**Alternatives to Proctored Exams**

There are countless alternatives to high-stakes exams: these are just a few of the options. But remember than in each case the most important question is what you really want to assess!

**Series of Quizzes:** Quizzes offer a low-stakes opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of material and give you ongoing information about student understanding. Frequent quizzing has also been shown to reinforce student understanding. Learning management systems can randomize questions in quizzes. It can be especially useful to pair frequent in- or out-of-class quizzes with well-structured homework and in-class activities.

**Poster Sessions:** In poster sessions, much like conference poster sessions, students solve a problem, analyze a case, propose a product, etc. on a poster, and then *explain their reasoning* to fellow students, LAs, and the instructor who are circulating around the room asking questions. This requires students to have a high level of command of the material, in order to provide adequate explanation. This can be done individually or in pairs or groups, of the members take turns, so that only one student at a time is responsible for attending and explaining the poster, so each member must be prepared to explain fully and clearly.

**Student-developed quiz questions:** Developing good quiz questions both builds and demonstrates students’ understanding of the material. This assignment can be structured as a collaborative group activity.

**Open-book, take-home exams or other assessments:** These tests are good for open-ended, conceptual, applied questions—questions that Siri can’t answer.

**Presentations, demonstrations, etc.**

**Videos, blogs, vlogs:** These offer students the opportunity to explain their thinking in a variety of formats (and to draw upon multiple media). For many students they are less stressful than in-class presentations, since they allow for editing out bloopers.They can also offer more scope for creativity than traditional papers, and are easier to grade than in-class presentations. Students appreciate having some choice and autonomy, and such creative assignments often motivate them to invest more time and effort (but it is important to provide structure and transparency as well).

**Reflective writing:** Reflection is mental practice, and writing allows us to think on paper (or on the keyboard). Reflective writing prompts students to make connections between/amongst their prior knowledge and new learning, to apply ideas and theories to their lives and values, to explain and develop their reasoning, and many more forms of essential intellectual work.

**“Grounded” assignments:** grounded assignments have real-world and often context-specific elements that make them more relevant and interesting to students, and also make them practically impossible to plagiarize. A grounded assignment might ask students to apply a theory or concept from the course to a campus event, building, etc.

Here’s a great list of many more writing assignments: https://writing.umn.edu/sws/quickhelp/projects.html#WID

**Group projects:** Group projects require students to demonstrate mastery of subject matter and develop their ability to communicate and work collaboratively. It is crucial to make your assessment criteria and grading scheme clear, and to ensure that there are clear, explicit expectations for each team member.

**Fact sheets:** Developed by Barbara Abrams of Public Health at Berkeley, a Fact Sheet is a more demanding assignment than it first appears to be, and would be relevant to other courses. Such a fact sheet would be intended to be distributed to the public in relevant places. While Abrams’ fact sheets deal with health issues (smoking, HIV, etc.), other applications might be in economics or sociology (school board budgets or trends in enrollment), history or political science (fact sheet on the 1960 Presidential Election), engineering (fact sheet on the new Bay Bridge). Students must learn to search the relevant databases for the discipline, evaluate material, and present it in a concise, readable way. See Professor Barbara Abrams' [Disease Fact Sheet Assignment](https://teaching.berkeley.edu/sites/teaching.berkeley.edu/files/Disease_FactSheet_Assignment.doc)

**Portfolios**

**Annotated anthology or bibliography**

**Concept maps:** Concept maps are visual representations of information and/or ideas, like charts, graphic organizers, tables, flowcharts, Venn Diagrams, timelines, or T-charts. They’re especially useful for prompting students to delineate the *connections* amongst ideas.

**Role plays** (like historical trials, interviews, medical diagnoses, etc.)

**Useful links for more ideas and explanation:**

https://citl.indiana.edu/teaching-resources/assessing-student-learning/alternatives-traditional-exams-papers/index.html

https://sasoue.rutgers.edu/teaching-learning-guides/remote-exams-assessment#special-advice-for-open-book-assessment-in-quantitative-courses