

Faculty Guide to Major Course Assessments



Table of Contents

Table of Contents	2
Introduction	4
Types of Assessments	4
Traditional Assessments	4
What are traditional assessments?	4
What tools can I use to create online tests/exams?	5
What are the pros/cons of traditional assessments?	6
How do I proctor students taking online tests?	6
Technical Issues with Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor	7
How do I encourage academic integrity for exams without proctoring?	9
Alternatives to High-Stakes Tests and Exams	9
Open-Book Examinations	9
What are open-book examinations?	9
How do I design an open-book exam?	9
How do I convert my existing exam into an open-book exam?	10
What strategies should I consider for open-book exam questions?	10
What are the pros and cons of open-book exams?	10
Authentic Assessments	11
What are authentic assessments?	11
What are some examples of authentic assessments?	11
Student-Generated Media	11
Case Studies	12
Strategies for Creating an Authentic Assessment	12
What are the pros and cons of authentic assessments?	14
Academic Integrity	14
How do I prevent and detect plagiarism in assessment submissions?	14
What are other ways I can encourage students to uphold academic integrity?	15
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	15
Resources	15
Where can I find ideas for assessments?	15
References	16
Appendix: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities	19
Notes and License	28

Introduction

An assessment strategy that accurately determines the extent to which students have obtained the knowledge and skills we want them to acquire is a critical part of any course design. Accordingly, it is crucial for instructors to understand the different approaches available to them when considering major assessments in their courses. Each approach involves various strategies, as well as its own benefits and challenges. The goal of this guide is to provide guidance on approaches to traditional assessments, alternative assessments, and academic integrity.

Types of Assessments

Assessments are generally broken into two categories: formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments are assignments students complete to check and develop their learning in a course and give the instructor an indication as to their progress, while summative assessments are a culmination of a student's learning at the end of a course (Bulunuz et al., 2014; Emanuel, Robinson, & Korczak, 2013).

Formative assessment	Summative assessments
Quizzes <i>(taken at the end of a unit or lesson)</i>	Exams <i>(e.g. finals)</i>
Homework <i>(sets of questions or problem sets)</i>	Projects and papers <i>(e.g. essays, videos, student presentations)</i>

Traditional Assessments

What are traditional assessments?

Traditional assessments often refer to standard methods to evaluate students' progress in the course, such as quizzes, tests, and examinations. Different question types in tests can be used to determine mastery of various types of skills in learning objectives.

Type of Learning Objective	Test Question Type				
	Completion	Short Answer	Matching	Multiple Choice	Essay
State/name	✓	✓			
Define	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Identify	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Select		✓	✓	✓	
Locate		✓	✓	✓	
Evaluate		✓	✓	✓	
Solve		✓	✓	✓	✓
Discuss					✓
Develop					✓
Construct					✓
Generate					✓

Adapted from Dick, Carey & Carey (2005)

What tools can I use to create online tests/exams?

Blackboard has a feature called [Tests, Pools and Surveys](#), where instructors can create quizzes and exams online. Here are some UM resources to get started navigating this tool:

- [How to Create a Test, Exam, or Quiz](#)
- [Blackboard Learning Basics: Tests](#)

Another option beyond Blackboard is to use a tool like [Google Forms](#) to create short tests for students to complete either synchronously (during class) or asynchronously (outside of class). Google Forms is a good option for low-stakes quizzes or homework assignments but not for larger exams. Note that Google products, such as Google Forms, may not be accessible to students taking courses remotely from China.

What are the pros/cons of traditional assessments?

Pros of traditional assessments	Cons of traditional assessments
Can easily be prepared, administered, and scored, thus making it more efficient.	Provides teachers only a snapshot of what students have truly learned or not learned.
Can reveal how well students can recall, organize, and clearly communicate previously learned information.	Limited options for students to demonstrate knowledge and concepts taught.
If using a textbook, instructors can include appropriate questions from sample tests/test banks that are included.]	Could provoke feelings of stress or anxiety for students, especially if feeling pressured with timed or proctored exams.
Perceived degree of objectivity, usually only one right answer.	Typically involves students working in isolation and not in collaboration with other students.

How do I proctor students taking online tests?

Instructors can use the online proctoring tools, Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor if they wish to monitor students taking exams remotely. Both are only available to integrate with Blackboard tests.

Respondus Lockdown Browser is a locked browser for taking tests in Blackboard Learn. It prevents students from printing, copying, going into another URL, or accessing other applications during a test. If you request a student to take a test where LockdownBrowser is to be used, students will not be able to take that test with a standard web browser (e.g. Chrome or Safari).

