



Leading the  
Way in Digital  
Assessment



# Building Resilient Digital Exams In a Digital-Ready Environment

Within US Higher Education

## **Inspira was created to provide test-takers with equal opportunities and to enable them to prove their skills in an authentic way.**

We empower universities, awarding organizations, governments, municipalities, and schools to deliver secure, standardized tests, open and closed book exams, as well as formative and diagnostics tests. Inspira offers the most innovative, reliable, and secure online assessment platform, accompanied by the necessary expertise to ensure successful organization-wide implementation and rollout.

Founded in 1999, we are a dedicated international team of more than 170 EdTech entrepreneurs on a mission to impact education on a global scale.



## **Who Is This White Paper For?**

This document is intended for decision-makers in post-secondary institutions who want to establish a truly digital environment for their students and staff, particularly regarding digital and online assessments.

► Define what a digital higher education environment is

► Explain the advantages, pitfalls, and best practices related to digital exams

► Help higher education decision-makers choose the best online exam

# What is Digital Assessment?

In the education sector, there's one area that hasn't fully embraced the digital transformation: assessment. And by that term, we're including all forms of exams, quizzes, tests, papers, summative, formative, authentic...the whole gamut of evaluation.

While most institutions have been using an LMS for their digital exams and assessments, traditional testing has also continued in person and often, on paper.

Digital assessments in their truest form, offer everything a traditional test offers but with added accessibility, flexibility, efficiency and speed.

A digital assessment platform is capable of handling all assessment types. However, this white paper focuses mainly on exams.

## Providing Digital Education in a Digital World

### At a glance:

- ▶ By 2025, hybrid higher education will be the norm in the US.
- ▶ Students expect a seamless digital-first learning environment when enrolling in higher education.
- ▶ Nearly half of the students prefer a hybrid mode of education.
- ▶ Digital assessments are a vital part of ensuring a digital learning environment.



Students who entered US campuses twenty years ago likely did so clutching paper notebooks, scribbling down lecture notes with pens, and only occasionally exchanging emails with their professors. Their experience seems almost quaint compared to today's hyper-digitalized higher education environment.

Nowadays, students take notes on their tablets, laptops, or phones, attend lectures from professors who teach sitting in different countries, and receive digital certifications for completing Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

The pandemic accelerated the trend to digitalize higher education, with classes moving online almost overnight and educational institutions investing in digital infrastructure on a massive scale.

In the years since 2020, higher education has undergone significant changes. As the world emerges from the pandemic, many of these digital innovations are here to stay. Higher education in the United States is now – at least in part – digital education. By 2025, hybrid instruction will be the norm across US campuses<sup>1</sup>.

As of 2022, half of all US students prefer a hybrid class format with at least some of their regular classes online, and almost 20% would opt for a fully digital environment if given the choice<sup>2</sup>. According to a Salesforce study involving over 2,000 students across North America, Europe, and Australia, more than 80% of students consider having a positive digital campus experience as a critical factor in overall institutional satisfaction<sup>3</sup>.



When enrolling in a degree program, students expect access to technology that adds value to their education and anticipate relying on technology and support measures as part of their overall campus experience<sup>4</sup>.

Many educators also prefer teaching within a digital or hybrid learning environment and embrace technology in the lecture hall. One study found that almost 85% of the surveyed US educators believe that technology has a positive impact on student learning<sup>5</sup>.

Students, educators, and staff benefit from a digital-first learning environment.

Higher education institutions (HEIs) can reduce staff workload and administrative burdens by shifting selected aspects of higher education online and reallocating resources to ensure successful and measurable learning outcomes. Institutions can improve scalability, affordability, and data analytics, enabling them to make well-informed decisions regarding student outcomes.

Faculty members can better personalize instruction and assessment. In turn, students benefit from increased accessibility, flexibility, and engagement.

