

Designing Assessments for Online Delivery

You can dissuade dishonest behavior in the online environment through smart assignment design rather than fully relying on proctoring tools. Below are the various ways in which you can minimize and discourage plagiarism and cheating.

- **Research Papers, Essays, Policy Memos**, very common form of assessments, are authentic assessments that ask students to use higher order thinking skills (such as analyze, evaluate), to solve an authentic real-world problem and by applying various skills they have learned throughout the course. There is often no one right answer so students may use notes, texts and even the internet to support their ideas. Because students are evaluated on their individual thought process, they are less likely to copy each other's work. However, these types of assignments open themselves up to plagiarism. To check for and discourage plagiarism use the Assignment Tool in Blackboard and activate the SafeAssign function. SafeAssign compares submitted assignments against a set of academic papers and databases to identify areas of overlap between the submitted assignment and existing works. A report is provided to the faculty and if you choose, the report can be shared with the student. The assignment design video includes instructions of how to build assignments in Blackboard using SafeAssign.
- **Quizzes and Exams**, also used frequently, may include multiple choice, fill in the blank, and short answer questions. These types of assessment, if built to assess "recall" level information, are very easy to cheat on. However, quizzes and exams can be designed in ways to dissuade dishonest testing behavior. To do so, begin with designing questions that test higher order thinking skills rather than recalling facts. In addition, you can use the Blackboard Test Tool, which lets you introduce constraints making it difficult for student to cheat. For example, you can randomize questions so that each student sees a different sequence of question. Or you can create a question bank so that the questions in each quiz varies from one student to the next. You can include a timer which minimizes cheating because students don't have enough time to search out answers or ask for assistance. You can go a step further and have the quiz set to auto submit once the timer runs out. There are several ways to use the Blackboard testing tool; however, setting up quizzes and exams using the Blackboard Test Tool can be daunting. Therefore, we recommend that if you need help you reach out to ODL (sais.odl@jhu.edu) for advice and assistance.
- **Presentations and Oral Exams** are assessments that ask students to demonstrate knowledge by presenting in a live or recorded format. These assessments are naturally less susceptible to cheating because you are evaluating individual application of skills and can see/hear students. You can use Zoom for live presentations.

And finally, we recommend that before any assessment, you have your students read and acknowledge the **SAIS Honor Code**. *This can be attached to the beginning of any assessment you give to students. You can also ask students to write this on the cover page of an exam or include it as the cover of a written assessment.*