

## Advice for Online Exams: Psychological & Brain Sciences Department

### Open vs. Closed Note Exams (this one section repeats info from my email):

After discussion with Len, Deanna, instructors, and the Teaching Center, Leah and I have decided to **recommend that most courses transition to an open book/note approach** for three main reasons: 1) it will be easier for instructors and students to not have to learn another new technology and will have fewer tech problems, 2) students didn't know when they signed-up for the course that there would be webcam monitoring of them, and that might feel creepy and now they can't really say no, 3) even with the webcam monitor and lockdown browser some students could still cheat on a closed book/note exam.

This document explains best practices in writing and administering open-note exams so that students are still motivated to study and to reduce cheating. As with everything else this semester, there is no single correct way to handle this situation, and you may decide that you want your exam to be closed-note/book. This document also has information about this option. An alternative to exams would be to use a different type of assessment entirely. Because this is course-specific, we don't have advice in this document but we are happy to meet with you to discuss.

### General Considerations:

**Access to course materials.** Some students may not have access to notes or other materials from before spring break. If you plan to test students on that content, make sure that you have confirmed that all your students have their materials or that you have provided access. For example, survey your students, contact your publisher about how students can get free access to the ebook, set up a place for students to share notes and actively encourage this, or write your own notes and post these for students.

**Getting students on board.** Think carefully about how you talk about the exam with students. For example, a time-limit on an open-note exam could feel frustrating to a student. But if you clarify that this is done for the sake of their learning they will be more accepting. Leah and I are working on sample language you can use for various situations.

**Smooth transition online.** Create an "instructional quiz" due at least one day before the exam. This will use the same Canvas features that your exams use so that students can see what it will be like. They will feel more comfortable and you will solve most tech problems prior to the actual exam. The actual quiz questions can contain key information about taking an online exam. This may also include an honor statement or you might put one in the exam itself. Leah and I are working on a sample instructional quiz.

**Accommodations.** Canvas has a way to set up extra time for students who need it. You will need to know which students in your course have time accommodations and how much time they get. Canvas also has a way to set an exam for different dates/times for specific students in distant time zones or if students are unavailable to take the exam at the same time as everyone else. Be aware that students with disabilities may need additional or different testing accommodations in this online space. It's important to identify those students quickly and to work with them and [Disability Resources](#).

**Test security and reusing exams.** It is best to just assume that these exams will somehow end up available for future students. If you reuse exam questions year-to-year, consider either using different questions this year or writing new questions next year. Some approaches I've heard: Give a shorter exam this year to save some questions for next year (might happen anyway since you'll likely be covering less content), switch how you ask some questions (e.g., if you usually provide the term and ask for the definition, swap this), use some other types of questions (e.g., fill-in-the-blank).

## **All Exams (Open-note or Closed-note):**

### ***Writing Questions***

**Avoid questions that can be directly Googled.** For example, use more scenario-based questions rather than pure definitions. We are working on some examples for altering common types of questions in psychology courses.

**Consider other question formats.** A class that normally uses only multiple-choice questions can have some additional question formats that are still easily graded at-scale in an online environment (e.g., fill-in-the-blank grading can be partially automated). Canvas can also display images in exam questions.

### ***Recommended Canvas Settings***

These settings are meant to 1) reduce reliance on notes during the exam to encourage studying and preparation, and 2) reduce cheating such as sharing answers with classmates.

- Randomize order of questions using a question group
- Randomize order of answer options (for a work-around for options like “all of the above”, see link in Canvas Resources below)
- Set a time limit
  - Too long might discourage adequate preparation and studying, or may even encourage cheating between students; too short may be stressful.
  - Can set extra time for accommodations
- Have most students take the test at about the same time (set a limited window of availability)
  - Make this at least a little longer than the time limit to provide some flexibility, but not too long to prevent cheating
  - May need separate availability for students in far-away time zones or who are unavailable at the usual time
- You can also set the exam to only show one question at a time, which can reduce cheating. But it can also be very frustrating for students, so we only suggest using this if you feel it is necessary.
  - A sub-option to this is that after a student answers a question and moves on, they cannot go back. Again, students find this frustrating and we don’t recommend it in most cases.
- After submission, do not allow students to view which answers they gave and the correct answers until everyone has taken the exam.
  - In “Grades” (your gradebook in Canvas, outside of the Quiz options), set the exam to the manual posting option so that scores are not released until you are ready.
- You can give an extra attempt to individual students if they accidentally submit their exam (e.g., for technical problems); however, this is outside of the Quiz options on the set-up page, so do not check the “allow multiple attempts” option when originally setting up your exam.

### ***Canvas Resources***

There are several “tricks to the trade,” so we recommend that if you haven’t done quizzes or exams on Canvas before that you ask for help. But these support pages are good resources.

- Creating questions: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-12943-4152724267>
- Work-arounds for “all of the above” questions: [see bottom of this webpage](#)
- Randomizing questions: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-12979-415298624>
- Quiz settings: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10152-415241475>

- Manual posting of grades: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-17329-41521116618>
- Extra time or extra attempts: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-12711>
- Viewing quiz statistics: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-13037-415241484>
- Regrading a question: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-12823-4152457763>
- Reviewing auto-graded fill-in-the-blank questions: <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-13949-4152816809>

### **Additional advice for closed-note exams:**

- Use Respondus Lockdown Browser and Respondus Monitor as an additional deterrent to cheating:
  - <https://web.respondus.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/RLDB-QuickStartGuide-Instructor-Instructure.pdf>
- You will need to make sure all students have a webcam to use Respondus Monitor
- Be extra sure to require students to test all of this out before the actual exam
- You should use the Student View in Canvas to see what these tools will look like for students
- You will need a way for students to contact instructor/AIs during the exam if there are tech problems