

## Tips for Deploying a Test in Blackboard

Before you begin creating tests on Blackboard, you should be sure to understand the advantages and disadvantages of giving assessments online. There are many advantages to online testing, especially if the purpose is to allow the student to assess their own comfort level with the material.

- Self-assessments can be taken repeatedly until a student is satisfied with their performance.
- Online testing provides immediate feedback so students know which areas require further study.
- Except for essay and short answer questions, online tests are graded automatically.
- Test scores are automatically inserted into the Online Grade Center in Blackboard, which can be downloaded to an Excel spreadsheet.

## Choosing the Best Test Settings

Once you decide to implement online testing, the next step is to create your online test. Blackboard has attempted to make the assessment and testing capabilities of the software more flexible to allow for the variety of ways that instructors use the feature. This section will help you determine which settings will work best for your particular situation.

### Section 1 – Test Information

The first section contains spaces to change the name, description and directions of the test, but the most important aspect of this section is to leave **Open Test in new window** set to **NO**. This will avoid issues with pop-up blockers that many users have installed.

### Section 2 – Test Availability

You can create tests before you make them available to students, but when you are ready to deploy the test, you should select the following:

- **Make the link available:**  
Select **YES** to make a link to this Assessment appear to Students. If this option is set to No, it will not appear to Students. Instructors may make the link available, then use the Display After and Display Until fields to limit the amount of time the link appears.
- **Create an announcement for this Test**  
Select **YES** to create an Announcement about the Test. The Announcement will include the date and state “an Assessment has been made available in [Course area that includes the link to the Assessment]”. This Announcement will appear in the course Announcements.

- **Allow multiple attempts**  
Checking this option will allow the student to take the test multiple times. This is the best option when the test is a self-assessment. If it is a graded test, you will probably want to keep this option off so that they can't restart the test if they don't like their grade. Also note, whenever a multiple attempt is started, the previous attempt is deleted from the Grade Center. Only the most recent attempt is saved
- **Force Completion**  
This setting probably causes the most headaches. When this is checked on, it forces the student to complete the test as soon as it is initially launched. If they close their browser, their computer crashes, their Internet Provider boots them off, etc., then they cannot get back into the test. The Instructor then has to make the decision on whether or not to let them take it again by resetting their attempt. Resetting their attempt clears out all their previous answers and will force the student to start over.
- **Timed Tests**  
To eliminate the Forced Completion problem, you can keep this setting turned off, but then turn on the "Set timer" option. This setting records completion time for this Test. By setting the timer on and setting how long they have to take the test, you can see how long it took the student to complete the test, no matter how many times they may have accidentally closed their browser or been booted off. Since Force Completion is off, they can still get back into the test if they are booted off and the Instructor can see how long they took to complete the test to make sure that they didn't open it on a Friday and then finally submit it on a Sunday

*Note: if a student goes over the time allotted, they do not get an automatic score. Instead, they will get an exclamation point in the Grade Center instead and the Instructor will need to go into the Grade Center and hand grade their test, in case the instructor needs to deduct points for going over the time allotted. Blackboard will not force a submission at the end of a timed test, but will warn the student when they have 1 minute left to submit the test themselves.*

- **Display After**  
Select the date and time when the Test will become available to Students. This field is optional; the Instructor may control availability through the Make the link available option without setting specific dates.
- **Display Until**  
Select the date and time the Test will be made unavailable to Students. This field may be left blank.
- **Password**  
Select this check box to require a password for Students to access this Assessment. If this check box is selected, enter a password in the field below. Passwords cannot be longer than 15 characters. Passwords are case sensitive.

## **Section 3 – Self-Assessment Options**

- **Include this test in Grade Center score calculations**  
Be sure to **select** this option if you want the assessment to be calculated through the Grade Center. If you **DO NOT** select this option, the assessment will not be tracked and scores will be lost
- **Hide the score of this test from the Grade Center**  
Select this option to hide this test score in the Gradebook. If selected, this item behaves as a survey. The display in the Gradebook will read Complete / Incomplete and N/A or zero appears on the grade details pages. If this item is checked, **scores will never be recorded** in the Gradebook, and the instructor cannot see any responses. Students will see scores when the test is submitted but the results are not stored and cannot be seen by the instructor.

## **Section 4 - Test Feedback**

The next section gives you options for selecting the various kinds of feedback students will receive at the end of the test.

- **Score**  
Select this option to present only the final score to Students. This option is recommended for instructors who are concerned about students printing off any test information and sharing it with classmates. It is also ideal if you have selected the “Allow multiple attempts” option.
- **Submitted Answers**  
Select this option to present the students answers.
- **Correct Answers**  
Select this option to present the Student’s with their answer, the correct answer and the final score.
- **Feedback**  
Select this option to present the question feedback to the Student.

## **Section 5 - Test Presentation**

The next section deals with the way the test is presented to students. The selections in this section are critical for the successful submission of an exam.

- **All at Once**  
This option displays all of the questions on the screen at one time. This is the recommended setting for the presentation method. Though some instructors are concerned about students printing the test from the “All at once” screen, this option simplifies the test submission process and greatly reduces the possibility of an error occurring when the test is submitted.

- **One at a Time**  
Display one question at a time. The screen includes navigation tools to move between questions. The Submit button will only appear on the last page of the Test. This is NOT recommended as the likelihood of an error occurring is very high.
- **Prohibit Backtracking**  
Select this option to prevent Students from returning to questions they have already answered. This only applies when Question by Question presentation is used.
- **Randomize Questions**  
This option will randomize all of the questions in the test, so that no two students sitting next to each other will see the same questions in the same order. The power of this tool can be amplified if the questions on the test are randomly selected from a pool. This option is highly recommended for tests administered in a lab environment.

## Embedded Princeton “no print” Suppression Code

If you have embedded a script code into your exam/quiz to suppress the printing of a test, you will first need need to set the Text Box Editor to Unavailable from the Tools editor. Students will need to do this as well prior to taking the exam/quiz.

Go to **My UCD** tab > select **Text Editor Options** > set Availability to **Unavailable** > Submit

Next, copy and paste the following coding into the Instructions box of the test

```
<script language="javascript" type="text/javascript" src="/webapps/assessment/counter_endtime.js"></script>
```

### Reference:

<http://www.ats.neu.edu/bbblog/2007/01/tips-for-deploying-test-in-blackboard.html>

<http://www.soton.ac.uk/iss/computing/elearn/blackboard/deploytest.html>

<http://www.denison.edu/offices/computing/support/training/assessments.pdf>