PROTECTING INTEGRITY IN LARGE CLASS EXAMS

Tips to Reduce Opportunities for Cheating & Detecting Cheating when it Occurs

Responsibilities of Department/Institution
1. Provide a sufficiently sized room to allow students to sit in every other seat, or at least in the back half of the room.
2. Provide sufficient proctors for the size of the class and the exam room. For example, a full class in 2001 Warren Hall requires at least 5-7 proctors.
3. Require Instructors of Record to be present during exams.
4. Train proctors with AI Office and provide “proctoring exam” reminders right before exam week.
5. Speak consistently and vociferously about the importance of academic integrity. An “academic integrity pledge” could even be added to the exams themselves, which students would sign before beginning the exam. (some experimental research has found that the act of signing a pledge right before a task can reduce taking advantage of cheating opportunities).

Prior to the Exam
1. Create multiple versions of the exam---this can be as simple as rearranging the question order or using different values in different questions.
2. Print the versions on different colored paper---this allows proctors to spot-check that no neighbor has the same version
3. Mark exam version on front of scantron (in pencil) and discreetly on the back in ink and match the scantron with the appropriate exam version
4. At the last class, and by email, tell students to bring unmarked scantrons to the exam
5. If you allow “cheat sheets” in the exam, print your exam on a color other than white so you can easily see how many cheat sheets a student has during the exam
6. Reserve a few empty seats in the front row to which you can move “suspicious” students
7. Number the seats and assign alternate versions and students to seats. This is a lot of work, but Dan Donoghue, Chemistry, does this and he has found it to eliminate cheating. The AI Office is working with Registrar’s Office to see if permanent numbering can’t be done in the large lecture halls.

Right Before/During the Exam
1. Put announcements on a Powerpoint/overhead at the beginning and leave them up the entire time.
2. Collect scantrons that the students have brought to the exam for your future use.
3. Require students to put all non essential materials (e.g., backpacks, notebooks, cellphones) at the front of the room
4. Make some announcements before the exam begins—you can keep them up during the exam on a power point or slide—for example, “The integrity of this exam process is the responsibility of everyone in this room and you are particularly responsible for ensuring the integrity of your work. This means that you complete the exam by yourself without any assistance from others or unauthorized aids. It also means that you are responsible for ensuring that no one cheats off of your exam—cover your exam and scantron so that others cannot copy from you. Now is the time to put your cell phones, other electronic devices, or other unauthorized resources at the front of the room. Possession of these during the exam constitutes a violation of academic integrity. Once we start
passing out the exams, there is no further talking to each other. If you have a question or a need, raise your hand and one of us will assist you. We are ready to begin once you are all quiet.”

5. Ensure that there is always a proctor at the front of the room while others are walking around---especially when exams are being passed out. Students at the front could be sharing information in the commotion otherwise.

6. Have a laptop and projector ready to use power point to make corrections to the exam if necessary. Having to make corrections in the middle of the exam causes great frustration for students and difficulty hearing them (if given orally) or reading them (if written on a dirty chalkboard) can add to this frustration and entice cheating.

7. If you suspect cheating to be occurring, interrupt the behavior, move the student and mark the student’s exam at the point s/he was moved. If the student was copying off another, you should also mark that student’s exam (a simple check in the corner will do). This allows you to compare the exams afterward and see if the student’s performance worsened after the behavior was interrupted.

---

At the end & After the Exam
1. Check exam version against the version indicated on the scantron.
2. Check IDs when students submit their exams. Rather than just check it on the spot, compare the ID picture to their picture as printed out from ICSIS—the class list can contain all of the pictures.
3. Collect exams WITH the scantrons. This not only keeps exams from being widely distributed, but also allows you to see if suspicious students show work to support their answers.
4. Once exams are collected, deposit in a secure spot. So, for example, you could have one big envelope or box for each exam version. Once the mass of students are submitting their exams at the same time, there should be a least two proctors there to check IDs and ensure that students are not looking at already submitted exams.
5. Do NOT allow students to line up to submit their exams—they WILL take the opportunity to talk and change answers. Instead, require students to wait in their seat until there are 5 people or less in line (kind of like “no forming lines at the front of the aircraft”) OR collect exams from students in their seats.

---

Once the Exams are Graded
1. Do not return graded exams. If students really want “to learn” from them, they can visit the TA or you during office hours to go over their exam.
2. The extra benefit of not returning exams is that the student’s can ask for a regrade request in person, during office hours...giving them no chance to change the answers first.
3. If you insist on returning graded exams (note that they will most likely end up on the internet or in some test database on campus), you might choose one of multiple methods for easily checking on altered exams resubmitted for regrade. For example, photocopy exams before returning them, photocopying random exams or particular pages, clearly mark on the exam when an answer is wrong.