UNIVERSITY OF
Southampton

Online assessments: providing information to students.

Contents

1. Introduction

1.1 Students taking online assessment will need information about several aspects of the process and our expectations.

1.2 The best place to provide each piece of information is likely to depend on the format of the assessment offered by the School and the choice of delivery platform. In many cases, a generic document, supplemented by specific instructions on the assessment document may work best.

1.3 Schools with a wide variety of assessment types may find that placing all the rubric on the assessment document is the best plan but it is essential that they communicate the information well in advance of the assessment with instructions to candidates.

1.4 The list below is intended to act as a checklist. Not all information listed will be needed for all assessments.

2. Good Practice

2.1 Established good practice in this regard includes ensuring students understand:

- The importance of maintaining academic integrity for students' own learning and future careers.

- The exact requirements of the assessment, including clear statement of resources that can and cannot be accessed and used by students (e.g., calculators, notes, internet, software).

- The importance of asking if assignment criteria are not clear, and who to ask for further guidance.

- What support can be accessed and how to access it if necessary.

- What is permitted with regard to working with others: Specifically, what forms of interaction with other students are, or are not permitted in creating the assignment, and avoidance of unauthorised external support (e.g. essay mills, contract cheating, support from family members and other forms of unauthorised external authorship), including the dangers and likely consequences if such actions are detected.

2.2 Have you ensured well ahead of the date of the assessment that students are fully aware of the Academic Integrity Declaration that they will need to confirm when submitting their work so that they have time to ask questions as necessary?

3. Checklist

Communication to student in advance of the assessment period

a) Who should students talk to if they have queries about the exams timetable?

b) It is usual to publish the assessment rubric in advance of the assessment period so students can familiarise themselves with it. It is recommended that this is done for both generic and assessment specific rubrics and instructions.

c) Instructions for checking IT equipment, links, bandwidth, ability to open documents of different formats, upload and download files.

Location:

d) Where will students find their assessment?

Duration:

e) How long will assessments be open for submission? Earliest start; & Latest finish?

f) How long should the particular assessment take?

Use of resources:

g) Open or closed book? What resources may be accessed?

h) Are there specific resources that will definitely be needed or should be used?

i) Can students use software to make calculations? What is the expectation for showing working?

Security:

j) Proctored or not proctored? Note that for proctored exams there may need to be additional communication regarding privacy and use of personal data. Legal Services should be consulted as necessary.

Academic integrity:

k) Before the assessment students should be made aware of the long version of the academic integrity declaration from the AI Network.

Answer Format:

l) Must answers be handwritten/typed/student to choose? (Note that if assessments are to be handwritten there should be a specific note on the exemption for students where AERs permit them to type their answers.

m) Pen colour? Use of pencil? Margins expected? Each question on a new page? Rough working or notes to be crossed out?

n) is there a word limit/page limit?

o) Number of questions to be completed. Selection of questions to be completed (e.g. 2 from section A and 3 from section B).

Drafts:

p) Can a student submit multiple drafts prior to the deadline? If yes then advise that only the last submission will be marked and all others will be deleted without marking.

Queries

q) How do students raise a query or alert us to a problem during the assessment? Note that contact should be to the SAA Assessment Team who will log and triage queries and pass to module lead,/iSolutions/whoever for resolution. Make clear that students should not contact the module lead directly.

r) During which parts of the assessment window will the queries process be staffed?

s) How would all student be alerted to a problem with the assessment and its resolution?

Submission:

t) Do you require:

Cover sheet with module code; assessment title; Student ID number; number of pages in submission?

Page numbers?

u) How do students know to include an Academic Integrity statement and where will they find the wording recommended by the AI Network? Have you reminded them they need to sign this statement? What forms of signature are acceptable – typed name? Picture of handwritten signature? PDF electronic signature?

v) Link to information on creating a pdf from multiple images or from MS Office documents. Link to instructions about how to compress a very large file.

w) Instructions or link to instructions for how to submit via Blackboard, Turnitin, e-assignment etc

x) Reminder to check pdf can be opened and looks correct, contains all pages etc.

y) Reminder to finalise submission before the assessment closes, especially if draft submissions are permitted.

Late submission:

z) Warning that trying to upload large files close to the deadline is risky and plenty of time should be allowed for this?

aa) Warning that no deadline extensions are permitted.

bb) Warning that late submissions attract a mark of zero.

cc) Instructions for late submissions via SCB and process for submitting these. Note that decisions will be made at the SCB (in March for semester 1) and be published at the same time as marks are released. *Note that if SC for late submissions are not upheld the mark for the assessment will be zero.*

Special Instructions:

dd) Any special instructions specific to the assessment?

4.   Academic Integrity Declaration

Advanced notice for students.

Note to schools: This longer version should be shared with students well in advance of the assessment so that they have sufficient time to look at the linked resources and ask questions.

In attempting this online assessment and submitting your work, you are confirming that:

1. You have read and understood the Regulations Governing Academic Integrity and the University's Academic Integrity Guidance, in particular noting:
   - This is your own, unaided work, with any use of other sources being fully acknowledged as expected in your discipline.
   - You have only used resources specifically allowed within the assessment (e.g. source texts, calculators, software).
   - Except where specifically permitted in the assignment, you have not communicated with anyone about the topic of this assessment (including discussing or sharing the questions or answers in any way) during the time that the assessment was available to students. This includes social media or other forms of electronic/personal communication.
   - You have not accessed any unauthorised support from other students, resources, or external people (including friends and family members) in relation to the assessment through any route including social media or other forms of electronic/personal communication.
2. You are aware that failure to act in accordance with Regulations Governing Academic Integrity may lead to the imposition of penalties which, for the most serious cases, may include termination of programme.
3. You consent to the University copying and distributing any or all of your work in any form and using third parties from anywhere in the world to verify whether your work contains plagiarised material, and for quality assurance purposes.

There will be clear indications with the assessment about who to contact if you have any queries. The University will communicate with all students via University email addresses, if necessary, during the assessment.

Shorter version for actual submission:

Note to schools: where possible, tick boxes to indicate agreement with the three statements here should be included with the submission.

In submitting this assignment I confirm that I have read, understood and followed the Academic Integrity Declaration for online assessments [make hyperlink] and that this is my own, unaided work.

I have only used resources specifically allowed during the assessment and have not discussed, shared or been supported in any unauthorised way with the assessment.

I have not communicated (e.g., on social media or using other forms of electronic or personal communication), within the University or externally about the contents of the assessment at any stage.