1\_\_CHLOE 7: Tracking Online Learning from Mainstream Acceptance to Universal Adoption. 2022 CHLOE 7 Report. 2022

2\_\_College 2030™ – Emerging from the Pandemic: Reimagining Higher Education. Barnes & Noble College. Insight Report. 2022

3\_\_Connected Student Report. Salesforce. 2022

4\_\_Digital Technologies: Students' Expectations and Experiences during their Transition from High School to University. Keane, et al. Education and Information Technologies. 2023

5\_\_Teaching with Technology: U.S. Teachers' Perceptions and Use of Digital Technology in an International Context. NCES Blog. 2020

However, providing a truly digital learning environment requires more than just implementing technology. Institutions must also invest in professional development, infrastructure, and pedagogy.

Faculty members should be equipped with the necessary skills and resources to effectively integrate technology into their teaching, while students must be provided with the support they need to excel in digital learning environments.

### **Decline in student numbers**

The rise in digital learning coincides with a crisis in higher education. Higher education enrollment has decreased by almost 7.5% since 2019<sup>6</sup>. Gen Z, in particular, remains skeptical of the value of higher education. Their interest in pursuing a four-year degree has declined to 50% in 2022, down from 71% in 2020<sup>7</sup>. The reasons for this decline are varied.



The increased popularity of online education – together with cost considerations – certainly plays a crucial role. If HEIs want to attract students, they will have to provide an exceptional and valuable learning environment – including robust digital offers. Institutions that fail to adapt, risk losing students to competitors who offer a more engaging and flexible digital learning experience.

### **Enhanced Student Experience**

Digital education is not intended to replace interpersonal experiences on campus, but rather to enhance and complement in-person interactions. It ensures that all educational stakeholders have a valuable, equitable, and productive experience.

In the process of transitioning to a digital learning environment, the adoption of digital exams is a logical step. Digital exams provide numerous advantages, including enhanced efficiency, security, and accessibility.

A robust digital assessment system is essential to provide students and staff with a seamless digital experience that meets their needs and expectations and enhances their overall campus experience.

<sup>6</sup>\_\_College Enrollment Losses Continue, But At A Slower Rate, According To New Report. Nietzel, Michael T. Forbes. 2022

<sup>7</sup>\_\_Report: Gen Z Teens Want Shorter, More Affordable, Career-Connected Education Pathways. ECMC Group. 2022.

If administrative staff and decision makers are to make informed decisions about implementing digital assessment tools, they must have a thorough understanding of digital exams, including their potential and limitations, and how to adapt them to meet their specific requirements.

This paper will provide an in-depth discussion of digital assessments in higher education, including the connection between Learning Management Systems (LMS) and digital and online assessments, best practices, and pitfalls. Additionally, it will offer an overview of Inspera's digital exam solution, along with a case study of its successful implementation at the University of Oslo in Norway.

By the end of this paper, readers will have gained knowledge of the digital assessment process and have a clear understanding of how to create a truly digital-first environment in their institution that encompasses all aspects of the academic cycle.



# A Deep-Dive Into a Digital-Ready Learning Environment

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## What is a digital higher education environment?

A digital education environment leverages technology to create an efficient, effective, and engaging learning experience for students and a productive work environment for staff. It involves integrating digital tools and platforms into the teaching and learning process to support both academics and administrators. Importantly, it entails a mindset shift from viewing technology as a supporting tool to integrating technology at all levels of the institution and educational journey.

A digital environment encompasses all aspects of the higher education cycle, from student recruitment and enrollment to instruction, exams, graduation, and social and other support measures. To remain relevant, higher education must keep pace with the increasing digitalization of almost all aspects of our lives.

By providing a digital environment, institutions can meet student expectations, better prepare learners for the digital workplace, and equip them with the necessary skills for career success.



## Why is it important that HEIs build a digital learning environment?

Alenezi (2023) has identified five objectives for building a digital higher education system:

✓ **Improving students' learning environment:** Technology allows students to better grasp subject matters and access additional material. Digital exams generate data that instructors can use to modify their curriculum and create a customized learning environment.

✓ **Boost research:** Having a strong digital infrastructure makes research more efficient by providing easy access to datasets, collaborations, and publications.

