

Tests, Surveys, and Assignments in Blackboard

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Tests vs. Surveys

Tests and surveys are identical in many ways. Both have questions that students answer and both can have the same types of questions in them. The difference is that a survey submission is anonymous while a test is not. The only indication to the instructor that a student has taken a survey is that there will be a checkmark in the Gradebook in the appropriate grade column. Submitted surveys can be reviewed in the Gradebook by clicking on the column heading for a particular survey. This will show you all of the submitted surveys and will not show you who submitted them.

In this document almost everything said about tests also holds true for surveys. The key differences will be in grading and anonymity.

Survey = ungraded and anonymous

Test = graded and you know who took it

How to Create Tests in Blackboard

There are two options for creating tests in Blackboard, either by first making a test and then creating questions (Test First), or by first creating a pool of questions and then making a test based on those questions (Question First). Note: “Test First” and “Question First” are not official Blackboard terms. Determining which way to create tests will be determined by what your particular needs are. If you want to create a test with questions that will only be used in that test and not in other tests, the Test First method will work. If you want to create a test that will have questions you might want to use in other tests later, either in the current semester or in future semesters, the Question First method will work better.

Test First Method

In this method you first create a test and then add questions to it. The following is the procedure for this method.

1. Go to the page where you want the test (ie. "Course Documents")
2. Click on the "Edit View" link in the upper right corner.
3. Click the icon for Add Test.
4. Click on the "Create" button.
5. Give the test a name, and optionally a description and instructions.
 - a. The description appears on the page with the link to the test.
 - b. The instructions appear at the top of the page while taking the test.
6. Click "Submit"
7. Set the "Creation Settings" for the test
8. Add questions by selecting a question type and clicking "Go"
9. For each question created, type the question text, the answers, and set any appropriate settings.
10. After adding all the questions, click "OK"
11. In the "Add Test" window select the test you just created and then click "Submit"
12. Click "OK" to acknowledge that the test has been created.
13. Click "Modify the Test Options."
14. Be sure to set the Test Availability and any other appropriate settings. Until you manually make the test available, students will not see it. Click "Submit" to finish.

Question First Method

In this method you first create the questions and then make a test and select from a pool of questions you've already made. Here are the steps for using this method.

1. Go to the control panel for the course for which you want to make the questions and test.
2. Click on the "Pool Manager" under Assessments.
3. Add a new pool, or continue editing an existing pool.
 - a. If adding a pool, be sure to give it a name and optionally a description.
4. Set the "Creation Settings" for the test
5. Add questions to the pool by selecting a question type and clicking "Go"
6. For each question created, type the question text, the answers, and set any appropriate settings.
7. After adding all the questions, click "OK"
8. Go back to the Control Panel and choose "Test Manager" under Assessments
9. Click on the "Add Test" icon.
10. Give the test a name, and optionally a description and instructions.
 - a. The description appears on the page with the link to the test.
 - b. The instructions appear at the top of the page while taking the test.
11. Click "Submit"

12. For the question type, select “From a Question Pool or Assessment”
13. Select the pool you just created and click “Search”.
14. Select the questions you want to add to the test. Note, you can select all the questions at once by clicking on the “Select All” icon.
15. Click “Submit” to add the questions.
16. Go through each question then and assign the proper point value for each question.

Question Types

No matter what question type you choose, you must set a point value for each question. The total points for a test do not have to equal 100. Blackboard will calculate a % based on the correct responses and the total possible points. Setting the “Extra Credit Only” option makes it so that the point value will only be added above and beyond the final score for the exam.

Mathematical

Calculated Formula

Description

The Calculated Formula allows you to enter a formula for students to solve. You create an equation, like $x + y$, and Blackboard will produce a set of values for x and y and the corresponding answers. When students take the test Blackboard will present them one of the predetermined sets of values for x and y for them to solve. For example, for the formula $x + y$ Blackboard would present a student a question like $45 + 33 = ?$.

This question type is not designed to solve algebraic equations where the answer contains variables. It is only for formulas that can be solved to a single numeric expression.

