CONVERTING FINAL EXAMINATIONS TO COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

INTRODUCTION

As the decision to convert the final examinations to coursework assignments has been approved by the Chair of the Senate, this shall proceed as planned. The advent of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent Movement Control Order (MCO) brought about a drastic change to the ways things are done AIU, chiefly the way we impart knowledge. In the previous section we spoke about AIU's response to the unforeseen Covid-19 pandemic and AIU's transition to online teaching and learning. in this section we shall look at the issue of converting final examinations to coursework assignment.

For more insight into this issue please visit;
https://teaching.berkeley.edu/resources/improve/alternatives-traditional-testing

ASSESSMENTS AND COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

What is coursework? Coursework is written or practical work done by a student during a course of study, usually assessed in order to count towards a final mark or grade. It is a curriculum-mandated work that students usually have to do outside of normal classroom hours. Most coursework does count towards a student's final grade. The coursework students submit is graded and then considered at the end of the course when final grades are computed.

Is Coursework Like an Exam? Most instructors do take it as synonymous with '*home-based exam*'. Some people even claim that coursework was invented to help people who suffer with examination anxiety. There are some students who are so anxious when taking tests that they under-perform. There are also some students who have mastered the art of taking exams to the point that they can do well simply because they are good exam takers. So, what is coursework? It is like an examination that features course content, and where there is a time limit of days/weeks rather than minutes and hours.

Assignments

What is an assignment? As nouns the difference between coursework and assignment is that coursework is work carried out by students of a particular course; it is assessed and counts towards the grade given while assignment is the act of assigning; the allocation of a job or a set of tasks.

TYPES OF COURSEWORK	PURPOSE	AUDIENCE	WRITING STYLE	STRUCTURE AND CONTENT	NOTES AND INSTRUCTION FOR TASK ALLOCATION AND ASSIGNMENTS
1. RESEARCH ESSAY	The purpose of a research essay is to: ▪ answer a question ▪ present an argument based on facts.	When you're writing a research essay, think of your target audience as: ▪ your peers ▪ the broader academic community.	A research essay should: ▪ be concise and factual ▪ use active voice ▪ have a clear structure with a logical flow.	Don't use headings for sections in a research essay. Organise your content into: ▪ introduction ▪ body ▪ conclusion.	
2. PRACTICAL REPORT	The purpose of a practical report is to: ▪ explain what you did ▪ draw conclusions.	When you're writing a practical report, think of your target audience as: ▪ your peers ▪ other researchers wanting to replicate your experiments.	Practical reports should: ▪ be clear and objective ▪ be written in past tense and passive voice.	Use headings for sections in a practical report. Describe your actions and results in step-by-step order. Include the following sections: ▪ Introduction ▪ Methods ▪ Results ▪ Discussion. This kind of reports usually include tables, graphs and other graphics to present data and supplement the text.	
3. CASE STUDY (REPORT)	The purpose of a case study is to: ▪ examine a situation ▪ identify positives and negatives ▪ make recommendations.	When you're writing a case study, think of your target audience as: ▪ professionals (not just academics) ▪ politicians ▪ the general public.	Case studies should: ▪ be written in a factual and authoritative tone ▪ be concise and easy to follow.	Use numbered headings for sections in a case study. Make sure you include: ▪ table of contents ▪ executive summary. Reports usually include tables, graphs and other graphics to present data and supplement the	

				text.	
4. ARTICLE REVIEW	The purpose of an article review is to: ▪ evaluate or critique the article's data, research methods and results.	When you're writing an article review, think of your target audience as: ▪ your peers ▪ people interested in your profession	Article reviews should: ▪ be written in an analytical and evaluative tone ▪ use present tense and active voice.	Don't use headings for sections in article reviews. Your review should include: ▪ a brief summary of the article being reviewed ▪ your commentary on the quality of the work. ▪ Reports usually include tables, graphs and other graphics to present data and supplement the text.	
5. LITERATURE REVIEW	The purpose of a literature review is to: ▪ identify key areas across literature ▪ understand current thinking ▪ find a 'gap' for research	When you're writing a literature review, think of your target audience as: ▪ researchers ▪ academics ▪ fellow professionals.	Literature reviews should be: ▪ written in a formal style ▪ objective, but you can include tentative opinions based on the text.	Use meaningful headings for sections in a literature review (not just 'introduction', 'body' and 'conclusion'). Organise your content into: ▪ introduction ▪ body ▪ conclusion.	
6. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY	The purpose of an annotated bibliography is to: ▪ identify key literature on a topic ▪ evaluate the usefulness of the literature in relation to the topic ▪ inform others.	When you're writing an annotated bibliography, think of your target audience as: ▪ researchers ▪ academics ▪ fellow professionals.	Use a formal and objective tone in an annotated bibliography.	An annotated bibliography should: ▪ list works alphabetically by author ▪ include an indented 1-2 paragraph summary and critique for each work.	
7. REFLECTIVE JOURNAL	The purpose of a reflective journal is to: ▪ identify your understanding ▪ reflect on your thinking ▪ understand how and what you've learned.	When you're writing a reflective journal, think of your target audience as: ▪ yourself.	In a reflective journal you can use: ▪ a more informal style, but make sure it's still clear ▪ a conversational tone - write as if you're	In a reflective journal you should: ▪ refer to texts, lectures and practical situations ▪ make links between formal learning and personal meaning.	

