

Adapting Your Assessments for Remote Teaching and Learning

Instructor Planning Guide

The Office of Teaching & Learning

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I. Introduction

Part of the transition to remote teaching and learning is altering our assessments so that they continue to align with our learning outcomes, while also providing effective means for students to demonstrate their learning in a remote environment.

You may be changing just one of your assessments, or you may be changing all of them. You may be making small adjustments or completely redesigning your assessments. Either way, this planning guide will guide you through the decision making process and provide you with key questions and guidelines to help you embed assessment strategies that promote learning into your remote courses.

Deciding to redesign aspects of your course can result in an overwhelming task with no endpoint. Before beginning, we advise you to think about what changes are essential and start there. In a typical course redesign institute, we'd recommend changing about 10-15% of your course. How will you ensure that this process is manageable? What is your timeline for making these changes? What support do you have from TAs, colleagues, professional organizations, etc.? Be realistic about what you can accomplish and what *needs* to be changed (versus what would be *nice* to change).

Assessment: A Brief Intro

When we use the word *assessments* we are referring to any activity that is used to measure and evaluate student achievement of learning outcomes. Assessments in remote courses might include the following:

- Papers or Essays
- Presentations or Demonstrations
- Problem Sets
- Projects or Portfolio Assignments
- Case Study Analyses
- Group Projects or Simulations
- Infographics or Digital Posters
- Online Discussions
- Quizzes, Tests, or Exams

Assessments allow students to:

- Practice applying knowledge and skills
- Engage with course content in a meaningful way
- Receive feedback on their learning
- Reflect on their learning

Assessments allow instructors to:

- Create opportunities for students to practice skills and apply knowledge
- See evidence of student progress and engagement with course material
- Determine where students might be struggling with course material
- Provide relevant and timely feedback based on how students have demonstrated their learning

Adapted from Carleton University Teaching and Learning Services, [Assessments and Exams: Considerations for Change](#)

II. Key Principles for Effective Assessment

What are the key principles for effective assessment in a remote environment?

The following key principles for remote assessments are adapted from the University of Calgary's [explanation of key principles](#) and McGill's [principles for adapting assessments](#) for remote teaching. The main points are:

1) Focus on learning

Students will naturally focus their attention and effort on learning content that will be assessed. Therefore, try to ensure that each assessment is an opportunity for students to focus their learning on the most important aims of your course. Stating learning outcomes in clear, accessible language and directly linking assessment tasks to those outcomes supports student learning and success. Think about what you want students to learn and how they will demonstrate their learning. Focus on methods that demonstrate learning while reducing stressors. The worksheet [Aligning Your Course Assessments to your Course Learning Outcomes](#) is provided to outline the connections between your assessments and your learning outcomes.

2) Provide ongoing, frequent, low-stakes assessment activities

Assessments encourage students to engage with the course material, practice essential skills, and think about their own learning. For these reasons, frequent assessment is especially important in the remote environment, where student engagement benefits from the added accountability of assessments. Provide ongoing opportunities for students to check their understanding of the course material that are not graded or are worth small portions of the students' overall grade. Some ideas include quizzes on course content embedded into the material (e.g., quiz questions during or after lectures or videos), polls, chats during synchronous sessions, student reactions in Zoom (e.g., thumbs up), breakout chats or small group chats, and independent self-assessments (e.g., a one minute paper or reflection prompt). To manage the additional grading, use self-grading options (e.g., quizzes), rubrics built into CourseLink, self-assessments, peer feedback, or whole class feedback. Not everything needs to be graded (or graded by you!). See the [Grading and Feedback section](#) for more strategies related to evaluation in the remote environment.

3) Balance structure with flexibility by allowing students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways

When our courses provide choice and flexibility, students feel more in control of their learning, more engaged in the course, and can balance your course with their other courses and responsibilities. Students' individual circumstances may not be ideal for their learning, so integrating some flexibility into your course can help students calibrate their workload to cope with various challenges and circumstances. For

more information, see [the section on student choice and flexibility](#) for strategies to integrate flexibility into your assessment strategy for a remote course.

Keep in mind the increased workload of remote learning. For example, if you are asking students to do a 5-minute presentation, students in a remote environment now have to figure out the technology to create this presentation. Students might hate the sound of their voice and decide to re-record their presentation multiple times until they are happy with the result. Students will spend more time learning how to complete this task than they would have in person, just as instructors are spending more time learning how to navigate the various technologies they are using in their teaching. Without reducing the rigor of your course, consider lessening the workload in your course to accommodate for the increased effort and cognitive load for students learning in this new environment.

4) Provide clear instructions and expectations

Clear communication is essential in remote learning. As many students (and instructors) are still novices in remote learning spaces, it is more important than ever to articulate your expectations and provide clear instructions for assessments. Be as explicit as possible, giving more information than you think is necessary. Capture this information in an easy to follow format, such as a checklist. Here are some questions to consider:

- What do I normally tell students during face-to-face class time about upcoming assessments? How will I share this information in the remote environment? For example, capture this information and advice in a written introduction or short video on CourseLink. Send reminders and announcements regularly.
- How do I typically share grading and evaluation criteria with students?
- How will I ensure students have sufficient opportunities to ask for and receive support with the assessment? What forums will I provide for students to ask questions (e.g., CourseLink discussion board, online office hours, email)?

Be as transparent as possible in describing to students why certain assessments have been chosen, their weighting, and how students will be evaluated. Explain how you expect students to use course materials to learn and prepare for assessments. Help students see how assessment is linked to learning by explaining the value of each assignment in terms of student learning. Try addressing these questions:

- Why is the assessment part of the course?
- How does the assessment relate to course learning outcomes?
- Where might students use the new knowledge or skill after the course?

Use the [Assessment Outline](#) to think through these details and how you will communicate them to your students.

5) Provide opportunities for practice and feedback

The remote environment requires students to be more self-motivated and independent than in the typical on-campus, classroom-based setting. You can promote these dispositions by increasing opportunities for students to practice the skills needed to succeed on higher-stakes assessments and get feedback on their work. Integrate low-stakes practice assignments and scaffolded projects with multiple steps. For example:

- If students will be using a new technology or tool for an assignment (e.g., creating an audio or video presentation), provide a low stakes opportunity early in the semester for students to practice using the tools and building the components they will need for an effective final presentation (e.g., writing a script, submitting a practice video).
- Ask students to submit a project proposal prior to embarking on a large project, or a draft at an early stage of the project. Peer groups could provide feedback and questions for their colleagues' proposals.
- Set up benchmarks or check-ins throughout assignments. Students can create short videos to provide project updates, as well as reply to self-assessment surveys.
- In large classes, short reading responses can be shared in small groups with a rotating summary provider. The summary is submitted to the instructor and you can assess the summary without doing in-depth grading of every reading response.
- Break down large assignments into stages, with components due at different times of the term. Staged assignments allow you to see how students are progressing, and feedback at each stage can help them move forward with the assignment.
- Have students do a similar type of assignment twice: first, with support, and then, more autonomously. The second assignment can also be more conceptually challenging.
- Have students complete practice exams (individually or in small groups) and discuss results together.
- Have students review course materials and submit potential exam questions (with answers). For practice, students can answer the exam questions submitted by their peers.

6) Foster a climate for academic integrity

Academic integrity is the foundation of the development and acquisition of knowledge and is based on values of honesty, trust, responsibility, and respect. For more information, see [the academic integrity section](#). If you're interested in academic integrity guidelines specific to exams, see [the section on exams, tests, and quizzes](#).

How do I build in student choice or flexibility with my assessments?

As previously stated, there are motivational and learning benefits of integrating choice and flexibility for students. The following choices can be integrated into your assessment strategy for a remote course. Keep in mind that making too many choices is overwhelming for students. Students prefer to have choice in the context of structure and need sufficient information to make an effective choice.

Offer Students Choice About...	Example	Keep in Mind
Format of an assignment, or how to demonstrate their learning	Students can choose to submit a podcast, video presentation, or blog for a particular assessment. Have students suggest ideas for assessments.	Grading criteria must be consistent between submission formats. Create a rubric that is suitable for all submission format types. See the grading and feedback section for advice on rubrics.
Assignment deadlines	Students can choose when to submit their assignments within a specific deadline window, specified by the instructor. For example, if an assignment is due in March, have students sign up and choose which week to submit.	Your grading workload! Use deadline windows, rather than completely open choice about deadlines, to control the flow of assignment submissions. Balance flexibility with deadlines with ensuring students get timely feedback.
Dropping a low grade	If you have multiple low-stakes assessments (e.g., several quizzes, discussion posts, or journal submissions) throughout the semester, offer the opportunity for students to drop their lowest score.	Do students have to complete all assessments and can then drop their lowest grade, or are students able to drop a zero due to not completing an assessment? For example, if there are 10 quizzes, can a student opt not to do one of those quizzes, and drop that “0” score?
Weighting of assessments for their final grade	See section on the weighting of assessments in remote courses	

Should the weighting of assessments change?