Example

Formula: $[x] + [y] =$

Example of Blackboard generated values and answers for the above formula:

[x]	[y]	Answer
45	33	78
75	83	158
16	46	62
24	95	119
68	7	75

A student would see either “ $45 + 33 = \underline{\quad}$ ” or “ $75 + 83 = \underline{\quad}$ ” etc.

Notes

When you enter the text for the question the variables need to be enclosed in []. To have a question of the form $45 + 33 =$, you would type “[x] + [y] =”. Blackboard will substitute the variables with one of the possible value combinations.

You must also construct the equation in the equation editor which is below the question text box. Blackboard uses this formula to generate the value and answer sets. This editor functions similarly to Microsoft’s Equation Editor.

You can set a +/- value for the correct answer to allow for variance in the students’ responses. (i.e. accept an answer that is 23.3 ± 0.2)

Calculated Numeric

Description

The Calculated Numeric question type allows you to enter a question that students must give a numeric response to. Blackboard does not generate value and answer sets for this type of question as it does with the Calculated Formula question type.

You can set a +/- value to the correct answer to allow for variance in the students’ responses. (i.e. accept an answer that is 23.3 ± 0.2)

Example

What is the atomic weight of H₂O?

True/False

True/False

Description

This is a standard true/false question type. The student must respond either true or false to a statement.

Either/Or

Description

This is a more robust form of the true/false question type. Instead of a simple true/false answer, the answer can take the following forms:

- Yes/No
- Agree/Disagree
- Right/Wrong
- True/False

Essay/Short Answer

Essay

Description

The Essay question type allows students to give longer typed responses to questions. Blackboard will not automatically grade these answers for you so you must grade them through the Gradebook.

Please note, the “Example Answer” is not given to students. It is for your own benefit and will be shown to you while grading the essays so you can see an example of a good answer.

Short Answer

Description

The Short Answer question type is similar to the Essay question type. It allows students to type a short response to a question. The box in which students type is smaller for this question than for essays questions. The length of the response is limited to 4000 characters.

Fill in the Blank

Fill in the Blank

Description

With this question you type a sentence where you put a “_____” in the text of the question. You can only have 1 blank per question. You are allowed to have multiple right answers. The students are not given a choice of answers but must type their answer.

Fill In Multiple Blanks

Description

This question type allows you to have a sentence with multiple blanks in it. Type the text of the question and in the places you want a blank type a new variable name. Each blank can have multiple right answers. When taking the test students are not presented with choices for the blank – they must type in the answer themselves. You can create multiple right answers for each blank.

Example

“The President of the United States is [x] and the Vice-President is [y].”

Jumbled Sentence

Description

This question type is in the fill-in-the-blank genre, but students are given choices of words to put in each blank. Put a new variable in the question text where you want the blanks to appear. Students will get to pick from a list of choices for each blank. All of the answers appear as options for each blank. Also, not all of the answer options have to be correct.

Example

“The [x] is the front of the ship, while the [y] is the back.”

Possible answers:

Starboard

Bow

Stern

Port

Matching

Matching

Description

This question type has students match up an item in the left hand column with an item in the right hand column. Each item on the left can only have 1 match on the right. The right column can contain answers with no corresponding match in the left column.

Multiple Choice

Multiple Choice

Description

In this question type students select 1 correct answer from a list of choices. Please note, if you choose to randomize answers, DO NOT put as one of the answer choices “both A and C”. When answers are randomized you are not guaranteed what order or what letter each answer will be assigned. If you want to use an answer like “both A and C”, either do not randomize the answers, or use the Multiple Answers question type below.

Multiple Answers

Description

This question type is identical to the Multiple Choice type except there can be more than 1 correct answer. Students are not told how many correct answers there are.

Other

File Response

Description

Students answer this question by uploading a file. The file can be of any type. Please note, the uploaded files count against your Blackboard space quota

Hot Spot

Description

The students select an answer to the question by clicking somewhere on an image that you upload. JPEG and GIF files are the preferred formats for image uploads. Only 1 hot spot on the image can be chosen per question. Make sure to choose an area wide enough to allow for slight mistakes in clicking. THE FILE YOU UPLOAD SHOULD HAVE NO SPACES OR CAPITAL LETTERS IN THE FILE NAME.