Respondus Monitor is a companion application for LockDown Browser that uses the webcam to record students during an online exam. If students do not have access to a webcam, they will not be able to use this feature, but they can still use Lockdown Browser.

The University of Miami has a specific version of the LockDown browser; therefore students must download [only using this link to download and install the software](#).

Here are some UM resources to get started with using Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor:

- [How to Create a Test that Requires Respondus Lockdown Browser](#)
- [LPT: Respondus Lockdown Browser Playlist](#)
- [Student QuickStart Guide: Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor](#)
- [User Guides, Videos and Technical Support from Respondus](#)

Alternatively, you can also proctor exams live using Zoom. [This resource from the University of Iowa](#) offers some guidelines and procedures to consider when proctoring an exam using Zoom.

Technical Issues with Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor

Like all virtual proctoring platforms, the functionality provided by Respondus LockDown Browser and Monitor (shutting down the ability to access other programs, to access other web sites, to print, etc.) requires access to students' computers operating systems and is similar to how malware acts. The functionality of these tools can also depend on what type of computer a student is using, which operating system version, and any security patches that they have installed. Something that worked a week ago may stop working due to one of these changes. The University doesn't have control over when these types of changes will happen and we can't tell what impact they will have on exams.

Some of the common technical issues with Respondus tools include:

- Respondus does not work with Chromebooks.
- Sometimes the passwords set for Respondus exams don't work correctly and need to be removed or reset.
- Students get an "incorrect password" on an exam, even though no password is set.
- Multiple courses in one UM department had students locked into their exams when they needed to download a PDF during the exam and they were using an Apple computer. The majority of our students have Apple computers. The solution is to either not use PDF files or to install some security certificates on students' computers.
- Students with poor Internet connections may get a "Unable to connect to Respondus Server" message.
- Some students took exams and their video was not recorded. Respondus says that this is also due to a poor internet connection.
- Some students with disabilities will not be able to use assistive software with Respondus.
- Students get an error message saying "Downloads folder permissions required. You must allow Respondus to access the Downloads folder to proceed".

In order to mitigate these issues, consider having students go through practice runs to test out the software prior to the day of the exam. Also, it is highly recommended to create a backup plan if these proctoring tools do not work or cause errors during exam time. Also, What are the pros/cons of proctoring an exam?

Pros of proctoring exams	Cons of proctoring exams
Exam security (e.g. restrict the sharing of exam information)	Increased anxiety and pressure for students which may be detrimental to test-taking and learning.
Video algorithms can detect open book/notes/browser activity, other people in the room, and unusual behaviors (e.g. looking off screen repeatedly).	Not foolproof. Students can still find ways to “game the system” and cheat/plagiarize.
Video recordings of all attempts so faculty can later review exam videos.	Students must have a webcam and compatible computer is using Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor.
	Lack of a interaction for exam problems/questions
	Not compatible with some hardware (e.g. Chromebooks) and accessibility software.
	Likelihood of technical issues with passwords, Internet connectivity, and software updates

How do I encourage academic integrity for exams without proctoring?

Here are some recommendations on how to take steps to ensure academic integrity through simple Blackboard tests without using proctoring:

- Create a [pool of test questions](#) (e.g. bank) so that students can take multiple versions of the same exam and reduce chances of cheating.
- Create time restrictions using [Test settings](#) within Blackboard so students have less time to look up answers or ask for assistance.
- You can also enable the option to randomize question order within a test so students cannot follow along with each other on the same question.

Alternatives to High-Stakes Tests and Exams

Open-Book Examinations

What are open-book examinations?

Open-book examinations allow students to reference class notes, textbooks, and any other resources during the exam. Students are typically given a time frame within which to complete the exam and may be asked to complete as a take-home exam or be provided with the questions prior to the formal exam session.

How do I design an open-book exam?

When designing your questions for open-book exams, the key is to have your students do something with the information provided. The focus should be on conceptual understanding and application of knowledge. Here are a few suggestions:

Case studies: You can provide your students with a case study and ask them questions related to it.

Analysis of data: Provide your students with quantitative or qualitative data and ask questions that require interpretation, application and analytical skills.

Predict the outcome: For science-based courses, provide your students with a description of a physical/chemical interaction and ask students to predict the outcome.

Explore a concept or principle: Provide your students with a concept and ask them to identify an example along with their reasoning.

How do I convert my existing exam into an open-book exam?

Professor Michael Seery from the University of Edinburgh documented the entire process of transitioning to open book exams, this past Spring, focusing on written submissions and use of mobile phones to submit assignments. Here is an example process of how a three-hour chemistry exam was moved to an open-book exam, with a time frame of 48 hours to complete and how they structured this process. The tutorial linked below demonstrates how Seery and colleagues used Blackboard Assignments to collect student submissions. They also provided students a guide of expectations for the exam, and an overview video, detailed in his blog post.

