



GUIDANCE FOR DESIGNING ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT METHODS:

COVID 19 Contingency Planning

INTRODUCTION

As the Covid-19 situation continues to unfold, faculty and staff have been asked to consider the assessment implications of potential scenarios that could affect our community and campus. Student learning can be demonstrated through many different but equitable assessment methods. In considering an alternative to an existing assessment, Module Coordinators may need to consider alternative assessment strategies with respect to end-of-semester formal exams and/or continuous assessments. This *QUICK GUIDE* presents:

- A. Some examples of alternative strategies to common assessments methods
- B. Some assessment principles that assist in the decision-making and implementation of the alternative assessment strategy
- C. Links to further information and guidance.

A) EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

ALTERNATIVES TO FORMAL END-OF-SEMESTER EXAMS

These three options broadly mirror the end of semester formal examination approach.

- **Takeaway Exams (Open Book):** To replicate the exam paper format, students can receive the exam paper via 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 paper. NB: This approach will require central timetabling consideration.
- **Online Quiz:** there are a number of [online quiz options](#) that can be implemented in Brightspace, such as, multiple choice, short-answer questions, arithmetic. These can be set-up to be timed, akin to a formal exam. Timetabling issues, time to upskill on this approach and technical support will need to be considered for this exam type. See Brightspace guide to [Creating and Managing Quizzes](#). See also Student Guide on [‘Take a Quiz’](#)
- **Assignment in lieu of exam:** an assignment is set that aligns with intended outcomes of the original exam and may take a variety of formats, e.g. essay, report, problem sheet. Submission via Brightspace or email on designated date. See Brightspace resource on setting up the [Assignment Tool](#) and [Submit an Assignment](#) (advice for students)

ALTERNATIVES TO CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENTS

These strategies could 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 subject to clear alignment of the assessment task to the module learning outcomes.

Alternative to hard-copy assignment submission

- The Assignment tool in Brightspace can be set-up for individual or group assignment submission, accommodating a variety of file formats and allows start and end dates to be specified. See Brightspace resource on setting up the [Assignment Tool](#) and [Submit an Assignment](#) (advice for students).

Alternative 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](#). However where used, students and staff can use '[Google Hangout Meets](#)' to engage in an online oral examination. This is accessible from within the Google calendar (create event, add conferencing) or chose 'Meet' from the Google Apps launcher.
- [Bb Collaborate Ultra](#) has been prioritised for teaching delivery during the teaching semester, however in the examination period this could be used for oral examinations.
- Oral examinations may be recorded and retained where this has been normal practice and would be considered appropriate for equivalent examinations that would be conducted face to face. The purpose of recording should be clearly notified to students in advance. Appropriately recorded assessment materials should be retained according to the retention policy for assessments.

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

- Up to 30 mins of video can be submitted by a student to the Assignments section in Brightspace. There is a specific 'Video Assignments' tool available under 'Module Admin'. This tool is powered by Bongo, has peer review functionality, and allows for individual [student video assignments](#) to be submitted.
- Audio task with online assignment submission, e.g. student could record audio on phone or laptop and submit via Brightspace. See Brightspace resource on setting up the [Assignment Tool](#) and [Submit an Assignment](#) (advice for students)

Alternatives to group-work assessed task/project

- Online group discussion task
 - See [Create a group category](#)
 - See Setting up [Discussion and Topics](#)
 - See Student [guide on creating a discussion thread](#)
 - 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 has functionality to assess content and participation (see resources above).
- Brightspace '[Class progress](#)' functionality for Instructors provides indicative data on individual student engagement with Brightspace module resources. See also Student Guide on '[View your Progress](#)'. This data should be used with caution.

B) KEY PRINCIPLES TO INFORM DECISION-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION

VALIDITY AND TRANSPARENCY

- The module learning outcomes and the teaching and learning approaches should align with the proposed alternative assessment. For example, if the exam question is framed in terms of students discussing a topic/concept then the alternative assessment should also require this outcome and the teaching and learning approaches used in the module should be similarly aligned.
- To ensure student have sufficient skills to demonstrate their learning, they should have an opportunity, where possible, to trial any unfamiliar method, without grading.
- Students should be given clear comprehensive instructions on all aspects of the operation and completion of the online assessment including such information as the required file formats 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 hours on assessment task or word count. For some advice on considering equivalence in student work-load, see '[Assessment workload and equivalence](#)' (UCD T&L, 2020)
- Module Coordinators need to be cognisant 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 extra exam time due to the impact of their disability will need to be accommodated in an equivalent manner in relation to the alternative assessment.
 - a. Refer to this resource on [how to set-up exam time in Brightspace](#).
 - b. Listen to this resource on [Grant special Access to Users for a Quiz](#).

RELIABILITY & ASSESSMENT INTEGRITY

- Students' work will need to be judged having regard to the unfamiliar teaching and learning context that students will have experienced.
- 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 the students and are used to support inter-rater reliability of multiple graders. Bear in mind that tutors/GTAs may require some guidance and upskilling.
- When using Brightspace for high stakes assessment, you may need to consider who have access rights to your Brightspace module, e.g. tutors, GTA. To change access rights to Brightspace, go to [MAMS in INFOHUB](#)
- The alternative assessment should be of equal weighting of that which it is replacing.
- The weighting of assessment components already completed should not be adjusted.
- To ensure secure recording and storage of online assessments, the institutional VLE Brightspace should be used where possible. This doesn't preclude you or your students from using a range of online technology/tools to support engagement, participation and collaboration.

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 MCQ/short answer questions](#)
- Use of [Urkund](#) plagiarism software.

C) LINKS TO FURTHER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

- [Brightspace Community](#)
- [Brightspace YouTube Channel](#)
- [UCD IT Services](#)
- [UCD Teaching & Learning : Technology-Enhanced Learning](#)
- [UCD Teaching and Learning: Assessment and Feedback General Guidance](#)
- [UCD Registry: Assessment](#)
- [Brightspace : preparing for off campus delivery in response to COVID-19](#)

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