

Shifting to Taking Exams Online

At Lake Forest College

Exam Environment

You are used to more controlled environments to minimize distractions. To create a similar setting, you need to prepare your space before starting an exam online.

- Make the environment feel like a testing environment (in other words, don't decide to eat your lunch while you are taking your exam or have your television on in the background).
- Isolate yourself as much as possible.
- Put a sign up on the door of the room indicating that you are taking an exam and cannot be disturbed.
- Let others in the house know that you are taking an exam and how long you expect it to last so they do not interrupt or distract you.
- Turn off phones and put them away. Do not answer your phone or respond to texts. If you have a landline, set the ringer to silent or low. Or take the phone off the hook if it is nearby.
- Pets can be distracting. Think carefully about pets in your testing space.
- Consider using a lock down your browser if you're prone to surfing the internet.
- Minimize or close all unnecessary computer screens.
- Have all allowed materials available and organized before starting the exam.
- At least 15 minutes before the exam, set up your desktop or computer environment to make sure you do not have any computer or internet access issues.
- Is the room a comfortable temperature? Have you minimized screen glare?
- Once you open the exam but before you start the exam, make sure you know how many questions are on the exam and how much time you have, so you can plan accordingly. Plan for how you will account for time as you work through the exam.
- Have a clock or timer nearby so you can track how much time you have. You might want to set a timer to go off 10 minutes before your time is up, so that you have time to review your responses.
- Questions may be presented one at a time. It may be more difficult to navigate an exam and go back to review questions. Jot down question numbers and note any questions you may have to address later. Keep track of these on a piece of scratch paper.

- If you are prone to headaches or eye strain, use the “20-20-20 rule”. Look away from your computer at least every 20 minutes and gaze at a distant object (at least 20 feet away) for at least 20 seconds.

Prepare to take the exam WELL BEFORE the time of the exam

- You may have finally gotten used to the format of your professors’ in-class exams and suddenly that format might be different as it shifts to an online platform.
 - Reach out to your professors and ask if the exams will be different. The more prepared you are with what to expect, the better.
 - If you are suddenly allowed to use notes or access your books during an exam, *be careful not to use up all of your time and rely too heavily on these materials*. It is better to put an answer down that you think is correct and then return to that question later than to spend time searching for each of the answers in your notes or books.
 - Open book and open note exams require you to have very organized materials so that you can find material efficiently and effectively. Think through your organization of these materials so that you are ready to perform.
- Know all the rules and expectations of taking *each* exam online.
 - Is it open book/note or are you expected to follow a specific honor code or honesty policy set by the professor?
 - Are you being proctored remotely by your professor or a computer program?
 - Can you start the exam at any time or is the exam only available during a certain time frame?
 - If necessary, be sure to take in account time zone differences.
 - If you have clarification questions for your professor, will you be able to reach the professor? How will you do this?
 - Is the exam timed? In other words, once you start the exam do you need to finish it at a certain time or be logged off?
 - Be sure you fully understand how to submit the exam. Are you taking it on paper and sending a picture to send via moodle or email? How can you check to be sure that your professor has received your work?