- [Managing the open-book exam process blog post](#)
- [Video tutorial](#)

What strategies should I consider for open-book exam questions?

1. Focus on learning goals and objectives.
2. Decide on the type of open-book exam, restricted or unrestricted. If restricted, you may want to consider providing students with a list of acceptable materials.
3. Decide whether all or part of the exam will be open-book.
4. Structure questions that take full advantage of the open-book format by designing problems that are real-world focused and would require integration of information from various aspects of the course material.
5. Create questions that will require students to use thinking skills such as analysis and interpretation instead of knowledge and recall.
6. Create questions that are clear and unambiguous.

What are the pros and cons of open-book exams?

Pros of Open-Book Exams	Cons of Open-Book Exams
Requires students to use higher-order thinking skills	Study efforts may be reduced
Less stress on memory to recall facts	Efforts to learn sufficiently to achieve full understanding may be discouraged
Enhances knowledge retention	Cheating is less obvious
High validity	More superficial knowledge is encouraged

Authentic Assessments

What are authentic assessments?

An authentic assessment focuses on students performing “real-world tasks that demonstrate meaningful application of essential knowledge and skills” (Broadbent et al 2017, Mueller 2005). They often involve students completing “messy, real world tasks with multiple acceptable solutions, rather than fabricated problems for which there is only one correct answer” (Suskie, 2018). Authentic assessments allow students to know the content of the disciplines when they graduate, but also apply the acquired knowledge in the real world. These types of assessments can therefore tell us if students can apply when they have learned in authentic situations (Mueller, 2005).

What are some examples of authentic assessments?

There are a number of authentic assessment opportunities beyond essays, semester papers and research reports. For example, nursing, medical or psychology students may engage in case studies or role-playing activities to simulate the experience of working with patients, business majors may develop marketing or sales plans for a real-world organization, computer science students may develop applications according to client need, or troubleshoot problematic ethical scenarios, biology or chemistry students may engage in a group-based debate and presentation.

Student-Generated Media

This type of project usually involves students creating original media related to the course content and often aim to simulate real world contexts. Types of projects may include a podcast submission, for instance, where students create a short public service announcement, or a documentary that provides the public with guidance about newly evolved policy. Other types of projects may include creating a website or Wikipedia page to amplify resources and perspectives around hidden figures within a discipline. While some learning goals for these projects are to produce high-quality productions - a lot of the time, these projects provide students the opportunity to practice, fail and improve written, oral communication and critical thinking skills.

Tips for designing a student-generated media project

1. Identify the learning goals for the project and make sure that they match with the course goals.
2. Break it down into parts with due dates. This will serve as a guide through the process for students. For example if you would like your students to create a webpage, identify 4-5 major tasks you would like your students to complete which may include a proposal, draft of content, a first draft of the product and final version of the product. It will also provide you with many opportunities to provide feedback and opportunities for your students to make adjustments or improvements.

3. Provide students with the tools that are available for them to use for their projects. For example, at UM students have access to the adobe suite of products. We often suggest tools like Adobe Spark, Canva and Adobe Premiere Rush that provide guided tutorials, are fairly easy to use and produce quality results. In addition, the University of Miami's Creative Studio is available for consultations, and instructional sessions within your classroom.
4. Create a rubric for grading that aligns with your learning goals.

Case Studies

Case studies provide real-world examples for students to ponder, research, discuss and summarize. Cases provide an opportunity for learners to preview situations they can expect to encounter and apply theory to practice. Often, case studies also may include open-ended problems. Open-ended problems challenge students by forcing them to identify what they know in relation to a problem, allowing the group to then focus on the aspects of the problem they do not understand. Other opportunities for case studies allow educators to introduce role-playing scenarios. Role-playing is an activity-based learning environments where students approach complex, real-life issues from different perspectives and collaborate to find evidence-driven solutions.

Tips for designing a case study analysis assignment:

1. Identify the learning goals for the project and make sure that they align with your course goals.
2. Provide students with options for cases. Identify 3-4 case studies that are relevant to the topic or course that your students can choose from that will align with their interests, knowledge and cultural background.
3. Alternatively, you could create your own case studies or ask your students to create their own.
4. Break it down into parts with due dates. Identify 3-4 major tasks you would like your students to complete. For example this might include an introduction, background information, proposed solutions or recommendations.
5. Create a rubric for grading.

Strategies for Creating an Authentic Assessment

There are a number of ways to approach designing an authentic assessment. Here's some guiding steps to help you think about the process.

Step 1: Establish clear, observable expected goals for student learning (Suskie, 2018).
What do you ultimately want students to learn from the assessment?

