assignments' tool is available under 'Communication' in your D2L course. This tool is powered by Bongo, and allows for individual [student video assignments](#) to be submitted.
- Students may also present synchronously (in real time while the class is meeting) using Microsoft Teams

### **Alternatives to group task/project**

- Online group discussion task
  - See [Create a group category](#)
  - See [Setting up Discussion and Topics](#)
  - See also [Assessing Discussions](#)
  - See also '[Assessment Methods for Scoring Discussions](#)'
- Electronic submission of a 'Group Assignment' can also be accommodated via Brightspace (variety of formats can be accommodated). See [Creating Assignments](#)

### **Alternative to in-class debate**

- Critical essay where students present an argument on the topic and submit essay through Brightspace.
- Use of [Brightspace Discussion Forum-Topics](#) (See links above for assessing discussions).

## Alternative to assessed in-class participation

- Online group discussion task can be used to assess content and participation (see resources above).
- Brightspace '[Class progress](#)' for Instructors provides data on individual student engagement with Brightspace module resources. See also Student Guide on '[View your Progress](#)'. This data should be used with caution for the benefit of student learning.

# Key Principles to Inform Changes to your Assessments

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## VALIDITY AND TRANSPARENCY

- Learning Outcomes and the teaching and learning approaches should align with the assessment. For example, if the exam question asks students to discuss a topic then the alternative assessment should also require this outcome and the teaching and learning approaches should be aligned.
- To ensure students have sufficient skills to demonstrate their learning, they should have an opportunity, where possible, to trial any unfamiliar method without being graded.
- Students should be given clear comprehensive instructions on all aspects of the online assessment including such information as the required file formats, timing, and the number of attempts allowed for that assessment component for which they have the responsibility for submitting online.
- Students should be informed of all changes to assessment methods.

## EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- The alternative assessment should require an equivalent effort on the part of the student (e.g., estimated student effort, expected hours on assessment task, minimum or maximum word count, etc.).
- Instructors need to be aware that some students for a variety of reasons may have challenges engaging with online assessment. These students should be encouraged to self-identify in advance so that individual arrangements can be made locally.
- Students who are eligible for accommodations or extra exam time will need to be accommodated in an equivalent manner in relation to the alternative assessment.
  - How to [Grant Special Access to Users for a Quiz](#).
  - Visit the [Accessibility Services](#) site for more details

## RELIABILITY & ASSESSMENT INTEGRITY

- Students' work will need to be evaluated keeping in mind the unfamiliar teaching and learning context that students may be experiencing, especially if they are new to remote learning.
- Existing assessment criteria/rubric may need to be adapted to align with the alternative assessment. It is important that any revised criteria/rubric are shared with students.
- Any changes to the weighting of assessments must follow the guidelines set by the Director of Academic Development (see email dated March 23, 2020).
- To ensure secure recording and storage of online assessments, Brightspace should be used where possible. You are still encouraged to use a range of online technology/tools to support engagement, participation and collaboration if you feel this is beneficial to student learning and to your teaching.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- To minimise concerns about academic integrity, consideration should be given to the design and implementation of the alternative assessment. Some general advice to consider in designing the assessment include:
  - Customise the assessment by asking students to relate the topic/data to their experience or a specific context where possible.
  - Frame the assessment in such a way that students are required to present a justification for their argument, including a critique of their choice of supporting evidence.
- Some specific implementation strategies for consideration include:
  - Use of timed or time-constrained exam
  - Randomise MC/short answer questions
  - Use [Respondus Lockdown Browser](#).