NIU Testing Services Report #7
Administering & Scoring Classroom Tests

When giving tests it is important that everything possible be done to obtain valid results. Cheating, poor testing conditions, and test anxiety, as well as errors in test scoring procedures contribute to invalid test results. Many of these factors may be controlled by practicing good test administration procedures. Practicing these procedures will prove to be less time consuming and less troublesome than dealing with problems resulting from poor procedures.

The following guidelines are intended to:

- Ensure that examinees do their own work.
- Create a comfortable physical and mental test climate.
- Provide order and control.

**Before the Test:**

- Take the test yourself or have a colleague do so.
- Check the room conditions, i.e. temperature, lighting, and space.
- Check materials inventory, i.e. tests, answer sheets, spare pencils etc.
- Arrange for proctors who know the examinees.
- Sequentially number the tests (facilitates counting, distribution of tests, preparation of seating charts, and verification all tests have been returned).

**Admission and Seating:**

- Check student's ID at least once a semester.
- Assign seats. Do not use a pattern. Do not allow friends to sit together. For example, seat numbers could be added to the answer sheets in advance. The sheets could then be arranged in random order and handed to students as they enter the room.
- Be sensitive to special needs that may make regular seating unsuitable, e.g. visual or hearing impairment, body size, left handedness, etc. Allow special seating for these cases.
- Clear desks of everything except test materials. Do not allow the use of walkmans or of sharing erasers.
- Remind students to turn off cell phones, pagers, and alarm wristwatches.
- Remind examinees to use black soft lead pencils for machine readable forms.
- Establish rapport. Try to reduce anxiety level. Some humor may help.
**Administration:**

Test instructions should include information about guessing, use of time, and marking the answer sheets. It may be helpful to warn examinees to do their own work. Caution students to double check coding of *Name* and *ID Number* and *Section Number* on each test - especially the first test if a *cumulative record* is to be maintained.

Distribute tests systematically by sequence number, accounting for all materials at all times. If possible, distribute and collect alternate forms by rows with adjacent rows receiving different test forms. Be observant to prevent test booklet and/or answer sheet exchanges. Color coding of alternate forms may be helpful in this regard.

Prepare a seating chart showing the room arrangement and location of each booklet and examinee.

Have examinees record test book numbers on their answer sheets. After completion of the test have them sign the answer sheet in the signature box on side 2 of the answer sheet. Signatures written through unused response positions on scannable forms will be read as multiple marks during scanning. Seat numbers, when available, could also be recorded on the answer sheet.

Count students and compare this number with the number of test books distributed, and the number taking each form of the test. Also, account for absentees.

Be attentive but not annoying. Move about the room during the testing period. This will discourage cheating and will provide immediate access to students needing assistance. Proctors should watch for:

- persons with problems or questions
- proper marking of the answer sheets
- persons seated close together who are always on the same questions
- persons who immediately before or after answering a question always change position or make some kind of gesture or signal
- persons looking up often and watching proctors
- persons concealing crib notes on various parts of their bodies or clothing, particularly under sleeves or pant legs
  
  Make a careful record of irregular occurrences.

Some methods of cheating on multiple choice exams are:

- Impersonation - Sending someone else to take the test.
- Changing test form code to correspond to that of the adjacent person, then copying. Prearranged signals to communicate answers.
- Memorizing or recording strings of responses to pass on to someone taking the test at a later time.
- Taking a test and not turning it in, or taking it under another name, then claiming to have been absent.

Collect materials systematically. Be sure to verify that a test and answer sheet is collected from each person. Check to be sure the answer sheet is the same form as the test booklet. Check answer sheets for proper coding and for stray marks. There should be no writing on the edge of the answer sheet which has the black timing marks.
The procedures presented here are rather thorough. Use those you consider to be reasonable. It might be adequate to use some of them always and others on different occasions. This will help to prevent prearranged cheating plans from occurring.

After the Test:

- Account for all materials immediately. Record counts.
- Double check accuracy of the key
- Separate answer sheets by test form.

Sample Test Administration Instructions:

- **Introduction**: This test is a sampling of the information covered in this course. It will provide feedback about how much you are learning and how effectively you have been taught.

- **Cheating**: You are expected to do your own work. Methods of detecting cheating are available and will be used to help insure the validity of this test and to insure fair grading for everyone.

- **Use of time**: Apportion your time so that you will be able to read all the questions. Difficult questions may be marked and returned to if time permits.

- **Guessing**: (When no correction for guessing is used.) Try to answer every question. If you are not sure about the answer, first eliminate choices you think are wrong and then guess among the rest of the choices.

- **Marking**: Use a soft lead pencil (2 or 2-1/2). Do not use ink or colored pencils. Completely fill the marking bubbles. Erase cleanly any unintended marks. Complete the NAME, ID NUMBER, SECTION, and FORM blocks carefully in order to insure proper scoring and recording of test results. Mark only one answer per question.