



Best practices on e-Test creation

Quick guide for faculty members





Introduction:

Blackboard's test engine is a powerful set of tools that allow instructors to create and deploy tests to students. Blackboard provides a number of options that can restrict the ways in which students are able to take a test and reduce the incidence of cheating. Tips are available to assist in minimizing testing problems for your students.

To minimize the chance of test taking problems and give students the best environment for success, we recommend certain best practice when building and deploying tests in Blackboard.

Best Practices before making a Blackboard tests:

- Ensure that the internet connection is stable and proper.
- Use **Google Chrome** or **Mozilla Firefox** browse.
- Don't schedule all test sessions to start at the same time, (at least 5 minutes' difference) this reduces the load and helps to achieve better performance so avoid having a large number of students take a Blackboard test at the same time.
- Avoid using large sized Images.
- It is recommended that you avoid cutting-and-pasting directly from Microsoft Word, LibreOffice, LaTeX, or other high-level text editors also avoid copy/past from external sites since extra HTML code might be copied as well which causes issues.
- Take into consideration questions supported by the mobile App, if a large portion of students will be taking exams from mobiles. The Blackboard App supports these test questions: (True/False-Multiple choice-Short answer-Essay-Either/or).



- Although Blackboard scores fill-in-the-blank question automatically, it is recommended to review the scores for these questions as some variants of an answer that an Instructor may find acceptable, such as with additional spaces, capitalization, or slight spelling differences, will be rejected by Blackboard.
- Give very clear instructions before each test to your students.

Best Practices of design and set-up your blackboard tests:

To creating a test in Blackboard is essentially a 3-steps process (build a test, add questions and make the test available to students) but you should pay attention to test options when deploying the test.

- Before building a test, make **question pools** with random sets from the pools: If you're concerned about cheating, sure you can randomize the order of the questions per student and even randomize the order in which answer choices appear, but an even mightier feature is a Question Pool. Once you create question pools, which can be organized by topic, difficulty, or chapter, for example, you can deploy a randomly chosen subset of questions from those pools for each student. This way, each student receives a unique test attempt that assesses the same comprehension.
- In order to ensure students do not encounter any problems taking tests in Blackboard, we recommend several settings on the Test Options page. The Test Options page is accessed by locating the link to the test in your course, choosing the **arrow** after the course name, and selecting test option.
- You should **type a title of the test**: provide an intuitive test title so students can easily find the test among your course content. On the Course Content page, the title appears as the link students select to view the materials.



- Add **instruction** for students before starting the test, for example:
 - Instruct students to single click instead of double click on the arrow for Next Question, Save, and Submit.
 - Instruct students not to click the REFRESH or BACK arrow on their browser screen while taking the test.
 - Instruct students to avoid hitting Return/Enter, this may cause an inability to advance to the next question or page.
 - Instruct students to be interact with the application because the student will be timed out if he did not click within Blackboard Learn and are inactive for a certain timeframe.
- You must choose “Yes” in test availability to make the **Test Available** to all the students, if the test availability is set to No, students will not be able to access the test even if the test availability dates was specified.
- **Avoid** opening in a **new window**, sometimes opening test in a new window is blocked by the user’s browser settings.
- Add a **new announcement** to automatically generate a message that the test has been posted. (If you want a more detailed message, it is recommended to create your own announcement.)
- **Multiple attempts option:** This option should not be activated if the student has only one attempt to take the test.
- **Force Completion:** The force completion setting generally should **NOT** be turned on*, so that if a student accidentally closes their browser window or loses their connection to the internet/wifi, the student will be able to re-enter the test (all work will be saved). The timer will continue to countdown the time from the initial test entry time.



- The **test timer** must be activated to enable a time limit for the test and enter the duration in minutes. The timer will be shown as a countdown timer to the student, which allows the student to know the remaining time of the test time.
- **Auto-Submit:** If you set the timer, you should turn on Auto-Submit. Tests are automatically saved and submitted when the time expires, so the student's answers will be submitted at the end of test time automatically by the system. Either if "Off" option is selected, the student will be able to continue after the end of the time (*note that the test will not be auto graded, and the needs grading icon ! will be shown in the grade center*).
- **Password option:** If a password is set, the faculty member must ensure that students receive the password, which may be difficult to communicate with some students at times, which prevents these students from entering the test.
 - Common mistakes: Setting a password and not sending it to all students, or student entering the password incorrectly, which prevents students from taking the test.
*Note: If Respondus Lockdown Browser (LDB) is set to be required for a test, a password will be automatically created for that test by LDB, therefore, please **DONOT** change or remove the password form the test options.*
- Avoid selecting **test availability exceptions** to enable all students to take the test.
- **Due Date** allows you to specify a due date for the test that will show up in the student's calendar, as well as in the instructor's Grade Center. The due date option does not restrict the student's ability to submit after the due date has passed, and items submitted after the due date would be marked as Late.



