



GMIT

TEACHING
& LEARNING
OFFICE

Online Open Book Exams

A Guide for staff

Staff Guide for Online Open Book Exams

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What is an Online Open Book Exam?

An Online Open Book (Takeaway) Exam uses the exam paper assessment format but allows students to use notes, texts, and/or other resources. Students receive the exam paper through their VLE and submit their answers by uploading their work within a defined time period (e.g. same day). Students work remotely, unsupervised and have access to resources/books in that time period.

Students can type their submissions in a word processor or other specific software applications (e.g. AutoCAD, Excel) or they can hand-write their submissions.

Why would I want to use an Open Book Exam?

An open book exam is based on understanding rather than recall and memorisation. You can devise questions that require students to answer in more critical and analytical ways that encourage higher-order thinking skills; as compared to closed book or traditional exams that tend to encourage rote learning and more superficial application of knowledge.

Advantages

1. Less Reliance on Recall

In an Open book exam, students can check resources, so they don't have to worry about cramming facts and figures.

2. Provides additional opportunities for acquisition

Students get another opportunity to acquire knowledge. Also, they can demonstrate the ability to gather suitable learning material and relevant sources rather than just recalling information.

3. Enhances Retrieval Skills

Having to find relevant information increases recall accuracy and duration – students are more likely to remember information for longer if they have had to look it up themselves. Also, students find resourceful ways to collect and connect information from different sources.

Disadvantages

1. You must ensure access to resources during the exam

The books and articles you expect students to use must be available in the required numbers at the same time (Libraries may have limited copies of certain eBooks etc).

2. Difficulty in judging preparation

It can be difficult to judge differences in preparation between students.

3. Time-consuming

Unlike ordinary exams, you need to allow time for students to find information. Indeed, students may spend too much time looking for sources rather than answering with their own knowledge and skills. Extra time is also needed to allow for uploading and formatting submissions.

Pitfalls to avoid

1. Instructors need to develop and devise effective exam questions that require students to apply their knowledge through analysis and critical thinking – traditional exam question types designed to test recall and acquisition will not be effective in an Open Book exam.
2. Students may falsely assume that the exam will be easy and fail to prepare properly. You need to give students guidance on how to prepare for this type of exam and on how to go about answering the questions. For example: students are not going to be able to find all the answers to the exam questions in the books/resources – they will need to analyse/apply the information to provide answers.

Tips for creating Open Book Exam questions

Like all forms of assessments, you need to design your questions and overall exam paper with the learning outcomes in mind, for example: what specific skills and knowledge are you assessing? The following tips will help you devise questions that require students to apply and make use of the information from their textbook or notes rather than simply locate and re-write this information.

- Use real-world case-based exam questions that require students to apply information *and* critical reasoning skills in response to a specific scenario.
- Create problem-based questions, requiring students to apply their skills and knowledge to the given problem.
- Present qualitative or quantitative data and ask students to interpret and apply the data – What does the data show? What relevance does this data have? What other factors could potentially affect this data? How would you test for these?
- Structure questions or sections so that students move through different types of learning activities – interpreting, applying, analysing, evaluating, creating, synthesising and so on.

How do I create an Online Open Book Exam on Moodle?

The Moodle Assignment activity allows instructors to release an exam paper at a specific time and allows students to submit one or more pieces of work online within a defined timeframe. You can then access, assess and grade the submitted work.

Steps for adding an Open Book Exam assignment in Moodle

Before you begin:

If you have not already done so, we recommend adding an 'Assessment/Exam Information' section to your course (see the Teaching and Learning [Course Template](#)).

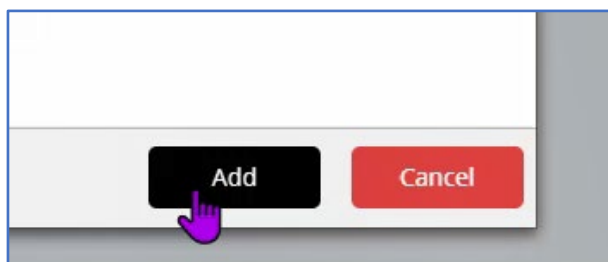
Step 1 In the Assessment/Exam section click 'Add activity or resource'.



Step 2 Select 'Assignment' from the activities list.



Step 3 Click 'Add'



Step 4 In the 'Assignment settings' page, click 'Expand all' to view all settings.



