Contingency planning: alternatives to face-to-face assessment

(Informed by a paper prepared by Sally Brown and Kay Sambell.)

Alternative assessment formats: the table below provides some manageable alternatives to consider, together with some important considerations. What are suggested here are some reasonable adjustments to be used in times of crisis, which will not exactly replicate the original assessments, but may offer your students some manageable alternatives in challenging times.

In designing alternative assessments, your starting point should be to try to ensure that you cover the same learning outcomes as the original assessment.

If you currently use….	You could instead consider using ….	To assure standards you might need to consider…	Guidance
Time-constrained unseen exams in invigilated exam rooms or **in-class tests**	**"Take-away" exams,** in which you set the questions or tasks virtually and ask the students to submit their responses electronically via Turnitin in Moodle (as pre usual for Applied Core Assessment) within a set period of time.	As with normal take-away papers, because students have access to materials, the design of questions may need to be reframed to move away from recall-based tasks to questions that require students to demonstrate how they *use* information rather than reiterate what they have learned. It will be important, therefore, to provide guidance for students in the change in orientation of the task. It is also good practice to re-run any changes to question formats through the usual moderation	Coventry University Guidance on 'Revised Assessment Processes'. Exam paper to be released at 05h00 (GMT) and deadline for submitting completed work to be 21h00 (GMT). Guidance to be given to students on the expected time that is required for completion of the paper.

		processes, where time allows. Feedback support is available from OTL.	
Time-constrained unseen exams in invigilated exam rooms or **in-class tests**	Short answer exams could be set using Moodle Quizzes or Questionmark Perception.		Potential tools can be Moodle Quizzes, within Moodle with an agreed time that the quiz will be available for completion, for example within a 2 hour period or as stated by the module leader guidance.
In-class presentations where students speak to an audience of their peers/others and are assessed not only on the content but also their presentation techniques.	Ask students (individually or in groups) to submit a **narrated presentation** in electronic form which can then be tutor-marked and peer-reviewed. PowerPoint is familiar to most students, and offers a slide-by-slide voice-narration recording facility Ask students to prepare a podcast on the topic to be submitted electronically.	You will need to take account of the fact that, given the recorded presentation format, students can have multiple opportunities to prepare the item they are submitting, rather than having to cope with the one-off nature of a live presentation.	Guidance required - Criteria guidelines – focus on content not style - Creating narrated presentations using PowerPoint or other tools (for students and staff) Examples of tools to use for recorded presentations include: • Narrated PowerPoint • Screencast-O-Matic recording • Adobe Spark Video Due to the file size of such recordings, recommend students to upload their final presentation in their **Student**

	For tools to use and methods of sharing the end product, se column 4.		**OneDrive** or **OneNote** account and to share the link with the tutor.
Portfolio, logbook or assessment notebook	It is likely that the best solution here is to move hard-copy portfolios to e-portfolios, for example in Mahara. *Other tools, see column 4.*	Where these have been partially completed already, assessors will have to use professional judgment to decide whether sufficient evidence of achievement of the LO's has been achieved already by the time of university closure. For some students without ready internet access or lacking digital confidence the move to e-portfolios might be quite challenging, and they may need extra guidance.	Suggest focus on Mahara unless know other tool (i.e. WordPress being used) – need Guidance for students on using Mahara. Students all have a Microsoft OneDrive account, including **OneNote that is a portfolio tool** that is quick and easy to use and can be shared with the tutor.
Viva Voce exams, e.g. for in person, or other forms of oral assessment.	These could readily be undertaken by Skype or other electronic remote means. *Other tools, see column 4.*	Students may need significant support in developing confidence to work virtually where they have no prior experience.	**Skype** allows for screen sharing should the student wish to share for example their notes and or PowerPoint presentation. Alternatives to Skype, is a tool named **ZOOM** (screen sharing included), and the free account allows for 40 minutes of engagement as well as having the **functionality to record** the

