Running and invigilating online assessments (including exams) with Blackboard

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About this guide

This guide outlines what you need to do on the day of the online exams and supplements the standard invigilation guides covering all exams. This guide is intended for people using the e-assessment engine in Blackboard.

Chief invigilating staff and system administrators should familiarise themselves with the procedures and the troubleshooting described in this guide prior to the online exam.

A very short guide ("Invigilating online assessments") aimed at postgraduate invigilators is also available.

Other invigilating staff should familiarise themselves with the general responsibilities for invigilators in online assessments (http://www.bris.ac.uk/esu/e-learning/support/tools/e-assessment/invigilation.html)

Training on how to invigilate online exams is available from the Digital Education Office (DEO). To book a session please contact the DEO: https://www.bristol.ac.uk/digital-education/whotocontact.html

Some of the tasks may have been performed by zonal IT support. Check with the chief invigilator what is expected of you.

All online exams should have a pre-agreed Latest Finish Time: a point by which all students must have finished. This is usually dictated by availability of invigilators, technical support, and when the building closes or set-up for afternoon exams must begin. In the very unlikely event that a student requires extra time because their answers have been lost, the exam should not continue beyond the Latest Finish Time. This will usually be 12.45pm for morning exams, 5.30pm for afternoon exams. Note that Blackboard technical support is not usually available after 5pm.

Latest Finish Time: ........................................

Contacts

IT Services Helpdesk 0117 92 87870
Zonal / local IT Support ..........................................................

Before the exam – help set up the room

Check all computers are working and connected to the network. If the computers have not been used for a while – such as at the start of term – it may be worth switching the PCs on early to minimise the chances of network failure or lengthy updates causing problems.

Ensure there is no glare on the screens from windows or lights.

Familiarise yourself with central equipment, such as tutor PC, projector, microphone, and monitoring equipment (where present).

Ensure that several back-up computers are set up and logged in to the network so that a student can be moved to one quickly if their own computer fails. There should be at least 2 back-ups for every 50 students. Ideally, you should log in to them using a guest account before the test starts.
Troubleshooting
Start of the exam needs to be delayed.

1. If you have set the test to be available to students at a particular time, you may need to go into the Blackboard course and change the Display After/Display Until times in the Test Options.

Student arrival and login
Check students are following the login instructions. Students may attempt to log in and start the exam early – watch their screens to ensure that they are not racing ahead.

Assist with any login problems.

Note any students who have not arrived by the start of the exam.

Any student arriving after the start of the exam can log in and start the test if they arrive within the 30 minutes allowed. Again you should note these students.

Additional instructions to students (to be read by chief invigilator)

- Confirm negative marking arrangements (if any)
- Ask students to log in to their machines, open the link to the browser (in kiosk mode, if being used), log in to Blackboard, and go to where the test is, but wait before starting the test
- Ask students to check that the test is visible in the course where you have placed it
- Remind them of the navigation options:
  - “Question Completion Status” near the top of the screen opens a checklist of all the questions, allowing you to move to any one, and showing which ones you have saved the answer to
  - If you have configured the test to display the questions one at a time: The “Previous question” and “Next question” buttons at the bottom of the screen allow you to move through the questions in sequence
  - For some questions you may need to scroll down to see the entire question text
  - If the test has the timer set: You will be warned 1 minute before your time is up. If you have set the timer, we suggest you do not set it to Auto-Submit, since if you have to give any students extra time this option would automatically submit them at the original time limit. If, however, you have chosen to use Auto-Submit then you should issue the following warning to the students:
    - When the timer runs out the test will automatically be submitted
  - If you try to submit the test with some questions still unanswered the system will warn you; if you then click OK it will submit it with questions unanswered
  - Once you submit you will not be able to go back and change any of your answers
  - You must not exit the browser, or open any other programmes, during the exam
  - All computers are monitored centrally, as well as visually by invigilators
- Ask the students to begin the exam in groups of around 40. This is a safeguard to prevent the server from becoming overloaded. Check that all students have successfully entered the exam before moving to the next group. If you have set a password for the exam, you can stagger entry by revealing the password to the students progressively.
Troubleshooting

Student can’t log in to the machine

1. Get them to double-check they are using the correct UoB username and password.
2. Students can use the IT services online tool to reset their password provided that their (personal) email and mobile number are stored on the University's systems OR ask them to complete the exam on paper.

Student can’t log in to Blackboard using single-sign-on

1. Get them to double-check they are using the correct UoB username and password.
2. As a last resort if one of the invigilators has Sys Admin permissions on Blackboard student’s guest password can be reset to allow the student to enter Blackboard via the Guest Login access or OR ask them to complete the exam on paper.

