Online Examinations Guidelines

1. Purpose and context

These guidelines specify approaches to online exams conducted in the Learning Management System (LMS) that support the integrity, equivalency, authenticity of the assessment task. Online examinations tests, and quizzes can be conducted remotely and on-campus, and may be administered by the Unit Coordinator, professional accreditation agencies, the University and approved third party providers.

It is recommended that these Guidelines are read in conjunction with the following policies: Examinations, Assessment, and that exams designed for delivery in units taught both on-campus and online have equivalent outcomes and have been approved by relevant committees.

2. Exam types

The classification of the type of examination that is being provided to students is important because it determines the set of procedures and processes that will be need to be put in place to ensure the successful implementation of an examination. An examination can either be formative or summative.

Formative
This is typically an assessment point that is used formatively or part of a series of assessment points that make up a programmatic or longitudinal assessment strategy.

Summative (low weight)
This type of examination is similar to formative but the summative weighting is likely to be higher.

Summative (high weight)
A high weighted summative examination is often used to determine if a student has reached an acceptable standard set by accreditation bodies such as medical, legal or educational organisations responsible for ensuring standards in professional practice. High weighted summative examinations can also be used to determine if students can complete a course of study or move to the next level.

3. Appropriate formats for your online exam

The following decision tree can be used to determine the type of examination to implement. The definition of a summative (high weight) examination relates to the mark that results from the examination and not on the testing instrument itself. If the mark is used as the basis for a

decision that will have a significant impact on a student's life or career path then this could be considered to be a summative (high weight) examination. [1]

Formative
- Is it diagnostic?
- *For example: Is it part of a longitudinal assessment strategy with multiple low weight summative marks that are each less than 30% of the total grade?*

Summative (low weight)
- Is your examination part of a summative set of assessments?
- *For example: is the assessment grade less than 30% of the final grade?*

Summative (high weight)
- Is the examination part of an accreditation requirement?
- Is the examination a threshold requirement?
- Does the result of the examination determine a student's progression?
- For example: does it make up over 30% of the final grade?

Process	Processes for formative examination	Processes for low weight summative examination	Processes for high weight summative examination
Availability and scheduling	Available to students over a few days or flexible completion in batches.	Restrictions in terms of scheduling of examination.	The schedule is fixed and advertised well in advance.
Number of attempts allocated in the assessment setting	Multiple attempts.	Depending on the weighting, consider a single attempt, or if you choose two attempts, take the highest mark in the Grade Centre.	Single attempt.
Learning design	Discussions have taken place with the Learning Futures Portfolio around risk mitigation strategies for academic integrity		
Invigilation	Invigilation is not required.	Examination may require invigilation	Invigilation is required.
Practice tests	A practice test provides students an opportunity to test equipment and internet connection.	Practice test is recommended to enable students to test equipment and internet connection.	Practice test is recommended to enable students to test equipment and internet connection.
Technology platform	Tools in LMS such as quizzes, tests and assignments.	Tools in LMS such as quizzes, tests and assignments. The option of recorded proctoring sessions.	A proctoring platform with appropriate options for delivery of high stakes examination or on-campus computer lab.

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[1] https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0504

BYOD	Students can bring their own device. This is coordinated by the unit coordinator.	Student can bring their own device. This is coordinated by the unit coordinator.	Constraints and restrictions with devices and physical space apply. Centrally coordinated.
Security and authentication	Minimal security (e.g. checking ID).	Minimal security, IP restriction may be applied.	High level of security (sweep of room, ID check, challenge questions).
Are resources allowed?	Resource guidelines are optional.	Resources guidelines are recommended.	Resources guidelines are mandatory.
Examination conditions	Exam conditions not specified.	There may be specific exam conditions.	Compliance with strict examination conditions (see section on proctored online examinations for more details).

4. Proctored online examinations

Online proctoring of an examination refers to the various methods and services to manage, supervise or monitor an examination in an online environment. In an online proctoring scenario, an individual student will typically be taking an examination in a room with internet access. To replicate a traditional, invigilated exam environment and to ensure that examination conditions are met the following thresholds and requirements need to be met.

