

# UPDATES ON ONLINE COURSE DELIVERY, GRADING, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FINAL EXAMS

Hi everyone,

Apologies for the multiple emails. I am writing with a few updates on online course delivery, and some suggestions for those of you who are thinking about how to deliver your final exam online (rather than change the assessment of switch the exam to take-home mode). Some colleagues taught PG courses using Zoom over the weekend, and we went online full scale today. So far, I have only heard that things have gone well. Many thanks to everyone for your great efforts!

## UPDATES ON ZOOM

- The University has worked out an arrangement to **transition our individual Zoom accounts to an institutional account**. This will take care of concerns about storage for recorded classes. Your department EO should have been / will probably soon be in touch to ask you for your exact login id so it can be included in the batch that will be migrated TONIGHT. Please do not ignore this request! (More batches will be migrated soon.)
- ITSC informs us that they have successfully **integrated Zoom into Canvas**. You will need to add Zoom as a “tool” in Canvas. Please contact [support@ust.hk](mailto:support@ust.hk) if you have any questions.
- In case you would like your **TA to conduct tutorial sessions on Zoom**, the University will support getting them a Zoom Pro account (but not the Webinar option) as part of the institutional package. Departments may want to consider having TAs share a single account.

## UPDATES ON GRADES AND GRADING

- Subsequent to Roger Cheng’s email yesterday, we’d like to repeat that **at SBM we will not allow any full-time student to switch to a P/F grade**. I understand this option is mainly being exercised by other schools that have courses featuring physical labs, in-person music performances, etc. Only exchange-in students will be granted this flexibility.
- However, as Roger mentioned, students will be allowed to “Withdraw” from courses unconditionally. This will reflect on their transcript as a “W” grade. Students who withdraw should know that this can have downstream consequences like graduation time, eligibility for major selection, etc.
- If you plan to have a final exam and are considering only changing it to online mode (not to take-home format), please note that the exam will need to be held during the time that has already been scheduled (the exam schedule was released recently).

## SUGGESTIONS FOR HOLDING REALTIME EXAMS ONLINE

- Administer the exam using Qualtrics, the online survey system. Qualtrics is accessible thru the intranet if you’d like to check it out, and we have colleagues who are familiar with it.

- Create different versions of your exam, containing nominally different questions (e.g., if a problem has Price = \$10 in one version, have Price = \$15 in another version so that the answers to the questions will be different).
- Randomize the order of questions, across the exam as a whole, or within subsets of questions, so that the question numbers are different for different people.
- Administer the exam while participants are on Zoom in meeting mode with their cameras on, so that using “gallery view”, you and your TAs can keep an eye on ~25 students at a time (and they don’t know whether you are watching or not).
- Reduce the length of the exam, so students have less “free time” to share answers. This may involve reducing the number of questions and increasing the points-value of each question. (You cannot increase the duration of the exam because of the upper limit enforced by the exam schedule.)
- Administer the exam question by question, i.e., release Q1 to all students and give them (e.g.) 20 minutes, then release Q2, etc.
- Ask students to do their calculations by hand on blank sheets of paper, and write their student ID (or some other randomly generated ID) on the paper. They will need to take photos of these pages and upload / share with you. Thus, even if they share the image with a friend, the friend will need to spend time copying everything down. Together with this, ensure that the final answer to the question needs to be entered on the system, so that this response is complementary to the uploaded image.

These are just some initial suggestions. Please note that none of them works for exams that involve recall of material which can simply be copied from an online source. We are very keen to hear your thoughts regarding these or other possible suggestions, and crowd-source some best practices as we learn together.

Please know that students will be allowed to withdraw from courses freely. The final exam arrangement could be an important criterion in their decision to withdraw or not. Therefore, the AP(T&L)’s office will want to know your decision regarding the formal very soon, maybe by the end of this week.

Thank you for your understanding during these challenging times. I hope you are well, and we will someday look back at this shared experience together. Please feel free to email me if you have any questions.

Best,  
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