Administering Exams in Large Lectures
Short Version, No Admin TA
By Adrienne Williams, September 2009

A Week in Advance:
1. Contact left-handed / special seating students and create seating chart. (see Creating a Seating Chart)
2. Contact proctors and graders with exam schedule.

Write the exam:
3. Start it early. Imageworks needs the versions turned in with at LEAST 24 hours notice.
4. Keep it short. Test time is minimal for midterms. Do not use more than 22 multiple choice questions. Use fewer if short answer questions are also asked.
5. Keep it clear.
   a. Images must photocopy clearly in B/W. Avoid photos and colors.
   b. Minimize the number of questions with “all of the above” or “a and b” or “not” in them. It’s okay to have only 3 or 4 answer choices.
   c. It’s better for the multiple choice question itself to be long and the possible answers short, rather than the other way around.
   d. Short answer responses must be straightforward to grade. An experienced TA is an excellent judge of “straightforward” – run questions by them.
   e. Write the exam key BEFORE photocopying the exam to catch errors.
6. Keep it un-cheatable.
   a. Use versions. Make the first question of a multiple choice section the version question: “You have version A. Bubble in “a” for question 1.”
   b. It’s okay to keep the questions in the same order and just shuffle the answer choices.
   c. If any question has an easily visible figure, make sure answer marks are not easily visible from another seat (or change the correct answer for each version)
   d. Again, minimize “a and b” answer choices. These are hard to scramble for different versions.
7. Arrange for Rapid Return cover sheets for short answer booklets and scantrons.
8. Photocopy the exam using Imageworks. (copy multiple choice onto colored paper and short answer booklets on white. Print double-sided.)
9. Collate exams, stuff scantrons, and count out stacks for rows before the exam.
10. Post seating chart on class web page the night before, and on doors of lecture hall the day of the exam.
Administer the exam:

11. Have students leave everything but pencil and ID in front of lecture hall
12. Announce you will not answer content questions during the exam
13. Use proctor handout at end of this packet to instruct proctors
14. Check student IDs when students hand in exams.

Grade the exam:

15. Have multiple copies of the short answer key ready as soon as the exam ends
16. Plan on attending the grading session for at least 30 minutes to discuss common short answer responses and how to grade.
17. Ask coordinator to give you a copy of the scantron results that indicates the most-missed exam questions
18. Ask graders to give you a summary sheet that estimates the most-missed short answer questions, the most common mistakes, and how to better write the question in the future.
19. Have coordinator send short answer booklets and scantrons to Rapid Return

Release the grades:

20. Graders should type all scores into a spreadsheet and upload to Gradebook as a single score for the exam. Do NOT release the scores yet.
21. After you’ve checked the scantron and short answer reports from the graders, create a full exam answer key and post it on the class web page. Email the students that the key is up.
22. Wait for Rapid Return to upload the pdfs for the short answer booklets and scantrons.
23. After students have seen the key (and perhaps caught more errors) and have access to their pdfs, release the exam scores on Gradebook and email students the regrade procedure.
Exam Proctor Instructions
(To be given to proctors before exam)

Arrive early
1. Arrive at the lecture hall 10 minutes before the exam begins
2. Help seat students, have them move backpacks and notes to front of the room. Keep working area clear.
3. If you are not needed to help students, start counting out exams into small stacks with the right number of exams for row A evens, row B evens, etc.

Pass out exams
1. If the exams are not pre-stacked by row, they will need to be passed out quickly. Some TAs should estimate the right size of stack to hand to the first person in the row. Other proctors should be on the other side of the row to pick up extras or pass out if the stack was short.
2. If you see papers or bags at students seats, make them take stuff up front (or take it yourself).

Seat latecomers
1. If an exam was placed at every seat, escort them to their seat
2. If no exam is at their empty seat, put them in an empty seat (usually front row or extra left-handed seats) with an appropriate exam version. Tell coordinator where the new seat is.

Watch for cheating
1. Watch students from the side and below, so you can see their eyes.

Don’t proctor from the top of the room.
2. Don’t read over the exam while proctoring
3. If you see a student’s eyes wander once, watch longer. If they wander again, tell the faculty member to get them moved. Staring isn’t stopping them.
4. Don’t chat with other proctors

Collect exams
1. Stand back from the front row while accepting exams so lower students can concentrate
2. Take all booklets and scantron. Make sure scantron has ID numbers and bubbles filled in. Tell student to fill these in if they aren’t done.
3. Take student ID. Check:
   a. First four numbers are same as on exam
   b. Name is the same
   c. Picture looks at least somewhat like the student
4. Give the ID back with a “thank you” and a smile.

Sort and pack exams
1. Place multiple choice booklets (if separate) in one box
2. Sort free response booklets by version.
3. If time, sort scantrons by first digit of student ID. If the exam had a version question, the exams do NOT need to be sorted by version.