4.a Proctor/student ratio

For on-campus invigilated examinations a recommended ratio [2] of students to proctors is about 20:1. In an online context, there are different types or modes of invigilation. The live mode or 'live proctoring' is a service that is provided by all the major providers of proctoring services. Live proctoring is likely to be more appropriate for high stakes examinations (see decision tree) as opposed to low or medium stakes examinations. For these examinations, other services are available that can conduct live authentication and then record the examination or perform verification of identity through without the need of human involvement.

4.b Authentication and examination process

As noted above, the authentication process depends on the type of examination that is being provided.

- **Live proctoring**. This option is appropriate for high stakes examinations. Authentication and monitoring of the whole examination is undertaken and some providers offer a 2:1

student to proctor ratio for this scenario.

- **Automated proctoring**. A test-takers identity is verified by a live proctor and the examination is recorded to allow for a review of the test if behavioural anomalies were detected in the recording. This option could be used for a high stakes examination that does not involve accreditation requirements.

- **Automatic authentication**. Identity tests are conducted (e.g. student ID recorded and challenge tests are required) but the examination is not proctored. This option could be used for low or medium stakes examinations.

All proctoring services offer single sign on integration with all the major LMSs. The responsibility for conducting the examination rests with the service provider but the university is responsible for the design of the examination in the LMS.

If students are undertaking a live examination, the responsibility for scheduling a time to take the examination typically rests with the student. Most providers have online systems for scheduling an examination. If the examination is recorded, on the other hand, the student can usually take the examination during the time window specified by the university.

5. An integrated plan for online examinations

5.a Contingency planning and support pathways

It is important to consider contingencies in case there are problems with online examinations. It is the responsibility of the unit coordinator to consider contingency plans and to be appropriately prepared. The importance of planning for contingencies increases with the level of the examination (e.g. high stakes examination) that is being conducted. Examination guidelines for students should consider and evaluate software and hardware requirements.

Problems can include the following:

Technical issues

- The examination is not accessible and available to the student cohort.
    - o In this instance, unit coordinators are advised to prepare before the examination is undertaken and to ensure that the settings in the LMS are configured appropriately.
- Students do not have access to the LMS for the duration of the examination (e.g. internet outage).
- Students are unfamiliar with the technology that is used to access the examination.
- Volume of traffic (e.g. multiple contemporaneous submissions) causing connectivity issues.
- Internet connection problems at the student end.
- The examination involves dependencies of third party providers, e.g. publisher material.
- Time-zone differences that have not been appropriately addressed in the LMS or by the student.

The internet resources required for undertaking an examination that is overseen by a live proctor are likely to be greater than for a recorded examination. The support pathways available to students need to reflect this difference.

Support pathways

It is important to notify students in advance of the problems that they may encounter and to provide them with pathways for addressing issues such as the ones outlined above. Potential contingency plans include the following:

- o Increase the window of time during which the examination is available. This can range from over a few days or a week.
- o Provide the opportunity for multiple submission attempts.
- o Extend the deadline for 48 hours in the event of issues related to access to the examination.
- o If attempt is set to greater than 1 then configure the 'highest mark' setting in the LMS to ensure that grades are recorded.
- o AIPs and deferred examinations outside of semester.
- o Provide contact information (e.g. call ITDS service desk, unit coordinator or both).

Before they undertake the examination, students will need to confirm that they are sitting the examination by completing a declaration.

5.b Iterative improvement to process and training

It is important to ensure that students have been provided with resources and are prepared for processes and procedures associated with the type of examination that will be undertaken. Additionally, training also needs to be undertaken to ensure that staff are familiar with the processes and contingencies related to online examinations.

It also important to continue to evaluate data on the student experiences of undertaking online examinations (qualitative data) as well as recording the comparative data related to the online and traditional modes of examination.

Links to relevant Policies and Guidelines
- ● Producing and Using Multimedia Policy (under development)
- ● Copyright Policy
- ● Privacy policy
- ● Intellectual Property Policy
- ● Acceptable Use of IT Resources policy
- ● Student Code of Conduct
- ● Student Misconduct Rule
- ● Disability Policy