- **Test Presentation Mode:** When designing Blackboard tests, we recommend you to set **one at a time**, so that one question is displayed on each page.
- **Randomize questions:** Among the many test options, choosing to **randomize the questions** will ensure that each student will be presented with the test questions in a random order (*this option is not required if the questions are designed to be displayed in a logical order, and the test is set to select questions randomly from question pools*).
- During the set-up of the test, an Instructor can set differing amounts of **feedback** to be displayed to students once a test is submitted.
- Once you have **finished setting up test** preview the test as a student before your students take it to be sure the questions are functioning as intended, with the answers correctly configured, and to make sure all of the content displays properly in the browser.
- Always ask your students to document **test problems** with a screenshot or cell phone photo and report the problem to you immediately.
- Post an announcement to all students with the name and time of the test before long enough.

Best Practices in set-up your blackboard tests using LockDown Browser (LDB) and Respondus Monitor:

Definition:

- LockDown Browser (LDB) is a custom browser that locks down the testing environment for tests taken in Blackboard. If you enable LDB for a Blackboard tests, students will be unable to copy, print, access other applications, visit other websites, or close the test until it is submitted.



LDB functions much like a standard browser, but some options have been removed or works differently.

- Respondus Monitor is a proctoring solution that is built upon the Respondus LDB. Monitor adds an automated proctoring service that uses a student's webcam and industry-leading video analytics to prevent cheating during online exams.

How is LDB Works?

- Assessments are displayed full-screen and cannot be minimized.
- Browser menu and toolbar options are removed, except for Back, Forward, Refresh and Stop
- Prevents access to other applications including messaging, screen-sharing, virtual machines, and remote desktops.
- Printing and screen capture functions are disabled.
- Copying and pasting anything to or from an assessment is prevented.
- Right-click menu options, function keys, keyboard shortcuts and task switching are disabled.
- An assessment cannot be exited until the student submits it for grading.
- Assessments that are set up for use with LDB cannot be accessed with other browsers.

How is Respondus Monitor Works?

Students use a webcam to record themselves during an exam.

A "startup sequence" guides them through requirements selected by the instructor, such as showing identification or making a short video of the exam environment (i.e., their desk and surround area). Only the instructor can review video recordings and the results of the proctoring session.

Powerful analytics are used to detect suspicious behaviors during an exam session. Monitor AI analyzes the video for anomalies (e.g., student looking away from the screen excessively, student leaving the computer, or multiple faces appearing in the frame) and also analyzes the student's interaction



with the exam to compare question-by-question with other students who took the same exam. Video segments with potential exam violations are flagged for the instructor, with an overall risk level assigned to the exam session.

Accessing and Enabling LDB:

Once you have created and deployed a test in your course, you can configure it to require the Respondus LDB by going to **Control Panel > Course Tools > Respondus LockDown Browser**.

If a student tries to use a regular browser to access a test that has Respondus enabled, Blackboard will notify them that they need to use Respondus to access the test.

Recommended Best Practices:

Respondus LDB is straightforward to use, but there are some suggested best practices that will help it go smoothly for your students.

- **Do not change test name** - Once you have enabled Respondus LDB on a test, do not change the name of the test, or Respondus will not work correctly
- **Do not modify the test password** - If you want to set a password for the test, do so via the Respondus LDB settings and not the test settings. Respondus uses the password field to prevent students from taking the test from another browser, and modifying the password in Test Settings will prevent it from working correctly
- **Explain to students** early that they must use Respondus LDB for their online exams and provide them with the right LDB download link. Respondus provides a sample statement you may want to include or modify
- **Provide information on technical requirements for students** - Respondus LDB require that students use a Mac or Windows computer



to take their exam; Chromebooks are not supported. In addition, Monitor requires that students have a webcam.

- **Hold a practice test or quiz** - Before students need to use Respondus LDB for a high-stakes test or a quiz, have them complete a brief practice quiz to demonstrate that they have installed the browser and it is functioning correctly. This quiz can be for a few points extra credit or no points.
- If the student faced a **technical problem** and logged out of the test, the student can go back under teacher permission and start the test.
- If this happened and the student needed to change the device, the student need to install the LDB software in his new device.
- **Room lightning** should be bright enough for facial monitor.
- No **face cover**. Otherwise, student will be considered cheating in the test.
- Student need to be **full aware of the instructions** given before the test, like showing the surrounding and ID.
- The lockdown browser can be installed in any device. However, it is **recommended to use PC and\or Laptop**. As it is hard to maintain a tablets.

For more on Respondus LDB and Monitor common Q&A please visit the Respondus Knowledgebase website:

https://support.respondus.com/support/index.php?/default_import/Knowledgebase/List/Index/17