✓ **Improving the organization's operations:** Data analytics can help control recruitment costs, create effective marketing strategies, provide valuable counseling or academic planning insights, and identify and mitigate operational bottlenecks. Implementing systems that enable cross-functional collaboration reduces costs and increases efficiency.

✓ **Promote innovation:** If staff is freed from certain administrative burdens, they can direct their resources towards more innovative research or teaching concepts.

✓ **Cost efficiency:** If used correctly, educational technology cuts costs by replacing cumbersome resources, streamlining processes, and providing access to high-quality content for less<sup>8</sup>.

A digital environment provides opportunities for staff, students, and researchers alike to increase their efficiency and collaborate better.

However, creating a truly digital higher education experience is a complex long-term project that requires the buy-in of all stakeholders. Institutions as diverse as HEIs cannot presume that their staff and students are equally digitally literate.

To reduce the workload and administrative burdens of all stakeholders, it is essential to implement digital tools that are intelligently designed and have user-friendly interfaces.

Taking digital exams as an example, the following sections will spotlight how HEIs can transform into truly digital institutions that serve their community in innovative and productive ways.

<sup>8</sup>Alenezi (2023) has identified five objectives for building a digital higher education system  
8\_\_Digital Learning and Digital Institution in Higher Education. Alenezi, M. Educ. Sci. 2023



# Digital and Online Exams and HEIs – Examining for the Future

## How do digital exams fit into a digital strategy for higher education institutions?

Throughout much of 2020 and 2021, the majority of higher education institutions adopted some form of online remote assessment, either fully or in combination with in-person exams. As higher education institutions shift back towards in-person or hybrid modes of instruction, it is crucial to preserve the digital advancements made during the pandemic.

In light of this viewpoint, the United Nations has urged stakeholders to reimagine education rather than revert to pre-pandemic practices in their policy brief on education during Covid-19 and beyond. In this context, they have highlighted digital exams as an area that has made significant progress, but where challenges persist<sup>9</sup>. Traditional pen-and-paper exams no longer reflect the reality of modern education.

Digital education has evolved beyond its role as a mere provider of information to encompass the realms of “co-creation, mentoring, and assessment.”<sup>10</sup> As such, digital assessment and contemporary education are inextricably intertwined.

Online exams are a crucial component of a digital-first education environment. Examinations are key events in the academic calendar, often representing the culmination of months or even years of effort. Consequently, they are frequently associated with stress and anxiety. Students and instructors alike deserve an exam experience that allows them to demonstrate and evaluate their abilities equitably and productively.

9\_\_Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and Beyond. United Nations. 2020

10\_\_Understanding the role of digital technologies in education: A Review. Haleem Abid, et al. Sustainable Operations and Computers Volume 3, 2022.



## What are some of the positive effects of digital exams?

**At a glance:** Digital exams increase accessibility and efficiency, decrease costs, and lead to better data analytics.

In recent years, many institutions around the world have adapted their assessment systems to transition from in-person to online exams. While this process has not been without problems, digital assessments provide a key chance to improve the overall exam experience of students and staff. Five positive effects of implementing online exams are particularly relevant for HEIs: increased accessibility, improved data analysis and decision-making, decrease in student anxiety, high exam flexibility, and a decrease in costs, together with an increase in efficiency.

## Universal Design in Education (UDE)

UDE considers the diverse needs and situations of students and educators in all environments, including digital provision. This extends further than accessibility for people with disabilities to be inclusive of all characteristics, including gender, race and age.

### Accessibility designs:

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, one in ten undergraduate students in the United States has a disability<sup>11</sup>. Digital exams are integral in ensuring an accessible educational experience. Online exams can be readily customized to cater to the individual requirements of students with disabilities, such as modifying the font size, providing additional time, or adjusting the testing environment.

By incorporating such adjustments, students can complete the test in a manner that accommodates their needs.



