

The assessment feature in Blackboard is a helpful tool for providing online quizzes, exams and surveys. This guide will help minimize problems when you take assessments in Blackboard.

Avoiding Problems

Your attempt at an online test could be interrupted by these situations:

- Using the browser Back button
- Double-clicking instead of single-clicking
- Resizing the browser window
- Using instant messaging
- Having e-mail notification on
- Having Call Waiting on
- Failing to keep the browser window active. Typing or clicking answers is not considered activity; clicking the Save button does keep the server active.
- Experiencing failure of the Internet connection/system. If this happens, 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 test.

Preparing for the Test

Web browser – Use a web browser that is compatible with or certified to work the version of Blackboard we use here at Xavier. Visit the [Blackboard FAQs](#) for a list of recommended browsers (<http://cat.xula.edu/tutorials/blackboard/>).

Minimize interruptions – Turn off instant messaging, e-mail notification or other programs that may distract you from the test or interfere with it. Ideally, you should turn off the popup blocker for tests, but if you choose to keep popups blocked, at least make Blackboard an Allowed (or Trusted) Site. To adjust your pop-up blocker for use with Blackboard:

In Firefox, go to **Tools > Options > Content** > Next to the checked box for Block Pop-up Windows, click **Exceptions** > Type blackboard.xula.edu in the Address of Web Site field > Click **Allow**.

In Internet Explorer, go to **Tools > Popup Blocker > Popup Blocker Settings** > Type blackboard.xula.edu in the Address of Web Site to Allow field > Click **Add**.

Make time considerations – If your test is not set for a particular hour, give yourself adequate time and schedule yourself when your Internet access will be most reliable. If your Internet Service Provider is particularly slow at a certain time of day, plan to take the test at some other time. Have everything that you need and mentally prepare to start and complete the test once you begin the process.

Avoid connecting to Blackboard with America Online (AOL) – America Online is not completely compatible or stable with the Blackboard system. If you are using AOL to access the Internet, once the connection is made, minimize the AOL window and use one of the recommended browsers (refer to web browser information above).

Consider using a lab computer – Xavier computer labs offer Internet access that is usually more stable than off-campus.

Taking the Test

Read the instructions carefully – Since online tests may have a variety of features, it's important to read the instructions to find out how your professor has structured the test. Important terms for possible features your instructor may use include:

Force Completion – Once you begin taking the test, you are required to work until you finish it. As soon as you leave the test, whether or not you have actually clicked the Submit button, your attempt is recorded in the Gradebook as complete. If you leave the quiz without completing it, you will not be able to come back and finish it. If this happens, contact your Instructor.

Allow Multiple Attempts – You are permitted to take the test more than once, usually so that you can meet a minimum score. Note, however, that sometimes an instructor may use this setting so that if you are accidentally bumped from the quiz, you can get back into it without instructor intervention. Be careful not to go back into the test unless you truly want or need to take it again.

Timed Assessment – The instructor has set a time limit. The elapsed time appears at the bottom of the browser window, and you will receive a 1-minute warning when time is up.

Password Protected – Your instructor has safeguarded the test with a password, which s/he will provide to you before test time.

All at Once – All of the questions appear on one web page. Each question has a Save button so you can save as you go. Or you may choose to scroll down to the bottom of the page periodically to click the Save button there. Doing so should help protect you in case of technical difficulties.

One at a Time – Questions appear one by one as you single-click a forward arrow. Clicking the arrow automatically saves each question as you go. Note: Do not click Enter or you may have trouble.

Question Completion Status – You may keep track of which questions you have answered by clicking the small, upside down triangle immediately below the test instructions.

Backtracking Prohibited – You will not be able to go back to any questions once you have answered them.

Wait for questions to load – After you single-click to begin a test where all questions appear on one page, let all the questions load. Do not start using the Save button until a few minutes have passed, so that Bb has time to let all the questions flow in from the server.

Avoid the Back button – Using the Back button during a test can interrupt the computer processes. If your professor allows students to go backward in an All at Once test, you can click the triangle next to Question Completion Status to go to another question. In a One at a Time test, use the small back arrow. If you need to back out of the entire test (only if Force Completion isn't on), click Save and then click the desired link on the course menu.

Stay active in the test window – The assessment feature in Blackboard is set to time out after a certain number of minutes of inactivity. You must do more than just type or click answers to keep the test active. Save the assessment or individual questions periodically to reset the activity clock.

AOL, however, does not consider the use of a separate browser as “online activity” and may terminate your connection without warning because of a timeout. If this occurs, your quiz answers will be lost. You should occasionally do something on AOL while taking a test to prevent it from timing out. Consider alternative access to the Internet to properly complete your quiz/test.

Consider writing essays in a Plain Text Editor program – Notepad is on most PCs (click Start > All Programs > Accessories > Notepad) and lets you copy and paste your essay from the document into Blackboard. This will also give you a backup copy of your work. Remember to keep your test window active by occasionally clicking the Save button as you work in the editing program.

Submitting the Test

Single-click the Submit button – You will not get credit for your answers unless you have clicked Submit. You should see a confirmation and/or feedback for the test.

Confirming Test Submission

If there seems to be a problem, go back to the Content Area and find the exam.

Check for confirmation – If the link is still there, clicking on it should either tell you that you have already taken the exam or provide feedback about your exam results.

Check the exam grade – Go to Course Tools > My Grades and you should see one of the following:

- Your score for the exam (if enabled by your instructor) –or-
- An exclamation point, which means the test is submitted but not yet graded by the instructor –or-
- A padlock, which means your test attempt is locked up

If you cannot confirm that your test has been successfully submitted, contact your instructor – Ask him or her to check to see if your exam came through and that it is complete. Trying to do something by clicking around the site on your own could make matters worse.

If your instructor is not available and you need help, contact the Information Technology Center at helpdesk@xula.edu or (504) 520-7446.