Step 2: Identify and select learner-orientated assignments (Carless, 2015) to assess student learning. Some examples may include written assignments, oral presentation or performance, creative projects, reports, and portfolios of work. Carless (2015) highlights that our

choice of assessment methods often involves "a complex interplay between what has gone on before, contextual issues, the nature of the discipline, and staff (and student) preferences." Consider what evidence of student learning do these assignments produce and that you may need to share with your program.

Step 3: Draft the rubric, criteria, or instrument to be used to assess completed assignments (Suskie, 2018) or student performance (Fink, 2013). What will you use to determine student achievement towards goals and outcomes? A rubric can bring transparency to the assessment process, clarify intended learning outcomes, and state clearly what an instructor expects of students (Carless, 2015).

Step 4: Craft clear, guidelines and instructions related to any assignments (Suskie, 2018). In addition to details about the purpose, deadlines, guidelines may include a reference to rubrics, criteria, and exemplars to help define assessment (Carless, 2015).

Step 5: Design and create teaching and learning activities that will shape the learning experience for students (Fink, 2013). Ensure students have sufficient opportunities to achieve the learning goals (Suskie, 2018). This may include creating activities that allow students to prepare for assessments, like writing multiple drafts of a research paper and engaging in peer and self-assessment activities using criteria.

Step 6: Establish how you will gather, analyze, and interpret evidence of how well student learning meets those goals (Suskie, 2018). Consider how you will gather evidence that demonstrates what learning has taken place. This may involve using embedded assessments within a course like an observation of student performances, or collection of digital submissions. Other evidence may include exit tickets, mid-semester surveys that provide perceptions and attitudes related to questions about student learning.

Step 7: Establish a feedback strategy that is frequent, immediate, discriminating (Suskie, 2018). Carless (2015) also argues that the key role of an educator is to develop students' expertise and literacy to engage with feedback and evaluate ways to use it to inform future performance. Creating opportunities through group work, peer assessment, and reflective exercises to respond to and use feedback to improve their learning are key.

Step 8: Use the resulting information to understand and improve student learning (Suskie, 2018). Once assessment evidence is complete, part of the role of the educator is to explore what improvements need to be made to the assessments to improve student learning. For instance, if students are having difficulty meeting the criteria outlined in an assessment, you may need to consider activities and feedback strategies to help students meet those criteria, or revise the assessment.

What are the pros and cons of authentic assessments?

Pros of Authentic Assessments	Cons of Authentic Assessments
More closely reflects real-world thinking and skills	Significant initial upfront development
Can promote intrinsic motivation	Larger courses can require additional instructional support and training of assessors
Creates opportunities for collaborative learning	Unfamiliar techniques can overwhelm students
Promotes academic integrity through authenticity and creativity	Can take longer to grade for larger classes
Great match for different types of learning objectives	

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is honest and responsible scholarship, where students engage in academic work, attributing their sources and development of knowledge. Instructors and students review [University of Miami's Honor Code](#) to review our institutional policies on academic integrity.

How do I prevent and detect plagiarism in assessment submissions?

You can use Safe Assign for Blackboard Assignments such as a research paper. SafeAssign is a plagiarism prevention tool that checks the originality of students' written submissions. SafeAssign automatically conducts these checks by comparing submissions assignment against a database of other assignment submissions and academic articles. SafeAssign originality reports provide detailed information about the matches found between a student's submitted paper and existing sources. Both instructors and students can use the report to review assignment submissions for originality and create opportunities to identify how to properly attribute sources. SafeAssign is only available for Blackboard assignments, and not other tools such as Journals or Blogs. Here are some UM resources to get started with Safe Assign:

- [Using SafeAssign \(video\)](#)
- [Create an assignment with SafeAssign enabled](#)
- [Grade with SafeAssign in Blackboard Learn](#)
- [Finding and interpreting SafeAssign Originality Reports](#)

What are other ways I can encourage students to uphold academic integrity?

Here are recommendations on how to encourage academic integrity in the classroom and discourage plagiarism/cheating.

- Communicate to students that if they are struggling in your course, to contact you during virtual office hours.
- Guide students to resources such as the [Camner Center](#) for tutoring and accommodations through the Office of Disability services.
- Have you and your students co-collaborate on an academic honesty statement where you list expectations for academic integrity.
- Offer practice, low-stakes assessments to give students the opportunity to receive feedback and prepare for high-stakes assessments.
- Offer check-in appointments with students working on large assignments or group projects to make sure they are on track.
- Create authentic assessments as they discourage academic integrity (e.g. students less likely to cheat on a project versus an exam).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

See appendix for more information.

Resources

Where can I find ideas for assessments?

