

## Academic Integrity in Online Exams Written During a Pandemic

Use this checklist as a guide toward upholding academic integrity in online exams written during a pandemic.

### Set your students up for success

- Talk to your students about the importance of honesty and academic integrity – this is the *most* effective way of preventing academic misconduct
- Consider including an [Academic Honesty Agreement](#) on all online exams and discuss the importance of upholding academic integrity in your discipline
- Give clear directions about your expectations for writing online exams
- Vary your assessment strategies and use a number of lower stake or scaffolded assignments to evaluate your students
- Increase your online social presence and hold online office hours so students can connect with you and see you as being a real person. Student-to-instructor interaction is important to students' learning and when students feel a connection with their instructor they are less likely to cheat.
- Point to resources that students can access should they need help such as emailing their academic advisors, online tutorials or workshops, library references etc.
- Watch the webinar [Academic Integrity in Online Course: Adapting During Covid 19](#) (YouTube, 1:26:40)
- Keep your focus on learning, not on avoiding cheating

### Don't assume that all, or even most, students will cheat on online exams. Know what the research shows.

- Research shows that compared with exams written in person, online exams do not necessarily lead to increased cheating. The frequency of cheating in online exams depends on several factors related to the design and parameters of the exam.
- In any exam environment (online or in person) academic misconduct is more likely:
  - When students are in high stakes situations
  - When there is an increased opportunity for misconduct. When instructors have not taken steps to uphold academic integrity, the opportunity for misconduct is increased.

### Avoid creating high stakes situations where students are more likely to feel desperate

- Avoid giving high stakes exams (i.e., those that are worth 30% or more)
- Keep the duration of the exam (i.e., the amount of time for actually interacting with the exam questions) reasonable
- Remember to add extra time for each student who requires that accommodation, as per their accommodations plan from AccessAbility Services so that students with disabilities do not face increased

**☐ Design exams that uphold academic integrity and decrease the opportunity for academic misconduct**

- Avoid re-using the same exam questions from term to term. Making even slight changes to the questions and the response options improves academic integrity.
- Explicitly state that the exam is open-book
- For multiple choice exams, consider incorporating at least some written response questions, if possible
- Avoid using open test bank questions where answers can be found online
- Create large banks of questions for online quizzes and have each student get a random sample of these questions
- Scramble the response options on multiple choice questions. This works well as long as there is no choice for the questions that is “all of the above”
- For calculation-based questions, consider using an algorithmic question generator to create questions that have different parameters and numbers in the questions and in the answers
- When creating a new exam, prepare multiple versions of the exam in order to reduce future workload

**☐ Use timed exams appropriately and only when learning outcomes warrant timed assessment**

- Recognize that many students are writing exams in sub-optimal conditions that might involve interruptions from ill family members, unreliable internet connections, etc.
- Consider what you want to assess by timing the exam, and whether or not that fits with your learning outcomes
- Limit timed exams for low stakes quizzes that assess recall so that students do not have sufficient time to just look up the answer
- When using application questions (for which the answers cannot simply be looked up) timing is typically less crucial
- Recognize that timed exams are generally considered stressful (especially if students see the countdown clock during the exam)

**☐ Consider that students are writing exams in various time zones, during a pandemic**

- Set a timeframe of at least 24 hours so that students in multiple time zones have the opportunity to access the exam during daytime hours
- Recognize that the pandemic increases the likelihood of students becoming ill during the term. Provide the opportunity for a make-up exam rather than re-weighting missed midterm grades to the final exam
- Provide flexibility by offering multiple quizzes with the lowest one being dropped.

**☐ Use exam delivery settings that encourage academic integrity**

- Show only one question per screen (vs. displaying all exam questions on one screen) to reduce the likelihood that students will make use of “screen print” to copy the exam questions
- Do not show grades until all students in the class (including all sections of the course) have written the exam