Alternatives to Traditional Exams and Papers

In light of the developments linked to Covid-19, the University has asked staff to consider alternative assessments to assessment that could not be done online, to get them approved by the external examiner and be in place in time for the examination period.

The University is aware that some forms of assessment are vital to be carried out in person and can discuss the approach to these on a case by case basis.

In order to assist in developing alternatives to examinations, there are a number of useful guides that have been developed and are linked below. There are also examples of good practice currently in the University and some of these are outlined below.

The following questions are useful in reflecting on the assessments for the module and what needs to be included in the alternative assessment.

In redeveloping assessments, it is helpful to think about exactly what the assessment was assessing in terms of the learning outcomes.

The questions below will help you focus on exactly what skills and knowledge your assessment should include.

- Do you want to assess your students' acquisition of specific content knowledge, or their ability to apply that knowledge to new situations (or both)?
- Do you want to assess a product that students produce, or the process they went through to produce it, or both?
- Do you want to assess any of the following?
    - writing ability
    - speaking skills
    - creativity
    - use of information technology
    - Is a visual component to the assessment necessary or desirable?
    - Is the ability for students to work in a group an important component of the assessment?
    - Is it important that the assessment be time-constrained?
    - Depending on circumstances (learning aims, size and type of class), having a discussion with the students about the most appropriate assessment would be a good idea. Gives them a sense of empowerment, but also gives us a sense of how they are conceptualising their project.

Examples of Current Online Practice for Exams and Presentations in the University:

Online Examinations
- Does the examination need to be timed? If so, for how long?

- Can the examination be open book? If no, are there restrictions on what resources?
  - If moving to open book, it would be worth considering using a question bank instead of a given @test@ as that would work against collusion, etc.
- Does the Virtual Learning Environment test function provide the functionality you need?
- Is a word document uploaded to Turnitin appropriate?
- Would moving to a type of take-home exam work?
  - Would this better than moving from unseen to open book, as it can work better with the types of questions. A take-home with 3-4 questions changing from knowledge to critical discussion would allow them to apply the issues that might be covered in the exam.
- What do you need to verify student's identity?
- What in the replacement can mitigate against academic misconduct?

Individual Presentations:

- Does the presentation need to be to a group or to an individual?
- Could the presentation be recorded and uploaded or does it need to be live?
- Would an online conference be appropriate?

Group Work

- Does the group need to meet in person?
  - Consider using Moodle forums, Microsoft Teams, Skype for Business or any alterative online platform which the Partner Institution may be employing.
- What is the end-product of the group work?
- If it is a presentation, can it be presented via a videoconference platform?
- In some respects, you might consider going for a different type of assessment on the same topic, such as for group presentations or projects. So, if a group presentation, ask them instead to create a major prezi with video components.

Moving from written exams to oral exam via Skype

Other Resources:

https://www.queensu.ca/teachingandlearning/modules/assessments/31_s4_01_intro_section.html

https://www.jisc.ac.uk/guides/making-assessments-accessible

https://www.wwu.edu/teachinghandbook/course_design/assessment_strategies.shtml