Guidance on Final Exams in 100% Online Courses

*For Baruch College faculty teaching asynchronous, synchronous, or mixed online courses **effective September 2026**.*

Core requirement
Exam requirements must be posted in the course notes in CourseDog at the time the course is listed for registration. Once registration opens and students begin enrolling, exam requirements are set and may not be changed in ways that create new attendance, technology, scheduling, or travel obligations for students.

Purpose and Scope

This guidance applies to Baruch College courses that are 100% online, whether asynchronous, synchronous, or a mix of synchronous and asynchronous online instruction. It addresses when and how faculty may use proctored, synchronous, oral, camera-based, or in-person examinations in online courses.

The guidance distinguishes between courses in fully online degree programs and online courses offered to students enrolled in primarily in-person programs.

Fundamental Principle: Transparency at the Time of Registration

Any requirement for a proctored examination, synchronous examination, oral examination, camera use, in-person testing, or other assessment condition that may affect a student's ability to enroll in or complete a course must be clearly stated in the course notes when the course is listed.

Students rely on course notes when deciding whether to register. Once registration opens and students have begun enrolling, exam requirements are considered established. Faculty may not add or change exam requirements after registration opens if the change creates new obligations for students, including travel, technology (hardware/software), synchronous attendance, or proctoring requirements.

Assessment Design Should Be the First Strategy

Before requiring a proctored or in-person examination, faculty are strongly encouraged to work with the Center for Teaching and Learning and/or the Digital Learning Hub to explore assessment approaches that are resilient to unauthorized AI use and academic dishonesty while remaining accessible to online learners.

- Authentic assessments
- Project-based work
- Applied case analyses
- Iterative assignments with feedback
- Oral examinations or presentations
- Reflective and process-based assessments
- Portfolio-based assessments
- Timed online assessments with question banks and randomization

For most online courses, assessment design should be the first approach considered before implementing proctoring or requiring travel to campus.

Examination Options

Options, In Order of Preference	Guidance
Synchronous online proctored exam	When proctoring is necessary, the first choice should be a synchronous online proctored exam using Respondus LockDown Browser and Zoom, following available Baruch guidance.
Approved alternative assessment	Faculty should consider whether learning outcomes can be met through an alternative assessment that does not require proctoring.
In-person examination	In-person exams should be used only when pedagogically necessary, disclosed before registration opens, and accompanied by reasonable accommodations for students with access barriers.

Courses in Fully Online Degree Programs

This section applies to courses that are part of Baruch's fully online degree programs. Baruch currently has nine fully online degree programs: two undergraduate programs, one doctoral program, and six master's-level programs.

Students in these programs enroll with the expectation that the degree can be completed without regular travel to campus. For that reason, courses in fully online degree programs may not require routine in-person examinations unless the requirement is disclosed when students first enroll in the **program**, the requirements are in the course notes before registration opens, and there is a compelling academic rationale.

If an In-Person Exam Is Used in a Fully Online Degree Program

- Students must be made aware of this requirement prior to *program* enrollment
- The requirement must be published in the course notes before registration opens.
- The course notes should clearly identify that an in-person exam is required.
- The notes should include the anticipated location, date, testing window, and any technology or identification requirements when known.
- Faculty must provide reasonable accommodations for students who face access barriers.

Examples of Access Barriers

- Residence more than 50 miles outside New York City
- Residence in another state or country
- Significant time-zone differences
- Military service obligations
- Disability-related needs addressed through OSDS registration and accommodation

Examples of Reasonable Accommodations

- A synchronous online proctored examination

- An oral examination
- An approved remote proctoring arrangement
- An alternative assessment with equivalent learning outcomes

The goal is to ensure that students admitted to fully online degree programs retain a viable pathway to course completion regardless of geography.

Online Courses Offered to Students in Primarily In-Person Programs

This section applies to online courses that are not part of a fully online degree program but are offered to students enrolled in traditional on-campus programs.

These courses may require in-person examinations when the requirement is disclosed in the course notes before registration opens and students have the information needed to make an informed registration decision. Because students are enrolled in programs that ordinarily include campus participation, an in-person examination may be appropriate in some rare circumstances when there is a compelling academic rationale.

Even when an in-person examination is permitted, faculty must provide reasonable accommodations for students who face substantial access barriers. A student should not be prevented from successfully completing a course because of geographic, scheduling, disability-related, or other legitimate access challenges.

Room Scheduling Expectations

Faculty requiring in-person examinations should work with the appropriate department, school, and scheduling staff to ensure that a suitable testing location is secured before communicating logistics to students.

Online graduate courses are not automatically assigned physical classroom space for examinations. Faculty who intend to conduct an in-person examination in an online graduate course must coordinate with their Dean's Office and applicable scheduling staff to identify and reserve an appropriate location. Faculty should plan well in advance and should not assume that examination space will be available. In other words, such exams will not be scheduled into registrar-managed spaces.

Summary Checklist for Faculty

- ☐ **Begin with assessment design** and consult CTL or the Digital Learning Hub when possible.
- ☐ Only after considering all other assessment options, determine whether a proctored, synchronous, oral, camera-based, or in-person exam is pedagogically necessary.
- ☐ Include all exam requirements in the course notes before registration opens.
- ☐ Do not change exam requirements after registration opens in ways that create new student obligations.
- ☐ Use synchronous online proctoring with Respondus LockDown Browser and Zoom as the preferred proctoring model when proctoring is needed.
- ☐ Avoid in-person exams in fully online degree programs unless clearly disclosed and academically justified.
- ☐ Provide reasonable accommodations for students with access barriers.
- ☐ Coordinate early with the Dean's Office or scheduling staff if an in-person exam location is needed.

Suggested Course Note Language

Faculty and departments should use (or adapt if needed) the following language for course listings when a proctored or in-person exam requirement is known before registration opens.

Sample note for synchronous online proctored exam

This 100% online course requires a synchronous online proctored exam using Respondus LockDown Browser and Zoom. Students must be available during the scheduled exam window and must have access to the required technology. Students who anticipate an access barrier should contact the instructor as early as possible and no later than two weeks before the exam to discuss reasonable alternatives.

Sample note for in-person exam

This 100% online course requires an in-person exam. The exam requirement is part of the course as listed. Students should review the date, location, and testing requirements before registering. Students who face a documented access barrier should contact the instructor as early as possible and no later than two weeks before the exam to discuss reasonable accommodations.