Creating Quizzes, Tests, and Self-Check Exercises in Blackboard

This handout provides tips and instructions for creating tests and quizzes in Blackboard. In particular, we would like to highlight the test tool in Blackboard can also be used to provide "self-checks" to help reinforce students' learning and help them identify their own areas for improvement. Creating a self-check is the same as creating a test or quiz, but the emphasis is on providing feedback to help students understand why the answers are correct or incorrect. Self-checks are optional and provided for no, minimal, or extra credit.

We will cover tips for preparing a quiz, test, or self-check exercise, entering it into Blackboard, and deploying it for students.

Prepare your questions, answers, and feedback to copy into Blackboard.

Start by reviewing the learning objectives for the week or unit the quiz pertains to. Keep these handy to help you write questions that align with and measure achievement of the objectives. Questions should not be extraneous to the learning objectives.

Books have been written about writing effective test questions. To make the most of your tests and quizzes, spend a little time reviewing best practices for writing questions. Writing Good Multiple Choice Test Questions from Vanderbilt University's Center for Teaching is a good resource. Some of the important points are to:

- Avoid negatively stated questions, such as "which of the following is not true?" or "All of the following are true except…"
- Include only plausible possible answers.
- Avoid complex answers, such as "A and B."

With a self-check, it is important to provide feedback in a way that students can learn from their choices. Write feedback that explains why incorrect answer(s) are incorrect and why correct answer(s) are correct.
Here are some tips for copying your text from your document into Blackboard:

- Do not number or letter your questions or answer choices in the text document. Blackboard will number the questions and answers if you wish. However, we do not recommend numbering answers because it's not necessary and questions that use numbers tax students' working memory.
- In your draft document, type the answer and then the corresponding feedback for that answer. This is the order in which you will paste them into Blackboard.
- If using Microsoft Word, copy and paste the text into NotePad (in Windows, it can be found by clicking the Start button, All Programs, Accessories) or TextEdit (in Mac OS, this can be found by opening the Finder, Applications, Text Edit, Make Plain Text) to clear the formatting and have only Plain Text to paste into Blackboard. This will avoid formatting issues that are often caused by pasting Microsoft Word content into Blackboard.

If you have a large number of questions in a Word document, a software program called Respondus may be able to simplify the transfer process. Please contact us for details.

Create the quiz/test in Blackboard's Test tool.

1. Go to *Control Panel > Course Tools > Tests, Surveys, and Pools* (see figure below).
2. Select *Tests* and click on *Build Test.*
3. Give your test a name and add a description and instructions if you'd like. These will appear to students when you deploy the test.
4. Submit.
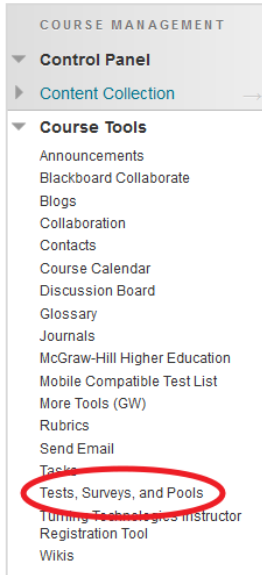
5. Click on *Question Settings* (see figure below) to indicate:
- If you want to provide feedback for individual answers (recommended for self-checks and can be released after a specified date for graded quizzes).
- If you want to use images or other media in your questions or answers.
- The default point value for the questions.
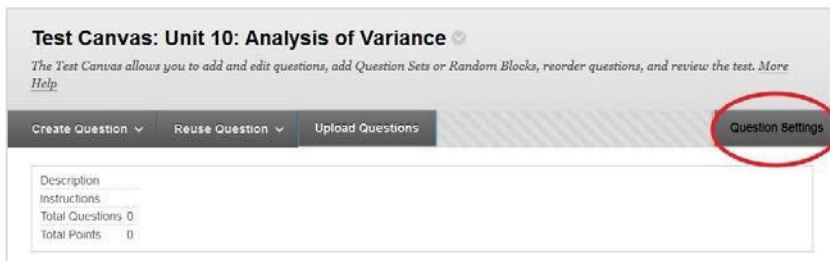
You can always change the point value for individual questions, but it will save time to specify the default at the beginning.
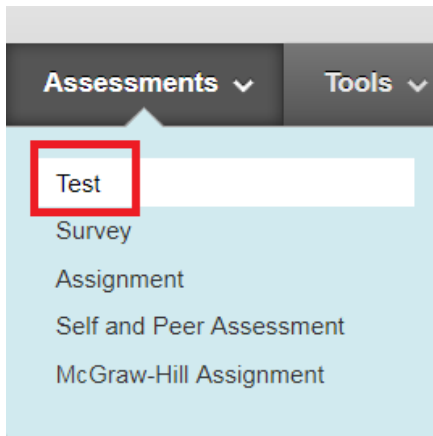
6. Submit.
7. Click on *Create Question* (see figure below) and select the type of question.
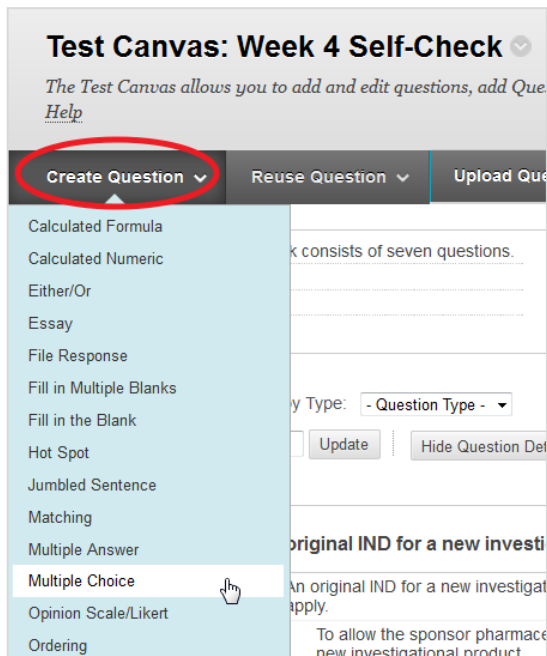
8. Copy and paste the question text, answers, and feedback from your text document. Under "Options," we recommend selecting 'None' for Answer Numbering.
9. Make sure the correct answer is indicated by clicking the radio button next to the correct answer and submit.
10. Click *Create Question* to add the next question and repeat until you have entered all your questions.
11. Click OK.

