A take-home exam is an asynchronous assessment where students can consult course resources like textbooks, notes, online resources, or even peers in completing the examination.

**When should you use take-home exams?**
When it is appropriate for students to:
- Have access to notes, texts, or other information during their exam
- Apply knowledge from available sources to specific problems, questions, or case studies
- (Option) work in groups to collaboratively access and apply information to specific problems, questions, or case studies (Johnson et al., 2015)

**What are some strengths of take-home exams?**
- Allows for assessment of higher order learning (e.g., application, analysis, evaluation, creation)
- Develops information literacy skills
- Mimics actual professional activities where access to information is not intentionally limited
- More realistic demonstration of learning than standard exams
- Less anxiety provoking for some students than standard exams
- Flexible in terms of the form of assessment (e.g., essay questions, analysis of cases, analysis and interpretation of data)

**What are some challenges of take-home exams?**
- Writing good questions can be difficult
- Generally involve fewer, more involved questions and may not allow as comprehensive an assessment of student learning as closed book exams
- Students may not be familiar with this form of assessment
- Grading can be time consuming
- Grades may be higher than with closed book exams (Parkes & Zimmaro, 2018)

Many of the strengths and limitation for take-home exams are specific to the format of the questions [e.g., see Boye (2019) for the strengths and limitations of essay exams].

**Specific academic integrity issues**
One of the major concerns with take home exams is academic integrity. Below are a number of strategies that one might employ to try to help address this issue.

- Create questions that assess higher order thinking skills (e.g., application, analysis, evaluation, creation) as this will reduce the possibility of students simply looking up the answer online.
- Require students to explicitly draw on course materials (e.g., course notes, textbook) and properly cite these sources as this will also reduce students simply looking up the answers online.
Clearly communicate expectations concerning the exam (e.g., are students allowed to collaborate and to what extent; what are the page or word limits; how much time do they have; how, in what format, and using what naming conventions should the exams be submitted; how should they cite sources) and provide an opportunity for students to ask questions about the process.

Inform students of the pedagogical rationale for selecting this form of assessment as students are more likely to cheat if they think that assessments are simply busy-work (McCabe et al., 2012).

Use Turnitin, a plagiarism detection software, in OWL’s Assignments tool to determine the originality of students’ submissions (click on these links for more information on enabling Turnitin for an assignment and generating a Turnitin originality report).

For additional help with Preparation, implementation, grading/feedback and Tools @ Western to aid in your implementation, visit our online resource here: https://teaching.uwo.ca/elearning/student_assessment/alt-assessment-ideas.html#take-home

Helpful References

