



### Test Setting Tips

Use these recommended settings to help eliminate potential problems with Tests in a Blackboard course. To change or modify Test settings, go to the Content Area where you deployed a Test (e.g. Lessons). Click the double-chevron to the right of the Test name, and choose *Edit the Test Options*.

1. **Do not set a Test to open in a new window:** Make sure you set this option to *No*. If your student has their browser set to block pop-up windows, setting this to *Yes* could prevent the Test from launching in their browser because the new window will be blocked.
2. **Determine if you want to allow multiple attempts:** Checking this option will allow the student to take the Test multiple times. This is the best option when the Test is a self-assessment. If it is a graded Test, you will probably want to leave this option off to prevent students from restarting a Test if they do not like their grade. Note that you have the option in the Grade Center to display either the most recent attempt's grade OR the highest grade.
3. **Do not set the Test for Force Completion:** This setting probably causes the most headaches. When this is enabled, it forces the student to complete the Test the first time it is launched. If the student closes their browser, or if their computer crashes, or if their Internet connection cuts out, they will not be able to re-enter the Test. The instructor then has to make the decision on whether to let the student take it again by resetting their attempt. Resetting their attempt clears out all their previous answers and will force the student to start over.
  - a. As an alternative, set a Timer on the exam by turning on the "Set timer" option. By setting a timer, you can see how long it took the student to complete the Test, no matter how many times they may have accidentally closed the browser or been booted off. When Force Completion is off, a student can re-enter a Test if they experience a disconnection. However, the timer will continue to run while the student is not in the exam. When they log back in, the timer displays the time since the start of the exam, including time spent outside the exam.
  - b. If a student goes over the time allotted, or if you have an Access student who needs more time, they will not get an automatic score. Instead, an exclamation point will appear in the Grade Center. You will then need to manually grade their Test, in case you need to deduct points for going over the time allotted. Blackboard will still grade the test questions (with the exception of Essay and Short Answer), but you will have to review and approve the points for those questions. Blackboard will not force a submission at the end of a timed Test, but will warn the student when they have 1 minute left to submit the Test themselves.



4. **Presentation Mode for Questions: All at Once VS. One at a Time:** The recommended setting for the presentation method is *All at Once*, which displays all the questions on a single screen. Though some instructors are concerned about students printing the Test from the “All at Once” screen, this option simplifies the Test submission process and greatly reduces the possibility of an error occurring when the Test is submitted. It also reduces server load and eases transitions.
  - a. The "One at a Time" setting is more prone to errors, since it involves more browser interaction between questions. If you must use One at a Time, you should avoid using the "Prohibit Backtracking" option. A student may try and get around the backtracking rule by using the Back button in their browser and it is very important that the Back button is never used during a Test. It can cause problems with the Test and the database storing the answers, possibly booting the student from the Test or corrupting their answers.
5. **Do Set Date and Time Restrictions:** This helps to ensure students are taking the assessment only during the time allotted.
6. **Use a Password when needed:** To set a password for the Test, you must select the checkbox and enter a password in the text field. The password field is case-sensitive, so users will have to enter the password exactly as it is shown in this box. The password option is an excellent way to regulate access to the Test. For example, if one student missed a Test for a legitimate reason, you could make the Test available again with a password. Only students with the password will be able to access and complete the Test.
7. **Randomizing Questions:** Choose randomize question in Test Options OR in Test Manager, but not in both. Selecting Randomize in both places often locks students out of assessments. If you are using a random block from a pool of questions, you do not need to check the “Randomize Questions” check box.
8. **Providing Feedback:** Test Feedback is visible immediately after the Test is submitted. If you would like to only show the student their score during the time period the Test is available, but then give them more detailed results once everybody has completed the Test, you can go back to the Test options and change the Test Feedback from the old setting to the new setting. When the student views their grades via Tools > My Grades, they will see the Test results based on the current Test Feedback setting. Test Feedback is available even if the Test link is not.
9. **Avoid any and all configuration changes:** To avoid loss of grades, do not change the assessment after it has been released to students (i.e. changing point values, changing names of exams, changing column information in the grade center).



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10. **Consider all exams open book:** Unless proctored, instructors should view all exams as open book. Using timed exams can help to reduce and eliminate the amount of time students can spend searching the web.
11. **Create a practice exam at the beginning of the term:** Create a simple practice assessment containing a question format you will use throughout the term. Allow your students to take this exam multiple times. This should help them understand and overcome any technical problems and questions before taking a “real” exam. Want to kill two birds with one stone? Give a simple syllabus quiz during the first week to ensure the students have read your syllabus.
12. **Limit assessments to 50 minutes or less:** If an assessment must be longer than 50 minutes, consider breaking it into two parts. The longer students are in the system, the greater the chance of something going wrong with their Test.