Example

Question: “Click on Colorado.”

You give the right answer by indicating:



The students see:



Ordering

Description

This question type allows you to place a list of items in order. The students must place a 1, 2, 3, etc. by each item indicating its correct order.

Example

Sort the following from the largest to the smallest:

Atlantic Ocean
Arctic Ocean
Indian Ocean
Pacific Ocean

Quiz Bowl

Description

This question type is very similar to a Jeopardy question and answer. The response a student gives must be in the form of a question. You specify the interrogatives that are allowed (ie. “who”, “what”) and the subject of the sentence.

Example

Answer: “He was the first president of the United States.” – this is what you type

Question: “Who was George Washington?” – this is what the student types

Opinion Scale/Likert Question

Description

This question type allows you to ask a question where the answer will lie somewhere on a scale that you provide. You can use a scale of “Agree”, “Neutral”, or “Disagree”, or you can create whatever scale you would like. One of the answers must be chosen as a correct answer.

This question type can be good for eliciting the class’ opinion in a survey.

Random Block

Description

With this question type Blackboard will randomly choose a question from a pool of questions that you specify. You can specify how many questions you want Blackboard to insert from the random pool. To use this question type you must have questions already in a question pool

From a Question Pool or Assessment

Description

This allows you to pick a question you have already written, either in a question pool or in another test.

Upload Questions

Description

This allows you to upload a document with the test questions typed in a particular format.

Questions in the file must conform to a specific structure to be uploaded to an Assessment successfully. Each field in the file is separated by a tab. Each row is a separate question.

- **Multiple Choice** questions are structured as follows:
'MC' TAB question text (TAB answer text TAB 'correct' or 'incorrect')
Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Multiple Choice question. The maximum number of answers is 20.
- **Multiple Answer** questions are structured as follows:
'MA' TAB question text (TAB answer text TAB 'correct' or 'incorrect')
Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Multiple Answer question. The maximum number of answers is 20.
- **True/False** questions are structured as follows:
'TF' TAB question text TAB 'true' or 'false'
- **Essay** questions are structured as follows:
'ESS' TAB question text TAB [example]
Text within [] is optional. The Instructor may choose to add a sample essay question or leave this blank.
- **Ordering** questions are structured as follows:
'ORD' TAB question text (TAB answer text)
Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Ordering question. The maximum number of answers is 20.
The order entered in the file is the correct order. The system will randomly order the answers.
- **Matching** questions are structured as follows:
'MAT' TAB question text (TAB answer text TAB matching text)
Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Matching question. The maximum number of answers is 20.
The system will randomly order the answers and their question.
When uploading a matching question, there must be a one-to-one relationship between questions and answers. If not, correct answers may be marked incorrect if more than one answer has the same value.
- **Fill in the Blank** questions are structured as follows:
'FIB' TAB question text (TAB answer text)
Text within () may be repeated for each of the answers that are part of the Fill in the Blank question. The maximum number of answers is 20.
- **File Response** questions are structured as follows:
'FIL' TAB question
- **Numeric Response** questions are structured as follows:
'NUM' TAB question TAB answer TAB [optional]tolerance
- **Short Response** questions are structured as follows:
'SR' TAB question TAB sample_answer
- **Opinion/Likert Scale** questions are structured as follows:
OP TAB question
- **Multiple Fill-in-the-Blank** questions are structured as follows:

FIB_PLUS TAB question TAB variable1 TAB answer1 TAB answer2 TAB variable2
TAB answer3

The format consists of a list of variable-answers where each variable- answer is composed of the variable name and a list of correct answers for that variable. variable-answers are delimited by an empty field.

- **Jumbled Sentence** questions are structured as follows:

JUMBLED_SENTENCE TAB question TAB choice1 TAB variable1 TAB choice2 TAB
TAB choice3 TAB variable2

The format consists of a list of choices-answers where each choice-answer consists of the choice followed by the list of variables for which that choice is the correct answer. An empty field indicates the end of a choice answer. A choice immediately followed by an empty field indicates that that choice is not the correct answer for any variable.

