Alternatives to Exams

If you are thinking about replacing an exam with an alternative assessment, this page sets out some options.

If you have any questions about your assessment design or setting up your exam replacement in Moodle, you can contact the CeTTL team by joining an online [Ask Me Anything](#) session, 9-10 am or 3-4 pm every weekday. or logging a job on [Kuhukuhu](#).

These assessments could take place during the exam period or at other points in the trimester.

Assessment type	Procedure	Tips
1 Online test	**A. Use a Moodle Assignment** ● Allows answers to be processed through Turnitin. **B. Use a Moodle Quiz** ● Allows you to set a flexible window with a shorter time limit, e.g. Students have two hours within a given 24 hour period. ● Some questions, including multi-choice, matching, and fill-the-gap, can be automatically marked.	● You could repurpose some of your exam questions and/or ask more complex and open-ended questions. ● Choose questions that encourage students to apply knowledge to help prevent copying and pasting. ● Both Assignment and Quiz can involve students taking photos of handwritten work and uploading them to Moodle. ● A longer time limit: may reduce anxiety; partially mitigates internet access issues; allows for reflective tasks. ● We recommend against online invigilation for privacy and equity reasons. It is also ineffective at ensuring academic integrity.

2 Presentation	**A. Live**: presented via Zoom or Hangouts to the teacher, the class, or a group. **B. Uploaded**: as a video to a Panopto Assignment Folder, Moodle Assignment, or Moodle Forum ● Students could demonstrate practical knowledge gained from the paper, or select among a series of topics assigned by the lecturer. ● Students can use visuals, like PowerPoint or realia, to present their work.	● Check your students have the necessary resources, such as a camera and microphone; give them opportunities to practice recording before any high stakes assessment. ● Students could teach one another paper concepts to reinforce learning or revise for a test. ● For pre-recorded presentations, consider setting up a Forum where students can ask and answer questions about their presentation. ● The file size limit for Moodle is 300 MB, but files under 100MB are more likely to be trouble-free. For larger video files, we recommend using a Panopto Assignment Folder.
3 Viva voce	Asking students to explain their understanding of academic concepts verbally is a common thesis defence examination technique.To use with larger classes, provide students with a set of questions ahead of time, then ask one or more of these questions in a short online meeting with each student. To reduce workload, consider involving two or three students per conversation. Vivas may appear time consuming, but are a highly valid form of assessment and an effective way to ensure academic integrity.	● Moodle Choice with appointment slots allows students to self-select viva voce times. ● Consider filming an example viva voce. ● Consider allowing a waiting time when asking questions so students can gather their thoughts. ● Consider how important it is that a student clearly articulates their understanding. Will you penalise a rambling answer that mentions all key points? Enforcing a set time period might help. ● Mark as you go to save time. ● Zoom meetings can be recorded as evidence and to help with moderation.

4 Tight deadline assignment	Set up a Moodle Assignment with a short deadline, e.g. 2 - 7 days. This may work well for problem-based or scenario-based questions, and may mimic many work situations where students have tight deadlines to produce a response or report under open book conditions.	● Likely to work best for application of knowledge to a scenario rather than a research assignment. ● Keep task expectations realistic. Students may be balancing other assessments and responsibilities.
5 Reflection	Students could write a reflection on their experience of the paper, or on how they have achieved specific learning objectives. To reflect on a group of objectives, students could present a portfolio of all the assessments they completed during the trimester, including a critical introduction to the portfolio, a brief introduction to each piece, and a conclusion on what they have learned. This may work best if you have several smaller assessments during the trimester. Students could write how they have achieved the paper goals or outcomes, and/or tie each paper goal/outcome with content they have read or an assignment that they have worked on during the trimester.	● Students tie the theory or themes in the paper to their personal, academic or professional experiences. ● Provide questions or prompts for students to guide their reflection.

Considerations when designing a final assessment

● What were your intended learning outcomes for the paper? Have you already assessed any of these?

- What was the purpose of your exam? E.g. assessing learning outcomes that have not yet been assessed, consolidation of learning, encouraging students to make connections between different content or skills, inviting students to achieve greater competence of learning outcomes.
- Is it better to replace your exam with one assessment or a combination of smaller assessments? (Also consider marking time.)
- What is practical for you and your students? (Workload, technology, study/work environment, etc.)
- Does your assessment require a new tool or technique? Give students low-stakes opportunities to familiarise themselves.
- Are there any students in your paper with special needs that will require extra space or support?
- Can you coordinate with colleagues in your programme to spread out high-stakes assessments? Consider using a shared Google "Assessment" calendar.
- Do you have more than one assessment to meet your learning objectives? Consider giving your students an element of choice. Could they demonstrate their knowledge via different media, e.g. a video presentation or an essay?
- Communicate the changes clearly to students in writing on your Moodle page, and in a Moodle Announcement or other communication. Include details such as the length of assessment, time frame, depth of response required, any marking criteria, etc.

Tips for marking the final assessment

- Clear marking criteria can help streamline your marking. It can also help with moderation across several markers in large classes. Share the marking criteria before the assessment to give students greater clarity.
- Providing feedback is recommended. Technology can help. Feedback Studio, integrated with Moodle's Assignment activity, allows you to record audio feedback or draw from a collection of frequently used comments. Alternatively, you can add feedback files to Moodle.
- Could students mark their own or peers' assessments? Reflecting on the process of judging their own or others' work might comprise an assessment, e.g. as part of a student presentation.
- Remember to take regular breaks and look after yourself.

Tips for encouraging academic integrity

- Emphasise to students the importance of academic integrity. Talk explicitly about your expectations.

- Pressure can lead to cheating. Consider whether more time or additional support might reduce pressure while still validly assessing.
- If you use self-marking quizzes to manage your marking workload, consider strategies such as shuffling, adding random questions, or including a question where students can elaborate on an answer, either in writing or by recording video/audio.
- Activities where students are asked to write about their experience of a task encourage academic integrity. Reflective assignments should ask students to make links between their experience and the paper content.

Exam replacement

1. Create your exam replacement in Moodle

If you have a final assessment in place of an exam, in Moodle you will need to create either

(a) an Assignment where students can upload a file,

OR

(b) a Quiz,

OR

(c) a place for you to enter a mark for some other type of assessment. Create a Moodle Assignment without file submission. (Select **Other Item** if using the Moodle Paper Setup Wizards.)

2. Check your settings

- Check the weighting.
- Check that the final assessment is not hidden in the paper OR in the Gradebook.
- (a) If you want students to upload a file, check:
  - Is your final assessment set up so students can submit a file?
  - Are the open, due and cut-off dates set to be the 24 hours (6:00 am - 5:59 am) the assessment is available?
- (b) If you want the students to take a quiz, check:
  - Is your final assessment set up as a quiz?
    - Yes: Adjust to reflect the scheduled date and time
    - No: Delete the assessment item and replace it with a quiz

3. Delete your original exam assessment item

If you had previously created an assessment item in Moodle for your exam, remember to delete it.

4. Communicate the details to students

Post a message to the Announcements forum with details of the assessment: date, time, and type.