RVC Guidance for online remote assessments

General concerns that are common to all forms of remote online assessment:

- Students will be required to have access to a suitable computer and a stable WIFI / broadband / internet connection as specified here. IT specifications (microphone/webcam) and bandwidth might be problematic for some students, particularly in an online proctored examination. This may be more problematic for assessments that are delivered online for the duration of the test (e.g. via LEARN Quiz) compared with those that can be completed offline (e.g. via download/upload to OCM) and only require intermittent internet access. Support from the LEARN Team should be provided during the test period to respond to technical issues and students should be encouraged to contact the Exams Office in the event of a technical failure. Provision of 'on campus' assessment accommodation should be considered in exceptional circumstances (and on a case-by-case basis), if the student's internet access issues cannot be resolved prior to the examination.
- Scheduling of assessments should be carefully considered with communication between the course team, Exams Office and LEARN team in order to minimise, where possible, the load on the VLE during busy times. Release of the test over a 24 hour period allows students from different time-zones to engage when it is most convenient for them. Another option would be to release the test in designated 'windows', e.g. during the middle of the day or alternatively, one early morning session and another in the late afternoon. There are concerns regarding collusion, whereby students who have undertaken the examination during the early stages of the release period communicate with students who have yet to start the test. Social media posts are particularly problematic in terms of sharing information between students. This has been mitigated by self-regulation (students asked not to engage in social media/electronic communication with others during the test period), but it should be noted that this is difficult to monitor/police. Different versions of the test should be considered, if offering this in two different time slots.
- Tests should normally be time-limited once they have started and consideration given to the duration of the test period, with longer tests delivered in shorter 'chunks' (preferably one hour sessions) with breaks in between. Consideration could be given to allowing some extra time (e.g. 15 minutes) to compensate for a lack of familiarity with the online environment. Where the test is 'open' for an extended period, clear guidance should be provided in terms of expectations of how much time should be spent completing the examination.
- The security of questions is a concern. Online (non-proctored) delivery may release the questions into the public domain. Consideration should be given in terms of re-use of questions following delivery in an online environment. This may require more new questions being written and less reliance on 'banked' questions. This would have advantages in terms of provision of feedback, where model answers could be released/discussed with students without security concerns.
- There is an increased risk of academic misconduct (cheating or collaboration) with remote online assessments, compared with invigilated written examinations. Students are expected to sign up to an "academic honesty and integrity" statement and remote proctoring should be considered 'the norm' as a replacement for invigilation. Academic (mis)conduct of students needs to be monitored for summative assessments, either through review of proctored recordings or plagiarism software for submitted pieces of work.

- A proctoring solution (Proctorio) is embedded within Moodle and should be employed for all summative assessments delivered using the Quiz environment. Students must have a proctored formative assessment in advance, so that they can experience this online environment before any proctored summative assessment takes place. Guidance is provided in LEARN to inform students on how online proctoring works and they will have an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the proctoring software through a test site. Students should be encouraged to resolve all Proctorio setup issues using the test site and through any formative opportunities prior to any summative assessments taking place.
- Special Exam Arrangements (SEA) will remain in place for students who have had these authorised by the Advice Centre. Students who are in receipt of an additional time allowance will have this included in the length of their exam period. Students with a rest break allocation will have this time added onto their exam time as they would for 'in person' exams. During proctored exams, students will not be able to leave the viewing area of their webcam to take their rest break, but getting up and stretching is allowed. Should students feel their approved SEA is not fully compatible with being proctored and not leaving the webcam viewing area, the Disability Adviser should be contacted in the first instance. Provision of 'on campus' assessment accommodation should be considered in exceptional circumstances (and on a case-by-case basis).
- Open book examinations may be considered as an alternative to remote proctoring. However, there needs to be some adjustment in the style of questioning to assess higher order cognitive skills (understanding, analysis, application and synthesis of information) rather than factual recall/knowledge. This may be more applicable to some types of assessment (CPRQ) than others (SAQ, MCQ). Plagiarism software (Turnitin) should be routinely used and reports evaluated in a systematic manner.
- Feedback to students from an online system might be superior to annotation of written scripts in terms of accessibility. The software used should encourage and facilitate staff marking and provision of individualised feedback that can be released in a timely manner.

