

Online Exam Tips

The following information applies only to online exams/quizzes delivered through Blackboard. Online exams have many different available settings, which allow them to be set for single or multiple attempts, with specific date and time settings, with timer restrictions which submit automatically and/or with password protection. An exam might display a single question at a time, or may offer the ability to stop/save and resume the exam. Other exams may be configured so questions are pulled in random order from a question pool. In certain courses, exams may require the use of Respondus Lock Down Browser. For additional information about installing and using LDB, refer to the separate [Respondus Lock Down Browser tutorial](#).

Contact your instructor ahead of time if you have any questions about your specific exam format. Review the following tips and please call the CMU Help Desk (989-774-3662) if you encounter any problems while taking your exam.

Before Starting an Online Quiz/Exam

- Be sure that you are using a Blackboard certified or compatible browser, by running the [Blackboard system test](#). It's also helpful to check that system software is up to date (PC users should use the Windows Automatic Updates and Mac users can run Software Update.) Finally, make sure your antivirus software is up to date as well, since spyware and viruses may interfere with taking the exam.
- For Wireless Internet Users: A hard-wired connection plugged directly into a network jack or router is **highly recommended** rather than a wireless connection—it provides a much more stable connection with less chance of a dropped connection.
- Disable any pop-up blockers before starting the exam. Some exams (depending on instructor configuration) are set to launch in a new window. Enabled pop-up blockers may prevent the new window from launching.
- Close all other unnecessary programs (instant messaging, Facebook, email, etc.) to prevent distracting pop-ups and interference with your network connection.
- Do not click the "Begin" exam link unless you are prepared to take the exam at that time. If the exam does not appear immediately, wait - do not click on the Begin button multiple times. Once you've entered the exam, avoid clicking the Cancel or Back button. If the exam is set to single attempt with force completion, your current attempt may become locked if you exit without submitting. Contact your instructor immediately if you cannot re-access the quiz/exam.
- Avoid minimizing, maximizing, resizing or a launching a new browser window or clicking on other course links during the exam. Ensure that the exam window is maximized before starting.
- If an exam must be taken in a specific time window, do not wait until the last minute to take it. Should something go wrong, there may not be enough time to resolve the issue before the deadline.
- If the exam question presentation is set to display all questions on a single screen (All at Once configuration), wait for the entire exam to load before starting to answer any questions. Scroll down to the bottom of the exam to ensure that all questions appear before starting.

While Taking the Exam

- Read exam instructions at the top of the page carefully, particularly the settings of involving Time Limits, Timer Settings and Force Completion.
- **Time Limits:** In the exam heading area, check if it is a Timed Test. If a time limit does not appear, the test is not timed. Timed Tests will have a timer bar counting down the elapsed time appearing just above the first question. (See examples below) Warning notifications will appear when half the time, 5 minutes, 1 minute, and 30 seconds remains.



Remaining Time: **58** seconds. **Less than one minute remains. Click Save and Submit to complete the test.**

✖ **Question Completion Status:**

- **Timer Setting:** The Timer Setting will indicate whether the test will automatically submit at the end of the time limit. Once the timer reaches zero seconds, Blackboard will save all the answers and submit the exam without any intervention on your part. If you finish early answering all the questions and you do not want to wait until the end time for the test to automatically submit, you must click the Save and Submit button.

Timer Setting	You will be notified when time expires, and you may continue or submit.
Timer Setting	This test will save and submit automatically when the time expires.

If the Timer Setting indicates that you are notified when time expires and you may continue or submit, be sure to click the Save and Submit button several seconds **before the timer countdown reaches zero**. If you go over the allowed time, Blackboard will still accept the submission, but the time overage will be noted in the My Grades area. Instructor intervention is required before a grade value is displayed. (Some instructors may deduct points for the time overage).

Save and Submit

- **Force Completion:** Force Completion will indicate whether or not the test can be saved and resumed at a later time—if it is **also a timed exam, the timer will continue to run up until you click Submit - even if you save and exit out of the exam.**

Force Completion	This test can be saved and resumed at any point until time has expired. The timer will continue to run if you leave the test.
Force Completion	Once started, this test must be completed in one sitting. Do not leave the test before clicking Save and Submit .

- DO NOT use the browser's Back and Forward buttons or the Scroll Wheel on your mouse to move through questions; instead use the provided arrow keys and/or window side scroll bars to navigate.
- Once an answer has been selected, approximately 7 seconds later the question will be automatically saved and the button next to the answer will change from "Save Answer" to "Saved". (See example below). With this automatic save feature, it is no longer necessary to manually save each question or use the Save All button periodically while taking the exam.

1,000,000 points **Save Answer**

1,000,000 points **✓ Saved**

- If time permits, review your exam responses prior to submitting. If any questions were left unanswered, a reminder prompt will appear.
- Remember that Save All Answers and Save and Submit are two separate processes with two different outcomes. Saving an exam (if allowed by the instructor and other test settings) may allow the exam attempt to be resumed at a later time. All exams must still be submitted (using the Save and Submit button) in order for the results to be recorded.
- Do not click Save and Submit more than once. It may take several minutes for the submission process to complete.
- If there appear to be any possible problems with the submission, you can print or save a copy of the confirmation page for your records. To confirm that the exam was successfully submitted, check within My Grades. Depending on the type of exam and settings used, either a score, green completion checkmark or exclamation mark should appear indicating the item "needs grading". If a blue clock icon appears, it represents an "in-progress" attempt—first, try to re-enter the exam to complete and submit it. If you are unable to do so, contact your instructor for assistance. The CMU Help Desk is not able to clear or submit in-progress exam attempts.