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How to Prepare for an Online Examination

Taking Online examinations can be stressful whether you have been taking them for years or if you are about to take your first one. Online examinations and quizzes come in many forms. It is advisable to remain prepared. Here are some steps to help you.

Instructions

- ▶ Contact your instructor ahead of time if you have any questions about the examination format and review the tips. Find out if notes are allowed during the exam. If notes are allowed, type your notes on the computer. If you do this rather than look at the notes on paper, you can press 'Ctrl-F' on the keyboard to use the 'find' tool, type in a keyword or statement to find it quickly in your typed notes. This works both on Macs and PCs.
- ▶ If you are allowed to use notes, you are usually allowed to use your course book as well. If this is the case, you will want to mark each chapter or specific topics in your book. You can do this with sticky notes, page markers, or even bookmarks. If you label the markers, it is easier to find exactly what you want more quickly.
- ▶ Do not click the exam link unless you are prepared to take the exam. Once you've entered the exam, avoid clicking the 'Cancel' or 'Back'. If the exam is set to single attempt and/or force completion, the current test attempt will be locked. If a locked attempt is preventing you from re-accessing the quiz/ exam, contact your instructor immediately.
- ▶ Click the link to the test only once. If the link is clicked more than once, a message indicating The assessment has already been taken may appear, prompting instructor intervention to clear the attempt, which may now be locked.
- ▶ Check beforehand if you will have adequate time for online examination. Some examinations time the exams and others do not so. You must find this out ahead of time as well. It is a good idea to find out if there are any storms headed your way to prevent power and internet interruptions. Online exams typically do not let you re-enter after you have already start them. If your computer shuts down or internet disconnects, you lose the chance.

- ▶ It is a good idea to take an Online examination at locations decided by the examination authority or at your study centre.
- ▶ Avoid minimizing, maximizing, resizing or a launching a new Internet browser window or clicking on other course links during the exam. Ensure that the exam window is maximized before starting.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ If an exam must be taken in a specific time window, do not wait until the last minute to start it. If something go wrong, there may not be enough time to resolve the issue before the deadline.
- ▶ Stay away from any distraction that you can. University libraries or Study centres are a great place for online examinations.
- ▶ In an exam, question presentation is set to display all test questions on a single screen (All at Once configuration), wait for the entire question to load before answering/saving any loaded questions. Scroll down to the bottom of the screen to ensure that all questions appear before starting.
- ▶ In the heading of the exam page, check status of Force Completion. If it says This Test must be completed now, the test must be completed and submitted without exiting from it—it CAN NOT be resumed later. If Force Completion indicates 'This test can be saved and resumed later', the test can be saved and resumed at a



later time—however, if it is a timed exam, the timer will continue to run, even if the exam has been exited.

- ▶ If the exam is timed, the heading of the exam page will indicate the time limit. Upon entering the exam, a timer displaying the elapsed time will appear in the Test/Survey Status box. When 1 minute remains, a warning pop-up message will display. If the time limit is exceeded, Blackboard will still accept the submission, but the time overage will be recorded by a green exclamation point in the grades area. If this happens, Blackboard requires instructor intervention before a grade value is displayed.
- ▶ If the connection is lost during the exam, do not close the browser window. Instead, try reestablishing the connection. If the exam is still displayed, complete it and try to submit. If you are concerned about whether your results were recorded, print a copy of the confirmation page for your records and email the same to your instructor indicating the problem you encountered.
- ▶ DO NOT use the browser's Back and Forward buttons or the Scroll Wheel on mouse to move through questions. Use provided arrow keys and/or window side scroll bars to navigate.
- ▶ If the exam is configured to display one question at a time, DO NOT click the Next button more than once.
- ▶ Remember that saving and submitting are two separate processes with two different outcomes. Saving an Examination (if allowed by the instructor) may allow the exam attempt to be resumed at a later time. If the exam has been saved, it must still be submitted when completed for the results to be recorded.
- ▶ Avoid using the Save Answer button located next to each question instead use the Save All.
- ▶ Answers button is usually at screen's bottom. When the individual Save Answer buttons are used, students may see the message: The following questions may be incomplete: x, y, z. Continue? If this occurs, click OK to submit the assessment; the answers will be saved.
- ▶ If time permits, review your exam responses prior to submission. If any questions were left unanswered, a reminder prompt may remind you about it. Take it seriously. ■■■

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