

Center for Learning and Teaching

Online Assessment Options

For support, please contact CLT (clt@odu.edu, 757-683-3172)

As you transition to an online learning environment, the University provides several online testing options that can help you assess how well your students are meeting your course learning objectives.

This table provides you with an overview of these options: descriptions of method, advantages and disadvantages, and faculty and student requirements.

In addition, you'll find tips, strategies, and alternative forms of assessment that will enable you accomplish your course objectives.

Option	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Support	Student requirements
<b>Blackboard Tests</b>	<p>Create, add questions, administer exams/quizzes including multiple-choice, multiple-answer, short-answer, ordering, fill in the blank, etc.</p> <p>Add feedback, customize exam settings, set time limit, create a pool of questions, randomize questions, set number of attempts, add a password, etc.</p>	<p>Tests are graded automatically.</p> <p><b>Used to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide quick feedback to student</li> <li>check for plagiarism using SafeAssign</li> <li>create and send anonymous surveys</li> <li>customize question display and settings</li> <li>add rubrics</li> <li>add self-checks to content areas</li> <li>conduct formative and summative assessments</li> </ul>	<p><u>Not proctored</u></p> <p>Essay questions are not graded automatically</p> <p>Wireless Internet connections are NOT recommended</p>	<p><a href="#">CLT Support and Training Resources</a></p> <p><a href="#">Blackboard at ODU</a></p> <p><a href="#">Test and survey basics in Blackboard</a></p>	<p><b>Students must:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have access to Blackboard using a wired connection</li> <li>know how to take exams in Blackboard</li> </ul> <p>Refer your students to this page: <a href="#">Blackboard Tips for Students</a></p>
<b>Respondus LockDown Browser</b>	<p>Locks down the Blackboard testing environment</p> <p>By using the LockDown browser, you limit students' ability to print, copy, visit other sites, access other applications, or close a test without submission</p>	<p>Same as those in Blackboard Tests</p> <p>Discourage cheating during online tests/exams</p>	<p><u>Semi-proctored</u></p> <p>Essay questions are not graded automatically</p> <p>Wireless Internet connections are NOT recommended</p>	<p><a href="#">CLT Support and Training Resources</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.odu.edu/ts/software-services/respondusldb">https://www.odu.edu/ts/software-services/respondusldb</a></p>	<p><b>Students must:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>have access to Blackboard using a wired connection</li> <li>know how to take exams in Blackboard</li> </ul> <p>LockDown Browser must be installed on each student's computer</p> <p>iOS, Android, Surface, and Chromebook are not supported</p> <p>Refer your students to this page: <a href="#">Respondus LockDown Browser students' tips</a></p>

<p><b>ProctorU</b></p>	<p>Integrated with Blackboard, ProctorU is an online exam <a href="#">proctoring solution</a> used to detect and prevent cheating.</p> <p>In case of irregularities, exam video archives are available for review</p>	<p><b>Used to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide a live person to monitor students as they complete a test</li> <li>• assess behavior via webcam and report any suspicious activity to the professor for investigation</li> <li>• show student's environment (required by ProctorU)</li> <li>• authenticate user, review environment, monitor students' computer screens in real time</li> <li>• limit students' use of other applications on their computer</li> </ul>	<p>Faculty are required to be available during exams to reset students' attempts in Blackboard, or to answer questions from the proctoring service</p> <p>Scheduling logistics can be challenging for students</p> <p>Wireless Internet connections are NOT recommended</p>	<p><a href="#">How does it work?</a></p> <p><a href="#">CLT Support and Training Resources</a></p> <p><a href="#">Exams and Proctors</a></p>	<p><b>Students must:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• have access to Blackboard using a wired connection</li> <li>• have an HD webcam with a mic and speakers</li> <li>• know how to take exams in Blackboard</li> </ul> <p>iOS, Android, Surface, and Chromebook are not supported</p> <p>Free for students who register for test 72 hours in advance of testing time</p>
<p><b>Alternative forms of assessment</b></p>	<p>Using alternative assessment strategies in an online setting provides faculty with a rich repertoire of options to assess student learning and to help students learn.</p> <p>These options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions</li> <li>• Journals</li> <li>• Projects</li> <li>• Portfolios</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Short papers</li> <li>• Reflective Journal</li> </ul>	<p><b>Used to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• replace classroom exams and tests</li> <li>• assess valued skills that cannot be directly assessed with traditional tests</li> <li>• provide instant and detailed feedback</li> <li>• provide a more realistic setting for student performance</li> <li>• align more easily with established learning outcomes</li> <li>• focus on student performance and the quality of performance</li> <li>• make learning accessible</li> </ul>	<p>Can involve more time and effort by faculty and students</p> <p>Typically, this kind of assessment is more subjective than traditional testing</p>	<p>See table below for a list of alternative assessment strategies</p>	<p><b>Students must be provided with:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• clear guidelines and instructions</li> <li>• flexible options taking into consideration their technology readiness and access</li> <li>• rubrics and self-assessment tools</li> <li>• information about the purpose and the relevance of the assessment</li> </ul>