Open Educational Resources: [Open educational resources](#) (OERs) are instructional materials that are published and licensed to be freely used, adapted, and distributed. OER course materials and assignments are available via a collection of repositories: the [OER Commons](#), [MERLOT](#), [AMSER](#), [Open Course Library](#), and Language Panda. Other places may include the [Adobe Education Exchange](#) and a great resource guide, searchable by disciplines, by [Humbolt State University](#).

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: UNC offers several exercises related to writing assignments. For instance, you may wish to break down a larger writing assignment into annotated bibliographies, concept maps, outlines or presentation of resources.

The University of New South Wales provides various examples and resources about different types of assessment methods, including pros and cons. [View exemplars](#) of digital assessments

they have shared from faculty.

[The University of Central Florida's \(UCF\) Center for Distributed Learning \(CDL\)](#) offers the Teaching Online Pedagogical Repository (TOPR) as a public resource for faculty and instructional designers interested in online and blended teaching strategies.

[The Chronicle of Higher Education's Teaching and Learning](#)

[Newsletter](#): *Teaching-and-learning* experts give you insights on what works in the classroom from University educators.

[Vanderbilt's Center for Teaching and Learning](#): Vanderbilt shares a wealth of guides on different assessment strategies, including classroom assessment techniques.

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Appendix: Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Accommodations and the ADA

What are academic accommodations?

Academic accommodations are adjustments that provide equal academic opportunity for students with disabilities. Academic accommodations are designed to provide equal access to courses and programs, but they do not guarantee an outcome or a level of achievement. Academic accommodations must be reasonable and may not alter the core competencies or standards of a course. They need not be provided when the accommodation would result in a fundamental alteration of the program or impose an undue financial or administrative burden on the institution. Furthermore, accommodations are not required to address a personal need such as: an attendant, an individually prescribed device, a reader for personal use or study, or other devices or services of a personal nature.

Who can request academic accommodations?

Accommodations must be requested by a student in a timely manner which will allow ODS to review documentation, determine eligibility, and coordinate the accommodations. This includes providing instructors reasonable notice prior to using the accommodation. Because some accommodations take longer to coordinate, students are advised to provide their Professor Memo to instructors within the first two weeks of the term. Faculty can avoid last minute requests by asking students to provide these memos and including a statement in the course syllabus.

What is the process of requesting/reviewing academic accommodations?

The process of granting and coordinating accommodations takes time and is not intended to be a triage for students suddenly struggling in a course. In most cases, a disability is a long standing condition that has been tested and identified by a medical, psychological, or learning professional. The law requires a meeting with each student and completing a comprehensive review of all documents submitted by the student. Students receive a decision letter outlining the accommodations they have been granted and are asked to meet with ODS to review the policies and practices they need to understand to utilize their accommodations. An important part of this process includes informing students about how they are expected to communicate

with instructors about accommodations. Accommodations are not granted retroactively and ODS is required to follow this process for every student.

Each accommodation is evaluated and granted individually; accommodations are not granted as a package or based solely on a diagnosis. Accommodations are based on the functional limitations specified in the documentation submitted by the student.

Understanding Accommodations in the Post Secondary Setting

According to law, accommodations in the post secondary setting commonly refer to: a) modifications to the manner of providing instruction in order to provide equal access to educational materials and b) modifications to the manner of testing or measuring competence in a particular course.

What do academic accommodations look like in the classroom?

Depending on the nature of the disability and its impact on major life activities, a student may need instructional materials provided in an alternative format (enlargement of handouts, books on CD, Braille) or may need an auxiliary aid (closed circuit FM radio, scanning text reader) or services (sign language interpreters). Students with learning disabilities, for example, may need extra time for exams or permission to use a word-processor for writing essay exams. Students with disabilities are expected to meet the same standards of academic performance as other students, but may be allowed an accommodation in the manner in which performance is measured. For example, allowing time and one-half for testing or allowing an electronic Reader for exams. Accommodations are permitted to ensure the academic competency is being measured rather than the effect of the disability. Modifications or accommodations that change the academic competency are never reasonable and not expected of faculty. The most common accommodation granted in post secondary institutions is "extended time for exams" since many types of disabilities affect the capability of retrieving and expressing information within time limits.

Who should I consult with about providing academic accommodations in my course?

Instructors should consult with the [Office of Disability Services](#) (ODS) as soon as possible if there is any question or concern about an accommodation or how it should be provided. If an instructor has a concern that a specific accommodation may fundamentally alter the nature of the course, the instructor should contact ODS as soon as possible so that the concern may be addressed. There may be times when extended time accommodations are not appropriate.

