Alternative Assessments for Remote Implementation

This document seeks to provide an overview of selected assessment approaches that can be implemented online. It considers how existing assessment practices might be adapted or repurposed for online assessment in a way that is academically and pedagogically sound. Please note that this resource is designed by Academic Practice to guide you as you adapt assessment practices to the current context. It is not intended to be prescriptive.

All assessments should enable students to demonstrate the achievement of learning outcomes. Often formal summative assessment practice is carried out through end of semester examinations. Students can, however, demonstrate the achievement of module or programme-level learning outcomes through a variety of other assessment formats. Consider how best to focus on complex, process-orientated questions testing higher order critical or creative thinking rather than on assessments that predominantly test student recall. When designing or repurposing alternative assessments, consider integrating pedagogical strategies into your assessment design that make it harder for students to simply copy and paste from online sources or each other.

Any alternative assessment model should require a comparable effort from the student in terms of workload. (Further information on this is available on our Academic Practice Resource ‘ECTS: Workload and Assessment Considerations’).

Considerations when implementing remote assessments:

1. Does the online assessment enable students to demonstrate achievement of the required learning outcomes?
2. Has the novel assessment been sized appropriately to ECTS weighting?
3. If appropriate, have existing assessment criteria (e.g. rubrics) been adapted to the online assessment?
4. Have any/all changes in assessment practice been clarified with students?
5. Is there a clear and comprehensive set of instructions on how to complete the new assessment format? Are these available to all students and staff?
6. Have students had a chance to practise novel assessments in a low-stakes environment?
7. Has an opportunity been provided for students to disclose if they have difficulties engaging with the new assessment task?
8. Where alternative assessment is taking place online, has due care been taken around the secure recording and storage of online assessment (e.g. GDPR, confidentiality)?
9. Have any concerns around academic integrity been addressed?

The following assessment tasks are particularly suited for open-book implementation:

1. **Annotated Bibliography:** Student provides a descriptive and evaluative commentary on their citations to demonstrate their engagement with the sources cited.
2. **Presentations:** Student submits or presents content remotely e.g. through pre-recorded or live voice-over-PowerPoint, video clip, or podcast.
3. **Extended Matching Question**: A detailed form of multiple-choice question that has a lead-in statement (such as a clinical vignette), followed by a list of at least five options from which the learner selects one or more, as instructed.

4. **Critical Reading**: Student extracts information actively from a text and/or demonstrates their learning from the way the author selects and arranges facts.

5. **Image Analysis (photograph)**: Student can use a visual prompt to ground personal reflection or may undertake textual analysis of an image. In science, image analysis may also entail the presentation of a quantitative and/or qualitative perspective on the image.

6. **Short Answer Questions**: Student provides short concise answers; often used to document/reflect on increase in knowledge, abilities, and/or skills.

7. **Short Response Paper**: Used to argue for or against a thesis found in a reading. Common in political theory, ethics, legal theory, and philosophy. Reducing word count in essays can promote cognitive stretch for students.

8. **Modified Essay Questions (MEQs)**: Students are presented with a scenario/case study, and then answer a series of questions related to the initial stimulus. These can assess a student’s ability to identify and resolve problems based on information provided and their own knowledge.

9. **Key Features Question (KFQ)**: Assessments using KFQs focus on a difficult aspect in the diagnosis and management of a problem. These can expose areas of (clinical) practice candidates are most likely to make errors. They are most often used for assessment of clinical reasoning skills.

10. **Statements of Relevance**: These short pieces of writing can be used to make claims about the relevance of a workshop, article, field observation etc. to another task or activity.

Online learning management systems such as Blackboard Learn can facilitate the implementation of both summative and formative assessment tasks such as:

1. **ePortfolios/Reflective Journals**:
2. **Virtual Labs**
3. **Blogs**
4. **Brainstorming / Mind Mapping / Concept Mapping**

For more ideas on alternative ways to assess, please view the resource document **100+ Ways to assess**.

**References/Attributions**

This resource has been developed in light of the materials contributing to the design of the Trinity Assessment Framework: [https://www.tcd.ie/TEP/assessment_framework.php](https://www.tcd.ie/TEP/assessment_framework.php)


Teaching intelligence: how to take your classes online [https://www.timeshighereducation.com/career/teaching-intelligence-how-take-your-classes-online](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/career/teaching-intelligence-how-take-your-classes-online)
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This document is not a statement of formal university policy, but a teaching and learning resource written from a pedagogical perspective. It is not intended to be prescriptive.

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