

## Take home exams

Take-home exams can be a good assessment method to test higher levels of learning in a flexible way. Keep in mind that the chosen assessment method always needs to be in line with your learning goals.



### What is a take-home exam?

#### A take home exam is ...

- Given to students to **complete on their own time**, over a **specified period of time**. It is typically assumed to be open book.
- **Assessing students' ability to find and apply information and knowledge**, often used in subjects requiring direct reference to written materials, like law statutes, statistics or acts of parliament.
- Taken in an **unsupervised environment**, usually with access to different types of materials.
- Typically **consisting of essay or constructed response questions**, which allow for lengthier responses from students and permits students lots of flexibility in their responses.

### When would you use take home exams?

#### Use take home exams ...

- **To assess the higher levels of Bloom** by requiring students to organize and integrate information, interpret information, construct arguments, give explanations, evaluate ideas and develop original thoughts/ opinions. Take-home exams also provide a way of testing a students' ability to communicate in writing and to present their responses in a logical manner.
- **To assess how students apply their knowledge to a specific situation**, context or problem (e.g., a case study), rather than regurgitating facts.
- **To assess small groups of candidates** because grading can take an extended amount of time to score. Larger groups are possible if you have multiple assessors for your course.

### Essential guidelines for communication to students



**Tip:** test if students can apply, analyze, evaluate and/or create

**As a teacher you need to be very explicit about what is and what is not permitted. Also make sure to set a specific timeframe for the exam.**

Information to communicate towards students:

- ✓ Make them aware of the confidential nature of the test and their responsibility to take it honestly.
- ✓ Specify the materials/resources that may and may not be consulted.
- ✓ Specify whether consultation or collaboration with other students is permitted.
- ✓ Let students confirm and sign that they have read and understood the instructions.
- ✓ Include consequences for breach of guidelines.





## Tools you can use

### Canvas assignments

- In Canvas assignments you can set 'availability dates'. You can create a date and/or time range in which the assignment is available and can be submitted. [Here you can find more information about how to do that.](#)



**Tip:** Create a quiz question in Canvas to let students confirm that they have read and understood the instructions.



## Challenges & opportunities

### Advantages

Opportunity for students to **demonstrate their ability** to reason, organize and synthesize knowledge and convey judgement and higher-order critical thinking skills in writing.

Can be an **authentic way of assessing** because students need to organize and interpret information from various resources and generate and communicate thoughts and ideas.

**Increase accessibility** as students can complete the test at a time and location of their choose and can use special hardware, software or adaptive technology if needed.

### Challenges

With assessments involving subjective scoring such as essay questions or case studies, the **scoring can be unreliable** because of biases. E.g. not all students took the exam in the same environment, under the same circumstances, so this can have a negative influence on the reliability of the results.

For extended response formats, it is **time consuming** to appropriately read and score candidate responses.

The unsupervised testing format allows the opportunity for unauthorized collaboration and consultation with others, **plagiarism** and access to unauthorized materials.

### Solutions

A **clear correction model** ensures a sufficient degree of objectivity and transparency. With assessments that require original responses, a certain amount of subjectivity is inevitable.

**Digital assessment** increases legibility and grading efficiency. Optionally, allowing students to **work in groups** can also reduce the correction-load.

With **well-constructed essay questions**, that require elaborate and original responses and assess the higher levels of bloom's taxonomy, plagiarism can be detected using software.



## Helpful materials

Click [here](#) for an overview

- How to construct essay questions? 
- How to score essay questions? 
- How to make correction models? 

### Estimate the length of open-ended questions exam, response time depends on complexity of question

Answer requires...	Response time
1 word or phrase	1 minute
¼ page A4	5 minutes
½ page A4	10 minutes
1 page A4	25 minutes
2 pages A4	60 minutes