Deploy the quiz /test to make it available to students.

1. Go to the page in the course where you want the students to access the quiz. For self-checks and unit quizzes we recommend that this be with the weekly unit information.
2. Go to *Assessments > Test* (see figure below).

3. Select the quiz from the list of existing tests.
4. Submit.

Most of the defaults will be fine, but here are a few notes:

Test Availability: For an asynchronous self-check there is usually no reason not to make the link available. You can allow multiple or unlimited attempts, but if you are creating a self-check there is usually no reason to do this. Students will learn the right and wrong answers once they submit their answers the first time if you set the test to provide feedback to the students, as described below. For all other tests, you may select dates when it will be open, and a set time students will have to complete the test once opened.

Self-Assessment Options: Blackboard gives you the option to hide test results from the instructor. However, generally for a self-check we suggest that you check the box to include the test in grade center, but in the Grade Center, do not include it in any calculated totals, unless of course your quiz contributes to their grade. This will allow you to see if students are taking the self-checks and which questions may be problematic, without it affecting their grade.

Show Test Results and Feedback to Students: This section allows you to specify when students see the feedback and results and what they see. For self-checks we suggest letting students see the results "After Submission," showing the correct and submitted answers, and showing feedback. If you don't want students to see the answers until after the due date, we suggest choosing "After Due Date" or "On Specific Date." If "After Attempts are graded" is selected, no students will be able to see the feedback or results until everyone in the class has finished the quiz, which can be problematic if one student does not complete the assignment.

Test Presentation: Blackboard generally works best when the test questions are shown *All at Once.*

5. Submit. A link to the quiz will appear on the course page. Click on the link to view the quiz as students will see it. Answer the questions and submit your responses to check how the results and feedback will appear to students.

To edit your quiz or the settings, hover over the link to it, click the down arrow and select *Edit the Test* or *Edit the Test Options* (see figure below).
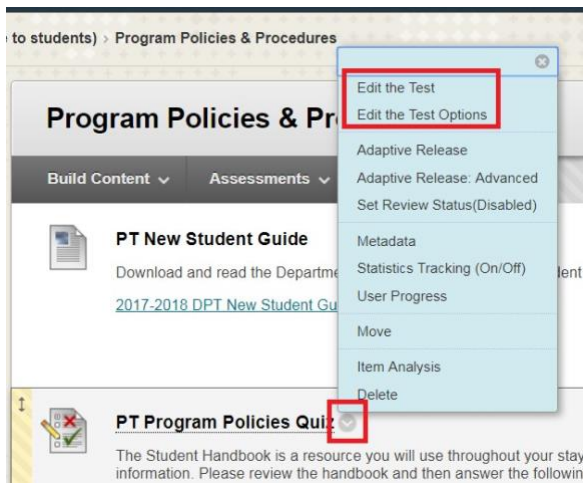
When you deploy a test or quiz, Blackboard will automatically create a column for it in the Grade Center. Check your Grade Center settings to ensure that the quiz is (or is not) contributing to student grades as desired.

Need more assistance?

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