

Blackboard tests are a great way to administer a test but there are some test options and external technologies that can cause your test to go badly. This guide is designed to assist you in avoiding Blackboard test issues.

Advice for Faculty on Blackboard Tests

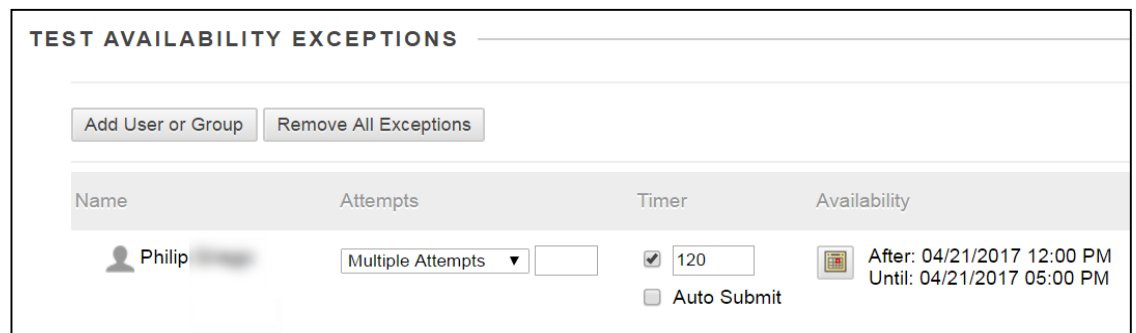
Do Not Check “Force Completion”

When setting test options, do not check “Force Completion”. *Force Completion* is intended to prevent cheating by automatically submitting the test should a student navigate away from a test; however, it has its downside too. For example, should a student’s internet connection be interrupted or they accidentally close their browser, their incomplete test will automatically be submitted.



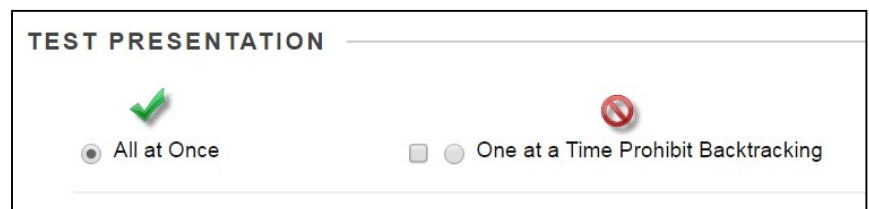
Do Know how to allow a Student Back into a Test that has Locked them Out

Should technical issues prevent a student from taking a test, the instructor can allow them to get back into a by making a “*Test Availability Exception*”. This is performed under “**Edit Test Options**”. The instructor will need to add the user as an exception, specify “multiple attempts”, and set a time and date range the test is available for them.



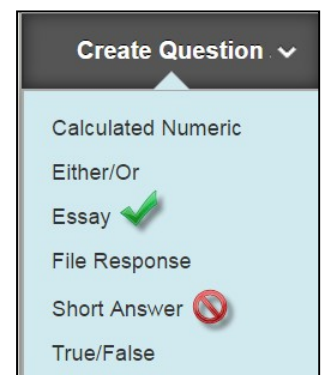
Do Check “All At Once”

When setting test options, do check “*All at Once*”. Checking “*One at a Time Prohibit Backtracking*” has caused issues in the past. For example, a student loses their connection or submits the question accidentally.



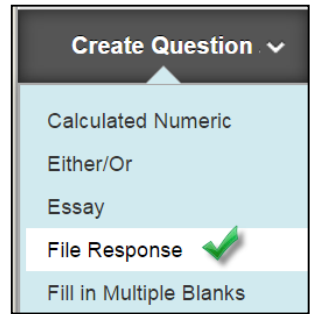
Do Not Use “Short Answer” Questions (Use Essay Instead)

When creating your test, use “*Essay*” type questions instead of “*Short Answer*”. In early 2017, issues with short answer questions began to appear after a change in Chrome.



Place “File Response” Questions at the End of the Test

If you want students to attach a file (e.g., a dataset), use the “File Response” question type and make it the very last question in the exam. Having the *File Response* question as the last question will ensure that all the other responses are saved as the student navigates the test. Also, be sure to tell your students to close the file before they submit it. Submitting an open file can sometimes not submit at all.



