Discouraging Cheating in Online Tests

In online courses, where a student completes a test off-campus without instructor supervision, online tests must be considered to be open-book tests because students often have access to a wide variety of information resources.

Although instructors may enable Respondus Lockdown Browser protections on a test in Blackboard to prevent printing or use of other applications during a test session, this software is meant for proctored classroom environments only!

Unsupervised test sessions in Respondus Lockdown Browser are not effective against cheating because students could have access to mobile devices to look up answers or take pictures of the test as displayed on the screen.

Instead of using Respondus, faculty concerned about cheating in online testing are encouraged to use these more effective countermeasures in their test design:

- Develop tests using large question pools containing at least 100 questions and random blocks. This ensures that no two students have the same questions or in the same order.
- Update your tests or question pools each time you teach the course so that tests are different each time. This is an important countermeasure to students sharing test information recalled from memory with new students.
- To reduce pressure to cheat, consider making tests worth a lower value in the course or allow multiple attempts.
- Set a test’s availability for an entire week but use Timer and Auto-Submit to enforce a tight time-frame for completing a test once it is opened. Depending on question complexity, a good rule of thumb for estimating time for completion is 1 minute per question. Once the test session reaches its end, the student’s test attempt will automatically submit itself. Advise students of the time restraints so that they may plan accordingly!
- Schedule when answer feedback becomes available to students through Test Options. The feedback options that you choose to display for a test will be available to students for the duration of the course through the My Grades tool. If you do not want students to see test questions or answers in their feedback, only select Score per Question.

To review how to build a test in Blackboard, please watch the videos in this training playlist on YouTube: https://youtu.be/ef08mqN4rIY?list=PLVmjihKPCtExtRfWnIo0cjM4-f_erURSo

References