			conversation (viva). Once the 40 minutes expired, a new link can be created for another 40 minutes of use.
Assessed seminars, group discussions and other similar activities.	It is likely these could be held in an online platform already used within your university such as Big Blue Button or Microsoft Teams. Also consider if it could be replaced by asynchronous discussion. Will need clear time period indicated. *Other tools, see column 4.*	Staff as well as students may need be supported to learn how to use this approach if it isn't currently part of their normal learning experiences.	For synchronous consider recording session. Discussion forums within Moodle allow for students to collaborate in an asynchronous manner and evidence of conversations are kept. As above, **Skype** allows for screen sharing should the student wish to share for example their notes and or PowerPoint presentation. Alternatives to Skype, is a tool named **ZOOM** (screen sharing included), and the free account allows for 40 minutes of engagement as well as having the **functionality to record** the conversation (viva). Once the 40 minutes expired, a new link can be created for another 40 minutes of use.
Lab work	It may be possible to replicate some aspects of lab work through simulations in which students are presented	If students can be provided with *different* data sets for personal interpretation, this can mitigate	

	with data sets and required to interpret them. Often this means focusing on *interpretation* of data rather than working in the lab to achieve the results personally Simulations can also be used remotely so students can 'see' data produced elsewhere and be asked to comment/interpret. Submission of completed work e.g. reports on lab work, can still be submitted via Turnitin as per usual for Applied Core Assessment.	the risk of 'over-sharing' or personation.	
Posters	You can potentially use a PowerPoint or other visuals which can be submitted via Moodle, for example, or posted in shared spaces, particularly if peer review is required. Consider asking students to record a video presenting their poster.	To confirm authenticity of the submitter, you may wish to supplement this with a short online oral.	Guidance document on creating posters. Examples of tools to use for recorded presentations include: • Narrated PowerPoint explaining the poster • Screencast-O-Matic recording explaining the poster • Adobe Spark Video

	Tools recommended, see column 4.		Due to the file size of such recordings, recommend students to upload their final presentation in their **Student OneDrive** or **OneNote** account and to share the link with the tutor.
Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) and other test requiring students to demonstrate a range of skills.	It may be possible for students to submit digital portfolios containing, for example, videos of themselves performing a range of practical tasks. *Tools recommend, see column 4.*	This may be problematic in professional disciplines where the achievement of specific capabilities is required at 100% eg Nursing, drugs calculations	Ref professional bodies and requirements. Students can record themselves performing the task(s) using their mobile phones. The recording can then be shared via their **Student OneDrive** or **OneNote** account and to share the link with the tutor. Note, that these Microsoft tools are able to cope with the upload of large files such as video recordings.
Peer assessments and support.	Peers can email each other drafts for comments or use a virtual space within Moodle, or via tool such as Padlet. Recommended to ask students to keep copies of drafts and work in progress.		**Asynchronous** - Shared work can be added to Padlet and will allow for student comments to be recorded. A PDF of the contribution can then be downloaded and shared with the tutor. This will capture the resource shared as well as peer comments.

	Also recommended to keep notes (minutes) of their meetings and feedback comments given and received. *Tools recommend, see column 4.*		**Synchronous** - Peer engagement and feedback can be facilitated using the tool ZOOM, (screen sharing of drafts and or final products is included), and the free account allows for 40 minutes of engagement as well as having the **functionality to record** the conversation (viva). Once the 40 minutes expired, a new link can be created for another 40 minutes of use. Comments can also be added via a **Chat function** that can be downloaded following the online meeting and capturing the comments.
Theatre, dance and other **performances**	Individuals and groups can be asked to work off-site to prepare and submit **videos** of their work, alongside **reflective commentaries/accounts** *Tools recommend, see column 4.*	Group performances may well be complex to organise off-site Videos cannot replicate the authentic live performance element but may suffice in crisis times	Students can record themselves performing the task(s) using their mobile phones. The recording can then be shared via their **Student OneDrive** or **OneNote** account and to share the link with the tutor. Note, that these Microsoft tools are able to cope with the upload of large files such as video recordings.