Extending Time in Blackboard for Students with Testing Accommodations

Who sets up extended time for students taking Blackboard exams and how much time should I give them?

Faculty provide extended time for students registered with the Office of Disabilities on their own, as part of Blackboard. Faculty may ask students to provide a copy of their Professor Memo, which will outline the accommodations granted to the student. Each student may have different testing accommodations but there are only two options for the amount of extended time, 1.5 and 2.0. The most common is 1.5 extended time and extended time is calculated by multiplying the number of minutes provided to the class by 1.5 or 2.0. For example, a class taking an exam on Monday may have the entire class period of 50 minutes to complete the exam. Extended time 1.5 would allow a student an additional 25 minutes for a total of 75 minutes to complete the exam. After creating the exam in Blackboard, instructors have the option to select students and set the time limit for individual students or student groups for any exam administered in Blackboard.

How do I set up extended time for a student with approved accommodations on Blackboard?

When creating an exam, navigate to **Test Availability** under **Test Options**. Faculty must **Add Users** by searching a student's name and selecting students with extended time. Adjust the length in minutes next to their name to provide extended time. ODS allows extended time in the form of time and 1.5 or 2.0. This does not mean untimed or unlimited time. Blackboard training is available [here](#).

Extending Time in Zoom for Testing Accommodations

Proctoring exams using Zoom meetings requires more planning and thought because the testing environment is not as controlled or individualized. Faculty have discovered many different ways to proctor using Zoom, the most common involves watching students on camera and with sound as they complete their exam. Faculty should consider several things regarding the testing environment when using Zoom.

How will extended time be managed for students who need to stay on Zoom?

Consider moving these students into breakout rooms prior to the end of the exam. This allows faculty to communicate with students in the main Zoom session without causing a distraction for students with additional time. Also, consider that some students may need their extended time

added to the beginning of an exam. Students may have another class that prevents them from adding it to the end or exams that begin late may extend the exam too late into the evening for a student. This can occur with exams beginning after 7pm where a student may have double time extended the end time until midnight. Consider having students with extended time begin their exams early and move them into a breakout session when other students begin joining. Once all students are working quietly, rejoin the groups. Faculty should be able to record the breakout sessions to maintain academic integrity.

How will students monitor their time or be aware of the time remaining?

Consider providing a clock or timer for students to view and avoid disruptions.

How can I help students limit distractions during exams?

Provide students with the option to mute themselves, turn down the volume on their device, or use ear plugs. Plan to communicate with students using the chat feature. If a student has a question during the exam, consider answering individual questions using the chat feature, limiting questions from students, or moving students in a break out session for any conversations.

How will students with an electronic reader use their accommodation?

Students with this accommodation need to have exams in compatible formats and the reader will be heard by others if the student is not allowed to mute themselves.

Distraction Reduced Testing Location

What is a distraction reduced testing accommodation?

Distraction reduced testing is an accommodation granted to students for a few different reasons but the most common necessity is the reduction in known classroom distractions. Eliminating all possible distractions is not reasonable and is not expected. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with instructors (well in advance) when the in person classroom setting does not meet their needs. Reducing distractions may be allowing the student to select a seat away from a door, wear earplugs, or it may involve ODS proctoring. This is up to the student to determine in advance of, and not during, an exam.

Am I obligated to provide a distraction reduced testing location?

The obligation to provide a distraction reduced testing location is on the university and instructor when exams are in person. The responsibility falls on the student when participating in remote or online exams. Students approved for a testing location with limited distractions are responsible for identifying an appropriate location for remote exams.

Students enrolled in courses listed as in person may use the test proctoring services at ODS if the exam is being administered to all students on campus and would be considered an in

person exam. Students schedule exams using the Accommodate portal and must select from test start times of 9am, 11am, 1pm, and 3pm. The last time available for students with 2.0 (double time) for exams the class receives 75 minutes to complete is the 1pm seating.

How can instructors reduce distractions during online proctored exams?

Here are some tips on how and your students can reduce distractions during online proctored exams.

Reducing noise levels and disruptions

The first thing is to be aware of the noise in the background and avoid anything that may take students off the task at hand. Online exams proctored using Blackboard Respondus allow the student the most control when it comes to distractions. Students set up their own environment and take the exam. The biggest concern for students taking exams on Respondus is remembering to keep their eyes on the screen and hands on computer.

Faculty administering exams using Zoom will need to minimize the distractions in the online environment. This includes noise distractions from other students and conversations where all students are interrupted when the conversation does not pertain to their exam. Limiting background noises can be accomplished by asking students to mute themselves during zoom proctoring. If monitoring the noise is part of how you proctor, you may allow students to turn down the volume on their computer. Offer to communicate with students using the chat or break out room.

