

## Blackboard Test Creation Tips for Instructors

When creating your online Blackboard tests, please make sure you follow these guidelines and best practices. This guide will help you maintain your test's accessibility and will help you avoid and troubleshoot common problems when taking and administering tests within Blackboard.

### Creating Questions



**Do not copy and paste your test content directly from a Word document into a Blackboard text-editor.**

- You will unknowingly insert Word-specific HTML and conditional scripting statements into your test instructions, questions, and answers. The browser will attempt to execute this code with unpredictable results.



**Do use one of these methods to create your test questions:**

- Either enter your test content directly into the text-editor fields by typing, or copy and paste your content from your Word document to Notepad, and then copy from Notepad back to Blackboard. This ensures that your test content is **plain text** and free of HTML and/or JavaScript code.
- Another option is to convert your Word Document into an importable pool of Blackboard test questions using the [MS Word Test Generator](#).

### Test Length



**Do not create tests designed to last more than one hour.**

- Administering a test that is one hour in length or longer increases the risk of a test timeout or submission error. When a student is answering questions, his or her Web browser will become idle after a period of time.
- Web browsers will time-out resulting in an inactive connection between Blackboard and the computer before your students have finished a lengthy test. This will cause their answers to be lost upon submission and what is known as a "failed attempt."



**Do break up your lengthy tests into shorter, multiple tests.**

- If your tests are longer than 50 questions, or the test is designed to take more than 1 hour to complete, please consider breaking your test into several smaller-length tests, such as Part 1 and Part 2. This helps prevent the browser time out issues experienced with students attempt to complete lengthy tests.

## Test Presentation Settings



**Do not enable the “One at a Time” presentation mode when delivering a lengthy test.**

- When a student is answering questions using this method, his or her Web browser’s connectivity may become idle after a period of time.

6. Test Presentation

Presentation Mode

All at Once  
Present the entire Test on one screen.

One at a Time  
Present one question at a time.

When configuring your Test Options for a long test, **do not** enable “One at a Time” presentation mode.



**Do enable the “All at Once” presentation mode when delivering a long tests (Ex: A 50 question, 1 hour test)**

- For longer tests we recommend displaying questions “All at Once”.
- Additionally, it is highly recommended that your students click the “Save Answer” button periodically when taking tests in Blackboard, such as every 5 questions.

This will keep the connection between Blackboard and the Web browser active, resulting in a lower risk of test submission error or time-out error.

Question 6 50 points Save Answer

What is a neurotransmitter? What function does it serve in the nervous system? Name 3 important ones and what they do in general?

Normal 3 Arial B I U abc x<sub>2</sub> x<sup>2</sup>

Path: body

Save and Submit

Save All Answers Save and Submit

When displaying “All Questions at Once”, students should click the “Save Answer” button *periodically*.



**Do enable either presentation mode for short tests (Ex: A 20 question, 30 minute test).**

- You can use the “All at Once” or “One at a Time” presentation mode for short tests.

## Test Availability Settings



**Do not enable the “Multiple Attempts” and “Force Completion” availability options together when delivering a lengthy test.**

- If a student loses internet connectivity or their Web browser times out due to inactivity while taking a lengthy test, the student will not be able to resume where they left off.

2. Test Availability

Make the Link Available  Yes  No

Add a New Announcement for this Test  Yes  No

Multiple Attempts

- Allow Unlimited Attempts
- Number of Attempts

Force Completion  
Test must be completed the first time it is launched.

Do not enable “Multiple Attempts” and “Force Completion” for long tests together.



**Do allow a single attempt at the test when the “One at a Time” and “Prohibit Backtracking” presentation modes are enabled.**

- By leaving the “Multiple Attempts” checkbox unchecked, your test becomes a “single attempt” test.
- If a student experiences a technical problem, any questions they have answered will be saved. The student will be able to resume the attempt at the test where he or she left off.

2. Test Availability

Make the Link Available  Yes  No

Add a New Announcement for this Test  Yes  No

Multiple Attempts

- Allow Unlimited Attempts
- Number of Attempts

Force Completion  
Test must be completed the first time it is launched.

Under Test Availability settings, leave all the checkboxes unchecked to make your test a “single attempt” test and to allow students to resume a test-in-progress.

## Test Feedback Settings

The Test feedback you choose to display for a test will be available to students for the duration of the course even if you make a test unavailable. Students can view this information through the My Grades tool link in your course and the My Grades link on the Academic Support tab in Blackboard.



