

UCL Academic Manual

Chapter 4: Assessment Framework for Taught Programmes

Annex 4.1

# Guidelines for Conducting E-Assessment

Contact: [E-Learning Environments](#)

## Guidance

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### 1 Guidelines for the Cluster Room Environment

PCs, chairs and the general assessment environment must conform to standard safe environmental guidelines (clear screen, adjustable screen, adjustable chair, good lighting, heating/air conditioning and ventilation). This is the responsibility of Information Systems for tests which are run in ISD cluster rooms, and of the Department / Division where other computer rooms are used.

### 2 Pre e-Assessment Planning

Staff should note that significant advance planning is required:

- 2.1 If the e-assessment task falls within the main exam period staff must ensure that it is timetabled by the Examinations Office as part of the official exam timetable. This is important to ensure that no student will have two examinations at the same time and may require liaison between the Department / Division, ELE and the Examination Office.
- 2.2 If an e-assessment task occurs outside the main exam periods, Department / Divisions must also ensure that it is appropriately timed to avoid timetable conflicts for students.
- 2.3 Determine what size of cluster room is required – note that spare PCs should be available at a ratio of at least 1 per 15 students, with a minimum of two spare PCs.
- 2.4 The room(s) required should be booked via ISD Cluster Room bookings as early as possible.

Cluster rooms should be booked for 30 minutes before an e-assessment task is scheduled to begin and at least 30 minutes after it is scheduled to be finished. Note that bookings of ISD Cluster Rooms normally have to be made in June for the following academic year and if this is done priority will be given to bookings for e-exams. ISD Room Bookings will also accept bookings during the year but may not be able to prioritise exams at this stage.

- 2.5 An 'e-assessment notification form' should be completed at least four weeks before the assessment. This is an essential requirement so that the ELE can ensure:
- The network and server systems in use have been load tested at levels equal to or greater than those expected during the exam
  - That no system outages or updates are planned for the time of the exam
  - That the relevant teams have been notified, so they can check that sufficient PCs in the cluster room are in working order
  - ELE are able to be present throughout the exam if requested for special circumstances.
- 2.6 Academic staff should ensure that a practice quiz has been run for the same student group, with the same quiz settings. The quiz need not cover the same academic content. A sample quiz is available, please ask ELE.
- 2.7 Complete checks, peer review and External Examiner review, a minimum of three weeks before the assessment date.
- 2.8 Provide the entire e-assessment (course name, quiz location) to ELE at least two weeks before the assessment date.
- 2.9 Ensure that ELE are notified of any changes to rooms or timings.

### 3 Invigilation

Invigilators must be familiar with UCL's invigilation procedures.

Guidelines are available from [examinations@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:examinations@ucl.ac.uk). In accordance with those procedures an academic should be present at the start. Additionally, e-assessments require the following special invigilation procedures.

- 3.1 Invigilators must be familiar with the online testing software and should know what the candidates are expected to do during the test, so that they can spot any attempts to cheat.
- 3.2 Active invigilation is required to prevent students accessing anything other than the test. Invigilators should make unannounced movements throughout the cluster room to check screens and general candidate behaviour, being aware of possible paper material, mobile phones, etc., (as is the case in any exam).
- 3.3 A member of the ELE must be available to be contacted during the examination or will be present if requested.
- 3.4 If using Moodle quizzes it is essential to ensure that all students have submitted their responses before they leave the room - otherwise (a) they may be able to re-open and complete the exam from another location, and (b) they will not receive a mark for the test. The Moodle Grader Report (from Settings>Grades) should be used to

see who has not yet submitted their responses - those who have not submitted will have a '-' for the quiz instead of a mark.

- If the entire group remain in the room until the end of the exam then it will be easy to spot any 'open' tests from the grader report as they will be the ones without a score.
- Students who ask to leave early should have their individual record checked in the Grader Report.

3.5 If it is discovered that a student has left without submitting their answers ELE should be contacted immediately for advice 020 3549 5678 (x65678)

3.6 Late arrivals should be dealt with according to standard examination procedures and will have to go to the Department/Division to sit the test; therefore a computer must be available in the Department/Division for the candidate to use and someone must be available to invigilate.

## 4 Provision for Students with Special Needs

Special assessment arrangements may be possible for students with dyslexia or other disabilities. This must be arranged in advance of the assessment in consultation with Student Disability Services.

## 5 Arrangements for Multiple Sittings

Identical e-assessment may be run in sequence to make best use of facilities and staff availability. However, the following steps must be undertaken:

- 5.1 Candidates in the first session must not be permitted to leave the examination room until everyone has finished.
- 5.2 The next group must be moved into the room while the initial group(s) leave(s). Ideally this should be achieved through different entrances.
- 5.3 In the event of illness which means that a candidate has to leave the room, someone must stay with that candidate until the second group of students has been moved into the room.

## 6 Immediately Before the Exam

- 6.1 Department / Divisions should take a backup copy of the exam the day before the assessment which may be restored in the event of any problems. ELE can advise on this if required.
- 6.2 A single paper copy of the entire test should be printed out in case a paper version is required in the event of a major network failure during the test. Answer books or MCQ cards are available through the Examinations Office on request.
- 6.3 Staff may also decide to take multiple copies of the printout to the exam, or may decide only to make copies on the day of the test in the event of network problems. If the test is very high stakes, or if it would be very difficult to re-schedule the test in the event of network problems, pre-copying of printouts is advisable.
- 6.4 Staff should have a complete printed list of expected participants and their user IDs.

- 6.5 Staff should have the ELE (x 65678) and Helpdesk (x 25000) phone numbers printed and a mobile phone if there is no phone in the cluster room.

