



## SPRING 2007 FACULTY SURVEY ON NEW CLASSROOM EXAM SERVICE

*Nana Lowell*

*July 2007*

### INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes results of a faculty survey conducted in spring 2007 to inform the decision to introduce proctoring services for classroom exams. Such services might take either of two forms: administration of make-up exams to students who miss quizzes or midterms, and proctoring for regularly-scheduled exams to enable instructors to use class time for instruction rather than testing. In each case, tests would be administered outside of the classroom. While administration of make-up exams might be accommodated in the existing Schmitz Hall testing suite (depending on level of demand), administration of regular exams to all students in a course would require acquisition of a separate dedicated testing facility.

### METHOD

A questionnaire (Appendix A) regarding OEA testing services was included in all course evaluation report packets sent to UW Seattle instructors at the end of spring quarter, 2007. The questionnaire asked instructors whether they would be interested in using either of the two services. A total of 3,348 questionnaires were sent out but only 103 (3.1%) were returned.

#### Returned questionnaires

Rank	N	%
TA	19	(18.4)
Instructor	4	(3.9)
Lecturer	8	(7.8)
Asst Prof	10	(9.7)
Assoc Prof	18	(17.5)
Prof	41	(39.8)
Other/Unknown	3	(2.9)
TOTAL	103	(100.0)

### RESULTS

Based on the extremely low rate of response, survey outcomes cannot be generalized to the general population of UW Seattle course instructors. Nevertheless, the following results are offered as suggestive of faculty opinion regarding proctoring of classroom exams. It is also possible that additional completed questionnaires will be submitted when faculty return to campus for fall quarter, in which case this report will be updated.

## Make-up Exams

Of faculty who responded, approximately one-third said they would use a make-up exam service if available. Among tenure track faculty, assistant professors were most likely (66.7%) to use a service to administer make-up exams. Associate professors were less likely (50.0%) and full professors were least likely (22.5%) to use such a service. The mean number of exams expected annually was 12.8. However, the number of administrations anticipated by individual instructors was extremely variable, with most of the 28 instructors who answered this question estimating two to five make-up exams per year but two instructors estimating 100-200 administrations.

### Would use make-up exam service

		TA	Instructor	Lecturer	Assistant Professor	Associate Professor	Professor	Other	Total
Yes	N	9	2	1	6	9	9	0	36
	%	(47.4)	(50.0)	(12.5)	(66.7)	(50.0)	(22.5)	(0.0)	(36.0)
No	N	10	2	7	3	9	31	2	64
	%	(52.6)	(50.0)	(87.5)	(33.3)	(50.0)	(77.5)	(100.0)	(64.0)
Total	N	19	4	8	9	18	40	2	100
	%	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)	(100.0)

## Classroom Exams

Instructors were asked to specify the size of classes they taught to determine the type of class for which administration of regular classroom exams might be most useful. The majority of instructors taught small (<20 students) and/or medium-sized (20-50 students) classes, and about one-third taught large (>50 students) classes.

### Number of instructors by class size

Small		Medium		Large	
N	%	N	%	N	%
69	(67.0)	78	(75.7)	35	(34.0)

Instructors of medium-size classes were most likely (19.5%) to use a service to administer classroom exams outside of regular class time. Large class instructors were less likely (15.8%) and small class instructors least likely (11.6%) to use such a service. No differences were found by instructor rank. Although the questionnaire also asked instructors to specify the number of times they would use such a service each year and, in the case of large classes, the approximate number of students to be tested, the information provided was not sufficient for analysis.

### Would use classroom exam service

	Small		Medium		Large	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	8	(11.6)	15	(19.5)	6	(15.8)
No	61	(88.4)	62	(80.5)	32	(84.2)
Total	69	(100.0)	77	(100.0)	38	(100.0)

## Comments

The end of the questionnaire allowed space for respondents to enter unstructured comments, and 43 (41.7%) did so (see Appendix B). Of these, 13.9% were simple statements that one or both of the new services were a 'good idea,' while the remainder addressed some type of concern. The most common (18.6%) observation was that use of the service would not allow the instructor to be present at the time of the exam to answer questions, followed by concern regarding the difficulty of crafting multiple versions of the same exam (13.9%) or other practical impediments (11.6%). Four instructors (9.3%) noted the difficulty in using either service for language courses, and three (7.0%) would be interested only in proctoring for online exams.

## CONCLUSIONS

Results of the faculty survey are not definitive due to the very low response rate, however, they provide sufficient basis for the OEA Testing Center to incorporate proctoring for make-up exams in its regular testing schedule. Although no staffing or facilities costs are associated with introducing this service, one concern has been that the demand would overwhelm the limited facilities available. This seems unlikely given that only one-third of the instructors thought they might use this service and then for fewer than five administrations per year. Although two instructors estimated 100 administrations per year, it may be possible to make alternate arrangements for large classes.

