

## Test Taking Tips

### **Initial setup:**

**Have multiple browsers available.** It is recommended that you install multiple browsers on your computer. If something doesn't work in one browser, it will typically work in another. For Blackboard we recommend using Mozilla Firefox (<https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/>) or Google Chrome (<https://www.google.com/chrome/>).

**Check Internet connection.** When deciding on a time to take your exam, take into account times when your connection seems to slow down or lose connectivity. These issues can cause your exam to disconnect, possibly making you lose your work.

**Try to avoid WiFi.** If you can, use a wired Internet connection, as opposed to a wireless connection. Some wireless connections can be spotty at times and not as stable as wired connections.

**Disable pop-up blockers.** Pop-up blockers might block an exam from opening in Blackboard exams. Your instructor has the option of opening your exam within Blackboard or in a new window. If the exam is set to open in a new window, your browser might treat it as a pop-up.

**Time considerations.** Blackboard times out after 3 hours of inactivity. Your Internet Service Provider might time out sooner with no activity. Save your answers or the exam frequently. Saving resets the inactivity clock, but not the exam clock.

### **Taking the exam:**

**Read your instructor's policy.** If your instructor has a policy on how she will deal with students who claim that technical problems prohibit them from submitting exams properly, read that policy carefully. It might be located in the course syllabus.

**Allow the page to load completely before answering questions.** The page may take a moment or two to load completely. If you begin scrolling or answering questions before it loads completely, it might not load all of the questions and they might go unanswered.

**Read the exam instructions carefully.** The exam instructions tell you exactly how to take the exam, and will include any special instructions that your instructor might have included. Any instructions about back tracking, forced completion, and multiple attempts will be listed here.

- **Force Completion:** Once you begin the exam, you are required to complete it in one session. As soon as you leave the exam by clicking elsewhere, you will not be able to access it again. For exams that deliver all of the questions on one page, if you did not save any answers or save the exam, none of your answers will be recorded.
- **Allow Multiple Attempts:** You may start and stop the exam as many times as you wish (within the total time limit for the exam if there is one). Once you finish the exam you will need to click Save and Submit for your score to be recorded.
- **All at Once:** If all of the exam questions appear on the page at once, the Save Answer button will appear next to each question. It is a good idea to click Save Answer after each question answered, in case of technical difficulties. Saved answers will be recorded.

- **One at a Time:** If the exam is in this mode, the Save Answer button will be displayed for each question. Again, it is good practice to save after each question. Click the forward arrow once you are done with the question. Once you move to the next question, the previous answer will be saved and recorded. If you click the double-forward arrow, you will skip to the last question. Conversely, clicking the double-back arrow brings you back to the first question.

**Write essay answers in a word processor.** You are allowed to copy and paste from a word processing program into Blackboard. By writing your essay answers in a word processor, you are essentially creating a backup of your answer. This comes in handy if any technical difficulties arise. You can also check your spelling and grammar in the word processor.

**Saving your answers.** Each answer that you select should save automatically. In the event it does not automatically save, click on the Save Answers button above each question to ensure your answers are saved. Before you Save and Submit, click Save All Answers.

### **Submitting the exam:**

**Submit the exam.** Once you have finished answering the questions, click the Save and Submit button at the bottom of the exam. If you do not submit the exam, you will receive no credit for your answers. You should see a confirmation page if the submission was successful. Clicking the Save All Answers button does not submit the exam.

**Confirm your submission.** If you received confirmation or feedback, your score was recorded successfully. If you did not receive confirmation, go back to the content area and locate the exam. Click the link to the exam. Blackboard should tell you that the exam has been completed or will give you feedback about the exam.

**You can check the My Grades area to confirm exam submission.** If you see a grade/score or an exclamation mark (!), then the submission was successful, and you are done. If you see an Attempt in Progress icon, then you should contact your instructor and ask for verification. If anything happened to your browser or Internet connection during the exam, or you received any error messages, include this information with your email to the instructor.

### **Common errors/issues:**

**Accidentally quitting the exam.** If you lose power or close your browser--or something else causes you to stop taking the exam before you submit it--contact your instructor immediately to get instructions. Make sure to include details as to what caused the problem.

**Firewall.** If you have a firewall installed on your system, it might prevent you from accessing your exam. You can either temporarily disable your firewall, or take the exam at a non-firewalled computer.