

Student Conduct and Academic Integrity

AN INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE TO ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND OPEN BOOK EXAMS

CREATING OPEN BOOK EXAMS

An alternative to the traditional closed final exam is the open-book exam. An open-book exam entails an assessment in which students will have the opportunity to use and review resources or references during their exam. It's important to note however, that with open-book exams these resources and references should be set and communicated by the instructor.

Here's some general tips to consider when creating an open-book exam:

- **ASK CONCEPTUAL QUESTIONS**

Try to create questions that ask students to apply and synthesize multiple pieces of knowledge they have learned throughout your course to answer a question. This is also known as "[climbing Blooms ladder](#)"

- **ASK STUDENTS TO SHOW THEIR WORK**

- **ASK STUDENTS TO IDENTIFY AN ERROR**

This is especially effective, as students are not able to simply google this question

- **AVOID USING TEXTBOOK PROBLEMS**

Textbook bank questions are commonly bought by tutoring sites and shared online

- **AVOID USING MULTIPLE-CHOICE, FILL-IN QUESTIONS, SIMPLE COMPUTATIONS, OR DEFINITION QUESTIONS**

TIPS TO LIMIT COLLUSION

While some instructors may permit collaboration on assignments, open-book exams rarely allow for students to collaborate when completing their assessment. Many of the preventative assessment design tools for closed-book exams also apply to open-book exams to limit unauthorized collaboration. These include, but are not limited to:

- **RANDOMIZED TEST QUESTIONS**

Students may post the question number if posting a question as an image – this has helped to determine which student had that question for that question number in order to find a student responsible

- **DEEP QUESTION POOLS**

If only a small amount of students have access to a specific question, it lowers the pool of possible students who posted the question to Chegg

- **DIFFERENT EXAM VERSIONS**

Again, this lowers the pool of possible students who had access to the question being posted

- **SET UP RANDOM ASSESSMENT VARIABLES**

If students are provided with unique assessment variables, it can help us quickly determine the student responsible for posting the question to online tutoring sites

INSTRUCTING STUDENTS ON OPEN BOOK EXAMS

Many students may be new to the concept of open-book exams, and therefore it is recommended to walk through exam expectations to ensure that all students understand the rules and regulations pertaining to open-book exams. Here are some topics that may be helpful to discuss with students in advance of the exams:

- **WHAT RESOURCES ARE PERMITTED DURING THE OPEN-BOOK EXAM?**

What materials can students use? What materials can they not? Both of these should be clearly stated and explained. Discuss unauthorized collaboration with students and confirm that they should complete their exams independently.

- **CAN STUDENTS COPY ALLOWED RESOURCES?**

Should their answers be paraphrased? Should they cite information they paraphrase/quote/summarize from the materials? How should they cite?

- **HOW SHOULD STUDENTS' STUDY FOR AN OPEN-BOOK EXAM?**

We recommend warning students that studying from non-course materials will raise concerns of cheating. Encourage students to use course materials or to contact their instructors if they require further instruction or explanation. Remind students that they should prepare their materials in advance and download their online books if possible.

- **WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF A STUDENT ACCESSES PROHIBITED MATERIALS?**

Explain to students that if you have concerns that they used prohibited material, you will ask them to show where they used the information from. Discuss how academic integrity reports work and what grade sanctions students may face for using unauthorized materials or collaboration.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

Instructors may consider including an academic integrity statement for students to complete before they are able to access their exam. These statements can help to reaffirm open-book exam rules, and to remind students to the importance of academic integrity. More information on how to set up a required academic integrity statement can be found [HERE](#).

[Download](#) a sample academic integrity statement for open book exams.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Best Practices: Open Book Exams](#) developed by Ryerson University
- [Designing Open-Book Exams](#) developed by Concordia University
- [Open-book Examination, Assessment Resources](#) developed by University of Hong Kong.
- [A guide for academics](#) – Open book exams developed by the University of Newcastle Australia