

Take home exams

What is a take home exam?

A take home exam is a non-proctored exam. Students complete the exam in their own time, over an extended period - usually days, rather than hours, as is usually the case for in-person exams (Bengtsson, 2019).

Take home exams are open book exams that students complete at a location of their choosing. While students do not require an internet connection to synchronously (same time) participate in the exam, they do require an internet connection to download the exam and upload their submission. Take home exams allow students to develop skills to retrieve, apply and synthesise information, providing an opportunity to assess higher levels in Blooms Taxonomy (Bengtsson, 2019).

Why use a take home exam

Redesigning your existing in-person exam as a take home exam means that students can complete the questions offline and upload their completed exam via StudyDesk later. The benefits of this approach are that:

- » students do not have to be connected to the internet to complete the exam, therefore mitigating possible connectivity issues with other exam formats (such as StudyDesk exams)
- » they can help to reduce student anxiety around assessment (Bengtsson, 2019; Johnson et al, 2015)
- » it may be easier to manage marking of extended responses in take home exam format than via a StudyDesk exam, as usual marking workflows can be used
- » you can use Turnitin to check for plagiarism. Notably, Turnitin requires 'typed' responses. Exams written in a booked physical venue, or on-campus, usually have hand-written responses from students. As Course Examiners, you need to clearly specify whether you will accept handwritten responses in online exams.

When to use a take home exam

You might consider using a take home exam when:

- » you need to assess application of knowledge and higher order thinking
- » you are converting an in-person extended response exam to another format
- » you are converting an exam that is already open book.

How it works

- » As the Course Examiner, you decide how long students have to complete the exam. For example, you might give the students 24 or 48 hours from release of the exam instructions, or you might release it on a Friday for return on a Monday.
- » You provide the exam to students via the Assessment tab on StudyDesk at a pre-determined time that is clearly communicated to students in advance.
- » Students complete the exam and submit via the Assessment tab on StudyDesk by the due date.

- » Good practice suggests that a rubric be used for extended responses where there is an element of subjective evaluation (Boye, 2019).

Mitigating academic integrity issues

The following strategies are suggested to assist with mitigating academic integrity concerns. You might like to:

- » set multiple scenarios or a bank of questions randomly allocated to students. These could be made available to students at a pre-announced time (Delorme, 2017)
- » use Turnitin for extended response questions to encourage originality of work and detect plagiarism (Sulehri, Chaudry & Qadeer, 2017; Williams & Wong, 2009)
- » narrow the timeframe to complete the exam, although consider whether a shortened timeframe may disadvantage students who may need time to deliver work to a higher standard (Lancaster & Clarke, 2017).

Further information and support

OALT staff are available to provide practical support for question and task redesign, including:

- » co-creating tasks sheets and rubrics
- » reviewing exam questions and advising on question design.

Practices

The following practices should underpin the conversion of all examination assessment items:

- » the learning outcomes assessed remain the same
- » the weighting of the assessment item (percentage of overall marks available for the course) remains the same
- » the assessment due date remains the same.

References

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