

## Utilizing Blackboard Exams and Quizzes

Tim Baker, Eric Powers, Jan Bass

03/17/2020

Blackboard allows the creation and deployment of exams and quizzes for face-to-face, hybrid, and online courses. This document enables an instructor to with some Blackboard familiarity to create and administer exams. This document is not a reference document for every function that Blackboard exams allow, but a guide to help an instructor decide if the Blackboard environment is the right solution for their course.

### Overview

### Question Types

Blackboard exams allow for the creation and delivery of exams within the Blackboard environment. The exam tool allows for the creation of a multitude of question types, including:

- Calculated Formula
- Calculated Numeric
- Either/Or
- Essay
- File Response
- Fill in the Multiple Blanks
- Fill in the Blank
- Hot Spot
- Jumbled Sentence
- Matching
- Multiple Answer
- Multiple Choice
- Opinion Scale/Likert
- Ordering
- Quiz Bowl
- Short Answer
- True/False

The exam can auto-grade questions that allow for exact matches (True/False, Multiple Choice, Fill in the multiple Blanks, etc.). Other types of questions that have qualitative responses require the grader to review and score the question manually. The file response question allows for the upload of a file that the grader manually evaluates. Question pools may also be created. An additional benefit of Blackboard exams is the automatic feedback that students can receive.

### Exam Controls

The exam controls are selected (think scheduled) once the questions are created. The exam options include:

- Make available to students
- Add a Blackboard announcement
- Allow multiple attempts (if selected, how many attempts allowed)

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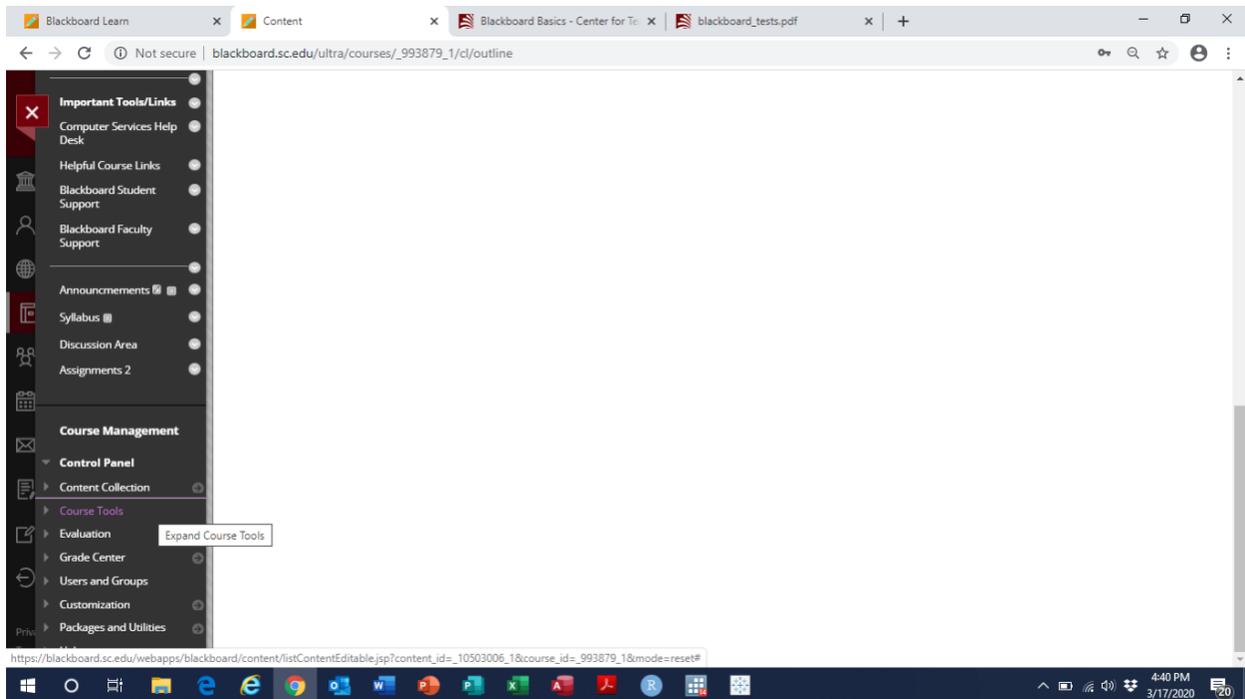
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- Force completion in one sitting
- The time allowed for the exam
- Automatically submit the exam when allowed time ends
- A display before date and time
- A display after date and time
- The password to access the exam
- User and group exceptions to the exam
- Due date and time
- Do not allow the student to start the exam if the due date and time is past
- Include the test in grade center calculations
- Hide results for this test from the instructor and grade book – this is a permanent option
- Showing test results and giving feedback to students – various options
- Test presentation – all at once or one question per screen
- Randomize questions

### Exam Creation Steps

The first step in the process is to create questions. The following screenshots document the creation of questions.

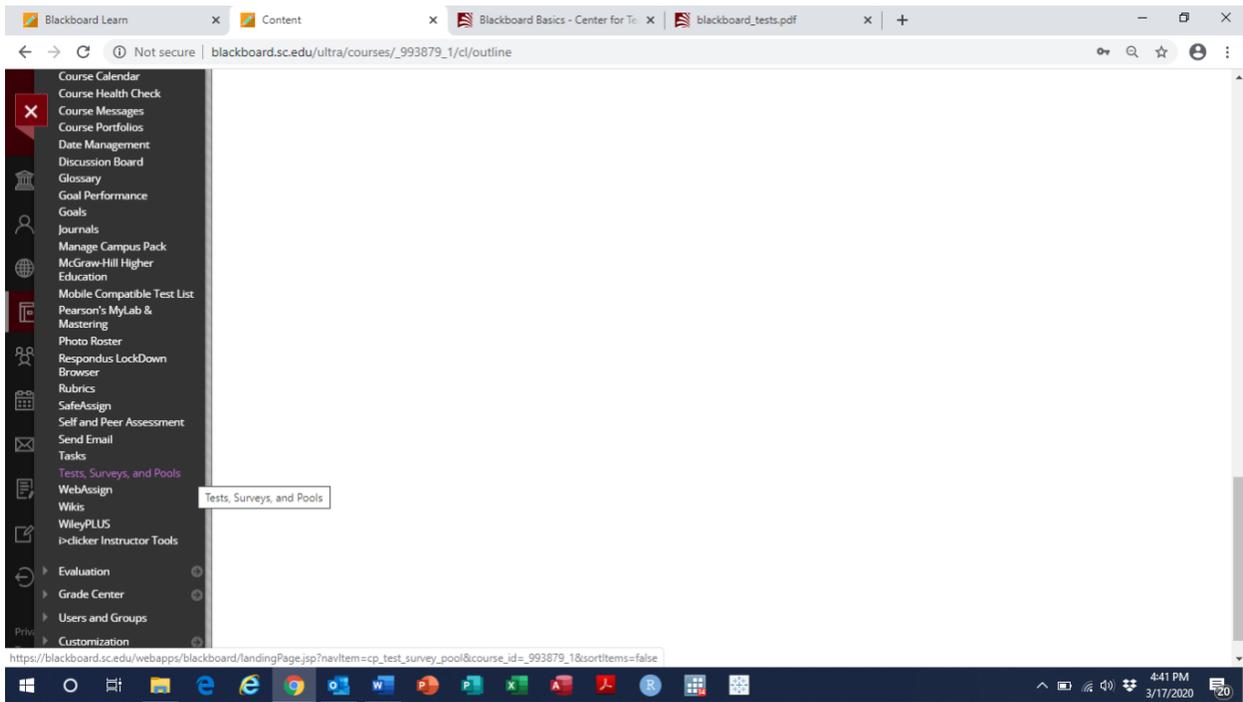
Login to Blackboard and select the course you want to create the exam. Select Course Tools from the Course Management menu, then Tests, Surveys, and Pools.



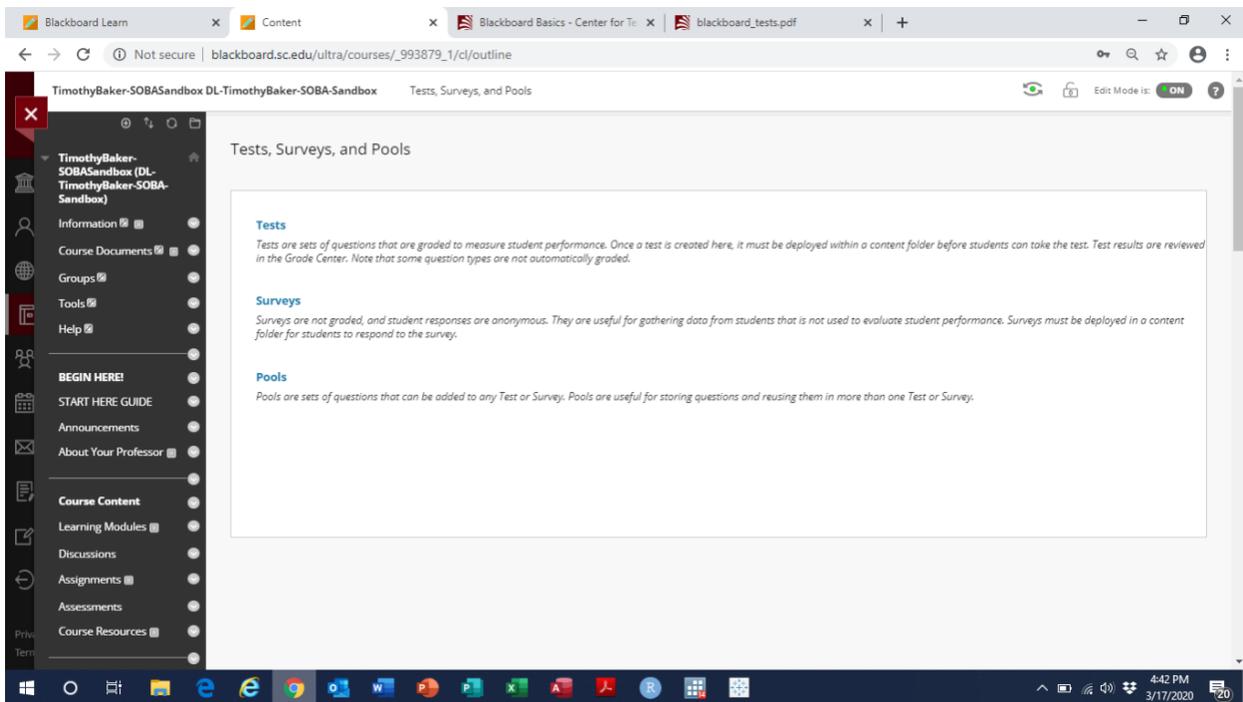
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## Select Tests

