

# Minimize cheating

## WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

The 3 design categories, or levels, over which instructors have control to minimize cheating on exams and other assessments, with example for each category. Instructors have control over course design, assessment design, and question design. Note: This resource does not contain information on minimizing plagiarism.

## HOW DO I USE IT?

Identify at which level(s) design changes could be made in order to minimize cheating on your course exams and other assessments. Focusing on changing at least one item. For assistance, [contact CET](http://cet.usc.edu/).

Simple strategies, used as appropriate for the discipline and the course learning objectives, can minimize the occurrence of cheating.

### Course design strategies

* **Plan many assessments**

Using few assessments raises the chance that a single error will damage a student’s grade.

* **Use diverse assessment types**

Assessing through varied methods more accurately measures mastery.

* **Change assessments each semester**

This could mean changing the topic or type of assessment while measuring the same learning objective.

* **Grade for mastery of learning objectives**

Grading on a curve puts students in competition with each other.

### Assessment design strategies

* **Test skills that have been taught and practiced**

Assessment is only fair if students have had an opportunity to learn and develop a skill.

* **Design authentic assessments**

Real-world problems increase both interest and skills transfer.

* **Randomize questions or test versions**

This can be done in Blackboard or manually.

* **Use open-resource and/or group exams**

Using resources is not considered “cheating” in the world outside the university.

### Question Design Strategies

* **Change questions each semester**

Changing a single word or number in the prompt may be sufficient.

* **Have students show their work**

Final results are justified by displayed reasoning.

* **Write more open-ended questions**

An open-ended question requires explanation.

* **Test higher-order skills**

Replace recognition or recall with analysis and synthesis.