Work with students

Students must identify issues and present them to the faculty before exams or as soon as the issue arises. Faculty are responsible for working with the student to provide reasonable options without compromise to academic integrity. To accommodate students with a distraction reduced testing location faculty can:

- Allow students to lower the volume on their device or ask students to mute themselves
- Allow students to use earplugs or noise cancelling headphones
- Avoid conversations during the exams
- Answer questions using the chat or breakout rooms

Reserve/Book Spaces

Students taking exams remotely may utilize campus study spaces for a distraction reduced testing location. We recommend students identify spaces at the beginning of the semester and make online reservations if necessary. The UM Libraries offer quiet study spaces, including individual rooms and a Respondus Testing Space for students needing to take online tests who do not have personal devices capable of loading that software. These spaces can be booked up

to 7 days in advance and are limited. Here are some additional options for on campus students taking remote exams:

- Richter Library - book [here](#) up to 7 days in advance
- Respondus Testing Space - book [here](#) up to 7 days in advance. This space is available for students without devices capable of loading Respondus Lockdown Browser
- Music Library - book [here](#) up to 7 days in advance
- Marine Library - book [here](#) up to 7 days in advance
- Shalala Student Center - Student Org Suites (2nd floor) or 24-hour Kornspan Study Lounge (1st floor)
- Residential College and Lakeside Village for residential students
- Classrooms - find available shared study spaces [here](#)
- Architecture Research Center - book [here](#) up to 7 days in advance
- Outdoor Seating - gliders or tables around campus

What are some other recommendations for providing a distraction reduced testing accommodations as well as extended time?

If the student also receives extended time, they will need to continue the exam without the class returning to discussion or lectures. Faculty may request the student begin the exam early to accommodate extended time and finish prior to any return to teaching. Consider how you can offer the extended time to students. Faculty have the option to offer extended time by starting the exam early, adding the extended time onto the end of the exam, or offering an alternative time. The most preferred option is to provide extended time at the end of an exam, however, this may not work for students who have back-to-back classes or in late night courses. Here are some tips to help manage the extended time process for students with disabilities:

- Make your procedure known to students by including a statement in the syllabus about how and when extended time accommodations are managed in the online environment. Provide students with a deadline to present you with the Professor Memo and inform them that last minute accommodations may not be possible once an exam is set up in Blackboard Respondus.
- Ask students to email their Professor Memo along with a current screenshot of their class schedule. This will help you identify time conflicts if you opt to start students early or add the time at the end of the exam.
- Add students into Blackboard as a group based on the increment of extended time. The Blackboard Help Desk can support you with the initial set up or provide instructions on how to do this one time.
- Consider how you will provide extended time to students if you opt to proctor the exams using Zoom. There are several factors that must be actively managed when selecting this option.
- Faculty may receive Professor Memos into the semester as ODS approves new requests. Students are responsible for providing advance notice as outlined in ODS Testing Policies and Procedures.

Respondus Lockdown Accessibility Issues

What are some of the accessibility issues students with accommodations might have when using Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor?

Students approved for use of assistive technology, including Reader, Scribe, and Assistive Devices, may not be able to complete online exams in Respondus Lockdown Browser without additional assistance. Students with these accommodations should coordinate with faculty and ODS to discuss appropriate testing methods. Faculty should be in touch with ODS well in advance of an exam when students are requesting the use of readers for exams.

Reader

Students needing a Reader may download free software to read the text on the screen aloud. This software does not work during Respondus Lockdown exams. In this case, students may be approved to take exams outside of Respondus, individually with faculty, or schedule in person exams with ODS. Students with a Reader accommodation may need additional assistance reading any images or graphics that are not compatible with screen readers.

Scribe

Students needing a Scribe may utilize software, such as Dragon NaturallySpeaking, to convert speech to text. This software does not work well during Respondus Lockdown exams and ODS will proctor exams for students or work with faculty to determine if an exception can be made to allow the student to take the exam outside of Respondus. Students with a Scribe accommodation may need additional assistance answering questions involving graphing.

Mobility

Students with severe mobility disabilities that impact movement or students with disabilities that impact focus may be flagged during exams using Respondus Monitor or other camera monitoring. This may impact students with issues focusing on the screen or sitting still and students with medical conditions. Faculty should outline their test monitoring policies in the course syllabus and how to address these concerns with faculty. We recommend creating a practice test to allow students to identify these issues in advance.

Office of Disabilities (ODS) Testing Center

Where is ODS?