### Examples of Alternative Assessment Strategies

Using alternative assessment strategies in an online setting provides faculty with a rich repertoire of options to assess student learning and to help students learn.

Indeed, the integration of various assessment strategies throughout online courses consolidates evidence of students' learning.

The following table presents a variety of options to help faculty answer the traditional questions associated with assessment:

1) *What are the essential skills and knowledge I am trying to teach?*

2) *How can I find out whether students are learning them? and*

3) *How can I help my students to learn better?* (Angelo & Cross, 1993, p. 304).

Strategy	Description	Online Assessments/ Tools	Bloom's Taxonomy
<b>Multiple-choice quizzes</b>	Online quizzes can be used to assess whether students are keeping up with the content and provide multiple low-stakes assessment points. You can create your questions around case studies or readings. Consider using open-book tests and quizzes.	Blackboard: Tests	Knowledge/comprehension
<b>Discussions</b>	Using Blackboard discussion forums, students share their knowledge and understanding of a concept or topic. Questions are typically used to initiate the exchange of ideas and opinions. Students can defend a stance or a point of view with supporting data, and they can analyze or critique writings or other works. Faculty can create small group discussion forums as well. Faculty must provide students with clear guidelines regarding purpose, expectations, and deliverables.	Blackboard: Discussion	Analysis/synthesis/evaluation
<b>Journals/ Learning Logs/Reflection</b>	Students reflect on their learning, a task, or an assignment. Reflection is typically used to assess students' progress and growth over a period of time. Reflection allows you to provide ongoing feedback, summarize critical ideas, reinforce points, encourage student work, and share and aggregate students' reflections.	Blackboard: Journals and Blogs	Knowledge/comprehension Analysis/synthesis/evaluation
<b>Essays/Papers</b>	Students construct responses to questions and provide supporting detail based on what they have learned, or by using supporting arguments. This method allows instructors to assess students' understanding and ability to analyze and synthesize information.	Blackboard: Tests (Essay question)	Knowledge/comprehension Analysis/synthesis/evaluation
<b>Projects</b>	Students design, create, or generate something that requires integrating the knowledge, concepts, and skills that they acquired during the course.  Options include simulation, role-playing, and problem-solving. To use a project-based assessment, you should provide clear guidelines, opportunities for incremental deliverables, and feedback. You should also provide rubrics, as well as evaluation and self-evaluation forms.	Blackboard: Assignments, Tests and Discussion Zoom	Knowledge/comprehension Analysis/synthesis/evaluation /creation