			thinking aloud ▪ the first person ('I' or 'me').		
8. PROJECT REPORT	The purpose of a project report is to: ▪ report on work that has been done, or ▪ plan for work that is to be done.	When you're writing a project report, think of your target audience as: ▪ an outside organisation, such as a government department or non-government organisation (NGO)	Use a factual tone in a project report. Vary your tense depending on what you're writing about. Use: ▪ present tense to outline the current situation ▪ past tense to describe work that has been completed ▪ future tense to explain work that is proposed.	Include the following sections: ▪ Title page ▪ Acknowledgements ▪ Executive summary or abstract ▪ Table of contents ▪ Introduction and body (no heading) ▪ Conclusion and recommendations ▪ References or bibliography ▪ Glossary ▪ Appendices. Reports usually include tables, graphs and other graphics to present data and supplement the text.	

For more information please refer to:
https://www.gcu.ac.uk/gsbs/ldc/academicwriting/structuringdifferenttypesofcoursework/
http://britainassignment.co.uk/what-is-a-coursework/
https://bestessayservice.net/blog/what-is-coursework

Take-Home Exam

The take-home test is a mix between homework and an open-book exam. Like normal homework given over the course of the year, it can be done at home with access to lecture notes, internet and any books or resources which might be useful. A regular final examination for example must be completed in a specific place and time. It tests a student's ability to use knowledge acquired during classes and through the studying materials provided by the instructor. However, a take-home exam tests a student's ability to look up the answers. The most frequent question the students normally asked would be; Why does my instructor want to know if I am capable of looking stuff up? There are many possible answers to these but two of the most popular answers are:

a. the instructor would rather use class time to teach more things instead of administering an exam
b. the take-home exams tend to be written in a more coherent language as opposed to handwritten scribbles, so therefore, more pleasant to read and grade.

c. some students have test-taking anxiety that negatively affects their performance, this can be mitigated by letting them take the examination in an environment they are comfortable in.

For more information regarding take home test / examination/ assessment please view:

https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/divisions/Eden-Centre/Assessment-Toolkit/Assessment-conditions/Take-home-assessment
https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/public-service-commission/migration/plcy-pltq/guides/tools-outils/pdf/pract-prat-eng.pdf
https://honor.fas.harvard.edu/take-home-exams-tell-it-it
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdFDN3CwvME
https://www.varsitytutors.com/blog/how+to+approach+a+take+home+test

Quizzes and Short Tests

An examination or quiz is a form of student assessment that measures knowledge, skills, and abilities. Generally, an examination is a culminating assessment that assesses a student over a large period of time and over a range of material. It is said that reading information as a way of learning does have its uses. However, reading information and then taking a quiz is said to be much more effective because it forces our brain to retrieve data and thus ensure that it becomes 'embedded' for use in the future. So, if there is certain information that the instructor believes is pertinent to what is being taught and learned, then quizzes are the answer.

Quizzes are more formative in nature in terms of assessment. On the other hand, for summative assessment it is better to test with exams because we need to test what students have learned during the entire semester. Formative assessment measures small parts of the instruction and quizzes are a good way to test that.
For more information regarding quizzes and short tests please view:

https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1134863.pdf
https://www.nactateachers.org/images/The_Student-Developed_Quiz_or_Exam-__Scaffolding_Higher-Order_Thinking.pdf
https://www.k-state.edu/assessment/toolkit/measurement/Special-Report-designing-better-quizzes.pdf

ASSESSING STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

The term 'assessment' is generally used to refer to all activities instructors use to help students learn and to gauge student progress. Assessment can be divided for the sake of convenience using the following categorisations: placement, formative, summative and diagnostic assessment.