### Inclusive designs:

Digital exams also provide an alternative to students who have family or work obligations that might prevent them from attending in-person exams at specific times and locations. More than 20% of college students in the US are parents<sup>12</sup>. 40% of students work full-time and almost two-thirds have a part-time job<sup>13</sup>. HEIs need to accommodate these learners to both attract talented students and ensure an equitable educational experience for all.

In addition, digital exams can minimize cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic biases and promote exam integrity. This can be achieved by utilizing various question formats, blind or automated grading, or allowing students to attempt the exam multiple times. Various case studies have shown that digital exams positively impacted student achievement, especially for black and mixed-ethnicity students<sup>14</sup>. Accessibility themes strongly resonate with younger demographics<sup>15</sup>.

By creating a fully accessible online exam experience, HEIs can not only guarantee a just exam process but also show their commitment to the values of their students.

## ✓ Improved Data Analysis and Decision-Making

Digital exams create a wealth of data that can be used to build more effective processes. Consolidated incident reporting allows instructors to access and document information about any issues that occur during a digital exam, such as technical glitches or instances of academic misconduct.

## ✓ Decrease in Student Anxiety

Confidence tools, such as flagging questions, time management indicators, and review options, help educators identify the most effective types of questions and adjust future exams. Moreover, time management indicators help students manage pacing, preventing rush-induced errors or unnecessary delays. Review options afford a final check of answers, enhancing accuracy and reducing uncertainty. By instilling a sense of control and support, confidence tools in digital exams foster a positive mindset, decrease student anxieties, and ensure overall exam success.

## ✓ Decreased Costs and Increased Efficiency

Online exams offer significant benefits to institutions, both in terms of cost savings and time efficiency. By moving exams online, institutions can reduce the administrative burden of organizing and running exams, while also providing quicker marking and issuing of feedback and results. This means that staff can focus on other tasks, such as research and teaching.

Auto-grading features and effective grading workflows significantly reduce the workload of instructors. Furthermore, digital and online exams allow for efficient content creation and collaboration by reusing existing questions in creative ways. With a wide range of question types and question banks that can be customized for specific departments or courses, instructors can create exams that are more engaging and interactive for students, promoting a deeper understanding of the material.

11\_\_Fast Facts. Students with Disabilities. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). 2015

12\_\_Many Determined College Students Are Also Dedicated Parents: A Preview of the Student Parent Affordability Report. Williams, Brittany. The Education Trust. 2022

13\_\_College Student Employment. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). 2022

14\_\_Case Studies in Inclusive Assessment. Part of a QAA Collaborative Enhancement Project Led by Teesside University. 2022

15\_\_Striving for Balance, Advocating for Change. The Deloitte Global 2022 GenZ and Millennial Survey. Deloitte. 2022



## High Exam Flexibility

A well-designed digital exam tool empowers educators to seamlessly handle a wide range of exams, including formative, summative, diagnostic, and authentic assessments.

Formative assessment is an iterative process that allows instructors to gather feedback and insights throughout the learning journey, identifying gaps and tailoring instruction accordingly, and thereby fostering a culture of continuous improvement.

By automating grading and feedback processes, digital exam tools alleviate the grading burden for instructors. Students receive meaningful benchmarks for their learning without adding to instructors' workload.

Additionally, a comprehensive digital exam tool should facilitate diagnostic exams conducted at the early stages of learning, enabling instructors to evaluate students' knowledge, strengths, and weaknesses. This is particularly crucial in addressing the diverse needs of a heterogeneous student group.

On the other hand, summative exams are more complex and comprehensive in scope, serving as preparation for future educational and professional pursuits. These assessments provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a more formal setting.

Furthermore, they yield valuable data for evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs and curricula. A robust digital assessment tool allows for high levels of customization, accessibility and control, ensuring these high-stakes exams are conducted with accuracy and reliability.

Authentic exams, which require students to apply their knowledge and skills in practical and meaningful contexts, provide an accurate measure of their abilities to transfer knowledge to real-world situations. Therefore, digital exam platforms must accommodate various submission and question formats that align with the demands of authentic assessments.

