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Pro Tip #7: Exams – academic honesty

Advice from your colleagues and some experts

High stress can leave to cheating—how can you support academic honesty?

Use big pools of questions

- Blackboard can assign large pools of questions randomly, so each student's test is unique.
- Increase your question pool by asking colleagues if they are willing to share homework or sample questions. Or ask students to write questions as a required exam review.
- Change wording of all questions enough to make them harder for students to find on the internet

Add written or oral questions to double-check conceptual understanding

- Adding a short answer question or an oral defense on each major concept can reveal who really understands the material.
- Require students to hand-write calculations, schematics or outlines, and send you a photograph of that work via email or Blackboard/Canvas.
- Big class? Only interview or read answers from students in the top third of the class, or who performed differently on the final and earlier tests.

It is true that students are under pressure and could really use some flexibility right now. But if you are concerned about academic honesty, try these options:

- In Blackboard, set **time limits** for the exam, **prohibit backtracking**, and **display one question at a time**.
- Create a **large pool** of questions, and set Blackboard to assign them randomly.
- Set Blackboard to **automatically submit** exams at a designated time. But don't forget you need a Plan B in case students or Blackboard have trouble.
- Define cheating out of your exam - make your exam an open-note test. Or reduce the opportunity and incentive to cheat by assigning students to solve exam questions in small groups.

If you come up with a good solution, share it.

Remember: it's okay to change your syllabus, or change your exam design. Just give students a chance to practice before high stakes finals.