**Do not enable these feedback settings *if you do not want students to be able to view the full test:* Submitted Answers, Correct Answers, or Feedback (feedback for correct/incorrect answers).**

- **With these settings enabled, the student will be able to view your test in full for the duration of the course, even if you make the test and My Grades tool link unavailable.**

5. Test Feedback

Select the Type of Feedback Displayed Upon Completion

- Score
- Submitted Answers
- Correct Answers
- Feedback



**Do display just the score that was earned if you do not want the test's questions or answers to be seen by students.**

- When you display just the score that was earned, none of the questions or answers on the test will be displayed.

When you display answers or feedback, you share the full test with students.

## Respondus Lockdown Browser

Respondus Lockdown Browser is a special browser meant for discouraging cheating when taking online tests. When students use Respondus to take a Blackboard test, they are unable to print, copy, go to another Website URL, access software applications, or close the test until it is submitted for grading. Tests created for use with Respondus Lockdown Browser, as well as any test feedback you enable, cannot be accessed with standard browsers such as Internet Explorer, Firefox or Safari.



**Do follow the previously mentioned tips to create a Blackboard test that can be delivered through Respondus Lockdown Browser.**

- This means avoiding copying and pasting text directly from Word into Blackboard text-editors and being aware of test length, test presentation settings, test availability settings, and your test's feedback settings.



**Do not give your test a password on the test's Test Options page. Respondus will be using this area as a part of its protections.**

- When you enable Respondus, it enters its own behind-the-scenes password on this page. Do not remove or modify it. You do not have to tell students about it.
- If you want to password protect your Respondus protected test, add your password on the same page where you enable Respondus for the test (Course Tools → Respondus LockDown Browser → Settings).

Respondus Lockdown Browser adds its own password (see above image) to your Test Options which it uses to perform its security functions.



**Do enable Respondus on tests you want to protect by following these instructions:**

1. First, deploy a test to a content area within your course (ie. Tests).
2. Next, scroll down to your course Control Panel. Click *Course Tools*, then select *Respondus Lockdown Browser*.
3. On the Respondus Lockdown Browser page, a list of your deployed tests will appear. Tests that are not protected by Respondus will be labeled with “Not Required”; Tests that are protected will be identified with a green “Required” label.

To enable Respondus for a test, click the *Settings* button next to the name of the deployed test you want to protect.

**Respondus LockDown Browser Dashboard**

	LockDown Browser
<input type="checkbox"/> Exam 1	Not Required
<input type="checkbox"/> Simple Test (1)	Not Required
<input type="checkbox"/> SbS Book 2B End of Book Test -	Not Required

Click and select **MODIFY SETTINGS**

4. Settings to enable Respondus will appear. Select “Require Respondus Lockdown Browser for this test”.

**Respondus LockDown Browser Dashboard**

	LockDown Browser
<input type="checkbox"/> Exam 1	Not Required

Click “Require”

**LockDown Browser Settings**

Don't require Respondus LockDown Browser for this exam

Require Respondus LockDown Browser for this exam

**Password Settings**

Password to access exam (optional)

Password to close browser and exit exam early (optional)

Cancel Save and Close

Add your own test access password here if desired.

If you would like to password protect this test, you can set up your test's password on this page, *NOT in the test's Test Options*. If you choose to set up a password, Respondus will prompt students to enter this instructor-provided password before allowing them to proceed with the test.

5. Click Submit to complete to apply your settings.



**Do not modify these settings in your test's Test Options once you have enabled Respondus protection for it: Test Name, Open Test in New Window, Require Password, Password.**

- If these settings have been modified, an error in the test's Respondus settings will occur, breaking your test's protection.
- You will have to re-enable Respondus for the test to correct the settings using the steps mentioned previously.