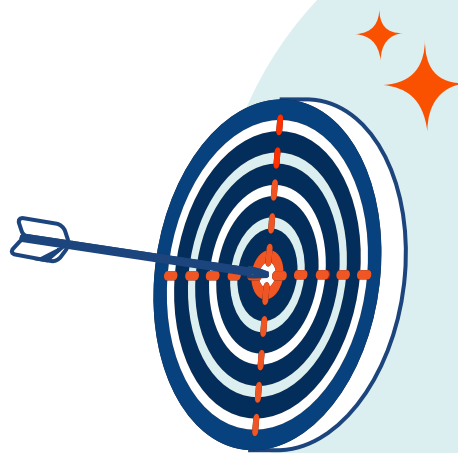
If students, instructors, and administrative staff are to adopt online exams, a digital exam platform must offer comprehensive solutions for all these exam types. Avoiding the need to switch between different exam providers is crucial for seamless learning and efficient exam administration.

Each exam type serves a distinct but essential purpose. A user-friendly digital assessment solution should cover all exam types, reduce instructors' workloads and students' anxiety, intuitively guide users, and consolidate data from all exams in one place to provide a holistic student picture.

## What are the pitfalls of digital and online exams?

### At a glance:

- ▶ Faulty technology can put undue stress on exam takers
- ▶ The risk of cheating might be increased
- ▶ If not implemented properly, digital and online exams can increase instructors' workloads
- ▶ LMS are usually not sufficient to administer high-stakes exams



A poor internet connection is the leading cause of technical difficulties during an online exam and a major stress factor for students and instructors alike<sup>16</sup>. Online exams usually rely on a stable internet connection, which can be a challenge for students who do not have access to a positive work and test environment. This can lead to anxiety for students who worry about connectivity issues, which can impact their performance. Instructors may also experience stress and anxiety as they attempt to troubleshoot technical issues during the exam and have to address student appeals due to connectivity.

Another concern about online exams is the risk of cheating. Digital exams can be easier to cheat on than traditional paper exams if not approached with solutions for this in mind. Students could use the internet to look up answers, or collaborate with others via messaging apps or social media.

In addition, digital exams can create additional work for instructors, especially if they are not familiar with the software or are not digitally literate. While digital exams may be quicker to grade than traditional paper exams, they require preparation and setup. Instructors must ensure that the technology is working correctly, that the exam is properly formatted, and that the questions are unambiguous. This can be time-consuming and can add to the already heavy workload of staff.

16\_Undergraduate Students' Views of and Difficulties in Online Exams During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Gürbüz Ocak, Gülçin Karakuş. Themes in Elearning. 2021

This is especially true if digital exams are administered over LMSs. The advantage of LMSs is that they are designed to perform a wide range of tasks, with options to add plug-ins for various needs. However, this also means that they are usually only suitable for general tasks and may struggle to meet more complex exam needs.

Often LMSs - such as Moodle, Instructure Canvas, or Blackboard - are limited in their exam capabilities with narrow personalization options, restricted question types, and few ways to guard academic integrity. Instructors have the option to add plug-ins to their online exams, such as proctoring or question plug-ins. However, this can create a patchwork exam experience that may require lengthy and costly debates about which add-ons to use. Additionally, staff may require costly and time-consuming training to learn how to use these plug-ins effectively or they can be used inconsistently between different departments. Moreover, potential integration problems could render the plug-ins completely ineffective.

The right exam solution addresses all these pitfalls to ensure that students and instructors have a satisfying and productive exam experience. If institutions implement digital exams, they should make sure that they do it right: instead of creating cumbersome patchwork experiences and combining different resources, they should put the experience of their students and staff first and commit to a fair and easy-to-use exam process.

With over twenty years experience in the digital assessment space, Inspera has successfully created online exam systems for their global clients which mitigate these risks and enable institutions to benefit from the full potential of digital and online exams.



# Inspira's Online Assessment Solution



"Using Inspira Assessment hugely simplified our transition to digital assessments. The vast array of features accommodated diverse requirements, and **the platform was simple to navigate and implement.** Working with Inspira has been a pleasure!"