Strategy	Description	Online Assessments/ Tools	Bloom's Taxonomy
<b>Self- and Peer-Assessment</b>	In a self-assessment, students monitor their progress in learning and critically evaluate their knowledge and learning. Peer assessment allows students to assess each other's contributions as well.	Blackboard: Groups, Wikis, Blogs, and Discussion	Knowledge/comprehension Analysis/synthesis/evaluation
<b>Case Studies</b>	Students analyze a case study to identify problems and to offer potential solutions (use prompts: either rhetorical or dialectical).	Blackboard: Assignments, Tests and Discussion	Knowledge/comprehension Analysis/synthesis/evaluation
<b>Portfolios</b>	Students develop and compile a collection of their work (usually throughout the course), which showcases learning and progress through various artifacts.	Blackboard: Portfolio, Wiki, Blog and Discussion	Knowledge/comprehension Analysis/synthesis/evaluation /creation
<b>Summaries</b>	Students write summaries of lectures or readings in their own words. The focus may be on summarizing the main points, documenting their reactions to ideas, or discussing what's most important.	Blackboard: Portfolio, Wiki, Blog Discussion Board	Knowledge/comprehension Analysis/synthesis/evaluation /creation
<b>Presentations</b>	Students present their work via website, blog, or recorded audio/video.	Blackboard: Portfolio, Wiki, Blog, and Discussion Zoom	Knowledge/comprehension Analysis/synthesis/evaluation
<b>Short papers</b>	<b>One-minute paper:</b> Students summarize the most crucial aspect of the learning and reflect upon questions regarding their understanding of it. <b>Muddiest point:</b> Students write about learning that was unclear after a lesson or a group of lessons OR about what students find least clear or most confusing about a lesson.	Blackboard: Portfolio, Wiki, Blog, and Discussion	Knowledge/comprehension Analysis/synthesis/evaluation
<b>Video Discussions</b>	Students and instructors share and discuss content, using text, images, audio, and video. VoiceThread combines a media player with interactive recording tools to facilitate online discussions.	VoiceThread (integrated with Blackboard)	Analysis/synthesis/evaluation
<b>Visual Representations or Concept Mapping</b>	Students create a visual representation of a concept, skill, or piece of information as a means of understanding a concept and/or topic.	Blackboard: Assignments, Wiki, Blog, and Discussion <a href="https://www.mindmup.com/">https://www.mindmup.com/</a>	Analysis/synthesis/evaluation

Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques—A handbook for college-teachers*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

### General online testing tips and best practices

- Assess frequently and use periodic ungraded self-assessments
- Break large assignments into smaller parts with low stakes "milestone" deadlines; ask students to submit their work in stages, such as topic and outline
- Clarify your course expectations on how to cite works in papers, assignments, discussion board threads, and other academic writing
- Provide clear guidelines on exam time duration, number of questions, number of attempts, and how to request help
- Remind students about your test dos and don'ts
- Schedule the exam/test to be taken at a set time, rather than having it open for a 24- to 48-hour window
- Schedule the exam/test to be taken during ITS Help Desk Support hours ([itshelp@odu.edu](mailto:itshelp@odu.edu), 757-683-3192)
- Set due dates and make exceptions for students with documented accommodation requests

### Tips and best practices for using Blackboard testing

- Add a practice quiz with unlimited attempts so that students can experience an online exam
- Limit the number of attempts based on the goals and level of complexity of the exam
- Allow one question to show at a time and do not allow backtracking
- Calculate the number of questions for the allotted time; for example, for a 30-minute exam, prepare 45 questions
- Remind students that, for a 30-minute test, they WILL have 45 seconds to answer each multiple-choice question (or 1.5 to 2 minutes for analysis/calculation items)
- Make test link available to students as an announcement, with automated notification
- Force exam completion once the exam is started; if this option is selected, you will need to clear any incomplete attempts for students who run into issues (loss of connectivity, power, etc.)
- Randomize exam questions and answer choices
- Use a pool of questions and give each student a different exam
- Use an additional password to control who and when students can access your exam in Blackboard