Exam/Quiz Security

The HHD Office of Undergraduate and Outreach Programs wants to remind faculty about the opportunities to protect academic integrity through exam security measures. A Penn State working group has provided a summary of testing options for instructors (https://integrity.psu.edu/assessment-options-instructors). Faculty can choose from the following options for their exams (these are not mutually exclusive).

- **Pollock Testing Center**: Limited spaces are available in Penn State's Pollock Testing Center. The Testing Center's eTesting Lab administers secure, computer-based exams through Canvas for **undergraduate** classes at the University Park campus. Faculty planning to use the center should review the eTesting video and additional information for faculty here: https://www.testing.psu.edu/. **The opening day to request an exam for Spring 2026 is December 12 and slots go quickly.**
- **Exam Scanning**: Scanning Operations in Pollock Building and the Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence offer paper-based exam scanning (aka bubble sheets) for Penn State courses. Information for faculty can be found here: https://www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/scanning.
- **Respondus Lockdown Browser**: For exam days or by requesting evening exams, instructors can request to deliver Canvas exams in a computer lab classroom and the Respondus Lockdown Browser is now available in all Student Technology Enabled Classrooms (STEC) and may also be available in unit-controlled computer labs. This custom software prevents students from accessing external resources during proctored Canvas assessments. Please review the etesting outside Pollock website and this Penn State Knowledge Base article for more information. Any questions, email ITservicedesk@psu.edu.
- **Honor Lock Proctoring**: Honorlock is Penn State's online proctoring service. Honorlock uses a hybrid proctoring approach that combines artificial intelligence and human proctors. Instructors receive a report of student activity, but must make their own determination of whether the actions warrant further review or violate academic integrity. Students also need to meet the IT and equipment requirements. Instructors should review the information on academic integrity options (https://honorlock.psu.edu/academic-integrity-and-proctoring/) and the information for instructors on how to use Honorlock (https://honorlock.psu.edu/). Honorlock is best used for high stakes exams (30%+ of the final grade) and those without a large enrollment.
- **TopHat**: TopHat is one of many types of courseware available for use at Penn State. You can get an overview at https://www.it.psu.edu/services/top-hat/. You can make and give exams in TopHat. When you give an exam in TopHat the students bring their personal computers, you can give the exam in any classroom with wifi. It will lock their screen so they cannot leave the testing screen. If they do leave the exam screen they will be locked out and it is up to your discretion if you let them back into the exam.
- **Evening Exams**: If instructors want to provide additional seating to space out students or additional proctoring, they can request an evening exam. Evening exams must be requested before the semester starts and must be communicated to students in the syllabus. To increase the likelihood of getting an assigned room through the Registrar, evening exam requests should be submitted 6-8 months prior to the start of the semester. Information on evening exams can be found at https://www.registrar.psu.edu/faculty-staff/scheduling/exam-scheduling/evening-exam-scheduling/. Exams can be scheduled through https://registrar.psu.edu/faculty-staff/forms/evening-exam/index.cfm, which submits them to the Associate Dean for approval.
- **Low-Stakes and/or Open Notes Exams:** For low-stakes or open notes exams, instructors can use Canvas Quizzes without any of the above resources in a proctored or nonproctored setting.

There are still several steps instructors can take to maximize exam security. More information can be found at https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Admin-Blog/Quiz-Settings-to-Maximize-Security/ba-p/259456. A quick guide to this information is also noted below.

- **Proctoring Using Zoom:** While Honorlock is the preferred proctoring approach for online exams at Penn State, some faculty have also proctored exams using Zoom. Guidance on this can be found at: https://sites.psu.edu/eodl/project/how-do-i-use-zoom-to-proctor-an-online-exam/

Quick Guide to Canvas Quiz Settings to Maximize Security

(adapted from https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Canvas-Admin-Blog/Quiz-Settings-to-Maximize-Security/ba-p/259456)

DO Use Question Groups and Test Banks: Create question groups to randomize quiz questions. The larger the number of questions in the question group (compared to the number randomly being picked for the quiz) the more secure the quiz.

DO NOT Let Students See Their Quiz Responses: This is a checkbox option under quiz settings and after a student submits a quiz. For the highest level of security, do not allow students to see their quiz responses at all. This is the most secure option. Uncheck the "Let students see their quiz responses" box. The ONLY way to stop students from viewing their quiz results is to have the “Let Students See their Quiz Responses” and “Show which answers were correct” boxes UNCHECKED.

DO Show One Question At a Time: This is a checkbox option under quiz settings and allows students to only see one quiz question at a time. It is recommended to use this feature in conjunction with the "Lock Questions after Answering" option. Used together, it requires the student to answer each individual question before moving on and prevents students from going back and changing their answer.

DO Set a Time Limit: If quizzes are given in a non-proctored environment the time limit can be used to cut down on the amount of time students have to look up question answers and/or share the questions with other students. If a student needs extended test time this can be added per individual student under the Moderate Quiz settings.

DO Shuffle Answers: This is a checkbox option under quiz settings and will randomize the order of the question's answer choices. By using “shuffle answers” students may get the same quiz question(s), but their answer options probably won't be in the same order. NOTE THAT IF YOUR QUIZ QUESTION HAS AN ANSWER LIKE “ALL OF THE ABOVE/BELOW” OR “ANSWER A & C” YOU SHOULD NOT USE THE “SHUFFLE ANSWER” SETTING.

DO NOT Allow Multiple Attempts: Unless there is a large question bank of questions and/or your goal is mastery of the content, multiple quiz attempts does not create a secure quiz environment. This should only be allowed for low-stakes exams where security is not an issue.

DO LIMIT Quiz Availability: To maximize quiz security it is best to have a quiz open the least amount of time as possible. Below is information on some quiz availability options and how they can be used to enhance quiz security.

- Available From and Until – These set the day/time your students will be able to access the exam and the day/time that the students will no longer be able to take the quiz. To enhance security, instructors should set the quiz to be open the minimal amount of time needed. For enhanced security instructors should set the “Until” date to be the same as the “Due” date of the quiz because it prevents students from taking the quiz after it is due. If the Until day/time is set beyond the "Due” date" students will still be able to take the quiz until the “Until” date, but it will show up as "late" in SpeedGrader and the gradebook.

Again, more Canvas quiz security information is available at the link above.