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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.

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- 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

Boye, A. P. (2019). *Writing better essay exams*. IDEA Paper# 76. IDEA Center. https://www.ideaedu.org/idea_papers/writing-better-essay-exams/

Johnson, C. M., Green, K. A., Galbraith, B. J., & Anelli, C. M. (2015). *Assessing and refining group take-home exams as authentic, effective learning experiences Journal of College Science Teaching, 44* https://doi.org/10.2505/4/jcst15_044_05_61

Parkes, J., & Zimmaro, D. (2018). *The college classroom assessment compendium: A practical guide to the college instructor's daily assessment life. Routledge.*