Online Exams
Strategies to Minimize Cheating

There is no foolproof way to completely prevent cheating either in a traditional classroom or in an online course. However, online assessment tools like SacCT provide more ways to add security and reduce the likelihood of cheating.

The following list provides a variety of ways to make your exams and quizzes more secure. The more items you choose from the list, the more secure your tests become!

1. Randomize the answer choices for each question.
2. Randomize the questions on the test. Use question sets to randomly choose which questions from the set are displayed to each student, with a possibility of a different set of similar questions for each student.
3. Create a large bank of questions (pool) from which to select questions for each test.
4. Display one question at a time.
5. Set a time limit for the test to not allow extra time per question.
6. Turn on the Auto-Submit option to automatically submit a test when the time limit is reached.
7. Do not release the student's test score until the availability time has ended.
8. Do not release results (feedback) to the students or at least not the answers.
9. Do not review the test in a group setting with your students. Test results can be reviewed online with an individual student via the faculty office hours.
10. Calculated questions - Calculated questions, typically used in math and science courses, include variables in the question wording. Variable values are randomly generated, so students given the same question must give unique answers.
11. Proctors - have students take an exam in a room that is monitored by a proctor. Have the proctor check the ID of each student prior to the start the exam.
12. Use a password for a proctored test and change the password immediately after the test begins. The proctor gives the password to the students verbally.
13. Code of Conduct - Have students sign an honesty statement that summarizes the expectations and requirements for academic honesty.
14. Other methods of assessment - Combine objective tests with other methods of assessment, such as group projects and writing assignments. Essay questions also make it difficult for students to cheat on a traditional assessment, (students know that the instructor may recognize an answer that has been copied).
15. Use the Respondus LockDown Browser (see next page).

TOOLS TO HELP YOU CREATE & ADMINISTER ONLINE EXAMS

Microsoft Word

Questions can be formatted in Microsoft Word, and then with additional formatting, can be imported into Respondus (a tool used to create quizzes, surveys and self-tests for SacCT or print). Questions can also be created and formatted using your favorite text editor (e.g. Notepad on the PC or TextEdit on the Mac). Questions are usually easier to format for Respondus using one of these plain text editors.

Publisher Test Banks

Many book publishers provide question banks formatted for Respondus or SacCT. You can request an electronic test bank from your publisher, which may be provided via CD-ROM or online from their Web site.

Respondus

This Windows-based application is free for faculty to use on campus or at home to create tests that can be uploaded into SacCT or to create printed tests. This tool is easier to use than the Tests tool in SacCT for creating questions for your tests. In addition, Respondus contains many features for printing quizzes, including randomizing the questions, creating an answer sheet, or creating a list of the questions with their answers.

Respondus LockDown Browser

Respondus LockDown Browser™ is a customized browser that increases the security of online testing in SacCT. It prevents students from printing, copying, going to another website, or accessing other applications during an assessment. If a SacCT assessment requires that Respondus LockDown Browser be used, the assessment won't be accessible with a standard Web browser. Respondus LockDown Browser should only be used for taking assessments in SacCT. It should not be used in other areas of SacCT or to visit other websites. For additional information regarding LockDown Browser see the ATCS LockDown Browser Web site (http://www.csus.edu/atcs/tools/lockdown-browser).

SUPPORT

ATCS support staff are available for consultation via:
- E-mail at web-courses@csus.edu
- ATCS office (ARC 3005) or 278-3370
- The Technology Learning Center (ARC 3012)
- SacCT Faculty Resources website (http://www.csus.edu/sacct/faculty)