Feedback (before and after submission)

Feedback for online submissions can be provided through Turnitin/Moodle. Where opportunities for face-to-face feedback, individual or generic, have been lost these can be replaced online including use of audio. Use of Moodle forums to provide generic feedback will provide an opportunity for a question and answer response. Use of synchronous tools such as Big Blue Button will also allow feedback and clarification through question and answer sessions.

Give consideration to the use of generic feedback preferably pre-submission as students are working on drafts of their planned submission. This allow students to revisit this guidance at any time or place, and is very timely and useful when working towards the point of submission. It will also give some reassurance to the students that are likely to be working in isolation. This generic feedback can be in the form of:

- Written generic feedforward comments shared via Moodle (see guide on Discussion forums)
- Recorded generic feedforward feedback using tools such as Screencast-O-Matic, Narrated PowerPoint, and or Adobe Spark Videos.

Remember to signpost students in a regular manner to this feedback.

Another consideration can be to use a shared space (document) where students can anonymously ask questions and all students can see your responses and or guidance. Using a shared document for example in OneDrive, with the link shared in Moodle, via email or other means of communication you may have with your students.

Guidance on giving feedforward-feedback, can be accessed here: Feedforward-feedback

Moderation

It is important to ensure assessments address the learning outcomes and that the assessment briefs are clear to students. Moderation is therefore critical and can include feedback from colleagues outside the discipline. Support will be available from Academic Development and Curriculum 2025 colleagues to help manage the demand.

Guidance on writing (or rewriting) your assessment criteria and rubrics, can be accessed here: Assessment criteria & rubrics

Assessment brief guidance for students

Providing a clear written brief is important but may not on its own be sufficient, opportunities should be provided to engage students with the assessment task and ensure understanding. This might include online Q&A, providing a video to supplement the written brief.

Some guidance on what to do when launching an assessment task, in class or online, can be accessed here: Launching assessment: Good practice hints & tips

The guidance is applicable for in class and online teaching. When teaching online, activities can be captured by encouraging students to use tools such as Padlet, to collate their plans as this will allow you as tutor to have view of the output and to comment on the contributions.

Appendix
10 Points to Consider in Choosing Alternative Assessment Methods for the Online Environment

[Compiled by Prof Geraldine O'Neill, UCD, as part of the National Forum Enhancement Theme focused on Assessment Of/For/As Learning.]

1. Your starting point is the learning outcomes for the modules, the alternative assessment should align with these outcomes.
2. Ensure students have sufficient skills to demonstrate their learning. They should have an opportunity, where possible, to trial any unfamiliar method, without grading.
3. Students should be given clear comprehensive instructions on all aspects of the operation and completion of the online assessment, including such information on the required file formats and the number of attempts allowed for that assessment component.
4. Students should be informed of all changes to assessment methods.
5. The alternative assessment should require an equivalent effort on the part of the student, estimated, for example, by student effort hours on the assessment task, length of time or word count.
6. Be aware that some students for a variety of reasons may have challenges engaging with online assessment. These students should be encouraged to self-identify in advance so that individual arrangements can be made.
7. Students' work will need to be judged having regard to the unfamiliar teaching and learning context that students will have experienced.
8. Existing assessment criteria/rubrics may need to be adapted to align with the alternative assessment. It is important that these revisions are shared with the students and are used to support inter-rater reliability of multiple graders. Bear in mind that other graders may require some guidance and upskilling.
9. Ensure secure recording and storage of online assessments.
10. To minimise concerns about academic integrity, consideration should be given to the design and implementation of the alternative assessment:
    - Customising the assessment by asking students to relate the topic/data to their experience or a specific context where possible
    - Use of timed or time-constrained exam
    - Randomise MCQ/short answer questions
    - Use of plagiarism software