Flexible weighting of assessments, where students have some choice about the weighting of some course assessments, can increase student engagement and reduce student stress and anxiety because students feel more in control of their learning. Keep in mind that students will select a weighting scheme based on their individual learning preferences (e.g., preferring tests over discussion posts, or preferring written work over presentations). Students may also select a weighting scheme based on deadlines that may conflict with other courses or responsibilities.

Questions to ask yourself:

- Which assessments should have leeway in weighting? What are the minimum and maximum weightings I am comfortable using?
- Which assessment weightings should not be changed? Why?
- How will I help students with making an informed decision?
- How many options will I offer?
- When do students have to decide on the weighting they would like to use (e.g., at the start of the course, after a certain set of activities, before the add/drop period)? Can they later change their mind?

Examples:

In this example, the quizzes have the highest weighting in option 1, the essay in option 2, and the podcast/video in option 3. The discussion post weighting is the same across all three options.

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Podcast/Video	20%	30%	35%
Essay	30%	35%	20%
Discussion posts	15%	15%	15%
Quizzes	35%	20%	30%

In this example, students choose whether the presentation has higher than or equal weighting to quizzes.

	Option 1	Option 2
10 quizzes (2% or 3% each)	20%	30%
2 papers (20% each)	40%	40%
Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Outline – 5%- Practice audio/video submission – 5%- Peer feedback – 5%- Final presentation – 15 or 25%	40%	30%

In this example, students are provided with ranges of possible weightings for each assessment, and students determine the weight of each assessment category (totaling to 100 percent). This example is adapted from James Lang's article, [How much do you want your final to count?](#) in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

- Clicker points: 6 to 10 percent.
- Journal entries: 6 to 10 percent.
- Myeconlab: 11 to 15 percent.
- In-class projects: 12 to 16 percent.
- Midterm No. 1: 15 to 19 percent.
- Midterm No. 2: 17 to 21 percent.
- Final exam: 20 to 24 percent.

III. Focusing in on the Assessments in my Course

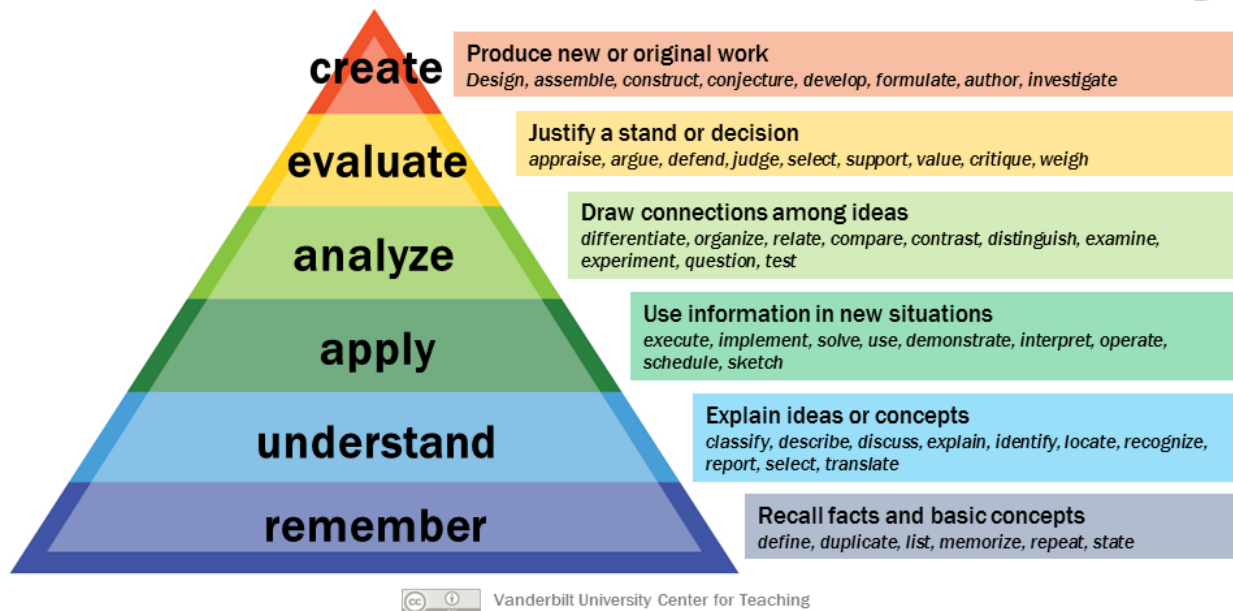
Step 1: Where do I start?

To begin the process of adjusting your assessments for the remote environment, start by looking at your course learning outcomes and asking yourself:

- What are the two or three things I most want students to learn how to do better?
- What knowledge, skills, or values am I assessing in my current course?
- How am I currently assessing those learning outcomes?

Complete the [Aligning your Course Assessments to your Course Learning Outcomes worksheet](#) as a starting point for a snapshot view of your current course assessments, their alignment with your course learning outcomes, and the level of understanding assessed. For more information on the level of understanding column, see the **Bloom's Taxonomy** pyramid below.

Bloom's Taxonomy



Worksheet: Aligning your Course Assessments to your Course Learning Outcomes

Current Course Assessment	Course Learning Outcome(s) Assessed	Level of Understanding

Example:

Midterm exam	<p>Compare and contrast historical and current views of child development</p> <p>Identify key developmental milestones during childhood in the different areas of development</p>	Remember, understand, analyze
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Step 2: What needs to be adjusted for the remote environment?

Now that you have created a snapshot of the assessments in your course, let's focus in on what needs to be adjusted for the remote environment. While the goal of this planning guide is to adjust your assessments, it's important to first look at the course learning outcomes to determine whether they also need adjusting. Because remote teaching can take more time than teaching face-to-face, some of your learning outcomes may need to be revised.

- Which learning outcomes will be prioritized in the remote version of your course?
- Which outcomes will need to be revised for the remote context?

Use the [Worksheet: Identifying Challenges and Making Adjustments to Effectively Assess Course Learning Outcomes in the Remote Environment](#) to identify the challenges in your current course with respect to adjusting your assessments, and possibly your learning outcomes, to support and maximize students' learning in your course. Solidify your course learning outcomes before attempting to adjust your assessments to measure student learning.

If you are looking for resources related to writing effective course learning outcomes, see the [Writing Intended Learning Outcomes website](#) from the University of Waterloo's Centre for Teaching Excellence. The following checklist, from the Learning Scientists blog on [sharing learning outcomes with students](#), can help you to determine whether your learning outcome is effective.

Is Your Learning Outcome Effective?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the learning outcome identify what students will be able to do after the topic, assignment, or unit is complete?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the learning outcome focus on specific and concrete actions, behaviors, or cognitive processes?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the outcome observable ?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is it clear how you would test or measure achievement of the learning outcome?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the learning outcome align with the expected level of knowledge or performance of students at that point in the course/program?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the learning outcome have a clear meaning to both teachers and students? Is the terminology familiar to students?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the learning outcome relevant and useful to students?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the learning outcome align with the corresponding learning activities and assessments?

Created by Sara M. Fulmer
Information adapted from:
http://www.cwsei.ubc.ca/resources/files/LearningGoals_CU-SEL_CWSEL_2-pg.pdf
<https://www.cte.cornell.edu/documents/Learning%20Outcome%20Review%20Checklist.pdf>
<https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/design/learningobjectives.html>

At the end of this step, you should have finalized your course learning outcomes and identified the challenges you are facing with your course assessments and the assessment of those outcomes.




Step 3: What aspects of my assessment need to be adjusted for the remote environment?