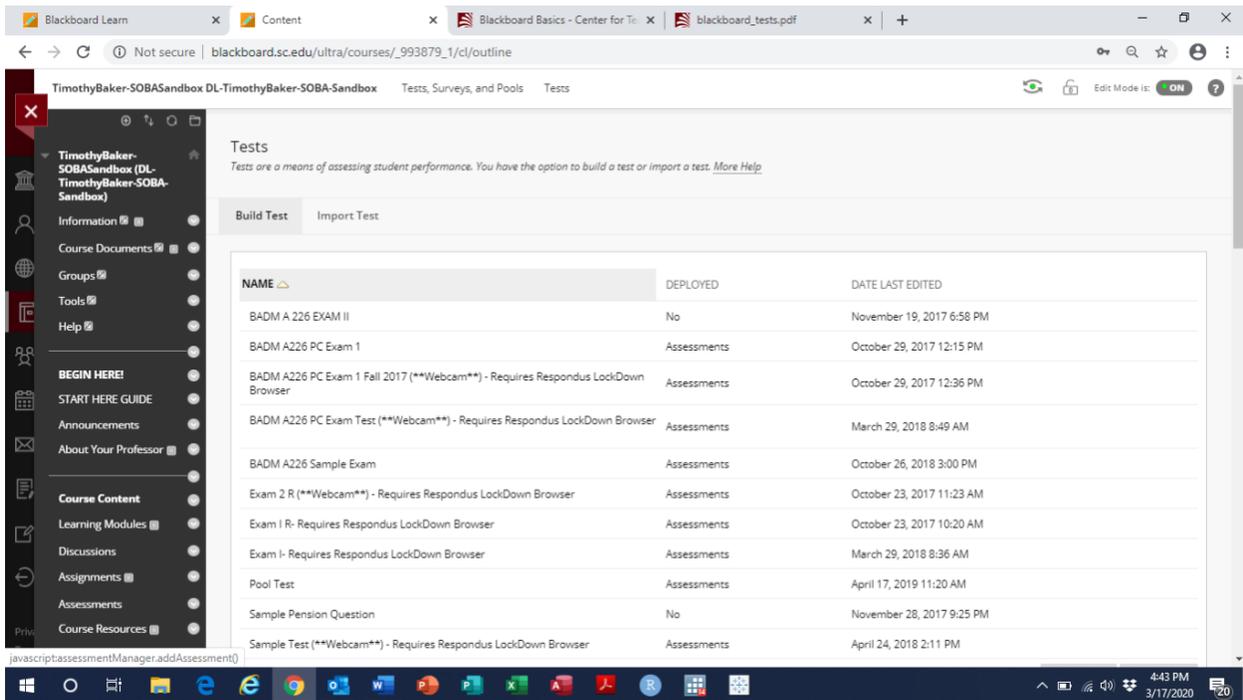


## Select Build Test

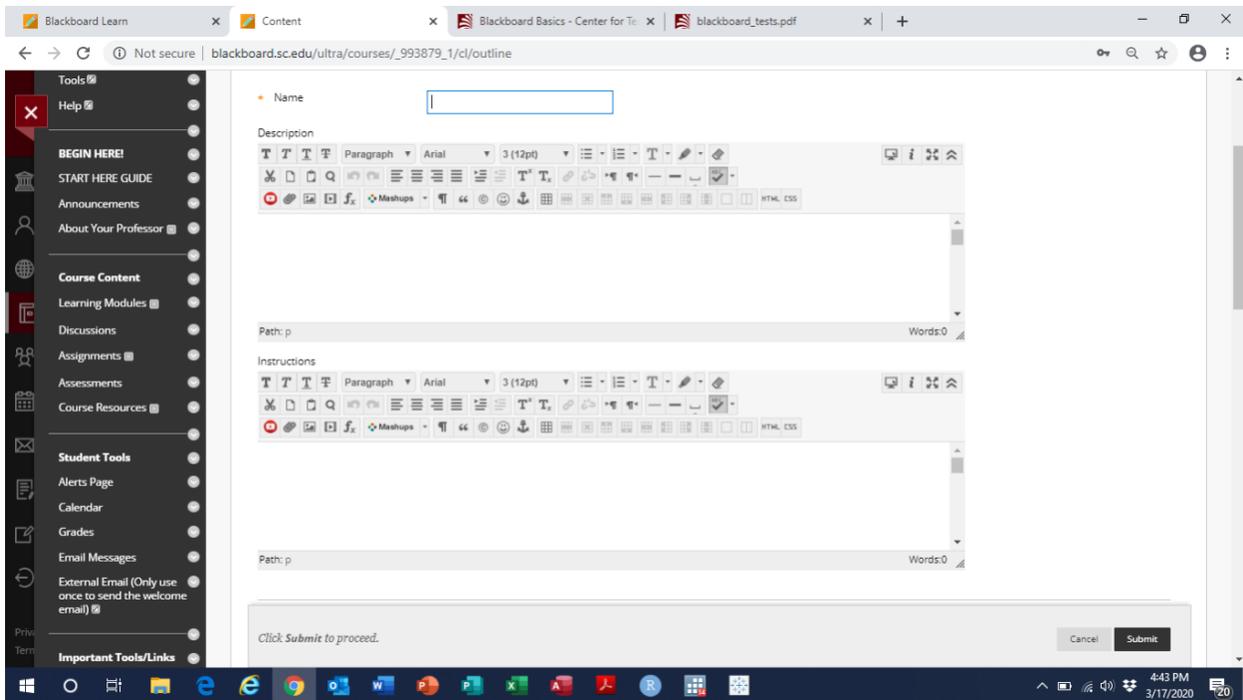
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Create a name, description, and instructions for your exam. You will have the option to display the description, instructions, or both when deploying the exam.



The instructions should tell the students all the information you would say to them if the exam were being administered in class, including:

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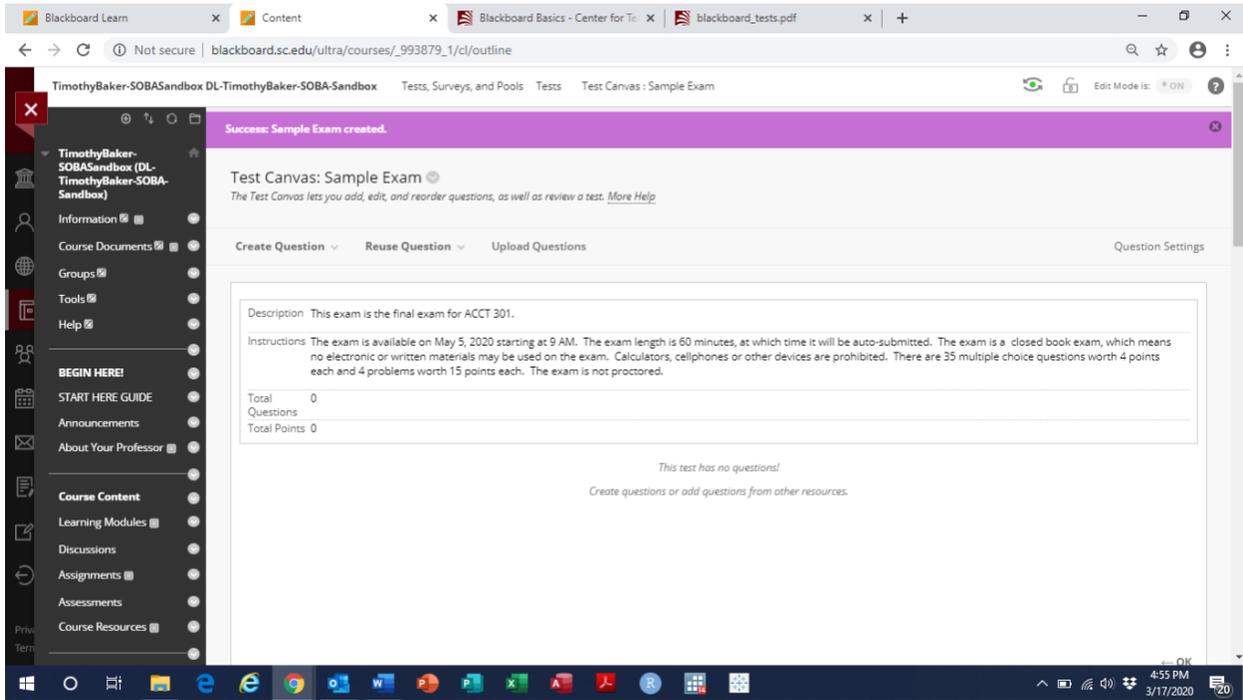
1. When is the test available? (What is your test window?)
2. How long does the student have to take the exam? (Is it timed?)
3. Is the open exam book or closed book? Can they use notes, scratch paper, calculators, etc....?
4. How many questions are on the exam? What's the exam worth? What types of questions are on the exam?
5. Is the exam proctored (optional)? Do students have the appropriate information for your proctoring method? (Respondus Lockdown Browser, ProctorU, etc.)

The screenshot displays the Blackboard Learn interface for configuring an exam. The left sidebar contains navigation links such as 'BEGIN HERE!', 'START HERE GUIDE', 'Announcements', 'Course Content', and 'Student Tools'. The main content area is titled 'Sample Exam' and features two rich text editors. The first editor contains the text 'This exam is the final exam for ACCT 301.' and a 'Path: p' field. The second editor contains the text 'The exam is available on May 5, 2020 starting at 9 AM. The exam length is 60 minutes, at which time it will be auto-submitted. The exam is a closed book exam, which means no electronic or written materials may be used on the exam. Calculators, cellphones or other devices are prohibited. There are 35 multiple choice questions worth 4 points each and 4 problems worth 15 points each. The exam is not proctored.' and a 'Path: p' field. At the bottom right, there are 'Cancel' and 'Submit' buttons.

