

Tip Sheet: Open Test-Based Assessments

Description

Open test-based assessments are tasks completed independently by students without supervision. These tasks are designed to evaluate students' knowledge, understanding, and application of unit/course content in a flexible, independent setting.

Common formats may include:

- **Online quizzes or tests:** These are timed or untimed digital assessments designed to evaluate students' understanding of key concepts through automatically or manually graded questions.
- **Take-home exams with time limits:** These are assessments completed independently within a set time frame, allowing students to demonstrate critical thinking and application of knowledge in a flexible environment.
- **Open-book or closed-book exam assessments:** These are unsupervised exams where students complete tasks with or without access to resources, without the use of remote proctoring tools.

These assessments are typically completed within a defined time window and submitted electronically.

Best Suited Learning Outcomes

Open test-based assessments are ideal for assessing:

- Understanding of key concepts and factual knowledge
- Application of knowledge to solve problems or analyse scenarios
- Interpretation of data or case-based information
- Decision-making under time constraints

These tasks are commonly used in fields such as health, science, law, business, education, and technical skills professions.

Learning Design Considerations

Designing effective and valid test-based assessments requires careful planning:

- **Validity:**
 - Design questions that assess application and reasoning rather than rote memorisation.
 - Align the questions directly to unit and course learning outcomes.
 - Use randomised question banks and scenario-based items to promote originality.
- **Scaffolding:**
 - Prepare students through practice quizzes or exams, and clear instructions.
 - Develop familiarity with the structure and timing of the exam.
 - Offer guidance on time management and test-taking strategies.
- **Transparency:**
 - Clearly communicate the conditions of the task (e.g. test format, duration, permitted resources, technical requirements and support options).

- **Equity and inclusion:**
 - Provide flexible timing where appropriate.
 - Ensure accessibility for students with diverse needs, including accommodations for extended time or alternative formats.
 - Ensure access to equipment required (e.g. laptops from the library, bookings for computer labs on-campus).
- **Reliability:**
 - Use automated grading where possible for objective marking.
 - Apply consensus moderation processes for open-ended responses.
 - If multiple test versions are used, ensure there is consistent question difficulty across versions.

Integrating Generative AI into the Task

While generative AI is less commonly used during test-based assessments, students can use it for preparation. Ethical and transparent use of AI tools are encouraged for reviewing of concepts or generating practice questions.

Examples include:

- A **nursing student** uses a GenAI tool to generate practice questions on wound care and infection control. The AI creates multiple-choice questions based on recent clinical guidelines, which the student uses to test their understanding and identify areas needing review.
- A **marketing student** uploads their class notes into a GenAI tool to generate concise summaries of key concepts, which will help the student quickly review core ideas before a take-home exam.
- An **education student** struggling with constructivist learning theory asks a GenAI tool to explain it in plain language with classroom examples. The AI provides a simplified explanation and analogies, helping the student grasp the concept and apply it a case-scenario for their exam.

Resourcing Considerations

- **Staffing:**
 - Provide staff development on writing effective test questions.
 - Plan for test development, review of questions, and marking (if not automated).
 - Allocate staff to marking if required, or source casual academics to support grading.
- **Technology:**
 - Ensure the LMS or testing platform supports the number of students accessing the test, as well as features such as time limits, question randomisation, or time extensions applied.
 - Students and staff must be confident in the use of any required platforms or tools.
- **Moderation and quality assurance:**
 - Complete moderation processes to ensure questions are valid, and marking is consistent across multiple markers.