

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 re-purposed for online assessment in a way that is academically and pedagogically sound.

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. 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')

The following assessment tasks are particularly suited for remote implementation:

1. **Annotated Bibliography:** a list of citations followed by a brief descriptive and evaluative paragraph, the purpose of which is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited.
2. **Presentations:** student-generated online content e.g. online quizzes, video/audio, or slide shows.
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:** asking what is learned from the way the author selected and arranged facts and /or to extract information actively from a text.
5. **Image Analysis (photograph):** look for the arrangement of visual elements within a photograph and discern patterns and the meaning to the student. In science, image analysis may also entail the a quantitative and/or qualitative perspective on the image.
6. **Short Answer Questions:** a brief assessment consisting of short questions requiring concise answers to document/reflect on growth in knowledge, abilities, and/or skills.
7. **Short Response Paper:** Used to argue for or against a thesis found in a reading. Common in in political theory, ethics, legal theory, and philosophy. May also be a good way to adapt problem solving in other disciplines.
8. **Modified Essay Questions (MEQs):** a sequence of questions based on a case study. Students are presented with a scenario, and then given a series of questions based on it that they answer with a short text. Assesses a student's ability to identify problems, and resolve them by applying their existing knowledge.
9. **Key Features Question (KFQ):** for assessment of clinical reasoning skills using key features providing significant steps in the resolution of a problem. Examinations using KFQs focus on a difficult aspect in the diagnosis and management of a problem, at which candidates are most likely to make errors.
10. **Statements of Relevance:** short pieces of writing, making claims about the relevance of a workshop, article, field observation etc. to another task or activity.

Online platforms such as Blackboard Learn VLE can facilitate the implementation of:

1. **Blogs:** a regularly updated or informational website consisting of discrete, often informal diary-style text entries ('posts'), which can include student comments and responses from the authors – also useful for peer learning and/or peer assessment).
2. **Brainstorming / Mind Mapping / Concept Mapping:** on various topics using online tools e.g. bubble.us, stormboard.com, MindMup, Coggle it etc.
3. **ePortfolios/Reflective Journals:** submitted and assessed online - used as tool for assessment wherever a repository of evidence, combined with a reflective analysis of the process and outcomes, is prepared for assessment and validation against a set of external criteria.
4. **Virtual Labs:** students work through protocols (as lab manuals, videos, audios) and are examined afterwards.

For more ideas on alternative ways to assess, please view the resource document [100+ Ways to assess](#) .

When designing or repurposing alternative assessments consider pedagogical and design strategies that make it harder for students to simply copy and paste from online sources or each other. Ask complex, process-orientated questions, which test higher order critical or creative thinking, rather than objectively 'right or wrong' questions.

Online Assessment Checklist:

1. Does the online assessment enable students to demonstrate achievement of the required learning outcomes?
2. Has the assessment re-design been sized appropriately to ECTS weighting?
3. If appropriate, have existing assessment criteria (e.g. rubrics) been adapted to the online assessment?
4. Have students been informed of any/all changes in assessment practice?
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 practice?
7. Has an opportunity been provided for students to disclose if they have difficulties engaging with the new assessment practice?
8. Where alternative assessment is taking place online, has due care been taken around the secure recording and storage of online assessment?
9. Have any concerns around academic integrity been addressed?

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

See also the resource '100 Ways to Assess', located at:
<https://www.tcd.ie/CAPSL/assets/pdf/Academic%20Practice%20Resources/100+%20ways%20to%20assess.pdf>

The authors are also grateful to the National Forum for Teaching and Learning for their stimulus document, *10 Points to Consider in Choosing Alternative Assessment Methods for the Online Environment*
<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/wp-content/uploads/10-Points-to-Consider-in-Choosing-Alternative-Assessment-Methods.pdf>

Teaching intelligence: how to take your classes online <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/career/teaching-intelligence-how-take-your-classes-online>

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