Best Practices for Online Testing:

There are a number of best practices that can be deployed to prevent concerns about cheating in online testing. One best practice is that online testing should take place within a self-contained learning management system, such as eCampus or SOLE, for archival and tracking purposes. Tests should not be transmitted via e-mail or alternative communications portals due to the inability of WVU to track or monitor transmissions. Archival allows faculty to go back to assessments/assignments if a student would file a grade appeal. Tracking allows faculty to see the actions taken by each student, such as the time a student accesses the assessment and the amount of time spent on each question.

For Best Practices in Online Testing, faculty are encouraged to approach testing in new ways as suggested below.

Types of Questions

- Think of every test as an open book test. Include questions that challenge students even if they use resources when structuring their answers. Include questions that require application of knowledge such as short-answer, essays and case studies as they require more extensive answers.

- Include questions that require students to provide examples from their personal experience. Creating questions that require students to think and apply what they are learning is an approach that discourages cheating. Students cannot get someone else with strong knowledge of the content to take the test for them.

Creating Tests

Create different forms of the test

- Randomize the questions within a test so that the questions do not appear in the same order for every student.

- To further randomize the question order, create different test questions that can be loaded into the question database. Set the test to pull a different set of questions from the database for each student.

- If you don’t create a question database, randomize the sequence of answers for each question.

- Deliver one question at a time and allow students to revisit previous questions.

Test Availability

Limit the availability of the test

- Limit the number of attempts that students can access a test. The test might be available for a three day period, but students can only access it once. Do not set a test at unlimited attempts.

- Make the test available on the day you want students to take it.

- Limit the amount of time students are given on each test. Limiting the amount of time students can access a test makes any form of cheating difficult.

- Incorporate measures to prevent printing an assessment. If you wish to keep students from printing assessment questions by using their Internet browser’s print function you can insert the following lines into the custom instructions field of the assessment properties:

```
<STYLE media="print">
  BODY {display:none}
</STYLE>
```
The student will still be able to print the page, but the page will appear blank.

- Don’t release grades or correct answers until after the test period has ended. Keep communications about grades within the learning management system.

**Security**

**Use secure testing software**

Responduis LockDown Browser is a custom browser that provides a secure testing environment. Students are locked into the assessment and are unable to print, copy, go to another URL, or access other applications.


**Clear Instructions**

Clearly state instructions such as format, time limitations, policies and implications of cheating.

- Post the question format, test length, and time limitations well in advance.

- Instructions should be clear (answering a question, rewriting a statement, picking one or several answers out of a list, etc.).

- Answers should not follow a pattern.

- Essay questions should indicate how the essay will be evaluated (organization, structure, content, etc.)

- The number of points that each item is worth should be stated clearly.

- Pages and sections should be clearly labeled, so that students can ensure they have a complete exam.

- Question format should be what has been presented to students during other activities (homework, in-class assignments, etc.) Although faculty may think that directions are clear and unequivocal, it is never the case for all students. Faced with a new type of problem or question, students may fail to give the appropriate answer not because they don’t know the material, but rather because they are uncertain as to how the question should be answered.

- Link to college policies to make students aware of the implications of cheating. Policy Regarding Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students http://www.arc.wvu.edu/rightsc.html

Remember testing is only one assessment of the learning process and not the only means for measuring learning. It is important to create tests based on learning objectives or what you want your students to learn.