



Assessment Plans in Virtual Instruction

Assessment is an integral course component that is most effective when aligned with the learning objectives and learning activities of the course. Assessment in virtual instruction means implementing specific strategies to capture students' learning and preserve academic integrity in a virtual environment.

A comprehensive assessment plan includes frequent, low-stakes formative assessments of students' learning during the semester. As these assessments are ongoing, they also give instructors a chance to reflect on and adjust their teaching activities to facilitate students' learning. Consider alternative assessment strategies in place of final exams, a high-stakes summative assessment, in a virtual setting. This [flowchart](#) (developed at Wake Forest University) provides an example of the paths you can take to plan your assessment strategies. However, if a final exam best aligns with your course learning objectives, there are resources and tools to help you administer it efficiently online.

One way to categorize assessment strategies is by whether they are question- or project-based.

Project-Based Assessment Strategies

These assessments embody group and individual projects that provide evidence for students' learning.

Assessment Strategy	Formative/Summative	Technology Option(s)
Group or individual projects and presentations	Formative/Summative	ICON Assignments , Zoom , UI Capture , Kaltura
Peer-review assignments	Formative/Summative	ICON Assignments , Turnitin , ICON Discussion
Final papers	Summative	ICON Assignments , Turnitin



Minute papers	Formative	ICON Discussion , ICON Assignments
Case studies	Summative	ICON Assignments , Zoom , ICON Discussion
Journaling	Formative	ICON Assignments
Student portfolios	Summative	ICON Assignments

Question-Based Assessment Strategies

These assessments are mainly quizzes and exams used throughout or at the end of the semester.

Assessment Strategy	Formative/Summative	Technology Option
Series of quizzes	Formative	ICON Quizzes
Student-developed quiz questions	Formative/Summative	ICON Quizzes
Open-book and take-home exams	Summative	Turnitin
Midterm/final exams	Formative/Summative	ICON Quizzes

Procedures to Establish Academic Integrity

Instructors can use different strategies to ensure the work their students submit is authentic and original. It may be helpful to provide students with the opportunity to nurture agency and confidence. Make sure to share your procedures as well as institutional policies for academic integrity early in the semester.

Reduce Students' Anxiety

Inflexible assessment structures can make students feel anxious. On this note, [Tobin \(2020\)](#) discusses some potential strategies to reduce students' anxiety, which has increased due to the uncertainty of pandemic circumstances.





Employ Transparent Assignment Design

Evidence shows that students develop a sense of belonging and connectedness to the course context when assignment and task instructions are transparently communicated to them. The more the students are clear about why, what, and how of their course tasks and assessments, the less they tend to pick inauthentic procedures to complete the tasks. Therefore, you may want to consider the transparent assignment model when communicating the assessment outlines and procedures with students:

- **Purpose:** State the learning objectives to help students recognize how the assignment will benefit their learning.
- **Task:** Give step-by-step instructions of what students should do.
- **Criteria:** Point out the characteristics of successful work. Be explicit about how students will be assessed in rubrics.

Identify Technology Tools' Affordances and Limitations

Before finalizing your plan to use certain technology tools to implement assessment strategies in a virtual setting, evaluate their capacities as well as limitations.

- Determine whether the assessments are meant to be synchronous or asynchronous.
- Examine the assessment tools' accessibility for students.
- Provide students with information about support resources for the assessment tools.

Consider Different Strategies to Prevent Cheating

- There are various reasons why students may decide to cheat when completing their assignments or taking exams. Instructors and administrators can consider certain tools and teaching strategies to help students have an authentic learning experience. If you plan to deliver quizzes/exams as a part of your assessment strategy, you may consider using Proctorio, a remote proctoring service. Proctorio is effective when instructors set clear student expectations up front, review Proctorio exam results, and follow up with students who exhibit questionable behavior. You may learn more about this tool through the [Proctorio Training Site](#).
- In addition to using tools to prevent cheating in a virtual course context, you can also use [teaching strategies](#) to develop an integrated learning environment.