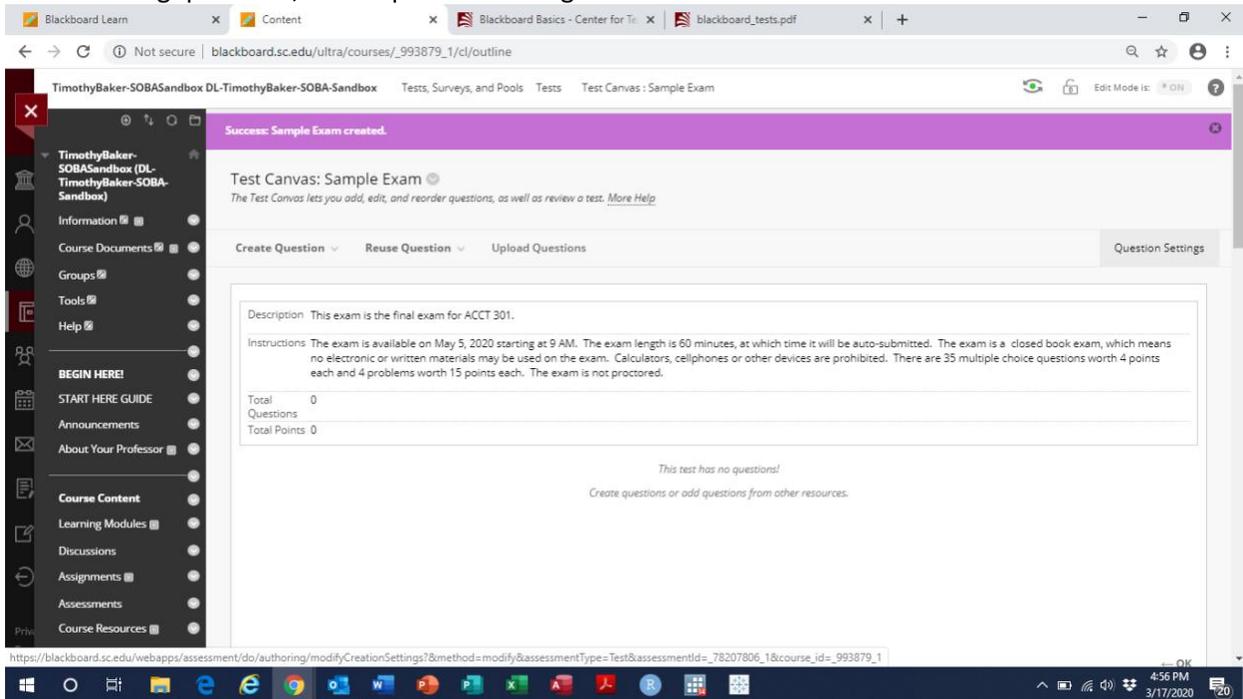
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Before adding questions, select question settings.

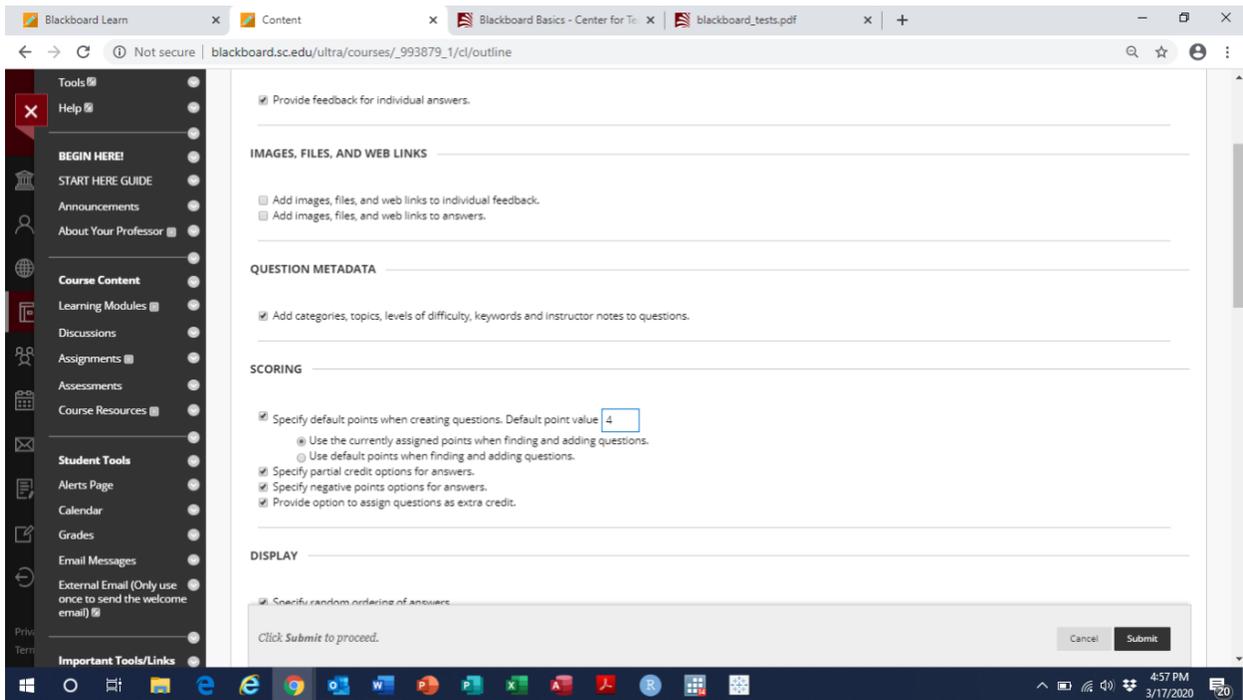


Select the appropriate options and/or change defaults.

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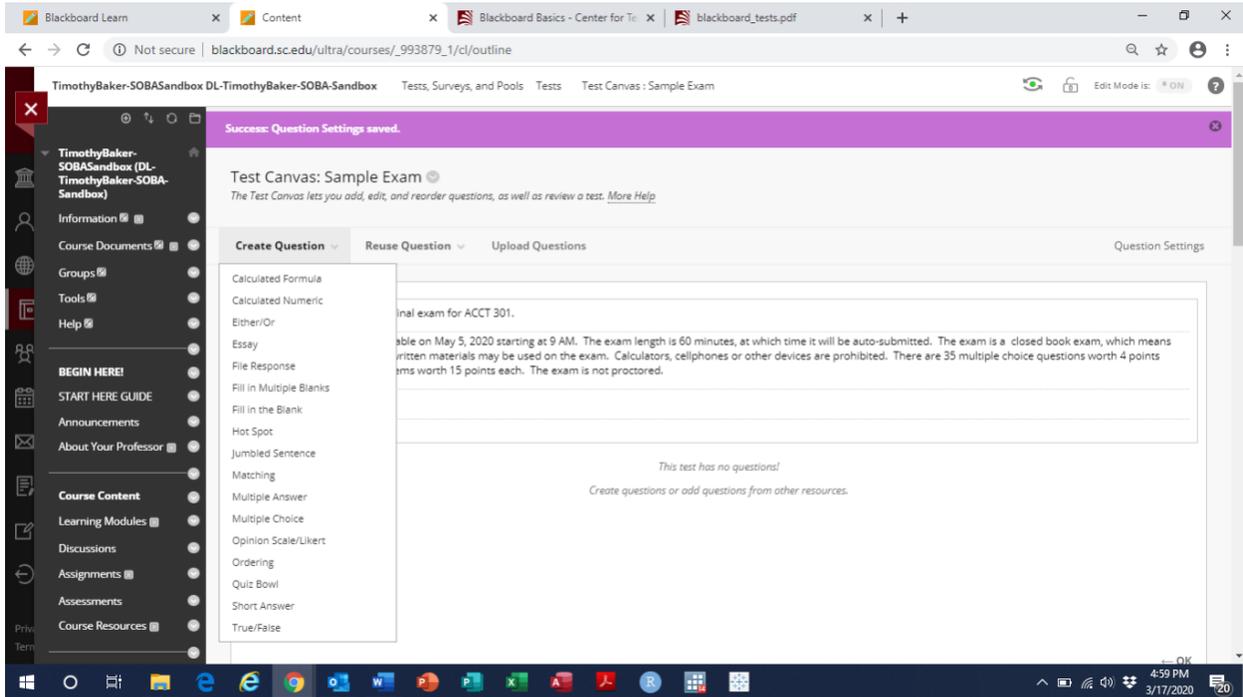
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The example above used defaults with the addition of adding "provide feedback to students" and changing "default points per question" to four. Select Submit.

Select Create Question and the question type you want to add.

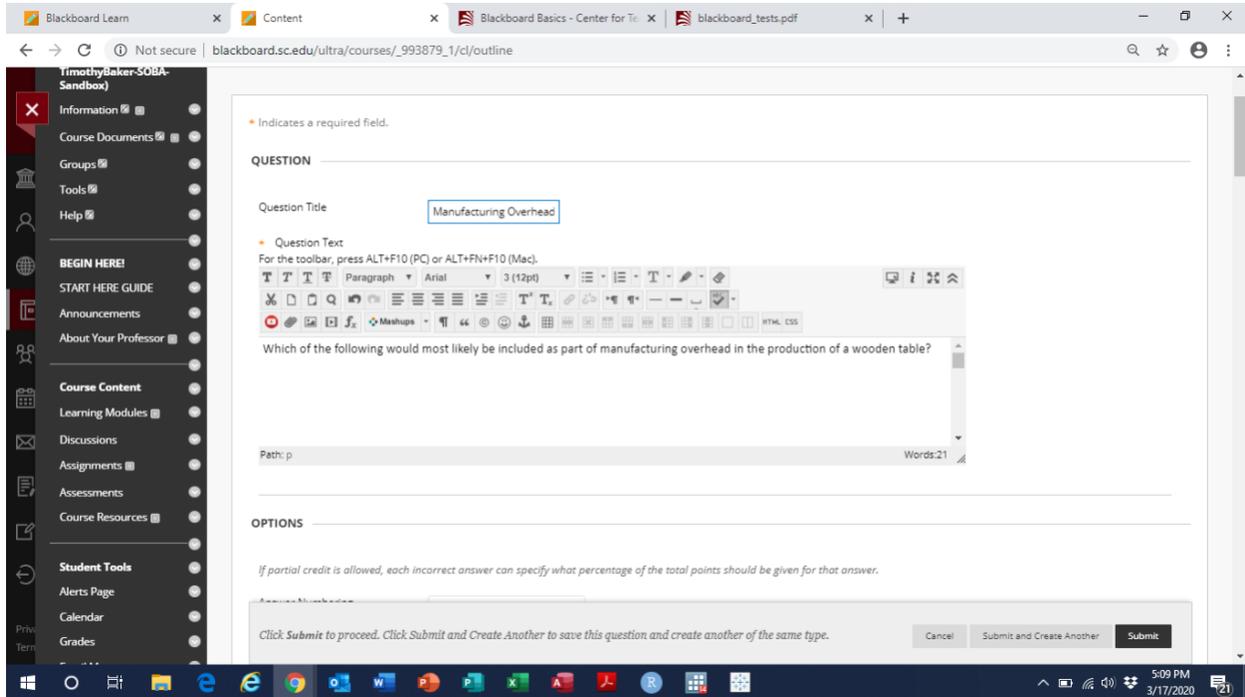


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The first question added in this example is a multiple-choice question. Create a question title and the text you want to be displayed.



