

Academic Technologies: Blackboard 7.3

Recommendations for Blackboard's Assessment Feature

Ohio University Office of Information Technology recognizes the following best practices to minimize the likelihood of issues occurring when creating or taking assessments in Blackboard 7.3.

Assessment Settings (Faculty):

- The Force Completion option under **Test Availability** should not be checked. When the Force Completion option is checked, the student must complete the assessment the first time it is launched. If a student accidentally exits or is timed out of the assessment, the student will not be able to complete the exam.
- If you want to place a date restraint on your exam, use the Display After and Display Until option under **Test Availability**.
- “Randomize Questions” option under Test Presentation should not be selected.
- “Open Test in new window” option under Test Information should be set to No.
- Do **NOT** use the “Hide from Gradebook” option under Self-assessment Options. It **CANNOT** be reversed. With this setting enabled, you will see only a check mark in your gradebook, and your students will see only a check mark in their My Grades area. You **CANNOT** later change this option to see grades in the gradebook. An attempt to change this option later – by un-checking the “Hide from Gradebook” option - will cause this warning to display:

“Changing this option will remove existing attempts....”

If you proceed with changing this option by clicking an OK button, the assessment item will remain in the gradebook, but the students’ attempts will be **deleted and cannot be recovered**.

Additional Recommendations (Faculty):

- No more than ten students at a time should take the exam (i.e., in a computer lab setting).
- A “practice” assessment should be given to students in the course prior to an actual assessment to help students learn how to interact with assessments in Blackboard. This will help ensure that the students will not experience issues related to individual computer settings, spyware, or problems with an Internet Service Provider (ISP) on the computers the students will use.
- When using essay questions, the students should write their essays in a word processing program - saving their work frequently – and then copy and paste the essay into Blackboard. If problems occur, the students’ work may not be entirely lost.

Computer Recommendations (Faculty and Students):

- Students should be advised to disable pop-up blockers, which may prevent an assessment from opening. Turn off the pop-up blockers by setting options similar to the following, which vary according to the browser being used:
 - Select “Turn Off Pop-up Blocker”
 - Remove check mark from “Block Pop-up windows”As an **alternative**, you can configure the Pop-up blocker to “Allow Pop-ups from this site:” and specify <http://bb7pilot.ohio.edu/>
- Students should **NOT** take assessments via a slow dial-up modem, a wireless network, or any unreliable connection method. If students choose to use a dial-up connection, the students should be sure to disable call waiting before beginning the assessment. The students should also insist that no one in the home picks up a telephone while the students are taking the assessment, which can cause disconnection. Students should be responsible and accountable for the reliability and performance of their own personal computing environments.
- Students’ computers should be free of viruses, adware/spyware, etc., which may inhibit the browser/computer from completing a test. Malware may take over the browser and navigate students to a different website.

Taking an Assessment (Students):

- Students should periodically click **Save** during the assessment. The advantage of saving individual questions is the students’ responses will be retained even if the browser is accidentally closed. Another advantage of clicking **Save** is that this action refreshes the browser so that it does not time out. The students must also click **Save** at the bottom of the assessment before clicking **Submit**.
- Students should **NOT** use any of the browser tools, such as; Back, Forward, Refresh, or Home. Students also should **NOT** resize a browser window while taking an assessment.
- Upon finishing an assessment students click the **Submit** button **ONLY ONCE**. If the Internet connection is slow, students may think the assessment is not being sent. Wait at least five minutes for a confirmation that the assessment was successfully submitted. Once the students receive confirmation that the assessment was successfully submitted, the students should click **OK**. The students’ **Review Assessment** screen will then be displayed for the assessment.