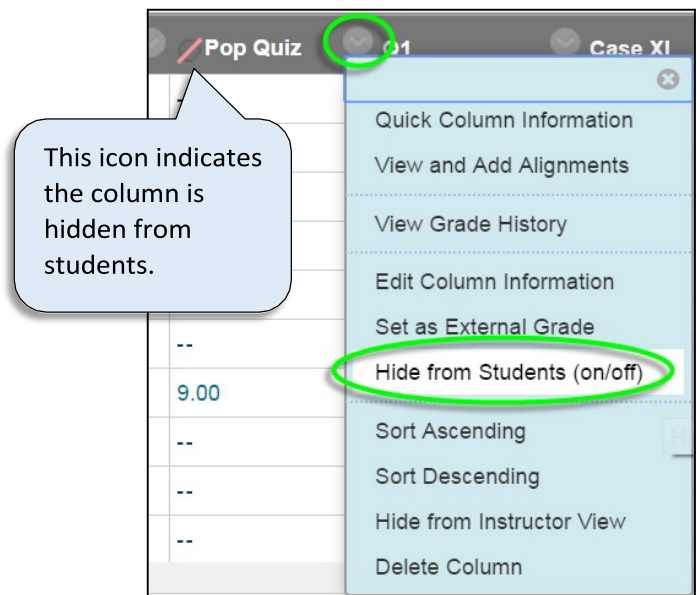
Avoid Wireless Overload in a Classroom – Airplane Mode for unused Devices

Be aware that BCM wireless may become overloaded when giving an exam in a classroom. If this occurs, asking students to put mobile devices they are not currently using into airplane mode might resolve the issue.



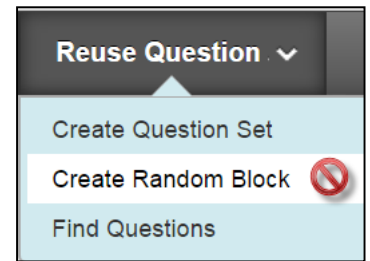
Do Know how to Hide Grades from Students

When tests contain questions that are self-grading (multiple choice, true/false, etc.), a student can view their score in the “My Grades” area right away. If you would like to prevent students from seeing their own scores, you should hide the test column from them in the Grade Center using “**Hide from Students (on/off)**”. The Grade Center is under “Control Panel”.

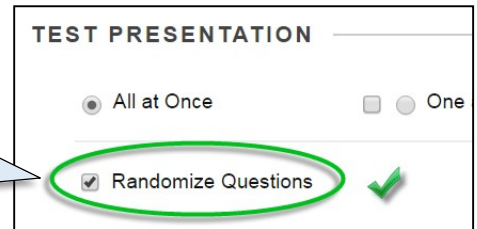


If using “Item Analysis” then Do Not use Block Randomization

If you use *Item Analysis* to analyze your tests results, then do not design your tests using *Block Randomization*. Block Randomization will prevent Item Analysis from gathering meaningful data

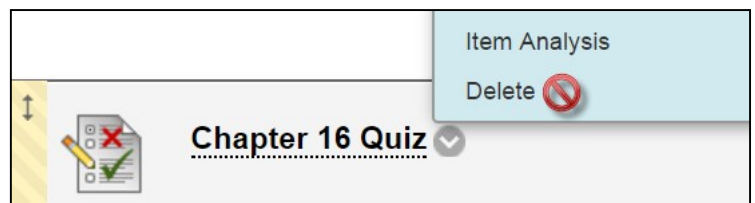


Note that “Randomize Questions” (within *Test Options*) is okay to use with Item Analysis.



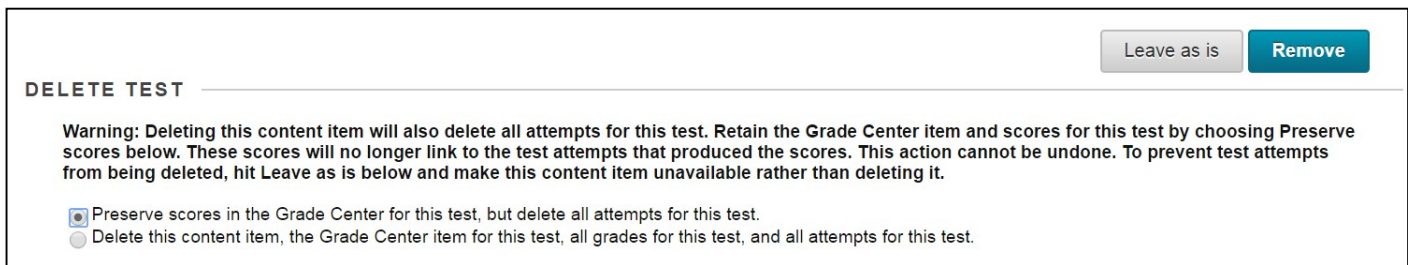
Do Not Delete Tests

When you delete a test, you risk deleting student responses to the test and their scores in the Grade Center. Instead, you can always hide the test icon from students, hide the test results column in the Grade Center, and remove test results from any calculated total columns in the Grade Center.



