



Test Taking Tips for Blackboard

Updated 9/13/06

Preparing to Successfully Take an Online Test

Set aside ample time - Think of an on-line assessment as the same as an in-class assessment where the time is devoted only to completing the test. The fewer distractions that you have the more you will be able to concentrate and the more efficient you will be.

America Online (AOL) America Online is not completely compatible or stable with Blackboard. If you are using AOL to access the Internet, once the connection is made, minimize the AOL window and use a different browser (Internet Explorer or Netscape are recommended for PC users and Safari, Netscape or FireFox are recommended for Apple computers).

Minimize interruptions - Turn off any browser Pop-Up Blockers, Instant Messaging, e-mail notification or other programs that may distract you from the test.

Dial Up - 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 abandoned the quiz and erase any answers you have entered.

Time Considerations - The assessment features in Blackboard are set to time out after three (3) hours of inactivity. Typing or clicking answers aren't recorded as an activity in the interface. Saving the assessment will record an activity and therefore reset the clock, so you should save early and often.

Know your browser and setup - When considering a time to take an important on-line test, take into account any slow time, or erratic connectivity issues that are inherent in your ISP. If your ISP is particularly slow at a certain time of the day or night, plan to take the test at some other time.

Use an ICC lab if needed - If you are in an on-campus course, sometimes the most efficient way to take a Blackboard test is to use a ICC computer lab. You may want to plan to take some time to visit one of the labs to take your important online quiz or test.

Test Taking Tips

The following recommendations are intended to help you to take an exam and minimize the possibility of technical issues that could hinder your success. These are basic test taking tips and suggestions which will allow you to take on-line tests with confidence.

1. Read the instructions for the test carefully

While most of us are used to test taking, **on-line test instructions are very important** as they provide information to insure that the process is trouble free. Terms such as force completion, allow multiple attempts and back tracking are important terms to understand.

- a. **Timed Assessment** – this will be displayed ONLY when a specific amount of time has been allocated for taking the test by the instructor. The elapsed time will display at the bottom of the screen and you will be given a warning message with one minute to go.
- b. **Multiple Attempts** – when allowed this means that you are permitted to enter and leave the test as much, or as often as you need. When you are finished with the test, you will need to submit it.
- c. **Force Completion** - means that once you begin taking the test that you are required to work until you finish it. As soon as you leave the test, your attempt is recorded in the grade book as complete.
- d. **Backtracking Prohibited** - If the test presentation is one question at a time it can be setup so that you can not back up to answer previous questions. You will need to answer questions as they are

presented, save the answer and then click on the forward arrow in the assessment to move on to the next question.

- e. **Question Completed Status** – Clicking on the down arrow to the left of the text will expand a window with links to each question on the test. If a question has an answered saved for it, a diskette icon will be displayed next to the link. This can be used to track which questions you have answered and which ones you have not. When backtracking is prohibited, questions and icons are still displayed but there is no link to move from question to question.
2. **Be certain that you are ready**
Have everything that you need be mentally prepared to start and complete the test once you begin the process. When you click on the **Take Quiz** link and answer **OK** to the "**Are you sure you want to take this quiz now?**" dialog, the expectation is that you will complete the quiz at that sitting.
3. **Saving your answers as you move through the test**
Answers can be saved with each question or they can be saved and submitted at the end of the exam. If you think you may be interrupted during the exam use the save buttons on each question as you move through the test. If you feel comfortable with your ISP connection and want to submit your answers at the end you can choose to do that. You do not have to use the Save buttons prior to using Submit to submit your answers.
4. **Navigating the test site**
 - a. Single-click on the test link – do not double-click.
 - b. While in the test scroll up and down and use the arrows to page through the questions. Do not use the *Back* button in your browser!
 - c. Do not resize the browser window.
 - d. Do not click on buttons on the left side panel once the test is displayed.
 - e. Single-click (not double-click) on the *Submit* button to submit your assessment.
 - f. After submitting the test do not click *Back* button – to check your score following the completion of the assessment, go to the *Tools* button and use the *Check Grade* link.

Submitting the Exam

Once you click the *Submit* button at the end of the exam you should receive confirmation and/or feedback. If you received confirmation or feedback upon completing the exam, your test has been recorded successfully and there should be no problem.

If you do not receive a confirmation upon completing and submitting the exam check your grade under the *Tools* button.

- If your score is displayed, the exam was accepted and graded.
- If an exclamation point (!) is displayed, the exam was accepted and is waiting to be graded.
- If an icon of padlock is displayed, the system thinks you are still taking the test and submission did not complete successfully. In this case – contact your instructor.

Internet Service Provider (ISP) Loss

If your connection to the Internet is terminated you should keep the assessment browser window open and attempt to re-connect to the Internet immediately. If the browser is kept open and the connection is re-established, you may be able to successfully submit the quiz.

If you are unable to access the exam after the connection is re-established, contact your instructor to discuss your options.

Additional Help and Support

If you are new to Blackboard complete the Blackboard Orientation that is listed in your online course list. You may also visit an **ICC HELP Lab in 234A on the East Peoria Campus, Perley 112 or the ICC North Learning Lab in Cedar 136**. If you continue to have technical questions about Blackboard, contact the **Help Desk at 694-5457**. **Help Desk personnel cannot reset your test – only your instructor can do that.**