Evaluation is a process that critically examines a programme. It involves collecting and analysing information about a programme's activities, characteristics, and outcomes. Its purpose is to make judgments about a programme, to improve its effectiveness, and/or to inform programming decisions (Patton, 1987).

Developing Assessment Rubric

A rubric is an assessment tool that clearly indicates achievement criteria across all the components of any kind of student work, from written to oral to visual. It can be used for marking assignments, class participation, or overall grades. Basically, there are two types of rubrics:

- Holistic Rubrics – single criterion rubrics (one-dimensional) used to assess participants' overall achievement on an activity or item based on predefined achievement levels. Performance descriptions are written in paragraphs and usually in full sentences.

- Analytic Rubrics - two-dimensional rubrics with levels of achievement as columns and assessment criteria as rows. Allows you to assess participants' achievements based on multiple criteria using a single rubric. You can assign different weights (value) to different criteria and include an overall achievement by totalling the criteria.

Example of a Holistic Rubric

Remember the rubrics that were used to test students reading proficiency? This is an example of a Holistic Rubric, which is a bit more complicated than a simple and general rubric, as the one below.

LEVELS	PERFORMANCE STANDARD					
	Band 1 0 -6	Band 2 7 –18	Band 3 19 -29	Band 4 30-41	Band 5 42-53	Band 6 54 – 60
Sem. 1						
Sem. 2						
Sem. 3						
Sem. 4						
Sem. 5						
Sem. 6						
	Min std. em. 1	Min std. sem. 2	Min std. sem. 3	Min std. sem. 4	Min std. sem. 5	

SCORE	DESCRIPTION
5	Demonstrates complete understanding of the problem. All requirements of the task are included in the response.
4	Demonstrates considerable understanding of the problem. All requirements of the task are included in the response.
3	Demonstrates partial understanding of the problem. Most requirements of the task are included in the response.
2	Demonstrates little understanding of the problem. Many of the requirements of the task are missing in the response.
1	Demonstrates no understanding of the problem.
0	No response / task no attempted.

Example of an Analytic Rubrics

Remember this rubric too? The was used to interview and assess the suitability of applicants to receive an AIU Scholarship. This is an example of an Analytic Rubric.

COMPONENTS	SUB COMPONENTS WEIGHTAGE		FULL WEIGHTAGE	DESCRIPTOR	SCORE RANGE
1. **SOCIAL ECONOMIC STATUS**	Employment	10%	40%	Hard-core Poor (30-40%)	30-40%
	Household Facilities	10%		Very poor	20-29%
	Luxury items	10%		poor	10-19%
	Condition and Remoteness of Living	10%		Not poor	0%
2. **COMMUNICATION SKILL**	Listening Ability	5%	20%	Excellent Communicator	15-20%
	Clarity of Speech	5%		Good Communicator	10-14%
	Clarity of Answer	5%		Poor Communicator	5-9%
	General English Language Ability	5%		Hardly any communication	Less than 5%
3. **PERSONALITY**	Leadership quality	10%	20%	Great leadership qualities	15-20%
	Self confidence	5%		Very confident	10-14%
	Awareness	5%		Timid	Less than 5%
4. **ATTITUDE**	Motivation	10%	20%	Highly motivated but humble	15-20%
	Humility and Politeness	10%		Very motivated	10-14%
				Not motivated, lacking humility	Less than 5%
Total		**100%**	**100%**		

Advantages of using Rubrics in Assessment

Grading through the use of rubrics offers many advantages to both students and instructors. By helping to clarify expectations for writing assignments, and the criteria by which those assignments will be assessed, rubrics can strengthen student writing. At the same time, rubrics help instructors' grade with greater consistency, and rubrics make it possible for instructors to provide each student with detailed feedback.

The reasons why Rubrics appeal to instructors and students alike are:

1. Rubrics can improve student performance, as well as monitor it, by making instructors' expectations clear and by showing students how to meet these expectations.
2. Rubrics are useful as they help students become more thoughtful judges of the quality of their own and others' work.
3. Rubrics reduce the amount of time instructors spend evaluating student work.
4. Rubrics allows instructors to accommodate heterogeneous classes.
5. Rubrics are easy to use and to explain.

Rubrics are becoming increasingly popular with educators moving toward more authentic, performance- based assessments. Recent publications contain some rubrics (Brewer 1996; Marzano et al 1993). Chances are, however, that you will have to develop a few of your own rubrics to reflect your own curriculum and teaching style.