With regard to the second service, administration of regularly-scheduled classroom exams, the survey did not provide the evidence of an overwhelming need required to seek an auxiliary facility. Although the percentage of faculty who were interested (12% to 20%, depending on class size) extrapolates to about 600 out of 4,000 classes per quarter, a number of practical concerns were identified including the difficulty of creating multiple versions of self-explanatory tests. It may be possible to identify one or two interested faculty for whom OEA could administer proctored exams on a limited basis to test the practicality of offering this service.



## APPENDIX A. CLASSROOM EXAM SERVICE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Office of Educational Assessment would like to provide a new service to administer course exams (quizzes, mid-terms, etc.) outside of the classroom, but first we need to determine whether there is faculty interest. The service could take two forms:

**Make-up exams** could be administered in our Schmitz Hall testing suite to students who miss regularly-scheduled classroom exams. Faculty would provide us with the make-up test and the names of students who would be taking it. We would administer the test and either machine-score it, or return it to the instructor for hand scoring. This service would be relatively easy to introduce in our current facilities.

**Regular quizzes or mid-terms.** In this case, faculty would provide us with two to four versions of a classroom exam, and students would be allowed to take it in our testing center at any time during a three to four day window. As with make-up exams, we would administer the test and either machine-score it, or return it to the instructor for hand scoring. This service would be more difficult to introduce than administration of make-up exams because it would require a larger testing center. However, if we administered two mid-terms for only 20% of the 4000 classes taught each quarter, that would free up 1600 hours to be used for instruction rather than in-class testing.

Let us know whether this sounds interesting by completing this form and returning it to us through campus mail.

1. What is your rank?	TA	Instructor	Assist Prof	Assoc Prof	Prof	Other
2. Would you use a service to administer make-up exams?				yes	no	
If yes, for how many students (on average) would you use the service each year? _____						
3. Do you teach <u>small</u> (<20 students) classes?				yes	no (If no, skip to #4)	
Would you use a service to administer regular quizzes and mid-terms in these classes?						
				yes	no (If no, skip to #4)	
For how many exams (on average) would you use the service each year? _____						
Would these exams be (choose one):						
				machine-scorable	instructor-scored	
4. Do you teach <u>medium sized</u> (20-50 students) classes?				yes	no (If no, skip to #5)	
Would you use a service to administer regular quizzes and mid-terms in these classes?						
				yes	no (If no, skip to #5)	
For how many exams (on average) would you use the service each year? _____						
Would these exams be (choose one):						
				machine-scorable	instructor-scored	
5. Do you teach <u>large</u> (>50 students) classes?				yes	no (If no, skip to Comments)	
Would you use a service to administer regular quizzes and mid-terms in these classes?						
				yes	no (If no, skip to Comments)	
For how many exams (on average) would you use the service each year? _____						
What would be the average number of students per exam? _____						
Would these exams be (choose one):						
				machine-scorable	instructor-scored	

Please write Comments on the back of this form.

Comments:

*Thank you!*

----- fold here -----

Nana Lowell, Director  
Office of Educational Assessment  
Box 354987

----- fold here -----

## APPENDIX B. COMMENTS

- 10 Creating 2-4 different exams per midterm/final and grading up to 4 different sets of problems is impossible for a larger engineering course. The only sensible way would be one set of problems administered for the entire class at once (or within a day). I am responding with CEE 220 in mind.
- 11 Good idea!
- 13 In my style of teaching we have exams when we reach the point in the material of the course that we have covered is satisfied. This point usually depends upon the class itself, how much new stuff I put in OR SAY, etc. and is not very predictable.
- 16 Dear Madam or Sir: This sounds like a very excellent service to provide to the University community. Unfortunately, I do not give tests. All work in my class includes papers or creative items that students develop.
- 19 Exams often require a prof. or TA present in order to clarify doubts. This would not be possible with the classroom exam services. I would probably only use it for make- up exams. Although it would be nice not to proctor long exams.
- 23 My only hesitation is that proctors wouldn't be able to answer specific questions about the exam/quiz.
- 24 Not enough make-up exams to matter. I only use one version of an exam. We have an honor code in Business School Graduate programs that is usually effective in preventing cheating.
- 25 I'm a Spanish TA and I feel like tests can only be taken in class as there are audio/listening comp. parts.
- 27 The service for make-up exams could be very helpful for faculty, TA's and students.
- 28 I don't like this idea at all. I have enough trouble with the exams I send to DRS – getting them back to my proper address on time is a major headache every time. We don't need this layer of bureaucracy.
- 29 Given the fast-paced Quarters in which we scramble to cover all material, this would be a useful service.
- 34 I rarely give midterms and quizzes in the small sections I teach. If I did, I would use the service to collect data about question quality.
- 38 My tests typically involve just a few problems that could easily be communicated by students who take the test at the beginning of a 3 day window to those who take it later.
- 39 This is an interesting plan. It gives flexibility to the examination enterprise and thereby enhances student's performance (and learning). Many thanks for your innovation. July 03, 2007
- 40 I don't give exams, but if I did I think this would be a great service.
- 42 I have to be there when giving a quiz in case students have questions.
- 43 Most of the courses I've TA'd don't have exams. One did and the service might be useful for that course.
- 44 I like the idea of freeing up class time. I'm not sure how I would create 2-4 versions of an exam – exams in the humanities are difficult to compare; it is already hard to quantify in-class essays, for example.
- 46 All my classes involve papers; I don't use exams for assessments. I'd benefit more (as would my students as well) from more support for students to get help with writing & revising.
- 47 In most of my classes, students (graduate students) complete papers rather than take tests.
- 49 Online testing would be more useful.
- 54 The service would be most useful for me when a student wanted to take an exam early due to a planned absence.
- 55 It's important for me to be present during exams to answer questions. Also, it would be a huge effort to create multiple exams and would be unfair – impossible to grade consistently.
- 58 I have a hard time saying whether or not I would use this service – I've never considered it before (?).
- 59 I would only use an online service, no paper.

61 The option of make-up exams can be useful when it is hard for the instructor to proctor some exams. The option of regular quizzes or midterms may catch on, and seem useful, but I think it could be perhaps hard to coordinate sending exams by mail and there is the danger they can get lost. For large classes, I fear this could get very confusing for all (students and instructors). Also, students often ask questions during exams.

63 I think this is a very useful service but with the exception of language classes. I teach Italian for instance and since students need extra explanations before the quiz (especially make-up quizzes because they supposedly missed the class!) I would prefer to help them in person and be there when they take the quiz.

64 I think this would be difficult in a foreign language classroom.

65 I don't think students would like to go to the testing center. I would not like to write multiple versions of a test.

69 Re: Make-up exams – We only allow students to make up an exam in rare cases, so that is not a service we would use. Re: Regular exams – We immediately grade exams after the test so having a 3-4 day waiting period is not ideal. We post grades online hours after the students take it. Also, having multiple versions would still allow students to know what topics will be tested on. For fairness, all tests are identical.

71 DRS office not able to proctor. If OEA could proctor all exams perhaps OEA can take over this service. Cost a concern

74 I would find this service impractical for my classes. I think the up-front work would greatly outweigh the time savings in class. The 3-4 day test taking window would lead to far too much cheating.

76 Although I think this service is a good idea, my courses are all project oriented and don't use exams.

82 Nana- hey. While freeing up instruction time is a great idea – I'm too paranoid about the following scenario. Student A takes exam on Monday, leaves testing center and tells Student B to focus on concept X, or even more specific info about exam content.

84 This would take more time than it would free up. Writing math exams is difficult – writing 2-4 instead of 1 would take a long time, especially once the students figured out that a friend taking the exam first would bring back helpful info about the exam – thus the exams would really have to be very difficult.

88 The difficulty of this plan is that the instructor wouldn't be available to answer questions during the exam.

92 I would greatly appreciate the ability to free up some class time and have students take quizzes/exams at an alternate location. A resource for make-up tests would also be helpful.

93 One advantage of off-line testing would be to have more flexibility w/respect to time (duration). However, I prefer tests with everyone present at one time, primarily so I can be present, too, to provide clarifications, etc., as needed, and to ensure everyone has the same opportunity to benefit from whatever clarifications are made.

95 I don't give standard exams, but rely on weekly written reports and final papers – so this service would not apply to me.

97 Because there is always an oral component to our quizzes & tests – I teach French – I think that proctoring is best handled within our department.

98 No test, only term paper.

101 The idea is great – I'll give only the negatives: The make-up exams option could potentially open up a loop hole in which students can exploit by coming up with false excuses to miss the regular scheduled exam for more hours of reading/studying – or worse – to ask friends who took the regular test/exam. Careful rules must be established to prevent this circumstance. Regular quizzes and midterms @ Schmitz testing center might cause an overflow of students given that the time window is not enough. 3-4 days proposed seemed unrealistic in many particular courses b/c quiz can be as frequent as once a week and the teaching team needs at least 3 days (out of 5) to cover the material – that leaves only 2 days for quiz/test.

102 What I would most like to have is access to a secure testing room where computer-administered tests could be given (maybe using Web Q) and know that students would not be able to use the rest of the Web or I.M., etc.