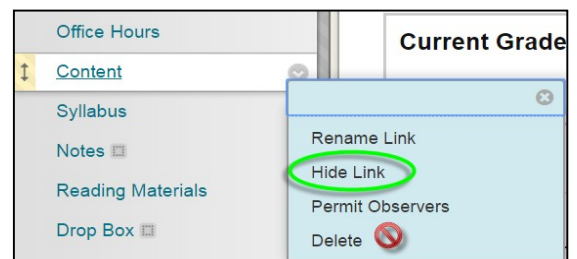
When deleting, Blackboard does give you the option of preserving the scores in the Grade Center BUT; the student’s responses are still removed. This means that if a student has an issue about one of their responses you cannot pull up their test to see how they responded; only total points awarded is retained. Further, if your test contains questions that are not auto-graded (e.g. essay questions), and you have not graded them yet, the student’s response to the essay is deleted.

If you really feel the need to delete a test then we strongly urge you to contact Blackboard Support before doing so. They are at (713) 798-7308.



Do Not Delete Left Menu Choices

Deleting a choice on the left menu removes any content it contains. Use “Hide Link” instead.

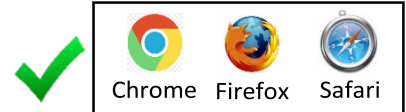


Advice for Students Taking a Blackboard Test

This section contains advice for students when taking a Blackboard test.

Use Chrome, Firefox or Safari – Never Internet Explorer

Use Chrome, Firefox, or Safari when taking a Blackboard test. Issues have been reported with other browsers and Blackboard tests.



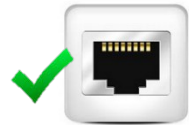
Type Long Essay Responses in a Word Processor First

It would be unfortunate if you lost your internet connection in the middle of typing the response to a long essay question. We recommend typing your response in a word processor and then pasting your test into the Blackboard essay box.



If Possible, use a Wired Connection over a Wireless Connection

If possible, use a wired connection over a wireless connection. Wireless connections can sometimes lose their signal making getting back into a test problematic.



Save as You Go

When you click a choice in the next question, Blackboard will sometimes save the answer above it for you but to be on the safe side, click “Save Answer” after each question.



Never Click these Buttons when Taking a Test

Never perform any of the actions below when taking a test. This includes clicking the buttons or their keyboard equivalents if applicable. They can cause any number of issues.



Don't Press
Refresh



Don't Press
Backspace



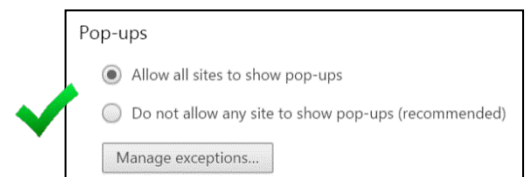
Don't Press
Enter/Return



Don't
Double Click

Ideally, Turn off Pop-up Blockers

Pop-up blockers can cause issues on tests. Either turn them off or add Blackboard as a trusted site.



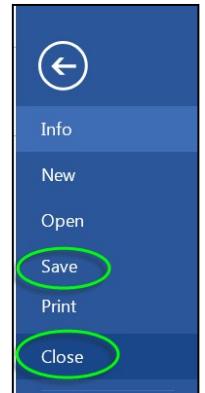
Avoid Timeouts by Clicking “Save Answer” Periodically

Clicking answer choices and hitting “Save” is registered as activity on most browsers but typing in an essay test box is not. Therefore, we suggest you click “Save Answer” periodically to avoid Blackboard timing you out.



Close Files before Submitting Them

For tests that require you to submit a file, be sure to save and close the file prior to submitting it. When you submit an open file it will appear to be accepted by Blackboard but submitting an open file can cause a blank file to be submitted or none at all.



Be Sure to Submit Your Test when Complete

At the end of the exam, be sure to click “*Save and Submit*” to send the completed exam to the instructor. And don’t double click it!



Copy Exam Confirmation

At the end of the exam, you might want to take a screen shot of the confirmation just in case anything goes wrong.

