ASPSA: Strategies for Taking an Online Exam

Test your computer and internet:

Ensure your computer is working properly, has no scheduled updates, your laptop is fully charged, and Wi-Fi/Internet access is available. Close all other windows and tabs in your internet browser except for the test to avoid accidentally closing out of exam.

Take your exam in a low-distraction environment:

Avoid distractions and alert anyone in your household that you will be taking an exam and unavailable. Gather all materials you may need (if permitted), including books, class notes, pen/pencil, calculator, etc. and find a quiet place to take your exam.

Make sure you understand the test guidelines days before the exam:

Confirm the test time and date (and check again!). Does the exam open and close at an exact time? Do you have a certain window to start and finish it (ex. Can you start the exam at any time that day, but have 90 minutes once it is opened)? How long do you have to complete the exam? Are outside materials permitted? Are parts of the exam, such as the essay, worth more than other sections? Can you skip questions and come back to them? Is the exam monitored and you need access to your webcam? Can you leave the test page once you start the exam and are you permitted to open other internet tabs? Are there directions for how to submit the exam (for example, do you need to attach your exam as a Word Document or PDF, or print the exam and submit a picture of your work)?

Manage and keep track of your time:

For timed exams, it will be up to you to track your progress to ensure you do not run out of time. If you get stuck on a question, move on and come back to it later (if permitted). Be mindful of sections of the exam (like the essay) that may be worth more and decide how you will divide your time. Also, make sure to give yourself enough time to check your responses and submit the exam before it closes.

Note: If you are connected with ARS on-campus and receive extended time, reach out to your professor directly as soon as possible to ensure you will have extended time. Contact ARS at ars@unc.edu with any questions.

Study and organize your class materials:

Like an in-person exam, it is important you study ahead of time. For "open book" exams, being familiar with the content will help you use your time efficiently and organizing your materials in advance will make information more easily accessible to you when answering the exam questions. This is especially important for timed exams.

Take practice exams and complete study guides if they are available:

Look on your Sakai page to see if practice exams and/or study guides are available. Reviewing class PowerPoints, notes, and readings are also recommended.