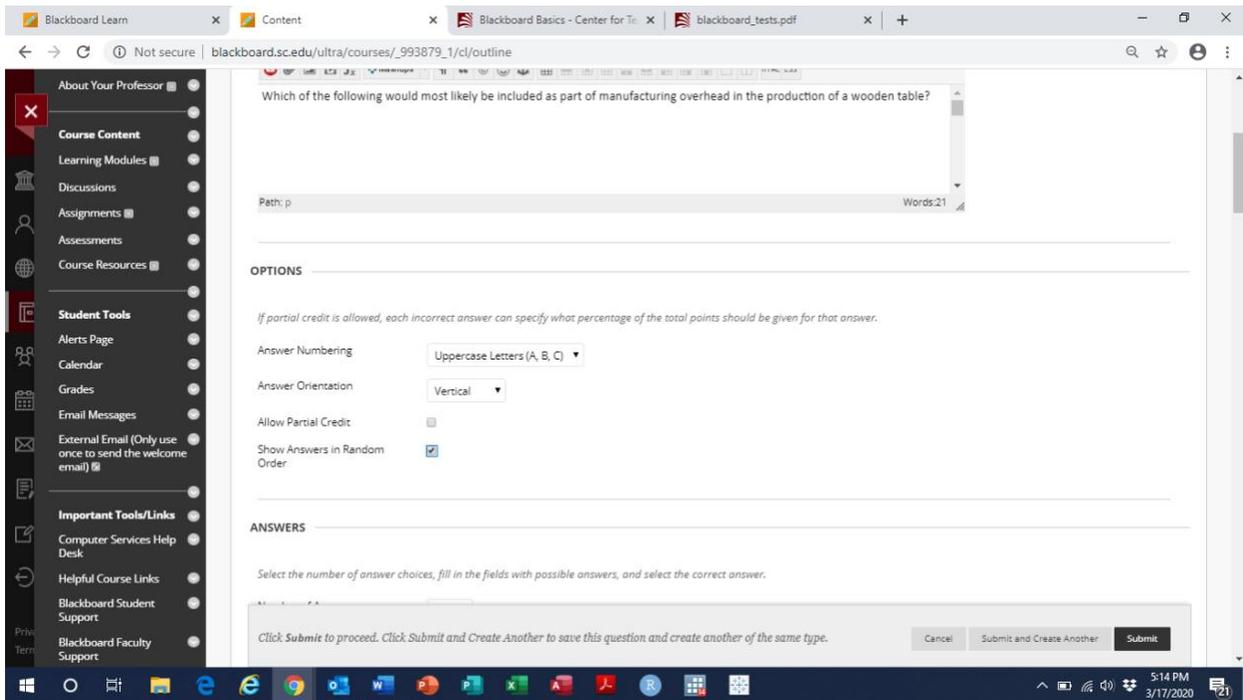
The screenshot shows the Blackboard Learn interface for creating a question. The browser address bar shows the URL: `blackboard.sc.edu/ultra/courses/_993879_1/cl/outline`. The left sidebar contains navigation options such as Information, Course Documents, Groups, Tools, Help, and a 'BEGIN HERE!' section. The main content area is titled 'QUESTION' and includes a 'Question Title' field with the text 'Manufacturing Overhead'. Below the title is a rich text editor with a toolbar and the question text: 'Which of the following would most likely be included as part of manufacturing overhead in the production of a wooden table?'. The 'OPTIONS' section is currently empty. At the bottom of the question editor, there are instructions: 'Click **Submit** to proceed. Click **Submit and Create Another** to save this question and create another of the same type.' and buttons for 'Cancel', 'Submit and Create Another', and 'Submit'. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the time as 5:09 PM on 3/17/2020.

Select the question options. Numbering format and randomize answer order are selected.

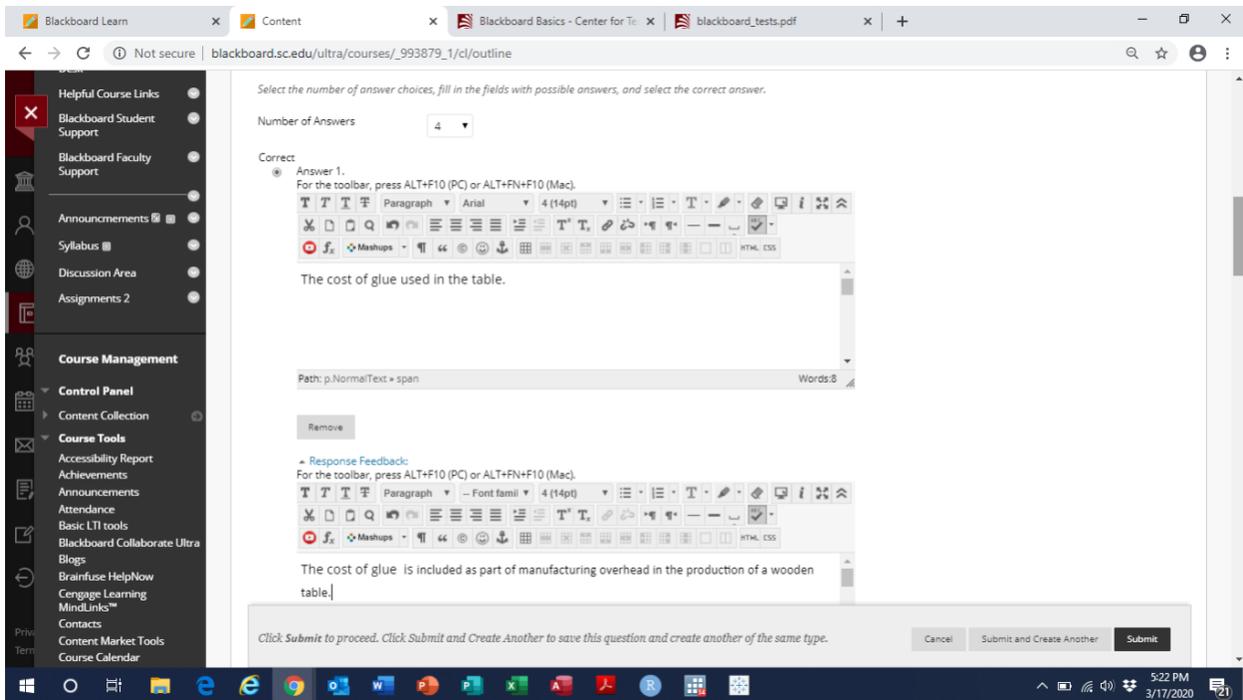
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Add the answers to the question. Note the radio button for the correct answer. Provide feedback for the answers. The feedback can be the same for each question if you are providing the right response.

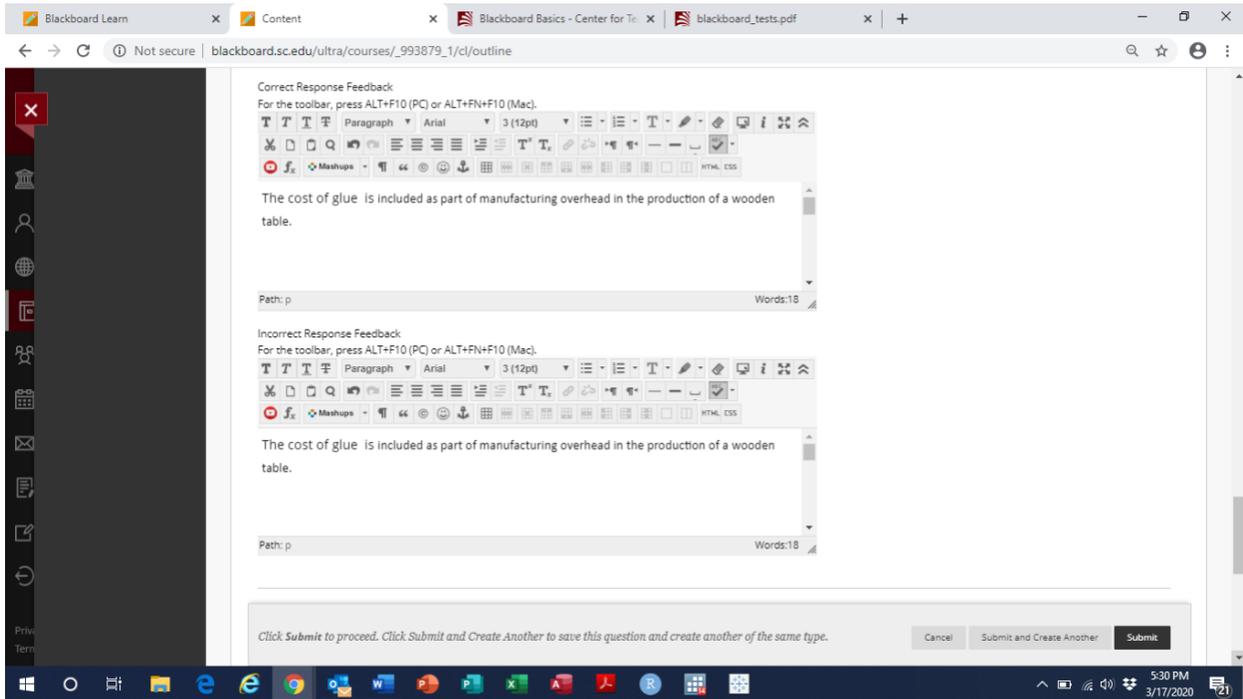


You can use individual question responses like the above example or leave the particular answer response blank and utilize the correct and incorrect answer windows at the bottom.

