

ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

PLANNING SUCCESSFUL ONLINE ASSESSMENTS

There are a variety of options and factors for faculty members to take into account when designing assessments for online courses. The information provided below includes some online assessment options, considerations for using them in online courses, and available resources.

Essays and Papers

Essays and papers provide students with the means to illustrate their understanding of a topic through their analysis and written dialogue.

When is it used?

- Essays and papers can be used in a variety of different courses to demonstrate a student's ability to synthesize and apply knowledge.
- Instructors can create essay questions using the Quizzes tool in eLC or require paper submissions via assignment dropboxes in eLC.

What are considerations when using essays and papers?

- Essay questions are an effective way to assess complex learning outcomes because they require a combination of synthesis, analysis, and application.
- Essay questions should require students to compose an authentic response that demonstrates their reasoning.
- Instructors can apply time restrictions to essays; however, these should allow time for the student to review the question/prompt, reflect on it, and construct their response.
- Essays and papers allow for the integration of research and references as support for student responses.
- Essays and papers include some levels of subjectivity, which should factor into how instructors assess students' responses.
- Detailed, carefully constructed rubrics based on learning outcomes and assignment expectations provide effective ways to assess essays and papers.

Available Resources

- Melissa Kelly: [Creating and Scoring Essay Tests](#).

Projects, Presentations, Portfolios

Projects, presentations, and portfolios provide students with a way to showcase what they have learned about a given topic. These forms of assessment go beyond focusing on the content, much like traditional exams do, and require students to demonstrate their knowledge through the application of concepts and skills.

When is it used?

- Projects, presentations, and portfolios can be used in a variety of different classes to demonstrate students' comprehensive knowledge.

What are considerations when using essays and papers?

- Projects, presentations, and portfolios allow students to demonstrate their understanding and practice creativity in how they represent that knowledge.
- These formats permit practical application of skills in fields where students must demonstrate such application.
- Projects, presentations, and portfolios should be developed over time, so students should be notified of the assignment expectations, parameters, and assessment guidelines in advance and given sufficient time to construct their assignments.
- Projects, presentations, and portfolios can incorporate a wide array of technology.
- Students can use materials created through these assessments as samples of their work when applying for internships, field placement, and job openings.

Available Resources

- National Education Association: [Research Spotlight on Project-Based Learning](#).

Scaffold Small Assignments

Scaffolded small assignments throughout an online course provide students with a way progressively develop their understanding of the material. These also allow the instructor to continuously build on the content presented in the course.

When is it used?

- Scaffolded small assignments can be used in a variety of different classes to help students develop connections between concepts and build on their knowledge.

What are considerations when using essays and papers?

- Scaffolded small assignments should focus on components or “chunks” of material that contribute to an overall representation of the topic.
- Scaffolded small assignments can be low stakes or high stakes assessments; however, it is recommended to use them as low stakes assessments to support student development and confidence in learning the material.
- Scaffolded small assignments can be developed using multiple formats to gauge knowledge, including quizzes, essays, projects, reports, and student-created products.
- This approach requires carefully constructed assignments that are integrated with one another and build toward meeting learning outcomes or goals.

Available Resources

- IRIS Center Peabody College (Vanderbilt University): [Instructional Scaffolding](#).

Online Proctoring

Online test proctoring utilizes video and audio monitoring of students while they complete online exams. Online proctoring is implemented to discourage academic dishonesty during testing.

When is it used?

- Some courses at UGA may require online proctoring due to accreditation.

What are considerations when using essays and papers?

- To maintain compliance, course fees (including online proctoring fees) must be provided for students before they register for the course.
- UGA offers online proctoring through Examyty.
- Currently, Examyty's services are only available through artificial intelligence (AI), which means there are no proctoring sessions offered by human observers.
- Online proctoring stipulates that students must adhere to very strict testing environment requirements and access to specific forms of technology (i.e. webcams, microphones, etc.).
- Student accessibility – including cost, technology, ease of use, and potential barriers for students with disabilities.
- In the case of suspected academic dishonesty, instructors must review proctoring videos and follow procedures outlined by the Office of Academic Honesty.

Available Resources

- UGA Testing Services: [Online Course Exams – Information for Faculty](#).
- UGA: [Office of Academic Honesty and Student Appeals](#).
- UGA OVPI: [Proctored Exam Alternatives](#).

Open Book Testing

Open book testing is an effective way to assess students' knowledge and application of concepts or skills developed during the course.

When is it used?

- Open book tests can be used in a variety of different courses and implemented through tests created within eLC.

What are considerations when using essays and papers?

- Student preparation is crucial to successful performance on an open book test. Instructors can provide students with suggestions on how to be strategic with their preparation (ex: bookmarking important pages or passages in a text, reviewing and annotating key concepts, collecting notes and materials to have on hand during the test).
- Open book tests should include carefully constructed questions designed to encourage critical thinking, analysis, and application over rote memorization or the need to "search" for a specific answer.
- Open book tests can be time-consuming. If the test is timed, students need realistic and appropriate time restraints. (ex: It is not advisable to require students to complete an open book test in significantly less time than they would be given to complete the test without using their text.)

Available Resources

- UGA Center for Teaching and Learning: [Teaching Resources](#).
- The University of Newcastle: [A Guide for Academics – Open Book Exams](#).