

Instructors' Guide to Encouraging Academic Honesty Online

Set Clear Expectations for Students

- Provide a statement on academic honesty for your course. Make that statement as specific as possible; if your rules vary from task to task (e.g., collaboration is permitted on some but not all assignments, on homework but not on exams), state that and give brief rationale as to why.
- Set expectations around communication. For example, “I will respond within 24 [or 36, or 48] hours to messages.” In online learning, setting and sticking to distinct boundaries is important.
- Hold office hours on Zoom. Consider setting an open meeting as standing appointment, so that students can drop in virtually and ask for help and clarity on how to comply with expectations.
- Clearly share any additional specific expectations for students about learning and assignments.

Carefully Consider the Format of Remote/Online Assessment

- Take a step back to consider advantages, disadvantages of different methods of delivery; e.g., <https://www.chronicle.com/article/7-ways-to-assess-students-online-and-minimize-cheating>.
- Open book take-home exams offered over a weekend will have different considerations than synchronous exams given in limited windows of time. Understand the impact of your choices.
- Consider carefully how windows of time affect the integrity of exam(s) you offer. In particular:
 - A *long* window may give students more time to confer with others or consult outside material; a *short* window may cause complications with technology (e.g., if students experience internet service disruption and connectivity issues) or make certain test-takers excessively nervous.
 - Remember and remind students to allow sufficient time for uploading files after they finish taking the exam(s). Have a back-up plan for technology issues that may arise.
- Take learning conditions into account when designing assessment. Wherever feasible, consider making your exams open book/open note and allowing students to collaborate with each other.
- Specify any conditions under which collaboration, consultation of outside resources can occur.
- Remember to administer a test honor pledge (required under [AS&E academic honesty policy](#)).

Implement Creative Solutions for Remote/Online Experiences

- Take advantage of students' ability to take pictures or capture video from devices as a way to show engagement (but be mindful of equity and access issues when it comes to technology).
- In addition to recording lectures, consider developing “byte of learning” videos to deliver key concepts in your course. Have students put together their own videos to demonstrate learning.
- To create a sense of community, consider implementing peer evaluation for uploaded work like video or audio recording. Peer evaluation demonstrates content knowledge by multiple parties.
- Consider ways to assess understanding via informal, in-class writing (journals/reflections, etc).

Have Students Sign an Honor Pledge for all Major Assignments

- This is a requirement of AS&E honesty policy. Suggested template language appears below:

For questions and course or assignment design consultations, contact Greer Murphy, Director of Academic Honesty, at honestyliaison@ur.rochester.edu. Credit: Ms. Blaire Wilson, Emory University.

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Suggested honor pledge language [template] for exam and assignment submissions:

“I affirm that I have not given or received any unauthorized help on this assignment, and that this work is my own.”

Suggested honor pledge group projects [template], to be signed by each group member:

“I accept responsibility for my role in ensuring the integrity of the work submitted by the group in which I participated.”

Note(s): These are baseline suggestions; feel free to customize templates to meet expectations of your specific course (see examples posted elsewhere on the [instructor resources pages](#)). Students are responsible for upholding AS&E’s honesty policy whether or not they write or sign a pledge.

Open-Book/Open-Resource Exams

- Any online test-taking experience carries with it the potential that students will consult course (or other outside) resources. Consider officially making some or all exams open note, in order to minimize students’ temptation to access materials dishonestly.
- Design exams and ask questions that encourage students to apply what they have learned from your course rather than only repeat back memorized definitions, theories, or facts. An example of what “applied” learning questions look like in the context of a specific field can be found at this link: <https://www.francissu.com/post/7-exam-questions-for-a-pandemic-or-any-other-time>.
- Allot time to complete exams as way to lower pressure on otherwise high-stakes assignments.
- Set clear expectations and guidelines for how information from outside sources should be cited.

Exams with Limited Time

- Set appropriate time limits. Exams should be long enough so students can reasonably complete them within the time allotted, but not so long that students feel incentivized to avail themselves of unauthorized resources. Time limits should dissuade students from using outside sources by making it an inefficient technique to complete the test within the time.
- Create multiple versions wherever possible; or at least, try to randomize questions and answers.
- The Blackboard feature for delivering one question at a time can be useful, but it can also have unexpected drawbacks. Consider whether this method is the most effective for your course(s).
- Allowing students to go back and change answers before submitting work creates opportunities for potential dishonesty but reduces pressure, stress of remote test-taking. Try to find a balance.

Remote/Online Written Assessments

- Specify the submission format that you prefer. Certain formats (such as Word versus PDF) are more conducive to providing comments and written feedback to students in a timely manner.
- Consider multi-stage writing assignments where students build on previous drafts and improve them over a period of time. Plan small, in-class writing workshops and encourage students to seek support from resources such as CETL [Tutoring](#), WSAP [Writing and Speaking Center](#), etc.

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