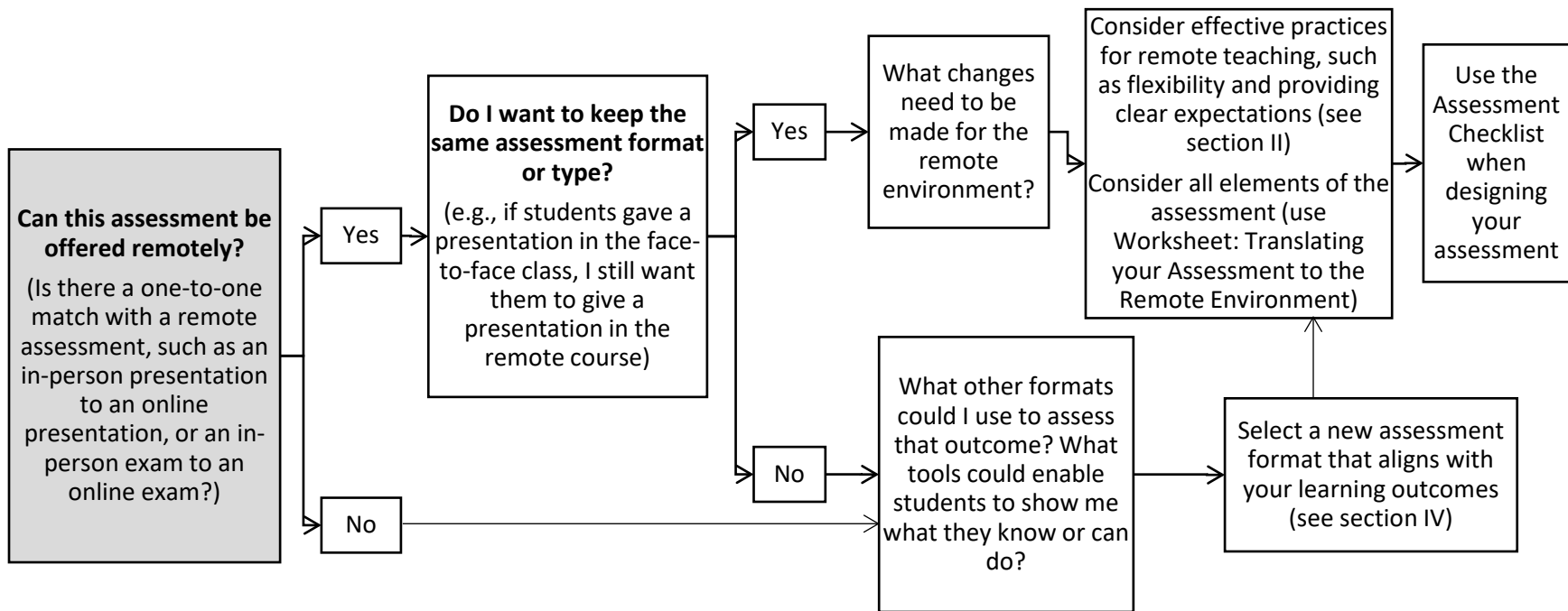
Select one of your course assessments to redesign for the remote environment. Enter information about this assessment into the “**Current Course**” column of the [Worksheet: Translating your Assessment to a Remote Environment](#). If you are adjusting multiple assessments, you will be going through this process for each assessment. This worksheet will help you to sketch out the details about the assessment that may need to be adjusted for the remote environment, such as the submission method and required resources.

At the end of this step, you should have completed the “Current Course” column of this worksheet.

Keep in mind that although many assessment formats have an equivalent in the online environment, there are additional challenges to consider when moving these assessments online. Because the learning context is different, the same assessment method may not be as effective in the remote environment. For example, if students are expected to learn new technologies or tools to complete the assessment in the remote environment, they may spend more time learning the technology than they will learning the content or skills you intended. You also may want to consider offering students [more flexibility or choice](#) with how they demonstrate their learning, and be more explicit with providing clear guidelines and expectations to students about this assessment (see [section on effective practices in remote assessment](#)). As you continue to think through your assessment design, the [Assessment Checklist](#) can act as a reminder of the questions to consider when designing your remote assessment.

Worksheet: Identifying Challenges and Making Adjustments to Effectively Assess Course Learning Outcomes in the Remote Environment

Decision Making Process and Questions	My Notes and Decisions
<p>STEP 1: What specifically is difficult to assess about this learning outcome?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The verb/level of learning? <input type="checkbox"/> The particular content students are learning or mastering? <input type="checkbox"/> The skill or behaviour students are performing? <input type="checkbox"/> How students demonstrate their learning? <input type="checkbox"/> Something else? 	
	
<p>STEP 2: Should I adjust the learning outcome? Consider the following three options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Adjust the learning outcome based on the challenges identified in STEP 1 to better align with your goals for student learning and what is achievable in the remote context <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the only challenge is with how students demonstrate their learning, this is an indication to change the assessment format/type. If there are challenges with the verb/level or the skill/behaviour, this may indicate that changes are needed to the learning outcome (if it cannot be measured in the remote environment), followed by changes to the assessment. B. Leave the learning outcome unchanged and proceed to STEP 3 C. Remove the learning outcome if not essential to your course 	
	
<p>STEP 3: What specifically is challenging about translating this assessment to the remote context?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The format/type of assessment? <input type="checkbox"/> The process by which students complete the assessment? <input type="checkbox"/> The product being assessed? <input type="checkbox"/> The submission process? <input type="checkbox"/> The grading or evaluation process? <input type="checkbox"/> Something else? <p>This is a good time to reflect on why you chose this assessment format for this learning outcome!</p>	
	
<p>STEP 4: Can this assessment be offered remotely? Follow the flow chart on the next page!</p>	



Worksheet: Translating your Assessment to a Remote Environment

	Current Course	Remote/Online Course	Rationale for Changes
Assessment method			
Associated course learning outcomes			
Level of student learning (e.g., remembering, applying)			
Grading/weighting (e.g., 30% of total course grade; 10% for proposal and 20% for final project)			
Timeline/due dates (e.g., assignment introduced in week 2, proposal due week 4, final project due week 6)			
Required resources/technology (for students and instructor)			
How students receive support (how are students' questions about the assignment gathered and answered)			
Submission method (e.g., CourseLink dropbox)			
Evaluation and feedback method (e.g., rubric scores on CourseLink, video feedback, peer feedback)			

Adapted from: <https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/TI%20Guides/Online%20Assessment%20Guide-2019-10-24.pdf>

IV. Adjusting Individual Assessments for the Remote Environment

Step 4: How do I convert my current assessment to a remote format?

Now that you have used the various worksheets to identify some of the adjustments you'll be making with your course assessments for the remote environment, let's look at some types of assessments that can be used in a remote environment. The goal of this step is to explore options for your assessment and identify the assessment type or format that will work best for your course and your students.

As you review and consider various assessment types in this section, reflect on the following questions:

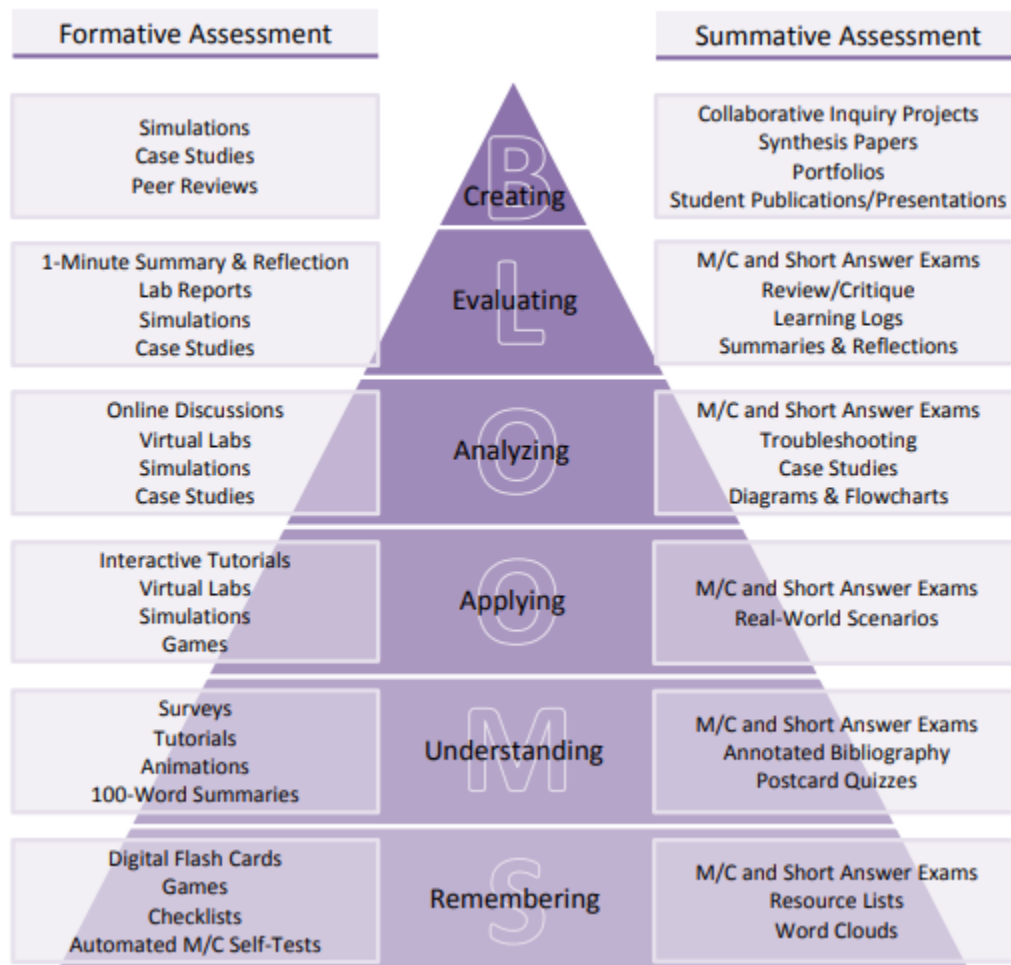
- Which assessment types align best with my learning outcomes and the level of understanding being assessed? (use your [Translating your Assessment to a Remote Environment](#) worksheet)
- Which assessment types would provide students with an effective means to demonstrate their knowledge or skill?
- Which assessment types do I feel comfortable offering, supporting, and evaluating in the remote environment?
- Which assessment types best align with my students' skill level, technological expertise, and content knowledge?
- Which assessment types would complement the other assessments in my course, offering students variety and flexibility with demonstrating their learning?
- Can I incorporate [authentic assessments](#) into my course?

After selecting the assessment type you'll be using for your course:

1. Complete the [Translating your Assessment to a Remote Environment](#) worksheet ("Remote/Online Course" column) to sketch out some of the logistical details of your assessment. When selecting technologies, tools, and resources, use familiar programs supported by the University of Guelph (e.g., CourseLink, Zoom).
2. Use the [Assessment Outline](#) as a template to outline your assignment and describe its components to your students. At the same time, reference the [Assessment Checklist](#) to guide you through various questions and considerations when designing the details of your assignment, including the [key principles for effective remote assessment](#).

Examples of Assessments in the Remote Environment

The diagram below provides some very specific examples of types of formative and summative assessments and demonstrates how these are aligned to levels of understanding in Bloom's Taxonomy.



From Dustin Summey, Instructional Development Centre, University of Central Arkansas, [Authentic Assessment Strategies for Online Learning](#)

Asynchronous and Synchronous Options for Typical Assessment Types

The table below lists typical types of assessments, how they might be delivered in synchronous or asynchronous formats, along with common platforms or software used for these types of assignments. You can explore this table by looking in the “Assessment Type” column for a similar assessment format to the one you are currently using, or you can use the same column to look for new assessment types.

Assessment Type	Asynchronous Format	Synchronous Format	Things to Keep in Mind
Collaborative writing or group reading and annotation in a single document	Shared documents (e.g. Google Docs, Wiki)	Shared documents (e.g. Google Docs, Wiki)	Students may be in different time zones, so synchronous collaborative work may be challenging.
Discussions (individual or group)	CourseLink discussion board	CourseLink discussion board, Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other synchronous audio/video platform. For group discussions, consider platforms that have breakout rooms, such as Zoom.	See section on Online Discussions
General formative assessment (checking for understanding during class meetings, after class meetings, or while students are learning content asynchronously)	Quiz or discussion board in CourseLink for students to submit questions or feedback	Poll tool in Zoom, quiz in Google Forms for live results, Zoom chat, raise hand feature in Zoom	Embed quizzes into course content to help students check their understanding and receive immediate feedback
In-class exams, tests, quizzes	Open-book/take-home exam/test/quiz (e.g. CourseLink Quizzes)	Timed exams/test/quiz (e.g. CourseLink Quizzes)	See section on remote exams, tests, and quizzes and our resource on two-stage exams
Lab or field work	Simulations, modelling, virtual reality, recorded demonstrations	Live stream demonstrations via Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other synchronous audio/video platform	Providing students with <i>different</i> data sets for personal interpretation or unique elements in the data set, this can mitigate the risk of “over-sharing” or personation.

Oral exams or interviews		Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other synchronous audio/video capture	See our Guidelines for Oral Assessments and Exams . Ensure that students are familiar with the technology prior to the synchronous activity. The students may not have access to the necessary technology.
Performances (individual or group)	Audio/video recording with reflective commentary (e.g. CourseLink Video Assignments tool)	Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other synchronous audio/video capture	<p>Consider requirements for health and safety related to physical distancing if choosing group performances. Additionally, students may not be in the same location (e.g. city, country) to organize off-site groups.</p> <p>Videos cannot replicate the authentic live performance element, but a video capturing the performance may suffice nonetheless in crisis times.</p>
Oral peer assessment, critique or feedback	Audio-recording via any audio-recording device producing digital audio file	CourseLink discussion board, Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other synchronous audio/video platform	Students may not have access to the necessary technology
Portfolios, logbook, assessment notes	e-portfolio or PDF portfolio		For some of your students without ready Internet access and/or who lack digital confidence, the move to e-portfolios might be quite challenging and intimidating, and they may need extra guidance. The PDF portfolio might be more accessible and not require execution of new, untaught skills to be successful.
Posters or 2D visual displays	Digital poster (e.g. Powerpoint), brochure, infographic, concept map		You may want to consider an oral presentation element to a poster or 2D visual display to ensure the student has produced the artefact themselves
Written work (project, paper, case study, photo essay, report, critique, reflection etc.)		CourseLink's Dropbox tool	

Presentations (individual or collaborative)	Audio and/or video recording, narrated presentation, podcast (e.g. CourseLink Video Assignments tool, narrated PowerPoint, Google Presentations)	Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other synchronous audio/video capture	See section on presentations
Studio artwork	Audio/video recording of studio work with reflective commentary (e.g. CourseLink Video Assignments tool)	Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other synchronous audio/video capture	Videos cannot replicate the authentic live engagement with studio artwork, but a video capturing the artist's voice and movement around their work may suffice nonetheless in crisis times

For more information about alternative assessment formats, see the University of Guelph's list of [alternative assessment formats for rapidly moving teaching online](#)

Additional Resources

- University of Guelph, Open Learning and Educational Support, [Academic Continuity](#)
- McGill University, Teaching and Learning Services, [Tool Table](#)
- University of Saskatchewan, Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning, [Remote Assessment Activities](#)

Authentic Assessment in the Remote Learning Environment

The remote environment lends itself particularly well to authentic assessment. This type of assessment requires students to draw from course materials and their lives outside of the classroom to apply what they've learned in creative ways to a new, complex circumstance or situation. Authentic assessment measures students' success in a way that's relevant to the skills required of them once they've finished your course or program. According to Wiggins (1998), an assessment is authentic if it:

- is realistic.
- requires judgement and innovation.
- asks the student to “do” the subject.
- replicates or simulates the contexts in which adults are “tested” in the workplace, in civic life, and in personal life.
- assesses the student's ability to efficiently and effectively use a repertoire of knowledge and skill to negotiate a complex task.
- allows appropriate opportunities to rehearse, practice, consult resources, and get feedback on and refine performances and products.

Typically, this can take one of two forms: real-world assessments that require students to engage in actual situations in their field (e.g., proposals, policy briefs, reports, memos, presentations, creation of public education resources), or realistic assessments that are relevant in nature but have students engage in situations that mimic the real world (e.g., a case study or simulation).

Regardless of the type, authentic assessment is often coupled with opportunities for rehearsal and/or practice. Authentic assessments are often scaffolded throughout a course and allow the instructor to provide feedback that students can then implement in subsequent drafts.