## 7 At the Start of the e-Assessment Task

- 7.1 It is advisable to be methodical in starting the e-assessment task, firstly asking all candidates to sit and log in to Moodle. (Noting item 7.6 below) When this is complete asking them to access the exam, and finally releasing the exam password. If any individuals have problems these can be addressed before moving on to the next step.
- 7.2 Technical assistance should be available to candidates to ensure they can login and use any of the equipment correctly. This will normally be provided by the invigilators, but ELE staff are available via the phone or can be present by prior arrangement.
- 7.3 ELE will provide temporary passwords in the event of students having forgotten their passwords.
- 7.4 The 'E-assessment attendance form' listing the examination completed, PC used (from sticker on PC), student name and user ID must be completed and signed by the student. This form may be downloaded from the ELE website and printed by the Department/Division before the exam, and should be stored subsequently by the Department/Division.
- 7.5 Students must display their UCL ID photo cards throughout the exam, and invigilators should check these against the details the student has entered into the attendance form.
- 7.6 Students should be instructed to login as soon as they enter the room, as large numbers of simultaneous logins can place a high load on the server.
- 7.7 Students should be reminded to submit their work before logging out or otherwise closing their browser window.

## 8 During the e-Assessment Task

In common with standard assessment regulations:

- 8.1 If a student finishes more than 15 minutes before the end of the exam they may leave the room, as long as a repeat of the same exam with an additional group of students is not scheduled
- 8.2 Students who finish within the last 15 minutes may not leave the room.
- 8.3 As with any examination candidates in an e-assessment should receive clear guidance as to when they are required to submit their final answers.
- 8.4 Additionally advice to candidates on how to navigate within the assessment will normally be provided by the invigilators.
- 8.5 In the event of a technical issue, invigilators should be notified immediately and a note should be made. Once the issue is resolved the student should then receive additional time to complete the exam so they are not disadvantaged.

## 9 After the e-Assessment Task has Ended

- 9.1 Immediately after the e-assessment a backup of the assessment should be made by the Department / Division and transferred to a second system (e.g. a secured shared drive). ELE can assist with this if necessary.
- 9.2 The Department / Division should store the completed attendance forms.
- 9.3 E-assessment systems such as Moodle provide tools for analysing the quality of the questions. This can be run after the assessment has been completed by students. These include measures of how easy or difficult a question was for candidates, as well as an indication of how well each question discriminates more able from less able candidates. Staff may make use of these tools after each e-assessment and may wish to adjust marking schemes and even to discount problematic questions from the final mark. Question responses can be analysed for question quality with the help of the question analysis tool to check:
  - How did people who did well in the assessment as a whole do within a particular question?
  - Were the distractors appropriate?
  - Were any correct answers marked incorrect, or vice versa?
  - Was the question overly easy or difficult, beyond that expected?
- 9.4 If it is judged that a question was too easy, too difficult, or problematic in some other way, then there are mechanisms for re-grading the test; consult ELE for guidance.
- 9.5 Mechanisms of feedback to students should be considered.
  - Will they get access to their results online once the External Examiner has confirmed marks?
  - Will they be able to see how they performed on individual questions?
  - Can students be shown the detailed result of the test if they consult a tutor?

## 10 Release of Marks Prior to Formal Ratification by a Board of Examiners

Departments/Divisions may provide students with information about their results before confirmation by a Board of Examiners. However, it should be made clear that the information is provisional and unconfirmed. Students and Staff should note that any marks release before confirmation by the relevant Board of Examiners is provisional and that the confirmed mark will prevail.

## 11 Disaster Avoidance and Management

- 11.1 ELE should be contacted immediately if there are any technical problems with either the operating system or the test software. Contact (x65678 or x25000) and be ready to provide as much detail as possible.
- 11.2 Students are not permitted to trouble-shoot themselves and invigilators should ask them to cease all data entry.
- 11.3 If the testing session has to be abandoned for any reason (fire, other emergency), ELE should be consulted for advice on re-arranging the session.

## 12 Central Arrangements

### 12.1 Dependability

Although UCL's servers are of a high standard with uninterruptible power supplies, it is recognised that no system is 100% dependable. However, for summative assessments the highest achievable standards are required. For this reason we recommend backing up the exam questions beforehand in a secured shared drive so they can be easily restored.

In the event of a system failure at network level, examiners may be forced to cancel exams and retime the event. A backup system of paper copies may be considered if the test is very high stakes, or if it would be very difficult to re-schedule.

### 12.2 Security

For medium and high stakes assessments, the assessment and results must be maintained in a secure environment. This will normally involve the use of secure usernames and passwords for all administrators with access to the server, restricted availability of the assessment and presentation of the assessment only through a secure browser. The assessment server is located in a physically secure environment

## Glossary of Terms

Computer assisted assessment or e-assessment is being used in an increasing number of courses at UCL. In many cases such assessment is purely formative – designed to help students check their understanding and identify areas to focus on. In some cases however, where marks contribute to students' end of module marks, these e assessments are defined as summative.

There are many teaching activities which may be described as e assessment, including:

#### **E-examinations:**

Online quizzes, typically using multiple choice questions or short answer questions, which contribute to students' end of module marks (i.e. are summative).

#### **E-tests:**

Online quizzes, typically using multiple choice questions or short answer questions in, designed to help students check their understanding and identify areas to focus on, and which do not contribute to students' end of module marks (i.e. are formative).

#### **E-coursework:**

Here the assessed work is coursework which is done wholly or partly online. Such e-coursework may include assessed contributions to discussions and debates, wikis, databases, lessons, portfolios, web pages, and so on. It may also involve 'open-book' use of quizzes – for instance using the quiz tool to present a complex question which students then research over a period of days before submitting their findings.

#### **E-submission:**

Here the online environment is used solely for managing submission and grading of traditional coursework (uploaded essays, reports, log books etc.).