

# Best Practices and Advice for Online Learning Assessment During the COVID-19 Crisis

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The COVID-19 crisis is not only going to disrupt the delivery of course content, but also the way student learning is assessed. Learning assessments will need to take place online and they will be unproctored - which could result in significant impacts on academic integrity.

Building high-quality online courses would take these factors into account from the very earliest stages in planning the overall design of the course. Given the crunch time in moving courses online because of COVID-19, we ask instructors to do their very best to balance the learning needs of students by providing formative feedback and to fairly judge their overall performance while minimizing academic dishonesty.

Here is a summary of best practices and advice to help in this process:

- In going online you may need to use alternate forms of formative and summative assessment. For example, traditional exams with multiple-choice questions may be replaced with essays, projects, or take-home style exams with written responses.
- Try to keep learning assessments as simple as possible and use approaches you are comfortable with.
- Do not make students struggle with complex high-stakes assessment methods without giving some practice opportunities (e.g. an online high-stake exam within Isidore should be preceded with low-stake examples, to help both instructor and student learn the ropes).
- Coordinate your revised assessment plans with your department chair, and potentially with other colleagues in your department (especially teachers of other sections of the same course).
- Continue to think about how your learning assessments are fully accessible to all students. This is especially important as you consider the needs of students in your courses that requested accommodations - which may mean you have to be flexible in designing and delivering assessments. For example, Isidore can provide extended test durations for selected students. Check with the [Office of Learning Resources](#) for assistance with accessibility and see the [accessibility page](#) on our Keep Teaching web site.
- Essays and reports gathered using the Isidore Assignment tool have an option to allow screening with Turnitin.com to help detect plagiarism.

- Make your intentions and your expectations very clear. If there are modifications in the method, frequency or grading weights of assessments, make these changes clear to students and as early as possible.
- Students value and rely on your feedback. Even a quick email to the full class describing themes can efficiently supplement direct one-on-one feedback to students.
- Be super clear about deadlines, but retain a degree of flexibility. Remember that some students or their families may directly experience COVID-19 infections that will impact their learning and productivity. Its also true that the learning environments that students are situated in may not be optimal. For eample, we are aware of some students that struggle to find Internet connectivity.
- To reduce the likelihood of cheating, consider using more frequent low-stakes assessments such as quizzes instead of infrequent high-stakes assessments.
- Consider tackling academic honesty by making an assessment “open book” and emphasizing questions that ask students to demonstrate understanding, integration and application of course material.
- The UD Honor Pledge can be automatically shared with students as an option with Isidore assessments.
- Carefully consider how long a test should be, since students may take longer if this is their first time experiencing an online test from you.
- Students can be asked to photograph hand-written diagrams or mathematical solutions. These images can be emailed to the instructor or collected with the Isidore Assignment tool.
- Student presentations or performances can be made through the use of Zoom or with personally made recordings on a cell phone or laptop.
- Reach out for help from the Office of E-Learning, especially if you are new to online assessment. Their contact information and additional resources can be found on the [Keep Teaching](#) web site.

## Additional Advice From Across the Internet

*Note that the links given below reference tools used at other institutions. But in general, the tools available at UD will have the same functionality.*

Internet resources from other higher education institutions:

- Indiana University <https://keepteaching.iu.edu/strategies/index.html#assess>
- Ohio State University <https://keepteaching.osu.edu/assessments>
- Portland State University <https://oaipplus.pdx.edu/blog/playlist/remote-exam-kit/>
- Stanford University <https://teachanywhere.stanford.edu/best-practices#assess>
- University of Minnesota <https://keep-teaching.umn.edu/assess-and-evaluate>
- University of Pittsburgh <https://teaching.pitt.edu/#Finals-Assessments>

- Vanderbilt University:  
<https://www.vanderbilt.edu/brightspace/2020/03/06/putting-some-of-your-course-content-online-in-a-hurry-we-have-resources-for-you/>

Additional readings:

- [Designing Effective Online Assessments](#)
- [Teaching in the context of COVID-19](#) (Crowdsourced document covering multiple topics related to teaching online)
- [What if we didn't grade? Articles and bibliography](#)
- [Preparing for Emergency Online Teaching](#)
- [Eight Steps for a Smoother Transition to Online Teaching](#)
- [Coronavirus Has Led to a Rush of Online Teaching. Here's Some Advice for Newly Remote Instructors](#)
- [Online Discussion Forums as Assessment Tools](#)
- [Coronavirus Resources: Teaching, Learning, and Thinking Critically](#)
- ['Panic-gogy': Teaching Online Classes During The Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

FERPA and student privacy during COVID-19:

- [https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource\\_document/file/FERPA%20and%20Coronavirus%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions\\_0.pdf](https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/sites/default/files/resource_document/file/FERPA%20and%20Coronavirus%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions_0.pdf)

And Now For Something Completely Different

- <https://youtu.be/CCe5PaeAeew>