

Course Content – Tests – Best Practices for Instructors

There are many options and settings to consider when creating a test in Blackboard. This handout provides guidelines that will help instructors understand the test properties and their implications for how the test is delivered to students.

Things to Consider When Creating an Online Test

- **Security** – Consider a number of test design strategies to alleviate the concern of securing tests, such as setting a time limit, using a large question pool along with randomized delivery, and, if possible, updating or changing question pools every semester.
- **Academic Integrity** – Including a statement about academic integrity along with the instructions for a test can help discourage cheating and emphasize the importance of proper student conduct.
- **Stability of internet service** – Encourage students to take tests on a wired internet connection on their laptop or desktop.
- **Face to Face courses** – If instructors are teaching a face to face course and plan to use online tests, class may not be canceled in favor of online testing. Instructors may also want to allow students the option to take tests in class.
- **Importance of Performance- based/Authentic Assessment** – Ensure that the test is designed to be a valid measure of student learning outcomes.
- **High-stakes exams online create pressure for cheating** – Consider a variety of graded activities to assess student performance.

Recommended Settings for Test Options

The test options below are recommended for setting up a test in Blackboard.

Test Availability

- **Make the Link Available** – While creating the test, choose **No** for this option. This will allow instructors to preview the test before students can see it. Once you have previewed the test, be sure to go back and select **Yes** to deploy the test. If the link is not made available, then the test will never be available for students to open regardless of availability dates.
- **Add a New Announcement for this Test** – Select **Yes** to automatically post a new announcement letting students know that the test is available.
- **Force Completion** – We strongly recommend leaving the *Force Completion* box unchecked. If a student inadvertently exits or loses connectivity, s/he cannot return to complete it. Leaving it unchecked allows students to resume the test only if the time limit has not yet expired.
- **Set Timer** – Enable the *Set Timer* option so that students can see how much time they have to take the test, and to record their completion time. The test will not end after the time has expired unless you select **ON** for *Auto-Submit*.
- **Display After/Until** – Use these options to control how long the test is visible to students. However, setting these dates will not make the test available. The *Make the Link Available* option must be set to **Yes**.

Due Date

We recommend setting a *Due Date* here, which students can see in their *Notification* modules and in the Grade Center. Instructors may also want to include the test due date in the *Description* box of the test so that this information is easily visible to students. The due date does not control the availability of the test to students.

Self-Assessment Options

Hide Results for this Test Completely from Instructor and the Grade Center – Unless this is a practice test in which the instructor will not view the grades, ***do not*** select the checkbox for this option. If instructors choose to view the students' test attempts later, changing this option will delete all previous attempts.


Test Feedback

Instructors may wish to delay providing correct answers and feedback until the testing period is over. Manually release this feedback once all students have taken the test.

Test Presentation

One at a Time – Displaying questions one at a time makes it harder for students to select and copy the entire exam.

Before Deploying a Test

- Preview a test as a student by selecting the **Enter Student Preview** button  before making it available to students.
- Make sure that students are aware of the policies regarding technical difficulties during a test and what options are available to them if they experience any problems. Feel free to include a reminder in the *Instructions* field under *Test Options*.