**Dr. Dee Scadden**  
Director of Teaching and Deputy Head  
of Department, University of Cambridge, UK.



## Inspira Quick Facts:



**Founded  
in 1999 in  
Norway**



**Users in  
more than  
160 countries**



**5 million  
submissions  
in a year  
(Sept 2023)**



**Supports more  
than 4 million  
test takers  
each year**

## Our Values:

- ▶ Digital assessment is foremost about people
- ▶ We are committed to equality and access to education for everyone
- ▶ We do this by providing a quality and efficient exam experience, ultimately helping students to achieve.

## Trusted by world-class education institutions:



UNIVERSITY  
OF OSLO



UNIVERSITY OF  
**BATH**



Universität  
Zürich <sup>UZH</sup>



UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

Inspira believes that online-only and hybrid exams are the key to a more accessible and productive higher education experience. Over the last 20 years, we have helped countless HEIs transition away from paper-based exams to rich interactive digital assessment experiences.

Inspira has always advocated for online exams as a way to create more effective and satisfactory assessments for students to demonstrate their knowledge, while also empowering instructors with a range of tools to improve efficiency.

Digital assessment should not be just a stopgap measure when an immediate need arises, but rather part of a long-term strategy for creating a truly digital learning environment.

## One Solution for All Exam Needs

Inspira has created a digital exam ecosystem that can be easily tailored to different stakeholders and institutions, promotes collaboration, and is proven to decrease workload and increase learning outcomes.

Rather than combining different products, software, or plug-ins, Inspira offers all its features in one seamlessly integrated solution. This ensures efficiency and staff buy-in. Administrators and faculty do not have to have lengthy discussions about combining different software and providers but can instead collaborate easily across teams and functions. Students and staff alike will have access to a tool that is intuitive to use and reliable.



## At a glance:



### Inspira's Benefits for Instructors

- ▶ Easy-to-use interface
- ▶ High level of customization
- ▶ Suitable for authentic formative and summative assessments, and diagnostic assessments.
- ▶ Easy collaboration, on- and offboarding across teams
- ▶ Auto-grading
- ▶ Full control over the whole exam cycle
- ▶ Robust exam integrity features
- ▶ Data analysis reporting



### Inspira's Benefits for Students

- ▶ Easy-to-use interface
- ▶ Reliable exam experience even when internet connection is disrupted
- ▶ Instant feedback and auto-grading features
- ▶ Secure exam experience  
Increased accessibility for all
- ▶ Same experience with both authentic formative and summative exams
- ▶ Unbiased grading
- ▶ Accessibility and integrity guides that don't accuse



### Inspira's Benefits for Administrative Staff

- ▶ Easy collaboration across teams, departments, functions
- ▶ Cost-saving
- ▶ Ability to uphold academic honor-code
- ▶ Increase student and staff satisfaction
- ▶ Easy-to-implement accessibility features
- ▶ Exportable exam data for evaluation
- ▶ Transformative digital learning experience for recruitment



# Best Practices for Building Resilient Digital Exams

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Ideally, online exams are part of a comprehensive digital strategy and executed with intention and evaluation protocols.

By bearing in mind the following four best practices for constructing a robust digital exam ecosystem, staff and administrators can ensure that their online exam implementation is successful.

## 1. Use Reliable Technology

Faulty technology can have serious consequences for exam takers and place undue stress on faculty and students alike.

Inspira's exam platform is designed to work seamlessly in both online and offline environments. An exam taker will have to be online to start the exam but if they lose connectivity, the assessment will continue working.

Inspira eliminates a major source of student stress and facilitates exam-taking for all students, including those lacking a stable internet connection, by allowing exams to lose connectivity. Once an exam begins, all data and actions are stored locally on the device, automatically syncing when the internet connection is restored.

Alternatively, students can download an encrypted exam file that cannot be altered and submit it to the examiner once internet access returns. This feature increases the acceptance of online exams within the academic community.



