



University of Adelaide Transitioning to Online Assessment Guide

Introduction

This guide provides principles and practical advice to support the maintenance of quality and rigour in the transition to online assessment. It has a particular focus on academic integrity and security as two concerns raised in the current context. The following are provided in this guide:

1. Considerations for transitioning to online assessment
2. Guidance on the process of designing online assessments
3. Guidelines and examples for examination question types
4. Links to further support

The content in this guide has been adapted from a resource produced by Deakin University's Centre for Research in Assessment and Digital Learning (CRADLE).

Considerations for transitioning to online assessment

- **Assessment design principles**
Principles that underpin valid, inclusive, and fair assessment design are key to a successful transition to online assessment, particularly the alignment of assessment tasks with course learning outcomes.
- **Academic Integrity**
As with all forms of assessment, assessment in fully online courses needs to be designed and managed to ensure students are supported in developing and demonstrating high standards of Academic Integrity. This includes modelling of, and providing guidance on, good academic practice.



- Communication and support

Explicit communication about assessment tasks and expectations is even more vital in this time of heightened stress. Practice opportunities will enable students to become familiar with the new assessment format and remove unnecessary cognitive load. Students will need to be provided with explicit information about not only the need to demonstrate academic integrity but also ways to develop this academic skill and information about the potential consequences of cheating. They may not be aware of the risks associated with contract cheating such as the low quality of bought assignments and blackmail (Sutherland-Smith & Dullaghan, 2019; Yorke, Sefcik, & Veeran-Colton, 2020).

All members of teaching and marking teams should be given the opportunity to discuss measures in place to mitigate and detect cheating, and to identify any training they need to be confident with the alternative processes or platforms.

- Assessment security

Online assessment is not inherently more or less prone to breaches of academic integrity than face to face assessment types such as invigilated exams (Harper, Bretag, & Rundle, 2020). In designing online assessment, consideration needs to be made of assessment types that students have reported they are less likely to cheat on such as reflections on work placements, vivas, and other tasks that require students to provide personalised and unique responses (Bretag et al, 2019).

Assessments that have only one correct answer can still be valid assessments, as can be seen by the flowchart below; there are means of reducing the ostensible ease with which they can be compromised. Questions that require longer written answers are easier to guard against cheating as they can be passed through Turnitin. Equation and mathematics-based assessment utilises Mobius, but also the functionality in Canvas for formula questions. This tool allows the variables in the question to be randomized, therefore effectively making every exam unique.



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ASSESS?

	RECALL	UNDERSTANDING	HIGHER ORDER	
ASSESSMENT Question type				How to improve exam integrity
Multiple choice				Randomised questions: - Banks - Formula - Open book
Short answer				Turnitin Open book
Essay				Turnitin Open book

MULTIPLE CHOICE

RESOURCES

DESIGN STRATEGIES include:

Having more than one distractor – this encourages deeper thinking
Not using 'none of the above' as an option –this doesn't encourage retrieval
Having 5 options – this reduces chance of guessing correctly

ADVANTAGES include

Robust form of assessment
Easy to mark
Can be reused in future tests
Can be used to assess a range of outcomes

OPTIONS TO IMPROVE INTEGRITY include

Randomising questions
Question banks
Formula questions
Shuffling questions & answers

DISADVANTAGES include

Time consuming to create
Difficult to create higher order questions
Some guesses will be correct therefore reducing the validity of the assessment