Examples of Authentic Assessments

Medicine	Provide a case study of a patient and students assess and create a plan of care
Business	Develop a business/marketing/sales plan for an imaginary or real company in a student's area of interest
Computer Science	Troubleshoot a problematic piece of code. Develop a website/app to solve a particular problem and/or meet a set of criteria.
Psychology	Examine/critique a case study from multiple theoretical positions
Service/Experiential Learning Courses	Consider how a community agency might be impacted by a particular challenge (budget cuts, infrastructure outage, public health crisis, etc.)
Biology	Detailed analysis of one's diet and exercise, including data analysis of calories, carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, etc., and creation of an action plan
History	Engage in a role play of a particular event in history. Describe what might have happened if one element of a historical event had changed.
Environmental Sciences	Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper about a community environmental concern
Applied Human Nutrition	Construct a website or public education resource
Child Studies	Create a resource for parents of school-aged children based on research in an area of interest

From Indiana University Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning, [Authentic Assessment](#)

Additional reading:

- [Authentic Assessment in the Online Classroom](#)
- [Assessing Authentically](#)

How do I promote academic integrity in my assessments?

The logistics of remote assessments and the affordances of the internet have the potential to make it easier for students inclined to cheat to do so, and may present a greater temptation for students who normally would not cheat in face-to-face contexts. Fostering an environment of academic integrity and adapting pedagogically to these circumstances is generally preferable to deploying technological and logistical countermeasures. Keep in mind that the majority of students don't intend to cheat or plagiarize.

Academic honesty can be encouraged through careful assignment design. The [guidelines for effective remote assessment](#), including providing clear expectations for every assignment, offering more low-stakes assessments, creating authentic assignments that are tailored to the course, offering flexibility in assignments, and opportunities for practice and feedback, all encourage academic integrity. These components of effective assignment design help students understand what is expected of them and how they can successfully demonstrate their learning. Many of the following strategies can be used concurrently and are also applicable in face-to-face contexts.

Fostering an environment of academic integrity

Below are several strategies that will help to foster a teaching and learning environment that values academic integrity.

- Become familiar with the [University of Guelph's academic integrity](#) definition, rules and regulations
- Discuss the expectations and rules with your students and their importance as part of the learning process in an academic setting and beyond (e.g. professional setting). Provide examples of academic and/or professional misconduct. This ensures everyone has the same base level of understanding about academic integrity.
- Create a course Honour code (similar to the assessment Honour pledge/statement noted below). This can be created by you or by the class collaboratively. This will engage students in the discussion of academic integrity.

Mitigation strategies for any assessments

- **Be present.** Create rapport with students, and students with their peers, through the discussion board. Students are more likely to adhere to academic integrity expectations if they have developed rapport with the instructor.
- **Clearly communicate purpose and expectations.** Communicate with your students the purpose of the assessment, why it is meaningful and how it contributes to their course/program learning outcomes. Where possible, link the assessment to something beyond what occurs in the course to create relevance (e.g. professional application). Ensure students are clear on the expectations of the assessments well in advance of the deadlines. This includes expectations about contribution divisions in group assessments.
- **Provide examples.** Give students examples of proper academic work that demonstrates your expectations (e.g. proper formatting for citations).
- **Allow draft submissions.** Provide opportunities for students to submit assignment drafts for feedback.
- **Use the plagiarism detection software.** Turnitin is integrated in Dropbox in CourseLink and can be used as a tool for your written assessments for plagiarism detection

(<https://support.opened.uoguelph.ca/instructors/courselink/tools/content/turnitin>). In tandem with the bullet above, allow students to see their plagiarism report with draft submissions. This can provide a learning opportunity for students, particularly in cases of unintentional plagiarism.

- **Practice with the technology.** Allow students to practice using the technology before submission of the graded assessment with a no-stakes practice assessment before high stakes assessments. On this practice test, include samples of all the different types of questions (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, matrix of choices, etc.) that you think you may wish to use later in the course.
- **Use an Honour pledge or statement.** Require students to affirm an honour pledge or statement at the beginning of the assessment. Spell out your precise expectations for the types of resources students may and may not consult. Statements like this trigger a psychological effect called "priming": reminding someone of ethical standards right before they make an ethically-loaded decision predisposes them to act ethically. Having students sign an honour pledge before beginning the assignment, a low-tech solution that is shown to reduce rates of academic dishonesty (Ariely 2013). Some examples of honour pledges can be found here <https://sites.udel.edu/studentconduct/honor-pledges/>
- **Ensure your deadlines are carefully timed.** Review deadlines for your course to assess whether students have enough time between assessments to complete high-quality work without having to resort to unethical behaviours just to complete the assessment by the deadline.
- **Consider including course specific or personalized design elements.** Assessments that require students to synthesize information, include original elements or specific material provided in the course can reduce issues with academic integrity. For example, you could ask students to include reference to personal experiences in relation to course material or write a personal reflection as an element of an assessment, or as the assessment. Collaborative assessments can also achieve this.
- **Allow student choice.** If individuals or groups are allowed different topics for an assessment, allow them to choose the topic. This increases engagement and ownership, which decreases likelihood of academic misconduct.
- **Get rid of the clock.** Limit or eliminate use of timed assessments as this can contribute to an increase academic misconduct.
- **Diversify assessments.** Using a diversity of assessment types will allow students an opportunity to demonstrate their strengths and learning. Providing a variety of assessment types is also an inclusive assessment strategy.
- **Adjust frequency and weighting.** If you have substantial time to design or revise your course, de-emphasize tests and put more weight on other types of assignments whereby students can demonstrate their progress toward achieving the course's learning outcomes. Replace infrequent, high-stakes summative assessments with **more frequent, low-stakes formative assessments**. This practice helps to mitigate the motivation to cheat in the first place. The weightier an assessment, the more powerful the motivation to cheat.

Additional Resources:

- Centre for Teaching Innovation. Cornell University, [Promoting Academic Integrity in Remote Teaching](#)
- Centre for Teaching and Learning. University of Windsor, [Academic Integrity at UWindsor](#)
- Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, [Teaching and Assessing Resources](#)
- Teaching and Learning Services. Carleton University, [Assessments and Final Exams Considerations for Change](#)

- Teaching and Learning Services. McGill University, [Assessment Strategies for Remote Teaching](#)
- Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning. University of Calgary, [Academic Integrity and Online Learning](#)

Special Considerations for Particular Assessment Types

Exams, Tests, and Quizzes

While the multiple choice test may be easy to replicate in a remote environment, it's important to consider challenges that may be encountered with technology, ensuring academic integrity, and whether it's the best option to accurately measure students' learning. Are there alternative forms of assessment where students could demonstrate the same knowledge or skills?

What types of questions are effective for a take home or open book exam?

- Design your tests with the assumption that, regardless of your preferences, students will have unrestricted access to the internet and their course materials while completing them.
- For multiple choice questions, use **question pools** and **randomization** features (e.g., randomize the order of the questions and the order of the answers within a question)
- Pair some multiple choice questions with a “**justify your answer**” open-ended question so that students articulate their understanding, and grade the students' justification
- Require students to **cite sources that support their answers** – preferably sources already assigned for the course
- Replace questions that require students to recall facts with more complex questions that **prompt students to apply, analyze, and evaluate**. For example, provide students with a link to an existing dataset and ask them to perform calculations or statistical analyses.

With respect to test design, consider that during a face-to-face test, students can quickly flip through the test to answer questions in any order and check their progress. Sometimes, a student may see a question later in the exam that reminds them of an earlier question, and can go back to change their response on the earlier question. Consider how these common test-taking practices translate to your online test. Will you allow students to “go back” to prior questions? Will the questions be presented one at a time or in groups? How will the online design of the exam impact the test-taking experience for students?

Additional Resources:

- [A Guide for Academics – Open Book Exams](#)
- [5 Tips for Using Take-Home Exams](#)
- [Best Practices for Take Home Exams](#)
- [Designing Effective Multiple Choice Questions](#)
- [Constructing Multiple Choice Items to Measure Higher-Order Thinking](#), Scully (2017)

How much time should I give students to complete an exam?

You can place time limitations on an online test or quiz just as you would for an on-site test. However, there are many good reasons not to impose time limits on most asynchronous tests. Depending on conditions completely outside the student's control, such as the age of their device or the local internet infrastructure, students may experience significantly different load times for questions. If one student can

load a new page in under five seconds but another student requires twenty seconds to load the same page because of slower internet service, the second student is at a disadvantage on the timed test.

Before imposing a time limit on an online test that you intend to deliver asynchronously, **consider whether the time limit is really necessary to show that students have reached the desired learning outcomes**. In other words, beware of unintentionally allowing items like "student types quickly and accurately" to sneak into your measured learning outcomes for the course.

