

Best Practices for Online Test Taking

We want our students to have a positive and successful test-taking experience. The following best practices outline what to do (and what **not** to do) in order to successfully complete an online exam.

Skipping any one of these items could cause the exam to hang or crash and you will not be able to complete the exam at that time. You also risk losing all of your progress and you might have to start over.

Before You Start:

1. **Set aside plenty of time.** Give yourself plenty of time to complete the exam and don't wait until the last minute! That gives you the best opportunity to receive assistance and complete the exam before the deadline should you experience an issue.
2. **Do not use a wireless connection.** The single biggest cause of exam failure is due to using a wireless connection, because the internet connection is prone to intermittent drops. You can connect your computer/laptop directly to your modem temporarily for purposes of taking the exam. If you don't have a wired connection available at home try your local library, one of our computer labs, your work location, a friend's house, etc.
3. **Use the recommended browser.** Firefox is the most compatible browser for Blackboard. Other browsers such as Internet Explorer are known to cause issues with Blackboard exams. If you don't have Firefox already, download it for free:
[Windows](#)
[Mac](#)
4. **Close all other browser windows and browser tabs.** Just leave Blackboard open so that you have all bandwidth available.
5. **Close all other open applications.** Close any other open applications such as Microsoft Word that might drain computer resources.
6. **Do not copy/paste.** Copying and pasting risks bringing over hidden HTML code that may interfere with the display of your exam or may corrupt the exam.
7. **Read the instructions.** Exam options can be different on each test, depending on the type and nature of the exam. Can you start and stop the exam, then return later? Or are you forced to complete it all at once?

Once the Exam Has Started:

1. **Don't hit the back button.** This disrupts the exam.
2. **Don't launch browsers, add browser tabs, or open other applications during the exam.** If you leave Blackboard and attempt to return to the exam screen you might get locked out.
3. **Don't minimize or resize the browser window.** This can also disrupt the exam.
4. **Pay attention to the time.** Blackboard times out after 3 hours of inactivity so it's important to save your answers or the exam frequently.

5. **Special note:** Careful if you are using a mouse with a scroll wheel! You could think you're scrolling down the page when in fact you're scrolling through a set of multiple choice answers. As a best practice, confirm your answers before submitting.

What to do if you have trouble:

1. **Contact OU Help.** OU Help is available 7 days a week/365 days a year from 8:00AM – Midnight (Central Time) every day. Call 855-268-4357 or email ouhelp@ottawa.edu.
2. **Email your instructor.** While your instructor may not be able to correct the issue, it's important to let your instructor know there was difficulty with the exam.