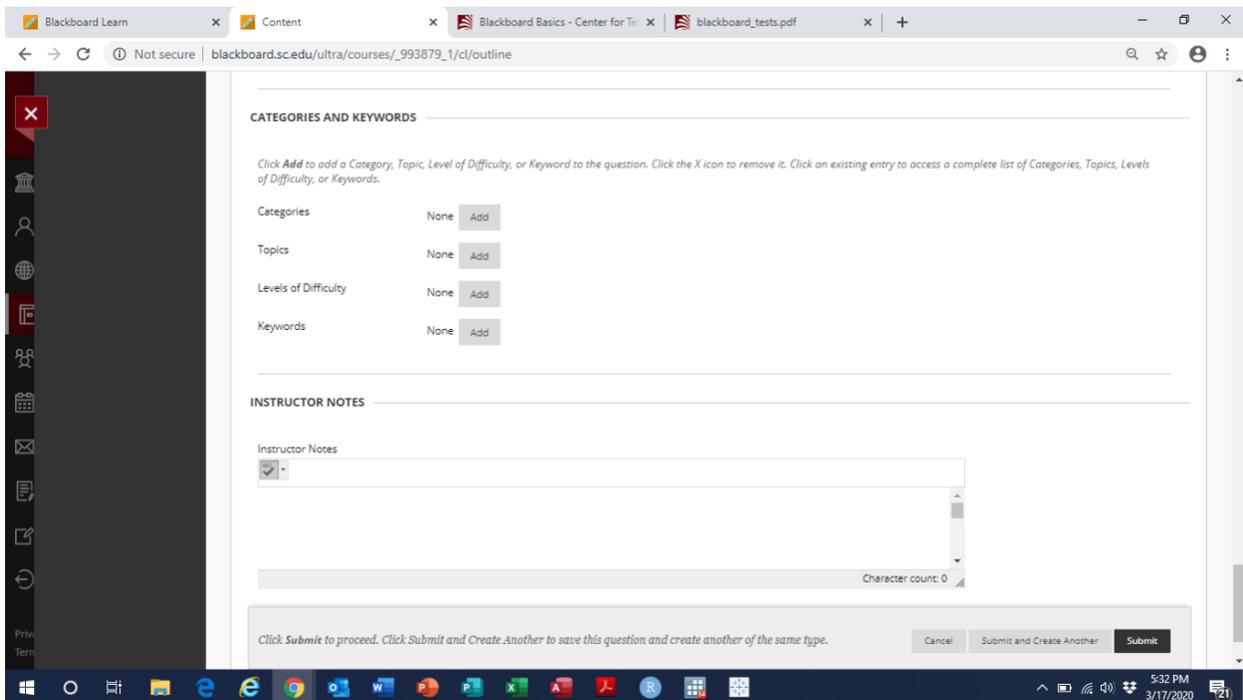
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You can also assign question categories, keywords, and instructor notes for the question.



Select Submit and add another if the question type remains the same. If the question is the last of this type or the previous on the exam, then select submit.

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The question is now added to the exam. Continue adding questions until the exam is complete. You may find it helpful to revise points using question settings when you change question types.

When you complete adding the questions, select okay at the bottom of the screen.

A few instructional design tips include:

If you were a student in your course, what would you want to know before taking an exam? When creating instructions or a description of your exams, consider the following:

1. If students have file upload questions, be sure to provide some instructions beforehand so students know files will need to be downloaded and uploaded during the exam.
2. If students are taken an exam in a different LMS or site, such as McGraw Hill, please let students the best browser to use when opening the site. **Note:** Some sites work better than others for some websites.

When creating instructions or a description of your exams, remember to add the following:

1. Be sure to weigh questions fairly (i.e., an essay question should not have the same weight as a true/false question).
2. Provide constructive feedback for both correct and incorrect responses. Both feedback responses can be the same, but do not just say "correct" or "incorrect."
3. The most commonly used questions are multiple-choice, multiple answers, true/false, and fill in the blank. However, providing several question types will help measure and assess knowledge in a variety of

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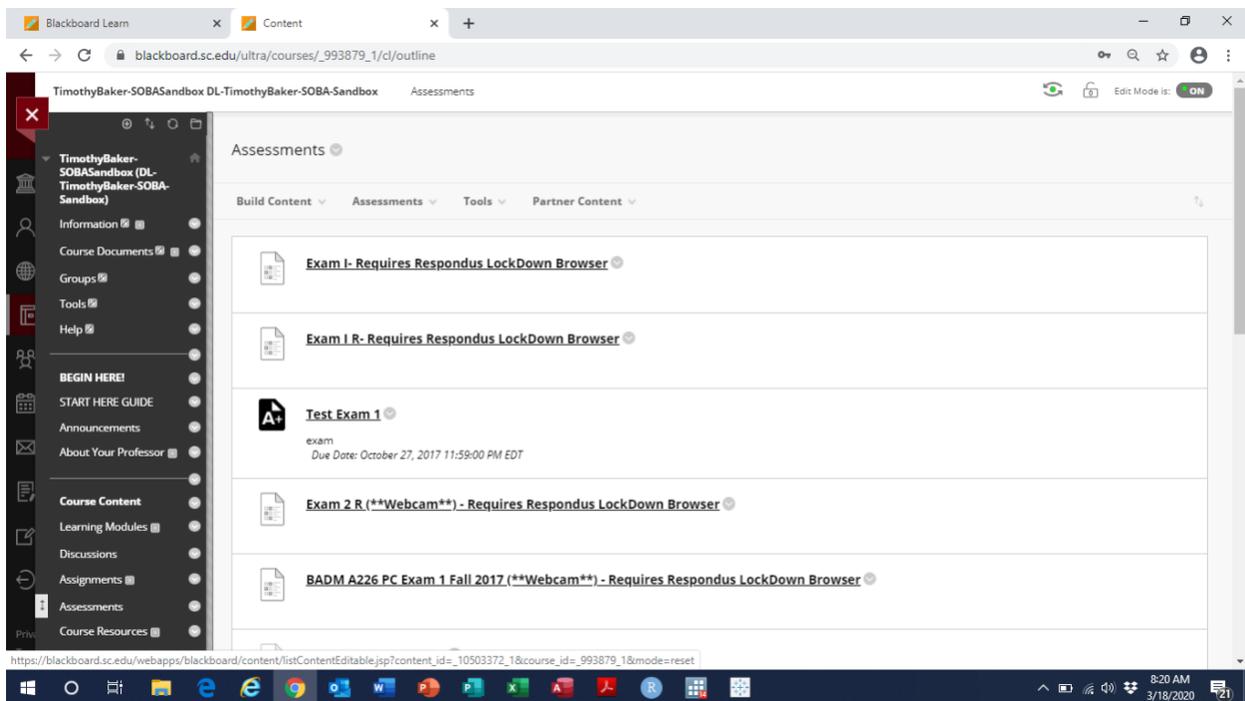
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ways. It is recommended that you limit the number of true/false questions.

4. When providing answer choices, best practice will be to use "all are correct" instead of "all of the above" or "none are correct" instead of "none of the above."

### Scheduling the Exam

The exam is adopted to allow the optional settings to be established. The first step is to navigate to the module where you want to publish the exam. That may be in a module, an exams folder, or others that will make sense to your students.



The screenshot displays the Blackboard Learn interface for a course titled "TimothyBaker-SOBASandbox DL-TimothyBaker-SOBA-Sandbox". The main content area is titled "Assessments" and lists several assessment items:

- Exam I - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser
- Exam I R - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser
- Test Exam 1 (exam, Due Date: October 27, 2017 11:59:00 PM EDT)
- Exam 2 R (\*\*Webcam\*\*) - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser
- BADM A226 PC Exam 1 Fall 2017 (\*\*Webcam\*\*) - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser

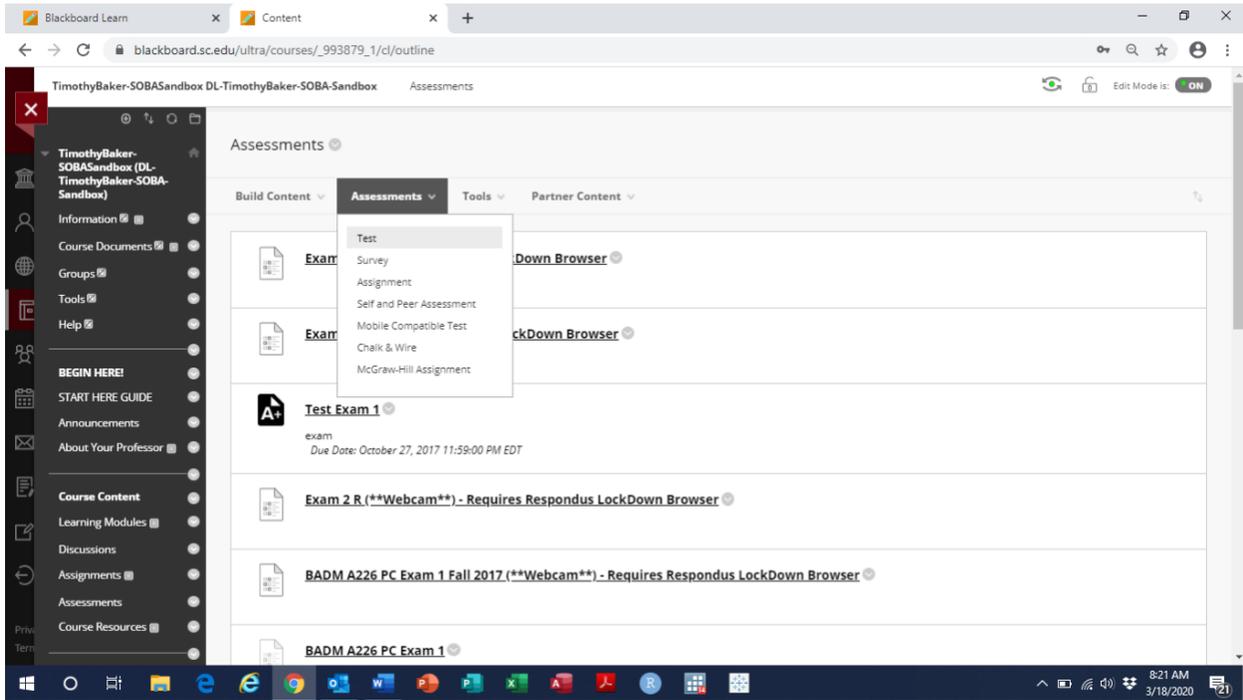
The interface includes a left-hand navigation menu with options like Information, Course Documents, Groups, Tools, Help, and Course Content. The bottom of the screen shows a Windows taskbar with various application icons and a system tray displaying the time as 8:20 AM on 3/18/2020.