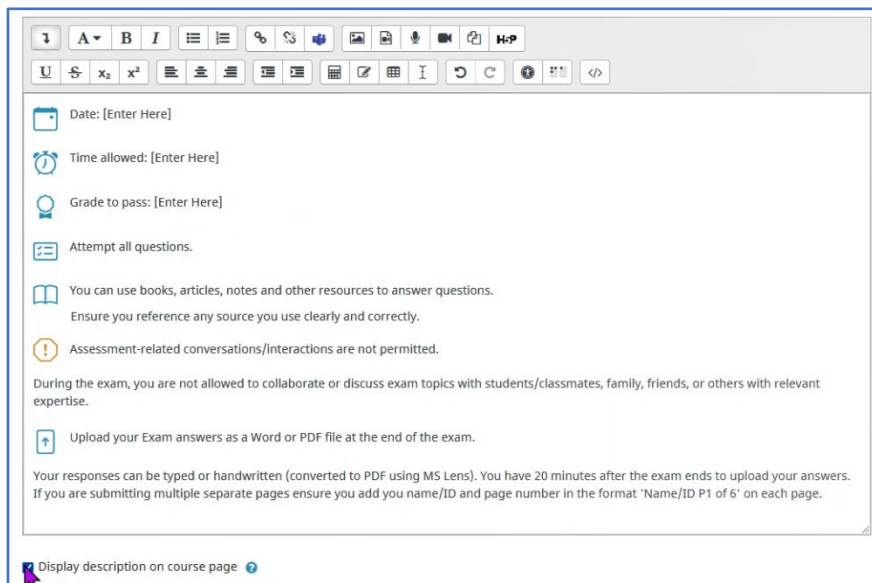
Step 5 In the 'Assignment settings' page, fill in the following options:

Name: Type in an appropriate Assignment or Exam Name

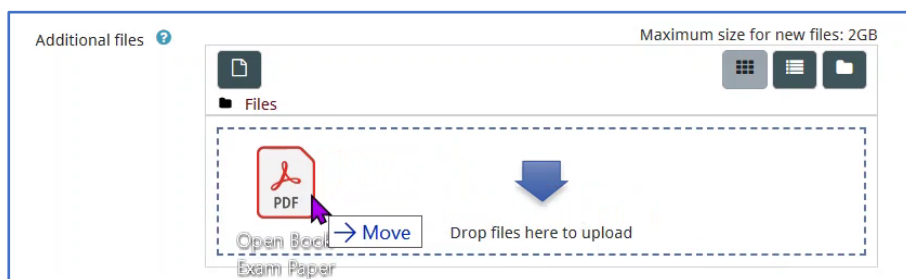
Description: Provide clear instructions in the description box outlining:

- Dates
- Time allotted
- Expectations
- Content format and upload instructions
- Conditions

Step 6 Select 'Display description on course page'



Step 7 In the 'Additional files' section, upload the exam paper as an accessible document (Word or PDF).



Step 8 In the 'Availability' section:

- Set 'Allow submissions from' to the start of the Exam date and time.
- Set 'Due date' to the end of the Exam date and time.
- You do not have to enable the 'Cut-off date'. If you do, students will not be able to submit work after the cut-off date.

Note: If you do not include the upload time in the assignment time limit students will see an 'overdue assignment' notification – you need to prepare students for this.

Step 9 In the 'Submission types' section you can use the default settings, with:

- 'Submission types' set to **File submissions**
- 'Maximum number of uploaded files' set to **20**
- 'Maximum submission size' set to **500MB**
- You do not have to select 'Accepted file types' unless you want to ensure students can only upload a specific file type (for example: a PDF or Word doc).

Step 10 In the 'Feedback types' section select the methods you want to use for feedback:

- Feedback comments - Leave general comments for each submission.
- Annotated PDF - Annotate work with comments, stamps and drawings.
- Offline grading worksheet - Download and upload a worksheet with grades.
- Feedback Files - Upload files with annotated work, text or audio feedback.

Step 11 In the 'Submission settings' section, set:

- 'Require students to click the submit button' to **Yes**
- 'Require that students accept the submission statement' to **Yes**
- 'Attempts reopened' to **Manual**
- 'Maximum Attempts' to **Unlimited**

Step 12 In the 'Grade settings' section:

- Set 'Grade' to either 'Point' or 'Scale' depending on assessment level.
- Set 'Anonymous marking' to **Yes**
- Set 'Marking Workflow' to **Yes**
- Set 'Marking allocation' to **Yes**

Step 13 In the 'Common module settings' section:

- Set 'Availability' to **Show on course page**

Step 14 If you want to enable URKUND, in the 'URKUND plagiarism plugin' section:

