



Student Tips for Successful Test Taking in Blackboard

Taking Your Test in Blackboard

To minimize technology problems that can occur while testing, please carefully read this information prior to beginning your test.

Before the Test:

- **Use a wired high speed connection if possible.** If using wireless, make sure you have a good wireless connection. Avoid using a dial-up connection if at all possible.
 - **Note for dial-up users:** Some Internet Service Providers (ISP) will kick you off the network for inactivity. Once you are logged into Blackboard, your ISP will not recognize further activity, and it may appear that you are inactive. You should check your settings to make sure your time-out settings are set to the maximum allowed time. If you use a dial-up modem to connect to the Internet, turn off call waiting. If you receive a phone call and call waiting is on, Blackboard will assume that you have completed the quiz and erase any answers you have entered.
- **Log out and log back into Blackboard just before taking the test** if you were already in Blackboard and have been in any other courses since it was opened. If taking the test later in the day reboot your computer if you have not done so within the last couple of hours. This will free memory resources from applications they have opened that may be running in the background. Only have one Blackboard session running at a time.
- **Close ALL applications except Blackboard.** This includes IM tools, email, and pop-up blockers. Simply closing an IM browser window does not stop the software. Right click on its icon in the Taskbar and Exit or Sign Out.
- **Turn off pop-up blockers.** If you don't disable your popup blocker, the test may not be able to fully display.
- **Do not wait until the last minute to take the quiz.** If something goes wrong there won't be enough time to resolve the issue.
- If at any time you get a pop-up Security Warning about the hidden_webeq_applet, you should select the "Always trust content from this publisher" checkbox and click **Run**. If you cancel this, you run the risk of the test locking up or kicking you out.
- **Minimize interruptions** – Turn off your phone, any browser Pop-Up Blockers, Instant Messaging, e-mail notification or other programs that may distract you from the test.

Read the instructions for the test carefully:

Each Blackboard test may be set up differently by your instructors. The options for each test will be listed at the top in the Instructions area. It is very important that you read your instructor's directions carefully:

- **Some tests may be taken more than once**, while others can only be taken once. Your instructor will inform you if the test can be taken more than once.
- **Some tests may require that they be completed in one sitting** (force completion), while some tests may allow you to complete one section, and then return to finish additional sections.
- **Some tests may be timed**. Your instructor will tell you if the test is timed and the time allotted. While Blackboard will not stop the test after the allotted time has elapsed, it will record the time spent on the test. Your instructor may penalize you if more time was taken than allotted for the test.
- **Some tests are all-at-once assessments**, allowing you access to the entire test and move freely item to item (permits backtracking). Some tests are one-at-a-time assessments, showing only one question at a time, and you may not return to a previous question.

Launching the Test:

- **Maximize the browser window before starting the test.** Minimizing during the test can prevent submission of the test.
- **Do NOT double click the link to the test.** Blackboard reads the first click as an attempt to take the test and the second click as a second attempt, and will therefore block access. You may receive a message that says you have completed the test or submission is in process. If this occurs the instructor may need to reset your attempt.

During the Test:

- **Do not resize (minimize) the browser window** during the test.
- **Never click the Back button** on the browser. This will take you out of the test and prevent Blackboard the ability to track selected answers.
- **Avoid using scroll button** on a mouse or keyboard.
- **Do not Alt+Tab out of the test.** Leaving the test window can lock you out of the test.
- Save the test periodically.
- **Do not open other browser windows while taking a Blackboard test.** Leaving the test window can lock you out of the test.
- **Avoid using the navigation buttons on the left side menu** once the test displays on your screen.
- **Avoid clicking outside the test area** (for example, on the "Announcement" button). This will submit the test before you have finished.
- **Do not take a quiz with other applications running in the background**, like watching movies, listening to music, sending e-mail or running instant messaging.
- For tests that present one question at a time, students should click the **Next Page** arrow rather than hit **Enter** on the keyboard.

- **Do not start a quiz and then walk away for several hours.** Blackboard has a timeout for security purposes and will end your session if it's idle for three hours.
- **Save your work often during the test using the Save button.** While taking an online test it is a good idea to save your work periodically. To save your test answers, you can either save each question individually by clicking on **Save** on the right, or by scrolling to the bottom right of the screen and clicking on the **Save** button after every 4-5 questions.
- **Make sure your computer is free of viruses and/or spyware** by running anti-virus & anti-spyware software regularly.

Completing the Test:

- **Review all of your answers before submitting the test.** Make sure you have not accidentally changed your response to a question or made a typographical mistake, then save your work one final time.
- Remember to click **Save and Submit** when done! The **Save All Answers** button will save an interim version of your work, but only **Save and Submit** will allow your work to be graded. **Don't click Save and Submit more than once!** For example, when beginning a password-protected test that does not allow multiple attempts, clicking **Save and Submit** more than once will lock the user out of the assessment. These errors also can occur if the screen refresh function takes longer than expected and the user clicks **Save and Submit** again, in an effort to speed up Blackboard.

When Problems Occur:

Technology is not problem-free, and it's possible that at some point in your university career you will run into a problem during a test, despite following all of the instructions listed above. If this happens:

- **Don't touch anything.** Waiting a few minutes to see if the issue resolves by itself is generally a safe first step. For example, if there is a temporary problem with the Blackboard server, the restart process takes about two minutes. If you wait, the test will resume at the point where it left off; however, if you press buttons or attempt to reload the test page, you will get a "Page Not Found" error and (depending on the test settings) may lose all of your test answers as well as being blocked from re-accessing the test.
- **Call the ITS Help Desk at 660-785-4544.** ITS Help Desk staff can let you know if there are system-wide issues affecting Blackboard, attempt to fix your problem, and advise you how to proceed.
- **Take a screenshot.** If the problem occurs after office hours, take a screenshot of your test window and any error messages displayed. If your test answers are still visible, make certain that you get all of your answers in a screenshot. As well as helping to identify the problem, these screenshots will also document your work on the test to the point when the problem occurred.
- **Contact your instructor** It's best to open a line of communication with your instructor as soon as testing problems occur. In a case where test responses have been lost or you are unable to re-access a test, the decision about how to proceed is ultimately up to the instructor. Most faculty will include general information about their course policies related to online testing in the class syllabus.