Select Assessments and Test.

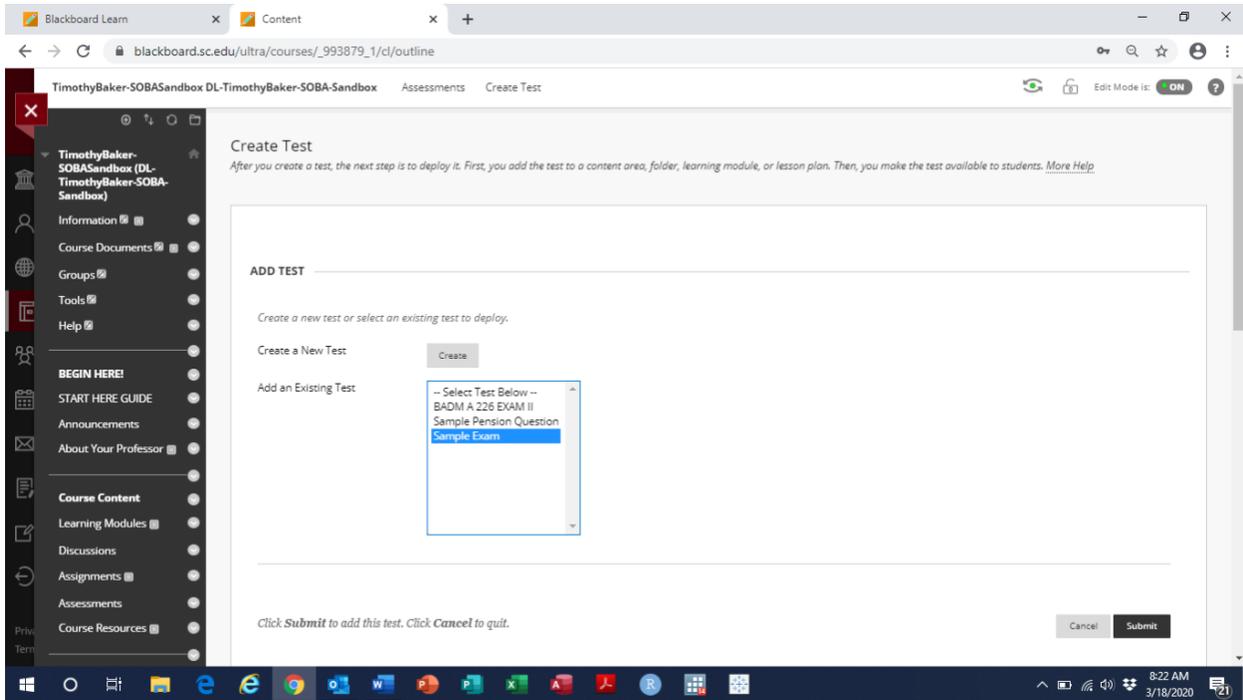
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Select the exam you created.

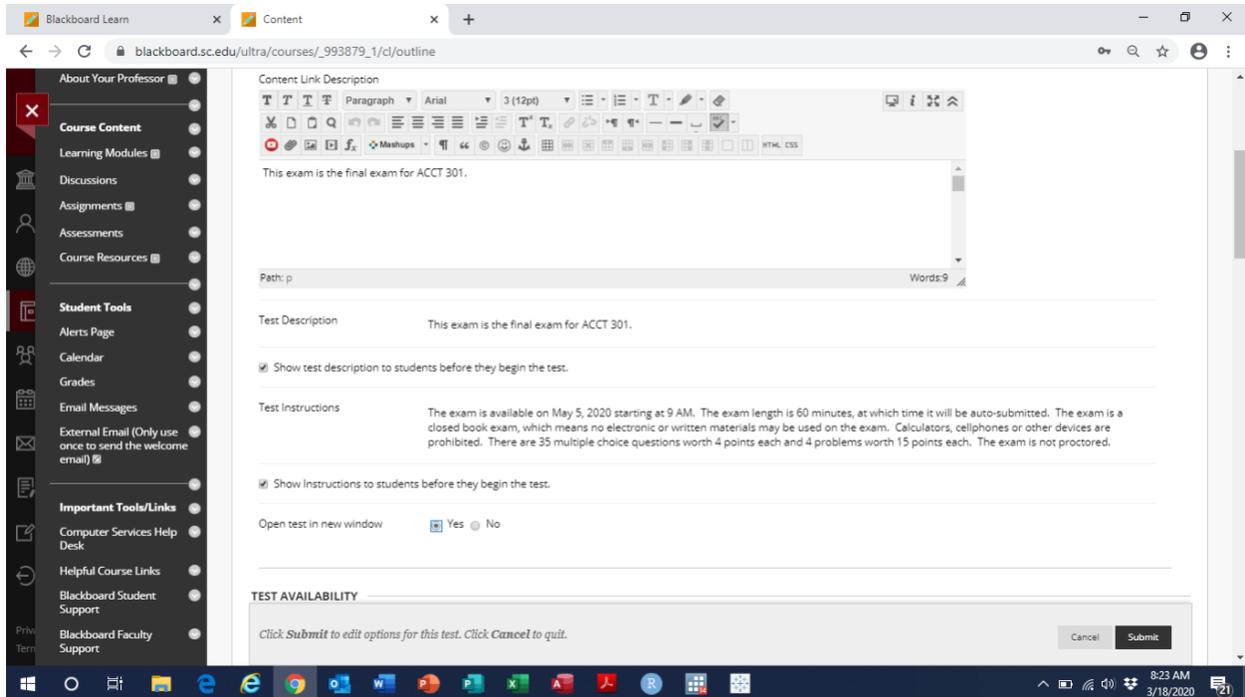


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You can allow the exam description and instructions to be visible to the students. You generally want to display it in a new window.



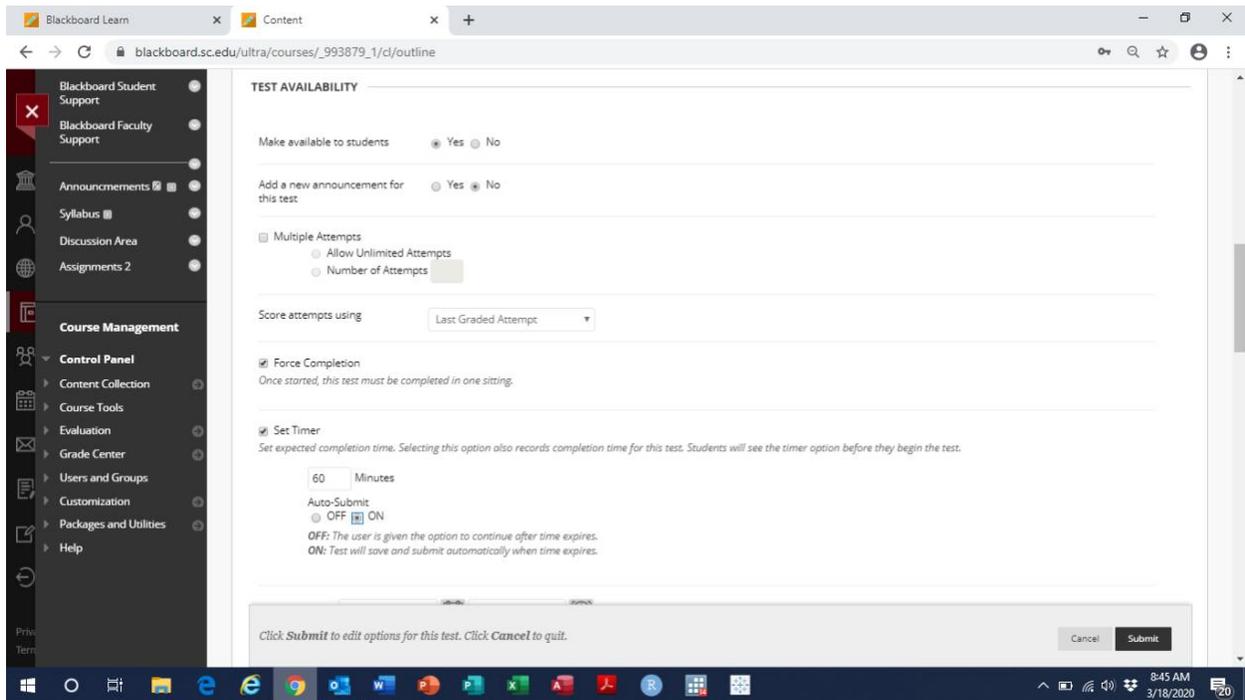
The screenshot shows the Blackboard Learn interface for configuring an exam. The left sidebar contains navigation options such as 'About Your Professor', 'Course Content', 'Student Tools', and 'Important Tools/Links'. The main content area is titled 'Content Link Description' and includes a rich text editor with the text: 'This exam is the final exam for ACCT 301.' Below the editor, there are sections for 'Test Description' and 'Test Instructions', both with checkboxes to 'Show test description to students before they begin the test.' and 'Show instructions to students before they begin the test.' The 'Open test in new window' option is set to 'Yes'. At the bottom, there is a 'TEST AVAILABILITY' section with a 'Submit' button.

In the test availability section, make the exam available for students (you can adjust start and stop dates and times lower on this page), add a course announcement, set up multiple attempts, force completion, and timer. If the exam is a closed book and not proctored, you may want to consider tightening the time allowed for the exam, so students are not able to reference materials. Some instructors also tighten the times on open-reference exams.