A group of students can’t log in to Blackboard using single-sign-on

1. Contact IT Services Helpdesk to check if this is a known issue and how soon it is likely to be fixed. If appropriate, delay the start of the exam. If it is delayed, you should check that the test will still be visible to students at the new start time.
2. OR ask them to complete the exam on paper.

Student(s) can’t see the test in Blackboard

1. Check they are looking in the correct Blackboard course and in the correct place. Go into the course and check that the test is deployed and available to students.

During the exam

Help monitor the students to prevent cheating. Specific things to look out for in online exams include: opening other programmes or attempting to move to a different web page; copying from other students’ monitors – especially looking at another student’s monitor and then moving to the same question as them.

Assist with any questions about using the system or any technical problems.

Reassure students (and staff) if there are any technical issues.

Troubleshooting

Mouse or keyboard broken

1. Replace swiftly. You should not usually need to grant extra time to the student.

Images not displaying correctly

1. Give the student a paper copy of the images. You should not usually need to grant extra time to the student.

Student has accidentally come out of the test

1. Make a note of the time they should have left in the exam and their UoB user name.
2. Ask them to log back into system and resume the test (if the option is available). They should find that their answers have been saved, though they may have lost a few seconds' work, so advise them to check over the last question they answered.

3. If the resume option is not available, and you haven't allowed multiple attempts, you can clear the student's attempt via the Grade Centre. In order to give them time to fill in their existing answers they should be allowed:
   - (time remaining when the computer failed) PLUS (half the time already taken)
   - OR (time remaining until Latest Finish Time), if that is lower.

Browser freezes

1. If the test is being taken in kiosk mode, click CTRL F4 to kill the browser and ask the student to log back into the system and resume the test. They should find that their answers have been saved, though they may have lost a few seconds' work, so advise them to check over the last question they answered.

Computer fails

1. Make a note of the time they should have left in the test and their UoB user name.
2. Move the student immediately to one of the back-up computers. They should be able to log in to Blackboard and "resume" the exam. They should find that their answers have been saved, though they may have lost a few seconds' work, so advise them to check over the last question they answered.
3. If no backup computer is available OR if this is the second time this student's computer has failed OR if the system has not saved their answers so far, give them a paper copy of the exam. In order to give them time to fill in their existing answers they should be allowed:
   - (time remaining when the computer failed) PLUS (half the time already taken)
   - OR (time remaining until Latest Finish Time), if that is lower

Network or Blackboard fails

1. Advise students that this should not cause a problem, but that they should not submit their answers until the network problem has been resolved. If you are reaching the end of the exam, reassure them that if the timer runs out and the test does automatically submit, they will not lose their work: the system will just keep trying to submit until the network is back up again.
2. Liaise with the IT Service Desk to find out how soon the problem will be resolved. Discuss with the chief invigilator whether it is necessary to ask the students to complete the exam on paper.
3. If they need to move to paper, in order to give them time to fill in their existing answers they should be allowed:
   - (time remaining when the computer failed) PLUS (half the time already taken)
   - OR (time remaining until Latest Finish Time), if that is lower
Power cut

1. The exam may need to be rescheduled, but if there is sufficient natural light in the room, and no other reason not to, you can move to paper. In order to give them time to fill in their existing answers, students should be allowed:
   - \((\text{time remaining when the computer failed}) \text{ PLUS (half the time already taken)}\)
   - OR \((\text{time remaining until Latest Finish Time}), \text{ if that is lower}\)

Fire alarm

1. When evacuating the room, instruct students to leave all the computers as they are.
2. On returning, attempt to continue online. This should mean that all students lose the same amount of time: the time they were absent from the room. If some machines have shut down, meaning that the students have to re-login and resume, you will need to check if there is a big difference in the amount of time remaining and ensure that no students are put at an advantage. This may mean requiring some students to submit before their timer has expired.
3. If there is a problem continuing online, move to paper. In order to give them time to fill in their existing answers they should be allowed:
   - \((\text{time remaining when the computer failed}) \text{ PLUS (half the time already taken)}\)
   - OR \((\text{time remaining until Latest Finish Time}), \text{ if that is lower}\)

At the end of the exam

Students must click “Save and Submit” then “OK” to submit their work. Once all students have submitted / timed out, read the following instructions:

- The examination is finished.
- We will collect your rough notes from your desk before you leave.
- You must not speak to anyone but the invigilator until you have left the building.