A risk of network interruptions accompanies any lengthy online experience, especially for students living in areas with poor internet infrastructure or those relying on cellular phone service. To reduce this risk, **divide lengthy tests into shorter, individual segments (whether timed or not)**.

It's important to take time zone differences into account when scheduling online examinations. Giving examinations **asynchronously, within an 18 to 24 hour window starting at the time the exam would have started under on-campus conditions**, should allow all students to take the exam under more equitable conditions.

How will I answer student questions during the test?

During an on-site test, the professor is generally accessible to the students for questions. How will you provide similar access during an online test? One option for synchronous tests is to host a Zoom meeting for the students during the same period, and use the private chat feature in Zoom to field individual students' questions. However, you should do this only if you can guarantee equitable access for all students. You can also be available via CourseLink or email. Indicate the date and times the channels will be monitored during the exam period.

How do I promote academic integrity when using online testing?

Effective strategies for promoting academic integrity in online testing vary depending on the type of questions you want to ask. Follow the guidelines presented above regarding effective questions for remote tests, such as question randomization and asking students to justify some of their answers. Other suggestions include:

- Replace infrequent, high-stakes assessments with **more frequent, low-stakes assessments**. This practice helps to mitigate the motivation to cheat in the first place. The weightier an assessment, the more powerful the motivation to cheat.
- Write questions that are not so easily Googled (e.g., not fact questions, but questions that are applied to a scenario or integrate multiple concepts, as these are more difficult to simply look up on the spot).
- Require students to consult a variety of sources to complete the assessment.
- Include an honour statement at the beginning of the assessment (for sample honour statement templates, see [Making the Transition to Take-Home Exams](#) and [Sample Open Book Academic Integrity Statement](#).) Spell out your precise expectations with regard to the types of resources students may and may not consult. Statements like this trigger a psychological effect called "[priming](#)": reminding someone of ethical standards right before they make an ethically-loaded decision predisposes them to act ethically. Having students sign an honour statement before beginning the assignment is shown to reduce rates of academic dishonesty (Ariely 2013).

- Limit the amount of time an assessment is available to students. A 24-hour window (preferably starting when the exam would normally begin in a face-to-face context) will obviously accommodate students around the globe. If you know from where your students will take the examination, you can reduce the window.
- Release feedback to students only after (but as soon as possible after, to promote learning) the submission deadline has passed.

Remote monitoring options are available to lock down the testing environment or to visually monitor students while they take an online test. Respondus is the LockDown Browser is a custom browser that locks down the testing environment in CourseLink when using CourseLink Quiz. For more detail, see OpenEd's information about [how to use Respondus](#). The Zoom platform allows you to visually monitor students while they take an online test. This technique also has the virtue of making you available to the students for questions, as previously discussed.

Either technique risks creating an inequitable testing environment for students based on variables beyond your and their control, such as webcam access, the quality of students' internet connection and even the effects of taking the exam at different times of day relative to the student's local time. Moreover, students subjected to this kind of proctoring may infer that their professor does not trust them, which may lead the students to view testing itself as an adversarial contest between student and professor—which in turn could actually spur some students to attempt cheating just to "beat the system."

Additional Resources:

- Cluskey, Jr., G. R., Ehlen, C. R., and Raiborn, M. H. (2011). [Thwarting Online Exam Cheating Without Proctor Supervision](#), Journal of Academic and Business Ethics 4
- Dobrin, A. (2013). [How to Keep Students From Cheating](#), Psychology Today.
- [Fourteen Strategies to Reduce Cheating in Online Examinations](#)

How do I prepare students for online testing?

Before you administer the first graded online test in any particular course, **give students a no-stakes practice test so they can become accustomed to the testing platform**. On this practice test, include samples of all the different types of questions (multiple choice, fill-in-the-blank, short answer, matrix of choices, etc.) that you think you may wish to use later in the course.

How do I grade open-ended test questions?

Guidelines for more efficient and effective grading of open-ended test questions include the following:

- 1) **Outline what constitutes an expected answer before students take the exam.** Prepare a rubric as you write the exam. What criteria will be used to assess students' responses? What components does a successful answer include? The rubric should outline what constitutes a complete and correct answer. By developing these criteria before giving the exam, you have an opportunity to revise the question to better communicate to students what you expect.
- 2) **Select an appropriate scoring method** based on the criteria. Will students be given points for each component of their answer, or will an overall judgement of quality be given for the full response?

- 3) **Clarify the role of writing mechanics** and other factors independent of the content-related outcomes being measured. Will grammar, spelling, organization, flow, vocabulary figure into the scoring criteria? In a course that isn't about writing, do organization, clarity, grammar, punctuation, or neatness of figures or drawings matter, independent of the course content being covered in the question? Will students lose points for including extra information that wasn't asked for?
- 4) **Refine the rubric** by using it to provisionally score a subset of completed exams, perhaps 5-10. It's possible that students will answer the question in unexpected ways. Revising the rubric to take into account any unexpected responses will help you to score all exams more efficiently.
- 5) **Use a systematic process for scoring each essay item.** Read and score all of question #1 for all students, then shuffle the exams to randomly reorder them, and read and score all of question #2.
- 6) Grade students' responses **anonymously**

See also:

- [Grading Exams](#) and [Best Practices for Designing and Grading Exams](#) from the University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching
- [How to Design Rubrics for Open-Ended Questions in eLearning](#)
- Our resource on implementing [two-stage exams in the remote environment](#)

Presentations, Demonstrations, or Performances

Some student projects will result in a presentation, such as a speech, demonstration, or performance. Think about your learning outcomes for this assessment, and how those learning outcomes are best met in the remote environment.

What is the goal or purpose of the presentations?

- Is the presentation a learning opportunity for the presenter, the audience, or both?
- Are students sharing new course content for their peers to learn? Summarizing content? Presenting on a topic of their choice as a key summative assessment?
- Who provides feedback to the presenter? Instructor? Peers?

Do I want presentations to be live (synchronous) or recorded (asynchronous)?

- How big is my course?
- If live, are students presenting to the whole class, a small group, or a peer?
- If recorded, who is the audience? The instructor? Are students expected to watch others' presentations?
- How will students receive feedback? From who? Instructor? Peers? Will the feedback be live or provided later?

What is the presentation format?

Depending on the learning outcomes of the assignment, you might ask students to record audio only (e.g., a podcast), an audio voiceover to a slideshow or poster, a video, or some variation on these formats. Students can then upload the recording in CourseLink. Depending on your learning outcomes, this may be a great opportunity for student choice and flexibility, with students choosing which format to use for their presentation.

For online presentations or performances delivered synchronously in a group session, such as a Zoom meeting for the whole class, you may wish to consider shortening the time limits slightly in case it takes more time to transition between students or groups than it would in-person.

What else do I need to keep in mind?

- How will students learn the tools they need to be successful with the presentation?
- How will students get an opportunity to practice and receive feedback?
- If students are giving live presentations, what technological issues can arise (e.g., slow internet, internet drops)? How will we deal with these issues?
- If students are watching others' presentations (live or recorded), how will I guide students' thinking and learning through this process? What prompts, questions, or instructions can I provide students to support them with their learning?

Online Discussions

General Guidelines

- Explain the **purpose** of the discussion board and make **expectations for conduct** clear
- Provide **samples of appropriate feedback and replies/comments**, and appropriate ways to respond to comments
- **Monitor posts** (or have students take turns monitoring posts) for inappropriate use
- Maintain **continuous discussions** throughout the course to help students build relationships and stay focused on the course content (Blackmon, 2012)

Types of Discussions

- Provide **specific topics** and **facilitate** the conversations to keep them on track
- Structure **different types of discussions**, such as debates, case studies, small group problem solving activities, etc.
- **Limit the number of words** students can use in each post (eg- 500 words) to encourage them to be concise when making their points, and to make discussion posts more manageable for you and your students. Occasionally do “Twitter-style” posts (limit posts to 140 characters) or multi-media discussions (photo, audio, memes, etc.). These methods encourage students to be succinct and can be a fun break from writing and reading long discussion posts.
- **Rotate students as facilitators** to encourage engagement (Xie, Yu & Bradshaw, 2014)
- In large classes, divide students into **small discussion groups**. Doing this can help students build stronger relationships with one another.

Grading and Feedback

- Provide **feedback** early in the course to give students guidance on how to make their discussion points effectively (Hortsmanshof & Brownie, 2011)
- Find the correct **weighting** for discussion board activities so students prioritize them without making the grade so high that it reduces the authenticity of discussions (Cheng et al., 2013)
- To reduce the grading workload, ask students to select their best few discussion posts for grading at the end of the semester. A **self-assessment component**, where students explain why they chose these posts, can be included.