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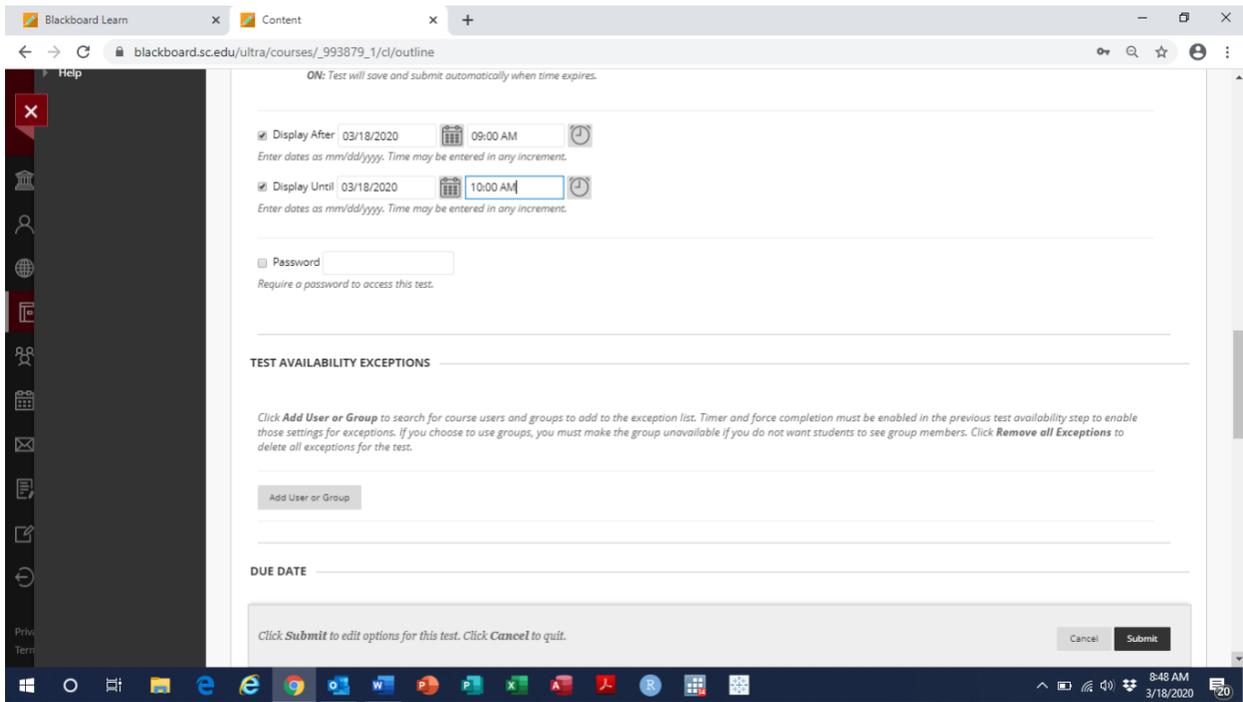
In this example, I selected to make available, with no multiple attempts, forced completion with a 60-minute time limit and auto submit on. Occasionally, a student will experience an internet interruption or other technical issues, and the exam will submit before they are complete. While those instances are few between, you will have to work around dealing with them.

Select the start and stop dates and times in the section below. You may elect to create a password. If you are using Respondus Lockdown Browser, it will create a password using this field.

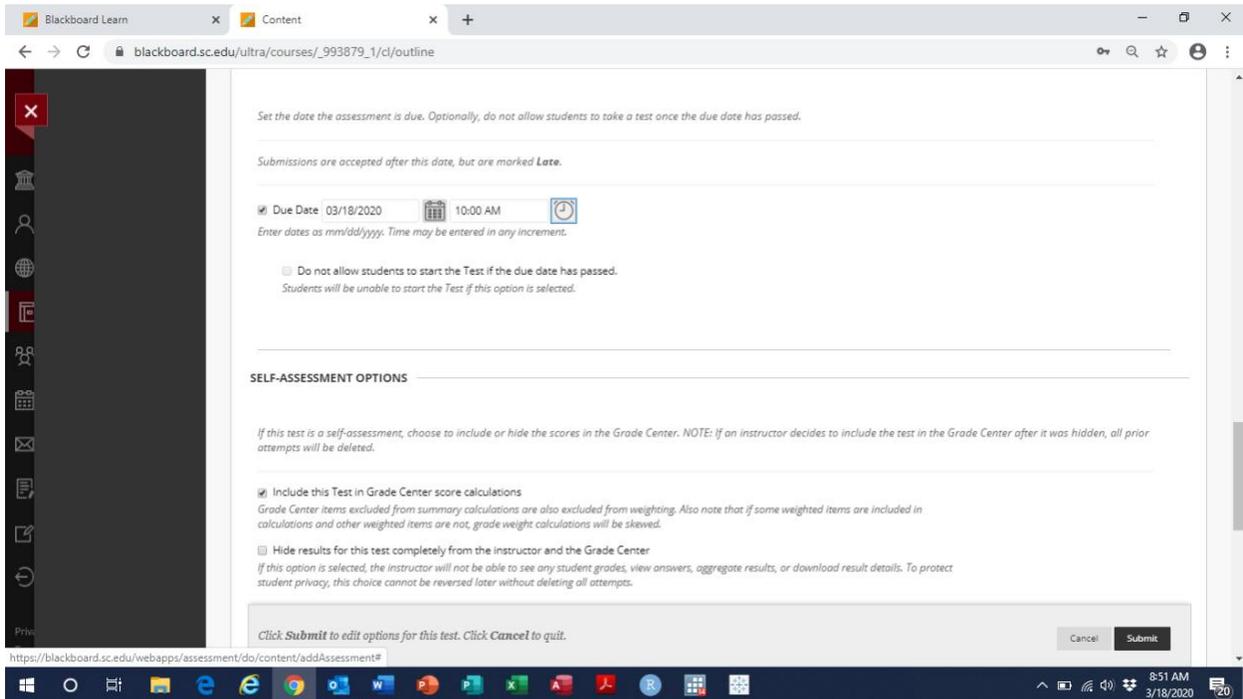
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You next select a due date and time. The option to not allow a student to start the exam after the due date and time is greyed out. You need to submit the exam, select edit exam, and return to select that option.



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Leave include in grade center calculations checked and the hide from instructor and gradebook option unchecked. I have not utilized the hide function, and it is irrevocable.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Learn interface for editing a test. The browser address bar shows the URL: `blackboard.sc.edu/ultra/courses/_993879_1/c/outline`. The page title is "SELF-ASSESSMENT OPTIONS".

**SELF-ASSESSMENT OPTIONS**

*If this test is a self-assessment, choose to include or hide the scores in the Grade Center. NOTE: If an instructor decides to include the test in the Grade Center after it was hidden, all prior attempts will be deleted.*

Include this Test in Grade Center score calculations  
*Grade Center items excluded from summary calculations are also excluded from weighting. Also note that if some weighted items are included in calculations and other weighted items are not, grade weight calculations will be skewed.*

Hide results for this test completely from the instructor and the Grade Center  
*If this option is selected, the instructor will not be able to see any student grades, view answers, aggregate results, or download result details. To protect student privacy, this choice cannot be reversed later without deleting all attempts.*

**SHOW TEST RESULTS AND FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS**

*Test results and feedback are available to students after they complete a test. Set up to two rules to show results and feedback. Rules occur based on the events selected. Each rule specifies when and what to show students; such as scores, answers, and feedback for each question.*

WHEN	SCORE PER QUESTION	ANSWERS	FEEDBACK	SHOW INCORRECT QUESTIONS
After Submission	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> All Answers <input type="checkbox"/> Correct <input type="checkbox"/> Submitted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

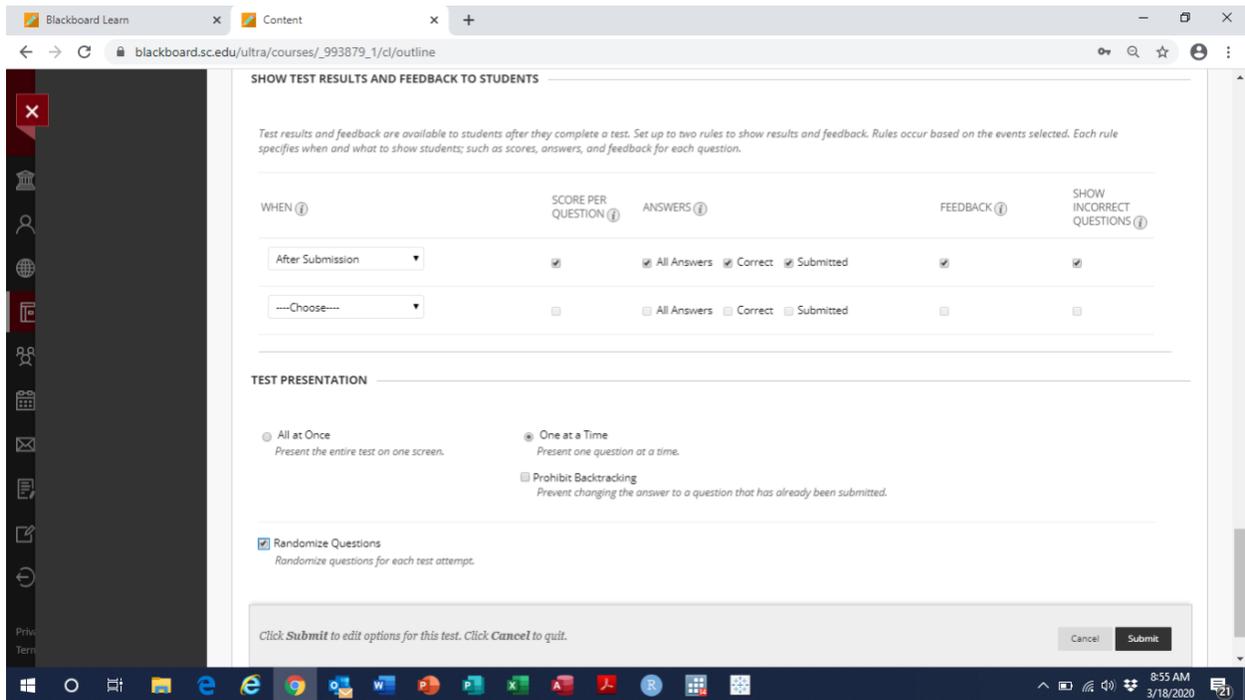
Click **Submit** to edit options for this test. Click **Cancel** to quit.

