

Academic Integrity Online: Tips for Online Quizzes and Tests



As online instructors, we promote & enforce academic integrity online through our teaching practices, our technical tools, and our institutional policies (e.g., Mason Honor Code). In this newsletter issue, we will:

- Share information about technical tools available for online tests and proctoring at Mason.
- Direct you to resources available from Stearns Center and from Information Technology Services (ITS) about creating online quizzes and tests.
- Introduce alternatives you might consider for high-stakes online quizzes and tests (e.g., formative assessments, alternative assessments).

Technical Tools to Support Academic Integrity Online at Mason

For Instructors: The following **Online Testing and Proctoring Tools** are available within your Blackboard course at Mason:

- **Respondus 4.0** is a tool for creating and managing exams that can be printed to paper or published directly to Blackboard.
- **LockDown Browser** is a custom browser that locks down the testing environment within the Blackboard environment. It locks down student browsers and prohibits them from accessing the internet on their computer while taking an exam.
- **Respondus Monitor** is a complement to the LockDown Browser and uses a student's webcam and video analytics to prevent cheating during non-proctored exams. iPads are supported. Students will need to use an internal (built-in) or external (USB) webcam. After the exam, faculty and TAs can review the video of student behavior the system has flagged as suspicious. Respondus Monitor is recommended for online tests by Mason's **Office of Academic Integrity**.
- **Have questions?** If you need assistance with these tools in your Blackboard course, please contact Mason ITS Blackboard Courses Support at courses@gmu.edu.

Creating Online Quizzes and Tests in Blackboard

- Video: **Creating Online Tests and Using Lockdown Browser and Monitor** (40 min) (ITS and Stearns Center, March 2020).
- Website: **How to Make Respondus Lockdown Browser and Monitor Required for Tests in Blackboard?** (ITS)

For Students: Here is information (from Mason ITS) for taking online quizzes and tests online-- Please share with your students to prepare them for online quizzes and tests:

- **How Do I Install and Use the Respondus LockDown Browser?**
- **How Do I Turn On Respondus Monitor?**
- **How Do I Take a Test Online?** (includes guidance for what student should do if something goes wrong during the test)
- **Blackboard Instructional Technology Support for Students**

Consider Alternatives to High-Stakes Proctored Online Tests and Quizzes

A challenge of teaching online is balancing assessment of student learning with academic integrity. Proctoring tools are often used to reduce the temptation to cheat on high-stakes online exams. Although helpful to instructors, students may feel stress, anxiety and suspicion about online proctoring and how it works.

What are some alternatives to proctored online quizzes and exams? You might consider using **Formative** or **Alternative assessments**. Smaller, lower-stakes assignments (*i.e.*, formative assessments) throughout an online course encourage academic integrity. Using alternatives to high-stakes exams (*i.e.*, alternative or authentic assessments) may reduce the opportunity, need and rationalization of students to cheat (["The Cheating Trifecta"](#)).

Why Use Formative Assessments? **Formative assessments** create opportunities for students to receive feedback throughout the course. Students can build their confidence when they regularly validate & check their mastery of course concepts. You can use formative assessments to replace high-stakes exam (*e.g.*, midterm), and you can use formative assessments to better prepare students for major summative assessments (*e.g.*, final exam).

- See [Stearns Center Formative Assignments Handout](#) for more information and ideas.
- Use [Blackboard Test Tool](#) to create quick, low-stakes quizzes (which also promote memory retrieval and prepare for complex learning) that can be automatically graded and recorded.
- Use [Blackboard Discussion Tool](#) for low-stakes activities to help your students synthesize & discuss material covered in your online course. See [Stearns Center Digital Learning Guide for Facilitating Effective Discussions](#).

Why Use Alternative Assessments? Alternative assessments involve authentic or realistic assessments (*e.g.*, portfolios, project, peer assessment, & other non-examination assessments). Alternative assessments allow students more freedom and creativity to demonstrate their knowledge, mastery & application of course content. Such assessments may prepare students for career by simulating "real-world" tasks and experiences. Alternative assessments promote academic integrity, since these focus on students creating original work to demonstrate higher order skills, critical thinking, problem-solving & solutions, rather than memorizing and recalling facts for high-stakes exams. There are benefits and challenges to Alternative Assessments, which we will explore in an upcoming issue of The Online Teaching Coaching Newsletter! (**Coming soon this Spring**)

- **Video:** Watch Stearns Center Digital Learning webinar recording, [Alternative Assessments: Design Challenges and Options](#). (80 min)

Contact Us!

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