Creating Rubrics

Rubrics are popular with educators when they start moving towards more authentic, performance-based assessments. However, you have to develop some of your own rubrics to reflect your own course and subject matter and teaching style. The use of rubrics in many ways reflect information-based teaching and learning. This will boost the learning process. The rubric design process should engage students through the following steps:

1. *Explore for an appropriate model:* Show students' examples of good and not-so-good work. Identify the characteristics that make the good ones good and the bad ones bad.
2. *Set the criteria:* Use the discussion of models to begin a list of what counts in quality work.
3. *Discuss the gradations of quality:* Describe the best and worst levels of quality, then fill in the middle levels based on your knowledge of common problems and the discussion of not-so-good work.
4. *Practice on models:* Have students use the rubrics to evaluate the models you gave them in Step 1.
5. *Use self and peer-assessment:* Give students their assignment. As they work, stop them occasionally for self and peer-assessment.
6. *Review:* Always give students time to revise their work based on the feedback they get in Step 5.
7. *Use instructor assessment:* Use the same rubric instructors use to assess their work yourself.

For more information on assessment rubrics please visit:

https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/uploads/production/document/path/11/11370/Guidance_for_Creating_Marking_Rubrics.pdf
https://www.unk.edu/academic_affairs/_files/assessment/rubrics.pdf
https://www.cmu.edu/teaching/designteach/teach/rubrics.html
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1618692/

CONCLUSION - CONVERTING THE FINAL EXAMINATIONTO COURSEWORK, QUIZZES AND SHORT TESTS

Currently most courses at AIU have final examinations. That final examination may vary in terms of weightage, but mostly they are between 30% to 40 % of the total course assessment.
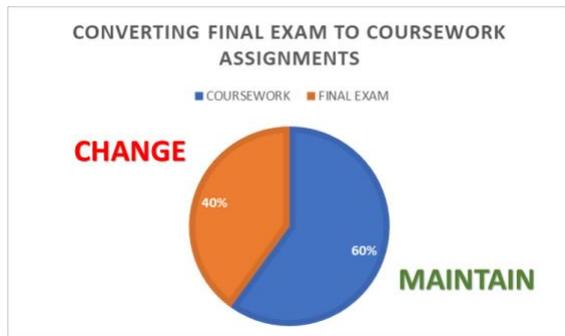
During the MCO period we will maintain the online teaching-learning mode. As such, 60% of the coursework component should be maintained albeit with some minor adjustments. However, our main concern is what do we do with the Final Examination component? With the situation we're in now it is inevitable that we need to change that component as we will not be able to operate as we have in the past. It has been agreed that the Final Examination component be changed to either coursework assignments, take home exams, quizzes or short tests. We've also discussed how these conversions will be assessed through proper rubrics.

It is also agreed that we shall leave it to the individual instructors to decide how they'll convert the Final Examination component (be it 30%, 40% or 50%) to coursework. Nonetheless, we feel that it would help the instructors if we could offer some illustrations of how these could be done.

The table below illustrates how the conversion could be made. These are just examples that the individual instructors could use to adapt to their own needs and situations. They could choose to use some or all the available assessment's modes. They could also vary the weightage and scoring of the assessment tasks. Nonetheless, the instructors should be aware of what a good assessment tool is made up of. Technically a good assessment tool should have the following: clear context and conditions for the assessment, the specific tasks to be administered to the learner, an outline of the evidence to be gathered from the learner and the evidence criteria used to judge the quality of performance. They must also be mindful that a good assessment must be reliable, valid, and free of bias.

1. Reliability refers to the consistency of students' scores; that is, an assessment is reliable when it produces stable and consistent results
2. Validity generally refers to how accurately a conclusion, measurement, or concept corresponds to what is being tested.
3. Assessment bias refers to qualities of an assessment instrument that unfairly penalizes a group of students because of gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion or other such group-defining characteristics.

TYPE OF TASK	EXAMPLE 1	EXAMPLE 2	EXAMPLE 3	EAXMPLE 4	EXAMPLE 5
COURSEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (CA)	CA 1 – 5% CA 2 – 5%	CA – 10%	CA – 20%	CA – 15%	CA 1 – 10% CA 2 – 10% CA 3 – 20%
QUIZZES (Q)	Q 1 – 3% Q 1 – 3%	Q – 5%		Q 1 – 5%	
SHORT TESTS (ST)	ST 1 – 5% ST 1 – 5%	ST – 10%		ST 1 – 10% ST 2 – 10%	
TAKE HOME TEST (THT)	THT – 14%	THT – 15%	TH – 20%		
TOTAL	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%

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