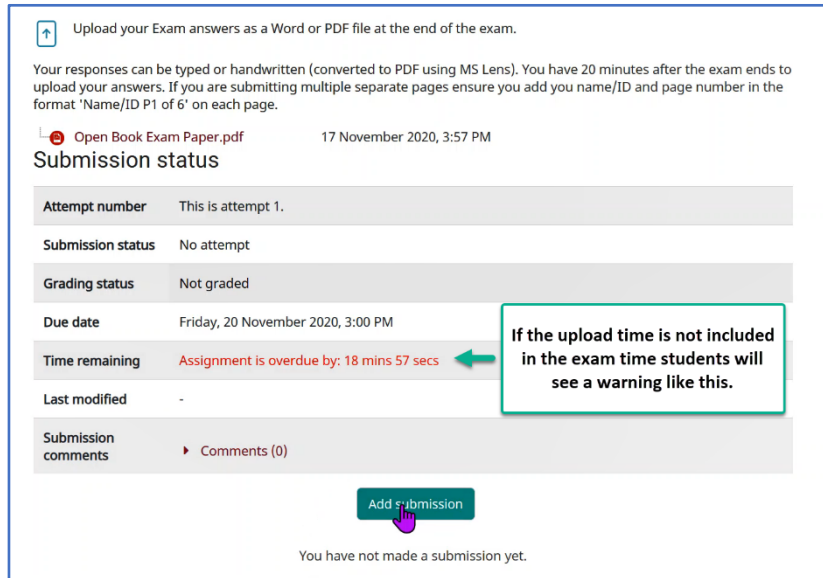
- Set 'Enable URKUND' to **Yes**.
- Choose the settings you wish to use.
- If it is your first time using URKUND, fill in your 'Receiver address' in the format: 'name.lastname.gmit@analysis.orkund.com'

Step 15 Click 'Save and Display' to save your assignment and see what it looks like.

How do students submit responses?

Students can submit work by uploading files to the Moodle assignment page.

The students select 'Add submission' in the 'Submission status' section.



Upload your Exam answers as a Word or PDF file at the end of the exam.

Your responses can be typed or handwritten (converted to PDF using MS Lens). You have 20 minutes after the exam ends to upload your answers. If you are submitting multiple separate pages ensure you add your name/ID and page number in the format 'Name/ID P1 of 6' on each page.

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Submission status

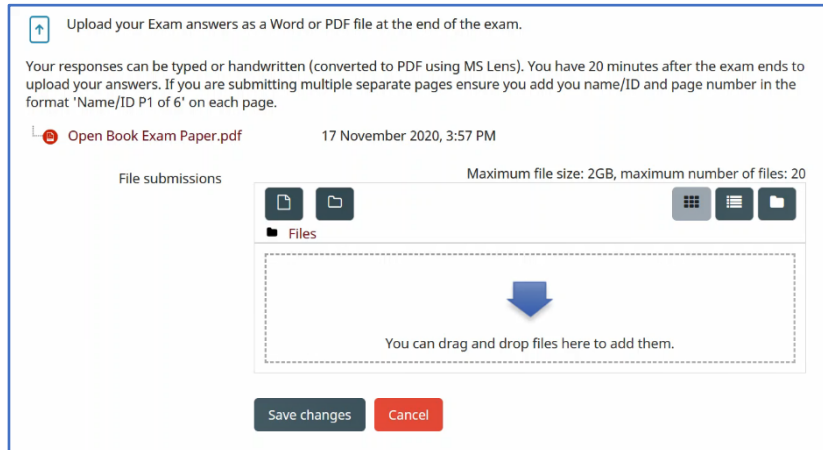
Attempt number	This is attempt 1.
Submission status	No attempt
Grading status	Not graded
Due date	Friday, 20 November 2020, 3:00 PM
Time remaining	Assignment is overdue by: 18 mins 57 secs
Last modified	-
Submission comments	Comments (0)

If the upload time is not included in the exam time students will see a warning like this.

Add submission

You have not made a submission yet.

A 'File submissions' box opens and the students can drag and drop their files or search for them.



Upload your Exam answers as a Word or PDF file at the end of the exam.

Your responses can be typed or handwritten (converted to PDF using MS Lens). You have 20 minutes after the exam ends to upload your answers. If you are submitting multiple separate pages ensure you add your name/ID and page number in the format 'Name/ID P1 of 6' on each page.

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File submissions Maximum file size: 2GB, maximum number of files: 20

Files

You can drag and drop files here to add them.

Save changes **Cancel**

Students can upload typed work or handwritten work converted to PDF format.

For steps on converting handwritten work to PDF format, see the Teaching and Learning [Student Guide for Uploading Handwritten Assessments](#).

How can I promote Academic Integrity?

Online assessments often require instructors to place more trust in, and demand more responsibility from, students than traditional onsite exams. Promoting and fostering a sense of academic integrity is especially important in online contexts.

The Teaching and Learning Office and GMIT Libraries have developed a range of online resources to help students understand academic integrity and the reasons why it is important.

Please share these resources with students and use every assessment as an opportunity to promote and reaffirm the values of academic integrity.

[Teaching and Learning Guide to Academic Integrity](#)

[GMIT Libraries Academic Integrity LibGuide](#)

Where can I find more information and resources?

[Teaching and Learning Online Assessment Guide](#)

[Teaching and Learning Moodle Assessment Tools resource](#)

[Teaching and Learning Student Guide for Uploading Handwritten Assessments](#)

[Moodle Docs: Using the Assignment Activity](#)

[Guide for Academics: Open Book Exams](#)

[Student Tips: Exam preparation for open book exams](#)

[Tips for Creating Open Book Exams](#)

[Teaching and Learning Guide to Academic Integrity](#)