- **Quiz Bowl** questions are structured as follows:

QUIZ_BOWL TAB question TAB question_word1 TAB question_word2 TAB phrase1
TAB phrase2

The format consists of a list of valid question words followed by an empty field and a list of valid answer phrases.

Test Options

To access the Test Options you must first navigate to the test in your site and then click on “Edit View” in the upper right hand corner of the screen. Then click on the “Modify” button next to the test. Here you can choose to “Modify Test Options”

Availability

Make Link Available

You must change this to “Yes” for the students to access it. Even if it is on “Yes”, if the “Display Times” are set and the current date does not fall between the availability dates then students will not be able to take the test.

Announcement

Click this if you want an announcement to go out to your students when a test becomes available.

Multiple Attempts

Select this if you want to allow students to have multiple attempts, and then set the number of attempts they are allowed.

Force Completion

If this is set then students will have to finish the test once they open it. Otherwise when students click “Save” in the test, Blackboard will remember their answers and they will be able to close the browser and come back and finish the test later. A student does not finish a test until they click “Submit.”

Timer

This puts a time limit on the test and will also record how long the student took on the test. A student is still allowed to submit a test past the deadline. When grading the test it will indicate on the top of each test how long the student took.

Display Times

Set these options if you would like to have the test automatically become available to students at set times. The “Make Link Available” setting still needs to be set to “Yes”.

Password

Set this option if students need to enter a password you provide in order to take the exam.

DO NOT USE YOUR BLACKBOARD PASSWORD – CREATE A UNIQUE ONE FOR THIS TEST

Self-Assessment Options

Include Test in Gradebook Score Calculation

If this option is selected, the grade will appear in the Gradebook and it will be used in the calculation for determining the final grade for the course.

Hide Test From Gradebook

If this option is selected, the grade will not appear in the Gradebook. This in essence turns the test into a survey, but it will still be listed under tests as opposed to surveys.

Feedback

Score

This allows the students to see their scores once the tests are graded.

Submitted Answers

This allows the students to see what answers they gave.

Correct Answers

This allows students to see the correct answers.

Feedback

This allows students to view any of the appropriate feedback fields.

Test Presentation

Presentation Mode

This sets how the questions are presented to the students. “All at Once” will display the entire test as one long page. “One at a time” will present each question on a separate page. This option can be further restricted to not allow students to backtrack through a test once they’ve answered a question.

One thing to consider is that in the “One at a Time” mode, the students have to navigate each question individually and cannot jump to another part of a test. This can be cumbersome if they are on question 20 and want to go back and check question 1.

Randomize Questions

This will randomize the order in which the questions are presented.

Creating Settings

Feedback

Provide feedback for individual answers.

This allows you to give feedback for individual answers within a question, in addition to just giving general feedback for the whole question.

In some cases you might want to customize your feedback depending on the answer given. Consider the following example:

Question: Who was the first Vice-President of the United States?

Answer Option 1: George Washington

Feedback: No, he was the first president.

Answer Option 2: John Adams
Feedback: Correct!

Answer Option 3: Thomas Jefferson
Feedback: No, he was the second Vice President and the Third President

Answer Option 4: Opus
Feedback: He made an unsuccessful bid for the office in 1984 and 1988 with Bill the Cat

Images, Files, and External Links

Add images, files, and external links to questions.

This allows instructors to add images or movies to view, files to download, or links to websites in their questions.

Add images, files, and external links to answers.

This allows students to add images or movies to view, files to download, or links to websites in their answers.

Question Metadata

Add categories, topics, levels of difficulty, and keywords to questions.

This allows you to categorize your questions so that they are easier to navigate through when constructing tests.

Display

Specify random ordering of answers.

This allows you to set if the answers are randomized. You can set this option on a question by question basis in the question editor. For question types Multiple Choice and Multiple Answers please see the notes above in those questions descriptions regarding randomizing answers.

Specify the horizontal or vertical display of answers.

This allows you to set whether the answers are presented to the students vertically or horizontally.

Specify numbering options for answers.