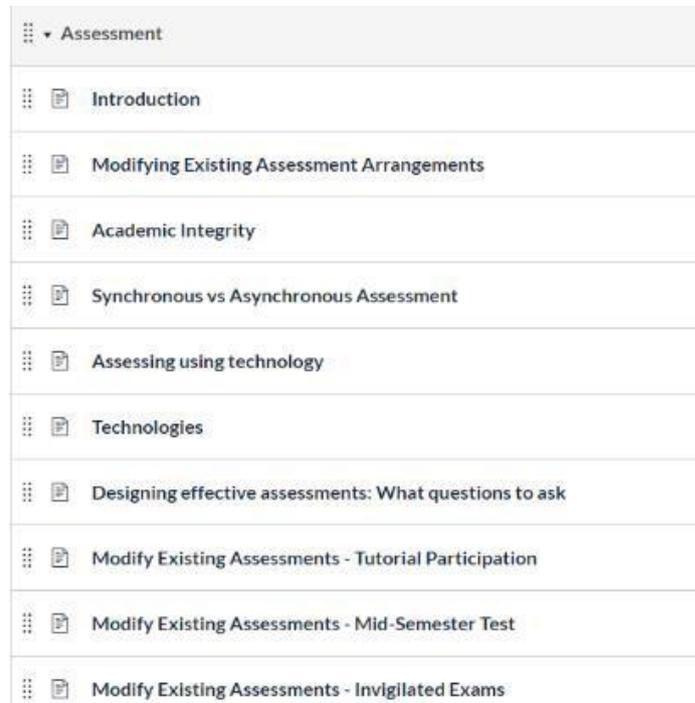


Further steps to maintaining academic integrity

Assessment types	Suggestions
Essays (e.g. history, English, visual arts, most arts-based subjects etc.).	Modify longer form essays: focus on a demonstration of a research-based approach rather than only analysis and application. Requiring the students to also write about process or to reflect adds to the uniqueness of the task.
Individualised solutions (e.g. comp science programming, mathematical problems, stats, accounting etc.).	Randomised questions in Canvas New Quizzes. Mobius. Also, ask for workings out and even explanations of process.
Paper-based authentic artefact development (e.g. marketing plans, legal response).	If keeping as scheduled on-line task with timed release add reflective components to help avoid cheating: e.g. ask students to upload videos explaining their answers and grade these; ask students to reflect on an online discussion
Take-home (open book) exams (e.g. law).	An online viva format using zoom where students are asked questions and respond on the spot means feedback and grades can be done in real time to reduce time in grading.

What about other forms of assessment?

Practical assessment types	Suggested alternatives
Laboratory-based practicals (e.g. chemistry, physics, health sciences)	Video-based uploads of tasks performed in home environment using Canvas Studio .
Physical artefact development (e.g. engineering, fine arts etc.).	Online simulation-based tasks (e.g. pre-existing computer-based sims). Captured (diary type) recordings of the process of creation
Performance-based assessments (e.g. fine arts, dance, etc.).	Providing a portfolio rather than making a single piece of work in a scheduled time frame (e.g. a series of videos showing development of an artwork/artefact). Video-based uploads of tasks performed in home environment using Canvas Studio .
Psychomotor skills (e.g. physiotherapy, nursing and other health professions etc.).	Critique and explanation of video practice – need to find or make videos and post online plus design a critique task for students.
Interpersonal skills (e.g. health professional consultation skills etc.). Language skills (e.g. vivas).	Real time observed practicals/vivas (very resource intensive) using Zoom



For lots more information on other assessment strategies see the Remote Teaching module [here](#)

Guidelines and examples for writing examination questions

Converting a single answer correct or MCQ question to a unique answer format often extends what is being tested. In these examples, you will see that not only do the students have to recall or identify the correct answer but explain it, thereby testing their ability to analyse/synthesise knowledge and articulate this analysis to students.

These two examples illustrate an easy means to convert these types of questions to a more unique answer format. Note that students will take longer to do these and that they will take longer to grade.



Example 1: Knowledge recall multiple choice or single correct answer

Original multiple-choice question

The strongest and most resilient connective tissue is

- a. adipose tissue
- b. reticular connective tissue
- c. fibrocartilage tissue
- d. elastic connective tissue
- e. areolar connective tissue

Original question with single correct answer

What is the strongest and most resilient connective tissue?

Answer: fibrocartilage tissue

Alternative questions, focussing on explanation:

Why is fibrocartilage tissue the strongest and most resilient connective tissue?

Comparing adipose tissue and fibrocartilage tissue, discuss reasons for relative strength and resilience of these connective tissues.