## 2. Create Tailor-Made Exam Experiences

No two exams are the same. Inspera offers unparalleled customization options for academics designing exams. With complete control over the process, staff can include various elements in the question section, such as LaTeX files, external links, images, formulas, audio, and video clips, define and track word limits, and even allow students to create basic drawings.

Inspira also enables administrators to establish specific parameters for video clips, such as regulating the frequency of viewings, disabling the pause function, or restricting playback durations. The user-friendly interface seamlessly integrates diverse question formats, encompassing multiple-choice, essay composition, in-line selection, hotspot identification, numerical summation, and the construction of intricate equations and graphs.

Nonetheless, we recognize the significance of maintaining a balance between flexibility and user-friendliness.

In light of this, the platform offers strategic customization options derived from its expertise in collaborating with academics, without overwhelming instructors during the exam design process.

## 3. Ensure Accessibility

Accessibility is key when creating a digital assessment. Inspera offers a range of features such as screen readers, a built-in text-to-speech tool, customizable font sizes and screen colors, and the option to define individual exam lengths.

Inspira has chosen to benchmark its standards against those set out by the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, the most broadly recognized industry standard for online accessibility.

Beyond students with disabilities, flexible online exams also provide greater access to students with family or work obligations. Our wifi resiliency feature ensures that students who don't have access to ideal work environments or a stable internet connection can still take the test.

In addition to using Inspera's accessibility features to design exams that serve the whole student population, consider having students with disabilities test the exam formats beforehand to ensure they truly meet the learners' needs.



## 4. Make Collaboration the Default

The successful execution of an exam typically involves the collective efforts of various teams, as the individual responsible for designing the test may not necessarily be the one grading it. Moreover, some staff might leave throughout the semester, making it imperative that a good onboarding system is in place for their replacements.

With Inspera, adding and removing collaborators at any given point is easy. Dividing up the grading by student subset or by question allows for a flexible grading workflow. Additionally, Inspera facilitates double-blinded marking, where multiple graders assess the same paper and compare their results at the end. Alternatively, instructors can mark collaboratively and assign equivalent grades.

Inspira's features grant academics complete control over the exam administration process, fostering seamless and efficient collaboration, grading, and reporting. The platform simplifies collaboration, enabling staff members to be onboarded or offboarded throughout the exam cycle and at any point in the term. Moreover, external staff can be invited to participate in the exam, and multiple graders can be assigned after the exam has concluded or even midway through the grading process.



"Digital exams have basically **changed the way we work and have made it much easier to share the responsibilities** connected with the assessment process."

**Valeriia Gorlushko**  
Head of Examination Office,  
Kozminski University, Poland



AKADEMIA  
LEONA KOŹMIŃSKIEGO

## 5. Create a Fair Test Environment by Minimizing Cheating

Cheating is an unfortunate reality in all types of exams, whether paper-based or online.

At Inspera we don't assume that every student is a potential cheater but work from a base of trust and respect. Inspera gives institutions the tools they need to ensure that the exam is conducted fairly, without making any judgment calls. In case of any suspected cheating, the software provides data that instructors can review and investigate.

The software ensures that all students take the exam equally so that staff can have a fair assessment of their skills. As part of our add-on proctoring package, Inspera provides identity verification checks at the beginning, throughout, and at the end of the exam and also offers a lockdown browser function. This feature locks down the student's browser during the exam, preventing them from accessing the internet or any other applications on their device. The package also includes proctoring options such as screen capture and recording audio and video of students during the exam, which is particularly crucial in high-stakes exams.

## 6. Test the Test

Before every test, the facilitators should do a trial run to ensure that the exams run smoothly and minimize the potential for disruption.

Ideally, students are also familiar with the test environment. This can be easily achieved by implementing low-stakes quizzes throughout the academic year to help students benchmark their knowledge and familiarize themselves with the testing environment.

Inspira enables instructors to easily set up quizzes and tests that incorporate a wide variety of questions and can mimic more high-stakes exams. A robust auto-grading feature for quizzes allows instructors to assess students without adding to their own workload.