This allows you to change the numbering system for answers. The options are:

- 1, 2, 3...
- I, II, III...
- A, B, C...
- A, b, c...
- None

Grading

Depending on the types of questions asked, you may or may not need to manually grade the tests. Many questions can be automatically graded by Blackboard, however, some will require you to manually grade them (ie. essay questions). To grade a test you need to go to the Control Panel and then the Gradebook. If a particular test needs you to manually grade some component of it the grade will appear as a “!”. Click on the “!” or the grade that has already been assigned to view the student’s answers.

Click on “View” to view the test. You can also reset the test attempt to allow a student to retake the exam. The “Clear Attempt” button forever and irrevocably erases a student’s test submission.

When viewing the individual answers in a student’s test submission, you can assign or override the points given for any question. Once you are done click “Submit.”

You can also override the final test score by typing the override score in the box labeled “Override.” Once a score is assigned, if you had previously chosen to release the scores to the students they will be able to see their scores and any other information you released to them (ie. their answers, the correct answers, and any feedback for them).

Exporting

Questions Pools and Tests can be exported to a local file on your hard disk for archival purposes. This can be useful in saving questions or tests for use in another course later or simply for backing them up. To export a question pool or test:

1. Go to the appropriate section in the Control Panel (either Question Pool Manager or Test Manager)
2. Click on the “Export” button to the right of the Question Pool or Test that you want to export.
3. Choose to save the file to your hard disk

This file can then be imported back into Blackboard at a later date.

Importing

Question Pools and Tests that were previously exported from Blackboard can be imported into a new course. To import a question pool or test:

1. Go to the appropriate section in the Control Panel (either Question Pool Manager or Test Manager)
2. Click on the Import icon.
3. Choose the file to import (This should be a zip file that Blackboard previously exported)

The questions or tests can now be used as normal.

Assignments

Creating Assignments

In Blackboard, Assignments are a means by which students can electronically submit papers and/or projects. In creating an assignment the instructor provides instructions either through an attached file or as a simple textual description. Students then respond either by typing text into a response area or by attaching files with their work in it.

To create an assignment, follow these steps:

1. Navigate to the page in Blackboard where you want the assignment to be.
2. Click on “Edit View” in the upper right corner of the screen.
3. From the drop down menu choose to add an assignment.
4. Click the “Go” button
5. Provide a title for the assignment.
6. Give the maximum number of points possible on the assignment.
7. Give any instructions for the assignment.
8. Attach any files that you want distributed to the students
 - a. You must create a link name for each file you attach. This name is used as a descriptive title for the linked file.
 - b. The files you attach count against your Blackboard space quota.
9. Make sure the assignment is available. One difference between Assignments and Tests is that Assignments are available by default while tests must be manually made available
10. Choose when you want to make the assignment available to the students. Note, the “Make the assignment available” must be set to “Yes” regardless of any date restrictions that are set.
11. Click “Submit”

SafeAssign

In Blackboard, SafeAssign is a tool for submitting papers to a database for authenticity. Students can electronically submit papers and the papers are reviewed by an anti-plagiarism program. In creating a Safeassignment, the instructor provides instructions by typing a simple textual description, and noting the available points for the safeassignment. Students respond by attaching files with their work in it.

To create a Safeassignment, follow these steps:

1. Navigate to the page in Blackboard where you want the Safeassignment to be.
2. Click on “Edit View” in the upper right corner of the screen.
3. From the drop down menu on the right side of the page, choose to add a Safeassignment.
4. Click the “Go” button

5. Provide a title for the Safeassignment.
6. Give the maximum number of points possible on the assignment.
7. Give any instructions for the assignment.
8. Make sure the assignment is available by making it student viewable.
9. Choose any dates that you want to make the safeassignment available to the students.
10. Click “Submit”

Grading

To grade an assignment you need to go to the Control Panel and then the Gradebook. If a particular assignment needs to be graded it will appear as a “!” in the Gradebook.

Click on the “!” or the grade that has already been assigned to view the student’s assignment. Here you can view any attachments the student provides and any comments given. You can then provide a grade in the “Grade” box. You can also give any feedback to the students, either as text in the text box or as file attachments.

Additionally, you can store notes to yourself regarding the assignment in the Instructor Notes section, either by typing text in the box or by attaching files.

Within the Gradebook you can also override previously given grades.