Challenges to Consider

- Students will make separate, unrelated posts, rather than have an actual conversation (Champion & Gunnlaugson, 2017)
- Many students are nervous about their peers reading and commenting on their writing (Hortsmanshof & Brownie, 2011)
- Students can struggle with accepting critical comments on their posts, or feeling that their posts got fewer comments than their peers did. This attitude can make discussion boards feel competitive rather than collaborative (Sato & Haegle, 2018).
- Students may not provide strong feedback or comments, so discussions remain surface level

Strategies for Synchronous Online Discussions

7 Strategies Designed to Engage Students in Synchronous Online Discussions

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- 1 Provide students with an agenda and a list of discussion questions
- 2 Communicate your expectations for participation and behavior online
- 3 Invite students to generate their own discussion questions
- 4 Start every virtual conferencing session with an icebreaker
- 5 Use the chat window strategically
- 6 Host shorter sessions with fewer students
- 7 Ask students to assess their participation online



See more: [7 Strategies to Engage Students in Synchronous Discussions](#)

and [Designing Synchronous Online Interactions and Discussions](#)

Adapted from the [Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning Online Assessment Guide](#)

Online Group Work

Resources for Designing Effective Online Team Projects:

[Designing Effective Team Projects in Online Courses](#), Faculty Focus

- Offers 7 best practices for teamwork in online courses, including how to intentionally create teams, setting clear expectations for individual contributions, creating and monitoring virtual group spaces, and advice about feedback and evaluation.

[Five Essential Skills Instructors Need to Facilitate Online Group Work and Collaboration](#)

- The five essential skills are: create a social and active learning community, demonstrate leadership, [over] communicate, deal with conflict, and monitor student progress and provide feedback.
- Faculty members should ask themselves the following questions before undertaking group projects:
 - What is the desired learning objective?
 - Will the groups be assigned or will students choose their group members?
 - How will students get to know each other and develop trust?
 - Will students receive direct experiences/assignments to help them learn group processes, or will they discover those during their projects?
 - How will students be graded?

[Five Elements that Promote Learner Collaboration and Group Work in Online Courses](#)

- The five elements include social presence, presence of a leader, purpose and clear instructions, skill development for working in a team, and seamless technology.

[Challenges Facing Group Work Online](#)

- This study suggests that instructors split group work into individual portions, use peer evaluation, establish guidelines for communication, use tools such as Google Drive to streamline duplicate works, monitor the process of the group work, and give group members freedom, ownership, and autonomy in their group work.

[Student Perceptions of Online Group Work: What They Really Think and How to Make It Work](#)

- This article describes the significant barriers to group work from students' perspectives, and clear suggestions to overcome those barriers. Barriers include a lack of individual accountability from team members, the challenges and limitations of asynchronous technologies and communication, and an absence of leadership in the team.

Online Group Work Checklist

Online group work checklist

As part of the seminar, Mandernach provided the following checklist for creating and implementing online group projects:

Preparation

- Students understand the value of both the process and product of the collaboration.
- Students have guidance concerning how to work in an asynchronous team.
- Group size is small enough to allow for full participation of all members.
- Course provides numerous opportunities for community building prior to group projects.

Assignment

- Assignment is an authentic measure of student learning.
- Assignment will benefit from collaborative work.
- Students have clear guidelines of the expected outcome of the collaborative assignment.
- Assignment creates a structure of positive interdependence in which individuals perceive that they will succeed when the group succeeds.
- Assignment is scheduled to allow adequate time for preparation and communication.
- Assignment is designed in a manner to allow students a level of personal control.

Evaluation

- Grading and/or evaluation strategies differentiate between the process and the product.
- Strategies are in place to monitor interaction processes.
- Clear grading rubrics are provided at the start of the assignment to guide student work.
- Self and peer evaluations are included in the process to monitor individual involvement and accountability.

Resources for Evaluating Group Work:

[How can I Assess Group Work?](#), Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence & Educational Innovation, Carnegie Mellon University

- Offers practical advice for how to assess individual vs. group learning, how to assess the product vs. the process, and how to make the expectations and assessment criteria clear to students.
- Offers several [tools for group projects](#), including team contracts, team roles, self-assessments, peer assessments, and group assessments
- Advantages and disadvantages of different [Grading Methods for Group Work](#), including shared group grades, individual grades, student allocation of grades, and peer evaluation)
- [Sample Grading Rubric for a Group Project](#)

[How to Evaluate Group Work](#) (provides advice and a sample rubric), Cornell University, Center for Teaching Innovation

V. Grading and Feedback in the Remote Environment

Think about how you will grade your assessment activities in advance to ensure that the grading workload is manageable, and to ensure that there aren't extraneous aspects of the assignment that will not be graded or that are not a priority for your learning outcomes.

Develop **clear instructions for the assignment and explicit expectations** for student performance (see the [Assessment Checklist](#) for key questions to consider, and the [Assessment Outline](#) for a template to draft your assignment instructions). Provide the grading criteria to students well in advance of the assignment due date so that students can use the criteria as a guideline.

Grading criteria should be **flexible** to account for access issues (e.g., a student is unable to participate in a synchronous learning session due to internet or technological issues).

As mentioned in the [key principles for effective remote assessment](#), **frequent, timely feedback** supports student engagement and learning in the remote environment. Give feedback early and ensure feedback is focused on what will help students in their future assessments. Have students **practice with the grading criteria** to become familiar with the grading criteria and expectations. For example, students can use parts of the rubric or checklist to self-assess a draft version of their assignment. Students can use the grading criteria in a peer feedback exercise on a draft version of the assignment.

You can find information related to grading open-ended exams at the end of the [special section on exams, tests, and quizzes](#) in the remote environment.

Use Rubrics to Grade Assignments with a Variety of Submission Formats


When providing students with choice to determine the format of their assignment submission (e.g., a video presentation vs. a podcast vs. an infographic), design a single rubric that will fairly assess all submissions, regardless of their format. Carefully consider the weighting for the technical and delivery aspects of the assignment versus the content. For example, a student can produce a beautifully delivered podcast from a technical standpoint, but that lacks application or synthesis of course content. The weighting should be based on the learning outcomes for the assignment and your course. Ask students to help you co-construct the rubric (see [A Crowdsourced Rubric for Evaluating Infographics](#)).

Sample Rubrics for Multimedia Assignments


Podcast Rubrics	Video Project Rubrics	Poster and Infographic Rubrics
Podcast Rubric (Ecology) Podcast Rubric (Education/General)	Video Project Rubric (General) Audio/Video Presentation Rubric (Education)	Research Poster Rubric Virtual Research Poster Rubric Infographic Rubric (Nutrition) Presentation Rubric (Human and Environmental Health)

Incorporate Different Types of Feedback to Lessen the Grading Workload

This excellent [resource from the Surrey Assessment and Learning Lab](#) (screenshot of a portion of this resource below) outlines the benefits and recommendations for various feedback opportunities in online learning. Included are different forms of providing feedback to individual students (e.g., typed comments on submitted work, audio/video feedback, virtual drop-in sessions, self-reflection) and providing feedback to the whole class or to small groups (e.g., feedback webinar, video summary, self-reflection).



FEEDBACK OPPORTUNITIES IN ONLINE LEARNING







@SurreyLab

CONTEXT

01 The relational dimension of feedback, and maintaining connections with students, are more important than ever. There are many opportunities for students to engage with feedback to support their learning that maintain a sense of connection with educators and peers.

02 Some feedback opportunities in online learning involve providing information to students on an individual level; others involve providing group-level information with opportunities for individual dialogue or self-reflection. Each form of feedback has its own benefits, and ways of maximising its utility.