The Office of Disabilities (ODS) Testing Center remains open for students eligible to take exams in person. ODS has moved into the new Student Services Building on the 2nd floor and has expanded the testing room to include 25 testing seats in the main testing room and several private testing rooms for students with assistive technology accommodations such as scribes, readers, or specialized adaptive equipment. This is currently limited to 6 seats in the group testing room based on requirements for social distancing. Exam proctoring services are scheduled at 9am, 11am, 1pm, and 3pm to maximize capacity. Complete ODS Testing Policies can be found [here](#).

When should students schedule taking an exam at ODS?

Students with testing accommodations taking exams in person and on campus must schedule exams with ODS at least 7 days in advance. This timeline allows faculty approximately 2 to 3 business days to see the request in Accommodate and approve the date and time before ODS has to seek clearance from the Student Health Center and prepare for the exam. The preparation includes acquiring any exams not yet received, printing each exam, assigning seats, gathering additional materials, and setting up and testing assistive technology. The Testing Coordinator finalizes the details the day before each exam. Professors should contact ODS immediately if last minute changes or corrections are made to the exam. The Testing Coordinator will make every effort to include the changes or notify students of changes once an exam has begun. However, this may not be feasible on busy testing days.

Final Exams

Scheduling for final exams will open approximately 4 weeks prior to the start of final exams and will be open for a limited time period. Seating for final in person final exams is limited based on capacity. The seating times for final exams are 8am and 1pm. This maximizes the center's capacity to proctor the most common accommodations for extended time (1.5) and distraction reduced testing locations. Students with double time (2.0) can only schedule exams starting at 8am to allow for the full 5 hours of accommodated testing time. Students are notified about the opening of final exam scheduling in a minimum of three separate emails. Once full, the Testing Center may attempt to keep waiting lists for students to switch days or times. Priority is given to students taking group exams. This information is communicated to students and weekly reminder notifications are sent via email.

How can students schedule time to take an exam at ODS?

Students can schedule in person exams with ODS using the online booking system called Accommodate. Students are trained in how to book these appointments during their intake meeting with our ODS staff. Students login to the system and select a course, date, and start time.

<p>Course</p> <p>IND10001</p>	<p>Monday, Jan 25, 2021</p> <p>ODS Testing Room (6 of 6 slots available) 9:00 am</p> <p>ODS Testing Room (6 of 6 slots available) 11:00 am</p> <p>ODS Testing Room (6 of 6 slots available) 1:00 pm</p> <p>ODS Testing Room (6 of 6 slots available) 3:00 pm</p>
<p>Date Range</p> <p>2021-01-05 Select to</p> <p>2021-01-29 Select</p>	<p>Tuesday, Jan 26, 2021</p> <p>ODS Testing Room (6 of 6 slots available) 9:00 am</p> <p>ODS Testing Room (6 of 6 slots available) 11:00 am</p> <p>ODS Testing Room (6 of 6 slots available) 1:00 pm</p> <p>ODS Testing Room (6 of 6 slots available) 3:00 pm</p>
<p>Time Range</p> <p>08 00 am Clear</p> <p>to</p> <p>04 30 pm Clear</p>	
<p>Final Exam</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="radio"/> no</p>	
<p>Override Course Length</p> <p>If you choose to override the length of your course your approved accommodation time will be calculated based on the time you choose (for example, if you are approved for double time and you choose a length of 10 minutes, your alternative test request will be for 20 minutes).</p>	

A student will only see the courses in which they are currently enrolled. Students seeking to take an exam with ODS to make up an Incomplete must contact the office directly. Preference is given to students scheduling exams for the current semester.

What measures have ODS taken in response to COVID-19?

Safety and cleaning procedures are in place for the health and wellbeing of our students and staff. Every student must show a completed Daily Symptom Checker and be cleared by the Student Health Center prior to entering our center. ODS has adapted our process to allow for contactless seating. Each desk is sanitized between exams and new materials are provided to each student. Students are asked to bring their own computers and calculators for exams that require these items. The center has calculators to loan in emergencies but it will not be common practice until it is safe to do so. The Center maintains records of seating charts and video of all exams for 90 days if contact tracing is necessary.

What measures have ODS taken to ensure academic integrity?

Academic integrity is a top priority for all exams proctored by the Testing Center. Every student agrees to the testing policies and procedures as outlined on our website by requesting an exam at ODS. Students also complete an Honor Code when submitting an exam request online. Click [here](#) to review the ODS Testing Policies.

The Office of Disability Services Contact

Students and faculty with questions regarding testing or other academic accommodations can contact ODS at (305) 284-2374 or via email at disabilityservices@miami.edu. For faculty questions regarding test scheduling, please contact ODSTesting@miami.edu for assistance.

Notes and License

This document was created by Learning Innovation and Faculty Engagement at the University of Miami. For questions or comments, please feel free to reach out to us at life@miami.edu.



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