**Do refer students to download Respondus Lockdown Browser on their computers if they intend to take a Respondus protected test off-campus. Otherwise, Respondus is installed on computers in any of the Academic Resource Center labs for secure test taking.**

- Respondus can be downloaded from this link:  
<http://www.respondus.com/lockdown/information.pl?ID=992336552>
- Instructions for installing and taking tests with Respondus can be found here:  
[http://ecampus.matc.edu/student\\_support/RespondusLockdownBrowserLoginPics.asp](http://ecampus.matc.edu/student_support/RespondusLockdownBrowserLoginPics.asp)



**Do refer students to the Student Support page's Respondus Troubleshooting guide if they experience problems accessing a Respondus test.**

- Encourage students to review the [Respondus Trouble-Shooting Tips Guide](#).
- Because Respondus Lockdown Browser refers to browser settings in a computer's local installation of Internet Explorer, students should make sure that they have Internet Explorer installed, that it has: a recent installation of Java enabled, Cookies are enabled, and that pop-up blocker disabled or set to allow pop-ups from Blackboard. An easy way to determine Internet Explorer's browser settings is to use our [Browser Tester](#).

- Before taking a Respondus test, the student should make sure any programs running in the background on the computer are turned off. This may include: firewall, spyware, antivirus, instant messengers, or other software applications.
- An easy way to make sure no other programs are running on a PC is to open Task Manager by pressing Ctrl + Alt + Del and selecting Task Manager/View Tasks. In the Task Manager, select each remaining program that is open and click the *End Task* button to close them. When the task manager is empty, no programs are open and running.

## Test Deployment



**Do not forget to preview a test before making it available to students.**

- To help detect and prevent problems with taking Blackboard tests, it is highly recommended that you preview your tests before making them available to students.
- Even better, try taking your tests as a student with a test student account.



**Do remember to make your test available when you want students to be able to take a test.**

- If your test is deployed, but not yet available to students, you can update your test's availability on your test's Test Options page.

## General Test Tips



**Do encourage students to use a computer and Web browser that is supported and prepared for Blackboard before taking a regular Blackboard test.**

- If students are going to use their own computers to take Blackboard tests, they should review the Minimum Computer Requirements Guide and Browser Guide to make sure they are using a compatible computer setup.
- To help identify whether a computer is prepared for use with Blackboard, we recommend visiting Teaching and Learning Technology's [Browser Test](#) page.

## Taking Tips



**Do inform students of what test format you will be using so that they can better avoid technical difficulties when taking the test.**

- If you are going to use any of the following test formats, tell students how they work so they know how to proceed with the test...
  - **Force Completion** – Once a student begins taking a test, the student must complete the test then and there. As soon as the student leaves the test, whether or not test was submitted, the attempt will be recorded in the Grade book as complete. If a student leaves the test without completing it, the student will not be able to come back and finish it. If this happens, the student should contact their instructor.
  - **Allow Multiple Attempts** – Students are permitted to take the test more than once, usually so that they can meet a minimum score. Students should not go back into the test unless they truly want or need to take it again.
  - **Timed Assessment** – The instructor has set a time limit. The elapsed time will appear at the bottom of the browser window. Students will you will receive a 1-minute warning when the time is up. The timer does not kick a student out of a test when time is up, but marks the test with a grading icon so that instructors can decide how to handle the student’s test. Tests completed past the time allotted are required to be manually graded by the instructor in Blackboard. This is because Blackboard assumes that the instructor will take away points for being over the time limit. The amount of time it took the student to complete the test is displayed with their test attempt.
  - **Password Protected** – The instructor has safeguarded the test with a password, which should be provided to students when it is time to take the test.
  - **All at Once** – All of the questions appear on one Web page. Students should periodically click a “Save Answer” button as they progress through the test. Doing so should help protect the student’s work in case of technical difficulties.
  - **One at a Time** – Questions appear one by one as students click a “Save and Next” button.




**Do tell students to wait for test questions to load when taking a Blackboard test that displays all questions at once.**

- Depending on the size of the exam and Internet connectivity, this may take a few moments. Please be patient.





**Do tell students to contact you in the event they have a technical difficulty or failed attempt.**

- A failed attempt icon  labeled as “in progress” will appear in the Grade Center when a student has attempted taking a test but has run into a technical problem.
- Only an instructor can clear a failed attempt.



**Do not do the following things which can cause technical difficulties when taking Blackboard tests.**

- Do not use the Browser’s Back button.
- Do not exit a quiz without submitting or saving.
- Do not resize your browser window.
- Do not have instant messaging or other chat tools on.
- Do not have e-mail notification or Call Waiting on.
- Do not leave the browser window open and idle for an extended period of time.
- Do not use the scroll wheel on your mouse to move up or down the page. Doing so might change your answers! Instead, use the scroll bar on the webpage or the up and down arrows on the keyboard.
- Do not click the Submit button more than once to submit your test.