INDIVIDUAL FEEDBACK

	BENEFITS	RECOMMENDATIONS	TO FIND OUT MORE
Typed comments or annotations on submitted work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted feedback, with annotations showing location of errors/where improvements could be made. Familiar format to educators and students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Less can be more - Lots of annotations can be overwhelming for students. Phrase comments as questions that develop self-regulation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dirkx et al. (2019) O'Donovan et al. (2019) Winstone et al. (2016)
Highlighted rubric linking performance to criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relatively quick to produce. Links directly to assessment criteria, giving transparency to the grading process and resulting grade decision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can be encouraged to look back through their work to find examples of why and how their work links to each level of the criteria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bearman & Ajajwi (2019)
Audio, video, or screencast feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhances the personal nature of feedback processes. Facial/voice cues can enhance the meaning of feedback comments. Available for students to view multiple times. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use screencast to show how your comments link to the piece of work, and to demonstrate corrections. Recordings don't need to be polished - students often appreciate informality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mahoney et al. (2019) Mayhew (2017) Winstone & Carless (2019) Chapter 4
Virtual drop-in sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogic, two-way interaction where students can seek clarification about feedback comments. Provides a personal connection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to direct the agenda by bringing specific questions about their work, to encourage feedback-seeking. A similar approach can be done at cohort level - see section on feedback webinars below. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blair & McGinty (2013) Nicol (2010)
Stimulated self-reflection on individual performance information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students can be provided with simple information representing their performance, followed by a series of questions that help them generate feedback for themselves. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage students to use this activity to connect feedback on the current task to previous tasks, as a way of visualising progress and set targets for future improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Winstone & Carless (2019) Chapter 7

Self-Assessment

Encourage students to evaluate their progress in the course and find gaps in their understanding of the content by reflecting on their performance. This self-assessment can replace some of the in-class feedback that students are missing in remote instruction.

- Have students write a one-minute paper with their main takeaway from a particular content area.
- In preparation for a major assessment, ask students to identify their own knowledge or skill gaps and devise a plan to focus their attention and effort to meet the goals of the assessment
- After completing a test or exam, have students self-assess their performance using the [test analyzer self-reflection](#) to help them reflect on their strengths and weaknesses.
- Use [assignment wrappers or lecture wrappers](#) to help students focus their learning process
- Have students write a journal or learning log about their learning progress and assessment performance each week.

Peer Feedback

Incorporate peer feedback so that students are given the opportunity to synthesize course content and teach their peers, increasing their mastery of the content. Peer feedback helps to build connection and community for students working remotely. Peer review can also be a major time saver for instructors, particular for scaffolded or staged assignments with multiple opportunities for feedback. Be careful to create a positive class culture and consider modelling effective feedback to avoid issues with harsh or unclear feedback. Provide clear instructions and criteria for giving feedback, such as giving students a portion of the grading rubric or a checklist to guide their feedback.

- Use the CourseLink discussion board so students can ask questions and provide feedback to one another.
- Have students submit a draft assignment for peer feedback. Give them time to incorporate the feedback before submitting their final assignment.
- Have students complete practice exams individually, then get into a group on Zoom to discuss their responses.
- Schedule online study sessions where students complete homework while their peers and TAs are available to answer questions.

Automated Feedback

- Create short graded or ungraded content quizzes on CourseLink to have students check their understanding after reading a textbook chapter or watching a pre-recorded lecture.
- Use polls in Zoom sessions or on CourseLink to gather quick feedback from students or to ask students to check their understanding of course material

See also:

- [Improving Feedback to Students in Online Courses](#)
- [How to Give your Students Better Feedback with Technology](#) (Chronicle)

VI. Step 5: Assignment Outline and Checklist

You made it! Now that you have brainstormed possibilities for your assessment, tackled the pedagogical and technological challenges, and worked through some of the logistics, it's time to draft an outline of your assessment. You can share this outline, once finalized, with your students. The goal of creating an assignment outline is to explain the assessment to your students in a transparent, logical, and engaging way. The [Assessment Outline](#) is a guided template for drafting your outline. The assignment outline can include more than just text! Consider adding a video introduction or graphical elements (e.g., a concept map or visual timeline) to explain the assignment to your students.

The [Assessment Checklist](#) in this section will guide you through key questions and considerations when designing your remote assessment, ensuring that your assessment is aligned with the [key principles of effective assessment](#) in the remote environment.

Assessment Outline

Assignment Name:

Due Date:

Purpose: *[Define the learning objectives in language and terms that help students recognize how this assignment will benefit their learning. Ideally, indicate how the specific knowledge and skills involved in this assignment will be important in students' lives beyond the contexts of this assignment, this course, and this program.]*

The purpose of this assignment is to help you **practice the following skills** that are essential to your success *[in this course / in school / in this field / in professional life beyond school]*:

- *Terms from Bloom's Taxonomy may help you explain these skills in language students will understand. For example, understanding basic disciplinary knowledge and methods/tools, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, judging/evaluating, creating/inventing.*

This assignment will also help you to become familiar with the following important **content knowledge** in this discipline:

- 1.
- 2.

Task: *[Define what activities the student should do/perform. List any steps or guidelines, or recommend a sequence and timeline for completing key stages of the assignment. Specify any extraneous mistakes to be avoided. Specify acceptable use of course materials and information.]*

Evaluation Criteria: *[Define the characteristics of a successful finished product. Provide examples of what these characteristics look like in practice. Explain how excellent work differs from adequate work. Provide or compile with students a checklist of characteristics of successful work. This enables students to evaluate the effectiveness of their own efforts while they are working, and to judge the quality of their completed work. Students can also use the checklist to provide feedback on peers' coursework. Indicate whether this task/product will be graded and/or how it factors into the student's overall grade for the course.]*

Adapted from the *Transparent Assignment Template*, M.-A. Winkelmes (2013)

https://www.unlv.edu/sites/default/files/page_files/27/Provost-Faculty-TransparentAssgntTemplate-2016.pdf

Assessment Checklist

Focus on Learning

- ☐ Does my assessment align with one or more course learning outcomes?

Provide Clear Instructions and Expectations

- ☐ Do I explain to students the purpose of the assessment and how the assessment connects to the course learning outcomes?
- ☐ Do I have clear instructions explaining what I want students to do and the expectations I have?
- ☐ Do I explain how I expect students to use course materials to learn and prepare for the assessment?
- ☐ Do I provide clear instructions about how and when students should submit the assessment?
- ☐ Do I provide clear grading rubrics or grading criteria to guide my students' completion of the assessment?
- ☐ Do I provide clear instructions about how and where to ask for support with the assignment?
- ☐ How might students misunderstand the assignment or understand it differently than it is intended? How will I discuss these potential misunderstandings or misconceptions with students?

Balance Structure with Flexibility

- ☐ Have I offered students appropriate choice or flexibility with this assessment? (e.g., deadlines, weighting for final grade, submission format)
- ☐ Do students have enough flexibility within this assignment to account for any technology or internet issues?

Opportunities for Practice and Feedback

- ☐ Have I offered students opportunities to practice the skills they need to be successful on this assessment? How are opportunities for feedback built into these practice opportunities?
- ☐ How familiar are students with the tool(s) and technologies being used for this assessment? How will I help students become familiar with the tools?
- ☐ What technological support is offered for students? Will I be responsible for providing technological support to students? Do I feel prepared to do so?

My Use of Technology

- ☐ Does CourseLink meet all of my needs for my assessment? If not, how will I address this issue?
- ☐ How comfortable do I feel using the technologies and tools that my students will use?
- ☐ How comfortable do I feel using the technologies and tools that I will use for providing feedback and evaluation?
- ☐ What security or privacy issues exist with the tools and technologies I'm using? How can I minimize these risks?

VII. Step 6: Assessment Planning for the Whole Course

It's time to begin again! You have successfully completed the redesign of one your assessments for the remote environment. Your next action is to repeat steps 3-5 for each assessment that needs to be redesigned for the remote environment. We encourage you to draft an [Assessment Outline](#) and use the [Assessment Checklist](#), found in Step 5, for each major assessment.

When you have redesigned or adapted all of your course assessments the next step is to create a detailed snapshot of all assessments in your course using the [Worksheet: Remote Course Assessment Summary](#). You can also use this summary to help create your course syllabus.

Worksheet: Remote Course Assessment Summary

	Remote/Online Course				
Assessment methods					
Associated course learning outcomes					
Level of student learning (e.g., remembering, applying)					
Grading/weighting (e.g., 30% of total course grade; 10% for proposal and 20% for final project)					
Timeline/due dates (e.g., assignment introduced in week 2, proposal due week 4, final project due week 6)					
Required resources/technology (for students and instructor)					
How students receive support (how are students' questions about the assignment gathered and answered)					
Submission method (e.g., CourseLink dropbox)					
Evaluation and feedback method (e.g., rubric scores on CourseLink, video feedback, peer feedback)					

Adapted from:

<https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/sites/default/files/TI%20Guides/Online%20Assessment%20Guide-2019-10-24.pdf>