## At a Glance: Inspera's Key Features:

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- ▶ Customization of exams (question types, time constraints, media use, etc.)
- ▶ Accessibility and support features (rubrics, voice notes, annotations, written comments)
- ▶ Supports different exam types (open or closed book, quizzes, live answers, coursework)
- ▶ Offline function in case of a faulty connection
- ▶ Feedback features within the platform
- ▶ Proctoring, lock-down browser, and ID checks add-ons
- ▶ Easy collaboration



# Case Study - University of Oslo: Building Resilient Exams With Inspira



"The deans have been eager, as they can see the benefits. **And once the users have transitioned to digital examination, they would not go back to the old system** – there is no question of that. The use of digital examinations has risen steadily."

**Anne-Lise Lande**  
Section Manager,  
University of Oslo, Norway



UNIVERSITY  
OF OSLO

The University of Oslo (UiO) has 28,000 students, 7,000 academic staff members, and roughly 1,700 administrative staff and is one of the oldest and most respected HEIs in Norway. The goal of UiO's and Inspira's collaboration was to simplify the exam process, make it more accessible for students, and create more efficient processes.

In 2012, Inspira initiated a small pilot involving a variety of stakeholders from the management and faculty levels, introducing online exam solutions gradually and expanding from there. This approach allowed for keeping the specific needs and prerequisites of the clients in mind. This is one of Inspira's unique strengths: the software is more than a product that is purchased and imposed on end-users. Inspira works diligently to incorporate all relevant stakeholders in the exam cycle and ensure that its solution is compatible with the client's culture.

Starting with almost no digital exam processes in 2012, by 2018, 75-80% of all exams at the UiO were conducted digitally using Inspira. This early

adoption of digital exams gave the university a competitive advantage when the pandemic struck since the infrastructure and mindset to transition to fully digital exams were already in place.

Implementing Inspira also led to a significant reduction in workload and an increase in satisfaction for faculty. Both applications for appeal as well as costs associated with assessments such as printing and distribution were reduced. Digital assessments have become so much the norm at the UiO that the term "online exam" has been replaced with simply "exams" in their communication.

This successful transition was not an overnight accomplishment but the outcome of careful planning and engagement with the university as a whole. By providing a digital assessment system that was accepted by all stakeholders and increased learning outcomes and efficiency, Inspira was able to support the UiO on their way to becoming a digital institution.



# The World Of Education Has Changed

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Our lives are increasingly digital – we talk to friends in messaging apps, find love through online dating profiles, apply for jobs and work online, watch videos to learn how to make home repairs, and order groceries, flowers, clothes, and books on the internet. It is only logical to shift education to a hybrid format as well – not to replace in-person interactions and peer-to-peer learning but to reduce stress, lighten workloads, and streamline processes.

Successful higher education institutions have a sustainable digital strategy that allows them to leverage the potential of digital education while mitigating its pitfalls. Within the coming years, almost all HEIs in the US will complete their shift toward becoming hybrid institutions. In this way, they will meet the demands of their stakeholders and prepare their students for the future of work.

Online exams are an integral part of a digital education strategy. Pen-and-paper exams, with their cumbersome creation, distribution, and marking processes, do not reflect what a modern university stands for anymore. Yet, the transition to online exams can't be done overnight, particularly without dedicated software. Most LMSs fall short when it comes to delivering digital assessments, especially in the areas of high-stakes exams, exam integrity, and cross-functional collaboration. Students, faculty, and administrators greatly benefit from a specialized exam solution that considers all their varying needs equally and is easy to implement and use.

For more than twenty years, Inspera has created the space for online assessments that increase study success and stakeholder satisfaction while decreasing costs and workloads.

Our partners across the globe trust us because we found solutions precisely tailored to their needs and prerequisites.

Take the next step in your digital strategy process.

**Contact us and find out how Inspera can help you deliver digital exams that will transform your student and faculty exam experience.**





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