

Will all courses switch to online assessment?

No, but those that do not switch will require justification in the form of professional registration requirements.

What new forms of online assessment is HKU making available to teachers?

ITS has created the Online Exam (OLEX) system, which can be used solely for holding online exams. OLEX enables teachers to upload an exam paper and make it accessible to students enrolled in their course at a scheduled exam time. It sends students an automated message to tell them to stop working at the end of the exam period. It enables students to upload their answer papers to the system and teachers to receive them in the form of a zip file. Teachers who prefer to use existing assessment functions in Moodle can continue to do so.

Will all students be able to access our online exams?

Yes. The major challenge involves students currently resident in Mainland China. ITS has secured a leased line that will enable these students to connect directly to an HKU server for online exams. We will therefore be able to conduct all online exams through a single platform – OLEX.

How will we make it clear to students that they must respect standard norms of academic integrity?

We are currently drafting an academic integrity statement that students will have to agree to before being able to access an online exam. We will also share this statement with students ahead of the exam period so they are fully aware of HKU policy.

How far ahead of the scheduled exam slot must the exam paper be uploaded to OLEX?

At least 48 hours in advance to allow time for double-checking by ITS and the relevant Faculty Office.

How will students answer the exam questions?

They will be asked to write all their answers into a Microsoft Word file. If need be, they can scan hand-written text or graphics into the file before uploading it to OLEX.

Will students be able to ask questions about the exam paper in the first 30 minutes of the exam?

No, this will not be possible.

How will we ensure that students do not take longer than the allocated time for an exam?

As part of the academic integrity statement, we will make it clear to students that when the online system tells them to stop writing they must stop – exactly as in a proctored exam. We will also inform students that they must make no modification to their Word file after the end of the exam, and that in cases of doubt we will check the time the file was last modified.

How long will students have to upload their exam answers?

We will allow students 30 minutes to upload their exam answers in a single Word file to OLEX. A receipt will be sent to each student's registered email address. We will make it clear that this time cannot be used to continue taking the exam. Again, we can check the final time the Word file was modified.

How will teachers access completed exam scripts?

They will receive them in a zip file. The scripts can either be read online in soft copy, or can be printed off and read in hard copy.

How can we ensure the security of exam papers and scripts?

All exam papers and scripts will be within OLEX, a system hosted by ITS at HKU. We are confident that this will generate the level of security we require.

What advice can we give to students who fear their Internet connection will not be good?

We can advise them voluntarily to capture (for instance by video or screen capture) everything they do from the start of the exam to the finish, so they have a full record of any problems they encounter. We may invite them to submit the record to us in cases of real difficulty.

Will ITS provide support for teachers in navigating the online exam system?

Yes, next week they will roll out an FAQs website, an online clinic and face-to-face training for teachers. There will also be practice online assessment sites for both students and teachers.

Will teachers know in advance which students have opted for letter grade and pass/fail?

Yes, it's standard practice throughout academia for instructors to know in full the parameters within which they're grading. We all know whether we're grading a letter-grade or pass/fail course, so the same practice will apply to students within a course.

Should teachers grade to a curve with or without the pass/fail students?

It's HKU policy not to grade to a curve. We use standards-based assessment, not norm-referenced.

Can teachers change the assessment weightings for their course?

Yes, but only if they have written consent from all enrolled students. In anything other than small classes, this makes changing assessment weightings practically impossible. By contrast, it is a simple matter to change the tasks required for a particular form of assessment. The final exam does not have to take the form of an exam paper, but can be changed to something quite different.

Can students choose pass/fail for courses in the UG5?

Yes. However, the Common Core Special Proviso (<https://commoncore.hku.hk/special-proviso/>) only comes into play with six graded courses. We've told students this.

What impact will pass/fail courses have on GPA?

None. It's already the case that students bring pass/fail courses onto their transcripts, for instance through academic exchange. Because of the special assessment arrangements adopted this semester, some students may have a few more pass/fail courses than usual. We will still do what we always do – calculate GPA on the basis of all graded courses.

What impact will pass/fail courses have on SGPA?

One impact is worth highlighting. If a student opts for pass/fail for all courses this semester, there will be no SGPA. It's worth mentioning to students who ask about this that they may be placed at a disadvantage for, say, student exchange. SGPA is a key factor in allocating exchange places, and students with no SGPA for this semester cannot expect us to create an alternative measure of academic performance.

If a student fails a pass/fail course and retakes it, will the retake have to be pass/fail as well?

Yes, the original decision taken by the student will stand for the retaken course.

If a supplementary exam is set for a course offered this semester, must the assessment be online?

Yes, the same conditions must apply to a supplementary exam as to the original exam.

What are the revised dates for the Semester 1 exam period?

December 7, 2019 to January 10, 2020.

Are we still planning to start Semester 2 teaching on January 20, 2020?

Yes.

What are the revised dates for submission of Semester 1 grades and notification of results?

The final date for submission of students' marks to home Faculties is January 21, 2020. The final date for announcement of Semester 1 course results is February 10, 2020.

Will the Semester 2 add/drop period for undergraduate students be extended?

Yes, the final date for add/drop for all undergraduate courses will be extended by one day from February 10 to February 11, 2020.