Example 2: Analytic style multiple choice question or short answer

Original multiple-choice question

In a study aimed at identifying factors associated with risk of developing dementia, a group of elderly people with a formal diagnosis of dementia were compared with a group of elderly people without dementia for a range of factors related to health, lifestyle and occupation. The patients with dementia were matched with those without dementia by age, sex and area of residence. Data collection was by interview. For the patients with severe dementia, where the dementia interfered with data collection, surrogates (usually a family member) assisted with data collection. This study is a

- a. Case-control study
- b. Cohort study
- c. Cross-sectional survey
- d. Field study



Original single correct question

In a study aimed at identifying factors associated with risk of developing dementia, a group of elderly people with a formal diagnosis of dementia were compared with a group of elderly people without dementia for a range of factors related to health, lifestyle and occupation. The patients with dementia were matched with those without dementia by age, sex and area of residence. Data collection was by interview. For the patients with severe dementia, where the dementia interfered with data collection, surrogates (usually a family member) assisted with data collection.

What type of study is this?

Answer: case-control study

Alternative questions, focussing on explanation:

Easier

In a case-control study aimed at identifying factors associated with risk of developing dementia, a group of elderly people with a formal diagnosis of dementia were compared with a group of elderly people without dementia for a range of factors related to health, lifestyle and occupation. The patients with dementia were matched with those without dementia by age, sex and area of residence. Data collection was by interview. For the patients with severe dementia, where the dementia interfered with data collection, surrogates (usually a family member) assisted with data collection.

What makes this a case control study?

Harder

In a study aimed at identifying factors associated with risk of developing dementia, a group of elderly people with a formal diagnosis of dementia were compared with a group of elderly people without dementia for a range of factors related to health, lifestyle and occupation. The patients with dementia were matched with those without dementia by age, sex and area of residence. Data collection was by interview. For the patients with severe dementia, where the dementia interfered with data collection, surrogates (usually a family member) assisted with data collection.

What type of study is this? Why do you think this?

Example 3 - higher order multiple choice questions

The following question tests a high-level depth of knowledge that requires not only a very strong knowledge base, but also the ability to compare and evaluate the knowledge base. It also provides a wonderful opportunity to supply feedback that teaches even more.



Liberal ideology...

- Was invented in the eighteenth century to serve the interests of the British Liberal Party.
- Developed as a hostile response to the emergence of industrial capitalism.
- Is a compromise between socialism and conservatism.
- Is a long-established creed which focuses on individual freedom.

Correct answer:

d. is a long-established creed which focuses on individual freedom.

Feedback:

The correct answer is d. Liberalism predates the British Liberal Party, which was not known by that name until the mid-1800s (answer a). Far from being hostile to industrial capitalism (answer b), liberalism is seen by some critics as an attempt to justify this economic system. The ideology is certainly not a compromise between socialism and conservatism; its focus on individual liberty makes it clearly distinct from those ideologies.

Acknowledgement for original multiple-choice questions: Jennifer Lindley, Monash University. Acknowledgement for alternative question formats: CRADLE.

Acknowledgement for higher order MCQ: Garner, Ferdinand & Lawson: Introduction to Politics 2e. Retrieved from [here](#)

Further support and resources

- University of Adelaide Academic Integrity Guidance and Policy:
<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning/resources-for-educators/academic-integrity>
- TEQSA have curated a set of good practice guides for academic integrity in online assessments: <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/assessment-integrity>
- Curated support resources for Teaching Online including assessment design:
<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/learning/teaching-online>



References

- Bretag, T., Harper, R., Burton, M., Ellis, C., Newton, P., van Haeringen, K., . . . Rozenberg, P. (2019). Contract cheating and assessment design: exploring the relationship. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(5), 676-691. doi:10.1080/02602938.2018.1527892
- Harper, R., Bretag, T., & Rundle, K. (2020). Detecting contract cheating: examining the role of assessment type. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 1-16. doi:10.1080/07294360.2020.1724899
- Sutherland-Smith, W., & Dullaghan, K. (2019). You don't always get what you pay for: User experiences of engaging with contract cheating sites. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 44(8), 1148-1162. doi:10.1080/02602938.2019.1576028
- Yorke, J., Sefcik, L., & Veeran-Colton, T. (2020). Contract cheating and blackmail: a risky business? *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-14. doi:10.1080/03075079.2020.1730313