Set the grade and feedback settings. I typically use it after submission and allow them to see all the questions and responses. The test presentation is the last section of the options. I usually use one at a time and allow (uncheck) backtracking and randomize questions.

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Select submit. The exam is now present and will show up for the students at the start time. Remember to edit the exam options and select the do not allow start if the start date and time is elapsed. You will want to be available during the exam for any questions or issues that may arise.

### Test Generation

When creating exams in Blackboard, it's nice to have tools in place that will make uploading quizzes to Blackboard efficient and convenient.

There are several helpful [test generators](#) that can help you create and export your test into Blackboard. With some research, the Department of Distance Learning found that the [Northeast Wisconsin Technical College](#) seems to be the best generator to use.

The [Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Blackboard Test Generator](#) helps to prepare questions in word or notepad. The generator recognizes several questions types, such as Multiple Choice, Multiple Answer, True/False, Essay, Matching, and Ordering. The generator allows you to create a text (.txt) file that can be edited before bringing it into Blackboard. This is an excellent tool because it can be used to create a regular test (quizzes) or pools of questions that can be used to build several tests/quizzes. Question numbers are removed in the test generation process. Manual removal is not necessary. The text is automatically inserted into the test generator.

### Formatting Your Word Document

The [Northeast Wisconsin Technical College Blackboard Test Generator](#) has provided an already formatted word document to help in making sure your questions are appropriately formatted before adding them to the test generator.

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Please download this [word document](#) and follow instructions on how to create your test questions in preparation to be added to the generator.

### Creating Questions Pools

An alternative to programming an exam with one-off questions is to create question pools and then have the exam randomly select a subset (usually one) from each pool. For numeric questions, you might vary a key input like an interest rate such that the correct answer differs across question variants. For conceptual questions, there might be several different key concepts intertwined in a particular course topic and you might have three or four different questions asking about those separate key concepts. There are two advantages of the pool approach. First, having multiple versions of a question is a barrier to collaboration among students. Second, pools exist independently and you can draw on those pools for both a midterm and a cumulative final.

Tests, Surveys, and Pools

**Tests**  
Tests are sets of questions that are graded to measure student performance. Once a test is created here, it must be deployed within a content folder before students can take the test. Test results are reviewed in the Grade Center. Note that some question types are not automatically graded.

**Surveys**  
Surveys are not graded, and student responses are anonymous. They are useful for gathering data from students that is not used to evaluate student performance. Surveys must be deployed in a content folder for students to respond to the survey.

**Pools**  
Pools are sets of questions that can be added to any Test or Survey. Pools are useful for storing questions and reusing them in more than one Test or Survey.

### Select "Build Pool"

Pools

Pools are sets of questions that you can use in multiple tests or surveys. You can import pools from outside the system and export them for reuse. [More Help](#)

**Build Pool** Import Pool Import QTI 2.1 Package

NAME	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	DATE LAST EDITED
2 Stage Growth DDM Final	8	December 2, 2019 9:39 AM
529 Plans	1	January 26, 2017 8:43 AM

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Give the pool a name and any necessary details for students to do the questions. Then hit submit.

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## POOL INFORMATION

Name:

Description

For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).



*I don't usually bother with a description*

Path: p » em Words:7

Instructions

For the toolbar, press ALT+F10 (PC) or ALT+FN+F10 (Mac).



*Sometimes I have numeric questions where I don't want a \$ sign or a negative sign. I would put those details here.*

Click **Submit** to proceed.

Now you can create questions as explained previously.

Pool Canvas: Sample Pool for How-to Guide

The Pool Canvas presents an inventory list of questions that can be managed and searched. You can use the check boxes to select any or all questions and then delete them or change their points, or edit questions individually. [More Help](#)

Description	<i>I don't usually bother with a description</i>
Instructions	<i>Sometimes I have numeric questions where I don't want a \$ sign or a negative sign. I would put those details here.</i>
Total Questions	0
Total Points	0

*This test has no questions!*

*Create questions or add questions from other resources.*

When you build your exam, you simply select from your pools.

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Test Canvas: sample test for How To Guide 

*The Test Canvas lets you add, edit, and reorder questions, as well as review a test. [More Help](#)*

Create Question  Reuse Question  Upload Questions

Create Question Set

Create Random Block

Find Questions

Description \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions \_\_\_\_\_

Total Questions 0

Total Points 0

*This test has no questions!*

*Create questions or add questions from other resources.*

When you identify the pool that you want to draw from, you also need to designate what types of questions that you want to use from the pool. You will see this set of check boxes when you scroll down. I always select All Questions.

### Create Random Block

*A random block is a group of questions retrieved from a question pool. Questions are randomly retrieved from the selected question pool based on the question type and the number of questions available in the selected pool. [More Help](#)*

#### Choose Criteria

View  Reset to Default

**Pool**

- 2 Stage Growth DDM Final
- 529 Plans
- Annuity FV
- Annuity PMT
- Annuity PV
- APR
- Auto Loan
- Auto Loan Final
- Balance Sheet Identity
- Basic Bond Valuation
- Bond Basics 1
- Bond Basics 2
- Bond Basics 3
- Bond Ratings
- Bond Valuation Final
- CAPM 1
- CAPM Final

#### Selected Criteria

*To create a random block, browse and select a source pool and at least one question type.  
The questions matching your criteria will be shown here.  
When done, click Submit to create the random block on your Test Canvas.  
The points per question and number of questions to use out of the block are set on the Test Canvas.*

Cancel **Submit**

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I usually select one question from each pool. This is the default. If you want to select more than one question from a pool that is an option.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard Test Canvas interface for a test titled "Test Canvas: sample test for How To Guide". The interface includes a header with navigation options: "Create Question", "Reuse Question", and "Upload Questions", along with a "Question Settings" link. Below the header, there is a section for "Description", "Instructions", "Total Questions: 1", and "Total Points: 10". A "Select" dropdown is set to "All", and "Select by Type" is set to "- Question Type -". There are buttons for "Delete", "Points", "Update", and "Hide Question Details". The main content area shows a "1. Random Block" configuration. It includes a "Total Questions" field set to 8, a "Number of Questions to display" field set to 1 (highlighted with a red box), a "Source Pool" field set to "2 Stage Growth DDM Final", and a "Question Types" field set to "All Pool Questions". A "Points per question" field is set to 10, and the "Total Points" is 10. A link "Preview questions that match selected criteria" is visible at the bottom.

Final comment on pools – those of us that have been teaching online have had the luxury of time which means we can build many versions of questions to deter cheating. You do not have that luxury. However, you will be surprised how quickly online information will get shared. Having a few versions of questions limits the ability to freeride substantially if the window during which students can take the exam is not too long.

### Respondus Lockdown Browser (RLB).

RLB is an installed feature in USC Blackboard. It is a denuded browser that students download and you can program your exam so that it can only be accessed with RLB. Once activated, RLB prevents a computer from doing anything else until the exam is submitted. This is a helpful feature that makes it impossible for students to copy and paste a question to a website like Chegg. Note that students can still easily access the internet via a second device. Moreover, I recently found copies of exam questions on Chegg that a student photographed with their phone. It is a never-ending arms race!

Once you have built and deployed a test, go to Respondus Lockdown Browser on your tools menu.

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Brainfuse HelpNow

Cengage Learning  
MindLinks™

Contacts

Content Market Tools

Course Calendar

Course Health Check

Course Messages

Course Portfolios

Date Management

Discussion Board

Glossary

Goal Performance

Goals

Journals

Manage Campus Pack

McGraw-Hill Higher  
Education

Mobile Compatible Test List

Pearson's MyLab &  
Mastering

Photo Roster

Respondus LockDown

Browser

Rubrics

SafeAssign

Self and Peer Assessment

Send Email

Tasks

Tests, Surveys, and Pools

WebAssign

Wikis

WileyPLUS

i>clicker Instructor Tools

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Practice for Lockdown Browser - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser	Required	Not Required
Test 1 Spring 2020 - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser	Required	Not Required
Test 2 Fall 2019- Requires Respondus LockDown Browser	Required	Not Required
Test 3 Final Fall 2019- Requires Respondus LockDown Browser	Required	Not Required
sample test for How To Guide		
<b>LockDown Browser Settings</b>		
<input checked="" type="radio"/> Don't require Respondus LockDown Browser for this exam		
<input type="radio"/> Require Respondus LockDown Browser for this exam		
<input type="button" value="Save + Close"/> <input type="button" value="Cancel"/>		

There is a useful video. Once you view it, hit Continue to LockDown Browser

Respondus LockDown Browser Dashboard

About LockDown Browser

Welcome | Video Tutorials | Getting Started | Resources

Prevent Cheating During Online Tests

Don't show this page again

Continue to LockDown Browser >

You will see a list of deployed exams. Select the relevant one and hit the arrow. Then select Require LockDown Browser for this exam. I have never programmed a Password as students can only access the exam via Blackboard anyways. Don't bother with the Monitor Webcam Settings. These pertain to a separate resource called Respondus Monitor. The university only has a teaser subscription to this service that provides 100 total seats a semester. Hit save and close and you are good to go.

## Utilizing Blackboard Exams and Quizzes

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The screenshot shows the Blackboard exam settings interface. At the top, the exam title is 'Test 3 Final Fall 2019 - Requires Respondus LockDown Browser', with 'Required' status in green and 'Not Required' in grey. Below this, a dropdown menu shows 'sample test for How To Guide'. The 'LockDown Browser Settings' section has two radio buttons: 'Don't require Respondus LockDown Browser for this exam' (unselected) and 'Require Respondus LockDown Browser for this exam' (selected). Below these are two expandable sections: 'Password Settings' with a text input field for 'Password to access exam (optional)', and 'Advanced Settings'. The 'Monitor Webcam Settings' section has three radio buttons: 'Don't require Respondus Monitor for this exam' (selected), 'Require Respondus Monitor for this exam' (unselected), and 'Either Respondus Monitor or a proctored lab can be used to take this exam' (unselected). At the bottom are 'Save + Close' and 'Cancel' buttons.

Final comments on RLB. It is important to give your students a practice exam so that they can test run RLB. My test run exam will have one silly question.

Sources:

Northeast Wisconsin Technical College

University of South Carolina Center for Teaching Excellence

University of South Carolina Aiken Office of Distance Learning