Best Practices and Test Options for Creating Online Assessments

To effectively deploy a Blackboard test in a course, instructors must consider the necessary availability and feedback options. These Test options are crucial in ensuring successful implementation of an online assessment. As an instructor, it is important to understand which settings enhance or interfere with your test delivery. The following document will present the best practices and recommendations for creating successful online assessments.

How to Effectively Deploy an Online Assessment

Once a test has been developed the next step is to ensure the correct deployment settings have been chosen. To make changes to the test options, the instructor must click the chevron to the right of the test and access its contextual menu. Then click Edit the Test Options to begin selecting the settings that are necessary for test deployment. When selecting test deployment settings, many options are available that include:

Make the Link Available

Making the link available helps ensure that students are able to view the test when they login to the course to take the assessment. To make the assessment available, it is best to change this setting to Yes and use the Display After and Display Until setting. This creates a limited timeframe for students to access the assessment.

Add a New Announcement for this Test/Survey

Adding a new announcement for a test or survey is an optional feature that will notify students when an assessment is posted in Blackboard. When selecting this option, an automated notification is sent to the students notifying them that an assessment has been made available in the course. If an announcement was previously posted using this feature, and edits have been made, the date and time of the most recent announcement appears.

Multiple Attempts

The Multiple Attempts option allow students to take a test or survey multiple times. The status of multiple attempts appears to students at the top of the test or survey. By selecting the Allow Unlimited Attempts option, students are able to take the assessment an unlimited amount of times. With multiple attempts for a test, the instructor can select the score of which attempt they want to use in the Grade Center from the score attempts drop-down list.

In traditional testing, it is recommended to only use single-attempt assessments to ensure test security. For students that need to retake an assessment or need an additional attempt, we recommend clearing the original attempt or adding an additional attempt for the individual user from the options available in the Grade Center. This ensures that only one attempt is submitted for each user and there is a clear Grade History.
**Force Completion**

By selecting *Force Completion*, students must complete the test or survey once the assessment has been activated. This feature only allows students to have access during that test session and once students leave the exam they are unable to return. The Save function is available for students to save the questions as they work through them, but they may not exit and reenter the test or survey once the test has been started. In the instructions, *Force Completion* is noted and explained to students. If you do not enable *Force Completion*, students may save their progress, navigate away from the assessment, and return to complete the test or survey.

It is recommended to leave this setting disabled. It is a college wide standard to not use Force Completion as it is detrimental to test takers who are forced out of the test for technical difficulties. If students accidentally close their browsers, leave the test or survey page, or lose power or their internet connections, they cannot continue the exam until the instructor clears their attempt or lets them retake the exam. As an alternative, we recommend using the *Set Timer* option to limit the student’s ability to exit the test and search for resources.

**Set Timer**

The *Set Timer* option is a great alternative to using *Force Completion*. This feature allows a student to reenter and finish an exam if they lose connectivity, as long as they are within the time allotted. If a student saves and exits the test, the timer continues until they have completed the exam. If you enabled the *Forced Completion* option instead of the *Set Timer* option, the students will be unable to access the exam if they lose connectivity during the assessment and will require the instructor to clear their attempt to reenter the exam.

If you set the timer and turn on *Auto-Submit*, the assessment will automatically save and submit when time expires. If *Auto-Submit* is not selected, students have the option to continue after time expires and their submission will be flagged as submitted after the time has expired. Instructors then have the option to adjust the grade based on the time the students took to complete the exam. If you choose not to select Auto Submit, it is recommended to inform students of how to proceed once time has expired.

**Display After or Display Until**

The *Display After* and *Display Until* feature allows you to select the date and time that the test or survey will be available to the students. If you choose not to select date and time parameters for your assessment, the test or survey will remain open to the students.

**Password**

Through the use of a *Password* you can control who has access to your test or survey. Students will not be able to access the exam until they enter the designated password. Commonly this feature is used when administering an exam in a live classroom to ensure attendance and test security. Passwords have a limit of 15 characters and are case sensitive.
**Test Availability Exceptions**

For existing availability settings, you can make exceptions for individual students or groups. To provide an accommodation to a student who is disabled, or for technology and language differences, you can create the following exceptions: *Number of Attempts; Timer; Availability.*

**Due Date**

If you are using the Bb Grade Center, set a *Due Date* to easily include that test or survey in a grading period and on the Bb Calendar feature. To prevent late submissions, you can select the check box for *Do not allow students to start the Test/Survey if the due date has passed.* Students will receive a message after the due date notifying them that they may no longer complete the test or survey.

When allowing late submissions, they are clearly marked on the following pages:

- *Needs Grading*
- *View All Attempts*
- *Review Test Submission*
- *Grade Details*

**Test Presentations**

When presenting questions in tests and surveys, there are many options to consider in an effort to protect the student’s ability to easily take the assessment and in protecting the integrity of your exam. The options for presenting questions include:

- **All at Once**
  - *All at Once* presents the entire assessment on one screen. Students are able to scroll through all the questions and can navigate through the assessment question by question. When enabled, you may not choose *Prohibit Backtracking.*

- **One at a Time**
  - *One at a Time* allows students to easily navigate between pages question by question. The *Submit* function appears at the end of the test or survey so that students can backtrack and move freely between questions before submitting their final attempt. With this option, instructors may also *Prohibit Backtracking* and *Randomize Questions* in an effort to protect test security.

- **Prohibit Backtracking**
  - To prevent students from revisiting questions they have already submitted, instructors can activate *Prohibit Backtracking.* This option will present questions one at a time to the students and once they have submitted a response they can proceed to the next question. When selecting this option, it also helps instructors secure the integrity of the assessment. However, students are not able to review their work before submission.

- **Randomize Questions**
  - Randomizing Questions helps to add another security level to testing. When selecting *Randomize Questions,* questions are presented in random order each time the test is taken by the students. If you create an assessment that references or builds upon other questions in the test or survey, *Randomize Questions* will compromise the question numbering of the assessment.