1. Single best answer (MCQ/EMQ)

Traditional format:

Invigilated exam hall delivery. Question paper provided as hard copy (generated from Ripley Systems). Paper-based answer sheet is completed manually by student. Scanned and automated marking. Statistical (item) analysis provided for QA processes. Spreadsheet provided for standard setting and incorporation into Final Mark Sheet.

Online format:

Online delivery via Moodle Quiz. Test could be either open-book (formative), self-regulated (formative) or proctored (summative). For summative assessment, the test should be released within a limited time window and be time limited once started. Test should be divided into one hour 'chunks' with breaks in between. Where possible and appropriate, questions and responses should be randomised in order and, if considered necessary, large student cohorts may be divided up into a number of smaller groups, with the paper divided into different sets of questions released in each consecutive section.

2. Short answer / problem-solving questions

Traditional format:

Invigilated exam hall delivery. Question paper provided as hard copy. Paper-based answer booklet completed by student. Scripts need to be distributed to markers (often more than one per question). Manual annotation of scripts for feedback/justification of mark. Sample marking of hard copy. Review of scripts/marking by external examiners. Scripts made available to students for feedback (particularly failing students).

Online format:

Online delivery normally via Moodle Quiz. Test could be either open-book (formative), self-regulated (formative) or proctored (summative). For summative assessment, the test should be released within a limited time window and be time limited once started. Test should be divided into one hour 'chunks' with breaks in between. Possible to release general feedback (shortly after the examination) and individualised feedback (after completion of marking and release of marks) to all students. For problem-solving questions of a more discursive nature it might be considered more appropriate to deliver these as in section 3, below.

3. Long answer / essay / CPRQ

Traditional format:

Invigilated exam hall delivery. Question paper provided as hard copy. Paper-based answer booklet completed by student. Scripts need to be distributed to markers (often more than one per question). Manual annotation of scripts for feedback/justification of mark. Sample marking of hard copy. Review of scripts/marking by external examiners. Scripts made available to students for feedback (particularly failing students).

Online format:

Online delivery via Learn/Online Coursework Management (OCM) system as an 'open book' or 'restricted resource' assignment. After ID Verification using Proctorio, students can access the document/task from Learn, must complete this within the designated time period and upload responses via OCM. Consideration should be given to the length of time students are expected to work on the assignment; this should be long enough to allow completion of the task, but not so long that they spend an extended period of time working on it. An advisory word count may be suggested to encourage students to provide responses that are precise and succinct. Turnitin must be reviewed for any evidence of plagiarism.

4. Research project

Traditional format:

Students complete their research project. One draft version submitted for feedback. Final document submitted electronically via OCM. Turnitin review for plagiarism. Either single marked and sampled or double marked online via OCM. Facilitation sometimes required for discrepant marks. Written feedback provided. External examiners can review remotely via OCM.

Online format:

Unchanged.

5. Viva voce examination

Traditional format:

Student undertakes a viva voce examination in the presence of two (or more) examiners.

Online format:

Student undertakes a viva voce examination in an online environment (e.g. MS Teams, Zoom) with two (or more) examiners present.

6. Assessed presentation

Traditional format:

Student presents their work using a visual aid (Powerpoint slides or poster) in the presence of two (or more) examiners. Marking rubric typically used for marking/feedback.

Online format:

Student presents their work by sharing a visual aid (such as Powerpoint slides or poster) in an online environment (e.g. MS Teams, Zoom) with one (or more) examiners present, or students submit their work as a pre-recorded file, such as a narrated Powerpoint presentation, video recording or similar type of AV file, for subsequent marking by examiners. Marking rubric typically used for marking/feedback.

7. ISF oral

Traditional format:

Students participate in a multi-mini interview style oral examination in the Dissection Room, where they are questioned around various 'props' in terms of their ability to integrate structure and function. A potentially 'tactile' experience.

Online format:

In the event of government restrictions preventing on-campus delivery, this assessment may be delivered online. Discussions are initiated by sharing a visual aid (image, photograph) in an online environment (e.g. MS Teams, Zoom) with one (or more) examiners present. Marking rubric typically used for marking/feedback.

8. OSCE

Traditional format:

Students must negotiate a number of stations to demonstrate a variety of clinical skills, while being observed and graded by examiners.

Online format:

It is not possible to replicate this type of practical skills assessment in an online environment. A modified formative OSCE experience may be required in terms of reduced numbers of stations to allow social distancing measures to be implemented.

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