

DigiGuide: Recommended Approach to Online Exams in Canvas

This digiguide provides a starter guide for creation of quizzes in Canvas for the purposes on online exams. Also included in this guide is some best practice online exams.

For getting started advice around using Canvas Quizzes for online exams including the best settings to choose please see our [wider range of resources](#) (webpage).

If you require technical support please use the Canvas Support available through the Help icon in Canvas, or for wider curriculum or assessment advice please email us at cie@liverpool.ac.uk

New Quizzes in Canvas

When setting up quizzes in Canvas it is important to be aware that there are two types of quiz engines: 'Classic' and 'New Quizzes'. When you create a quiz, you will be asked to select the quiz engine you want to use. We recommend using 'New Quizzes', this is because 'Classic Quizzes' will no longer be available in Canvas after the 30th June 2024. For further information please refer to the [Classic Quiz Sunset Timeline](#) (webpage).

Getting Started

For full instructions on setting up tests in Canvas please use the support pages below. Please supplement these by referring to our own recommendations on Question Types and Test Options for pain-free testing.

[How do I create an assessment using New Quizzes?](#) (webpage)

[How do I add all items or a random set from an item bank to an assessment in New Quizzes?](#) (webpage)

Question Types

Creating or indeed adapting an exam to run online does not have to necessarily mean a multiple choice question exam, this is just one question type available. You may also wish to consider whether some of the question types below might align more effectively with your assessment aims. There are more detailed help guides from Canvas on setting up and using these question types within your Canvas module hyperlinked in the question type column.

Question Type	Description	Available in
Categorization	You can create a Categorization question in New Quizzes. Categorization questions require students to place answers in the correct categories while ignoring all distractors. When Categorization questions are graded, students must categorize all items correctly to	New Quizzes



	earn full points. There is not an option to assign partial credit for Categorization questions.	
<u>Essay</u>	<p>You can create an essay question for your students. This question type requires manual grading.</p> <p>Some students may require the use of assistive technology which means that writing at length within a quiz becomes a barrier. Talk to your schools' exams office with regard to best supporting those students who require reasonable adjustment and consider how you would provide those students with an alternative means of assessment if required.</p>	Classic & New Quizzes
<u>Fill in the Blank</u>	Students are presented with a sentence or paragraph where a word is missing. They need to fill in the blank. You can specify multiple possible answers to allow for different spellings for example.	Classic & New Quizzes
<u>Fill in multiple Blanks</u>	Students are presented with a sentence or paragraph where some words are missing. They need to fill in the blanks.	Classic Quizzes (but there is a workaround in New Quizzes)
<u>File Upload</u>	You can create a question for students that requires a file upload and can be used for PDFs, images, audio files, video files, etc. This question type requires manual grading and accepts one file per question.	Classic & New Quizzes
<u>Formula</u>	You can create a quiz question that involves a formula with a single variable. Based on the variable and formula definitions, the question could change for every student. You can also create a quiz question with a formula in it .	Classic & New Quizzes
<u>Multiple Answer</u>	Multiple answer questions ask students to select correct answers from a list of possible options. Multiple answer allows more than one correct answer to be selected.	Classic & New Quizzes
<u>Multiple Choice</u>	Multiple choice questions ask students to select a correct answer from a list of possible options where only one option can be selected.	Classic & New Quizzes
<u>Multiple Dropdown</u>	You can create a question that has multiple options for students to select in their response. You can create a sentence with multiple answers or create a list. You can also use this to create Likert scale quiz questions (see the link for more information).	Classic Quizzes (but there is a workaround in New Quizzes)
<u>Matching</u>	Students are presented with two columns and have to match one column to another. For example, you could have a list of terms in one column and their definitions	Classic & New Quizzes

	in another. Columns do not have to be equal as answers can be used more than once, and distractors can be added so that students cannot use the process of elimination to achieve the correct answers.	
<u>Numeric</u>	You can create a quiz question that requires a numerical answer, if you want to use this option it is worth being familiar with mathematical formula in the Rich Content Editor. See Math Editor lesson for help with this.	Classic & New Quizzes
<u>Stimulus/Passage</u>	You can insert stimulus content in New Quizzes. Stimulus content gives students a piece of content with associated questions.	New Quizzes
<u>Text (No Question)</u>	You can create a question in a quiz that does not include answers or point values. A text (no question) quiz question can be used as a preface to a quiz or a group of questions within a quiz. You may wish to use this type of question to include a passage of text, image, or video that will be referenced in subsequent questions.	Classic Quizzes (but there is a workaround in New Quizzes)
<u>True/False</u>	Students are presented with a statement and asked to respond with either true or false.	Classic & New Quizzes
<u>Ordering</u>	You can create an Ordering question in New Quizzes. In an Ordering question, students are required to place answers in a specific order. You can add top and bottom labels to the list to help students know in which order they should place their responses. When Ordering questions are graded, students must order all items correctly to earn full points. There is not an option to assign partial credit for Ordering questions.	New Quizzes
<u>Hot Spot</u>	Hot spot questions are a great option if you want students to identify a particular area on an image that you upload. This could be an anatomical drawing, a map or graph for example. You upload your image, set your “hot spot”, this is the area where if student’s click they will be marked as getting the question correct. When using this question type it’s important to consider image quality and type.	New Quizzes

Configuring Online Tests

Once you have built your quiz in Canvas, before deployment to students you will need to consider and setup appropriate configuration options, for example number of attempts, availability dates or timer. For an outline of the best options to use please see our separate guides.

Best Practice

As well as the technical aspect of configuring an exam to run online, there are also other factors to consider such as inclusivity and academic integrity. Below are some things to consider so that you can make some informed decisions about the best way to approach and deliver online exams.

Inclusivity

The challenge faced by many academic teams will be on how to convert on-campus exams to online equivalents for the purpose of assessment in a way that ensures validity, reliability and fairness. But, we also need to pay particular attention to thinking about how our move to online environments brings new challenges and barriers to students against a backdrop of widespread change and disruption due to the current climate. Later in this guide we make recommendations for approach and setup of Tests in a way which is aimed at reducing additional stress for students and staff.

Some challenges can be addressed with offering additional flexibility in how students can complete a test for example open-book and extended time period (and our **Configuring Online Tests** can talk you through this). This said, expect that even after these adaptations, for some students, the Test platform will still be an unsuitable form of assessment. Therefore, it is vitally important that where students feel that they are unable to complete the test - even with carefully thought through setup - that they are able to speak with the module team to arrange an alternative and more suitable form of assessment. Your school will have in place a protocol for adaptations; you may need to go further in being proactive with this, recognising that the number of students now affected is likely to be much larger than those identified at the outset of the course.

The move to an online timed test should not automatically be your first choice. Do you have the flexibility to move from unseen written exams to assignment submissions instead, such as through Turnitin?

If your exam paper consisted of asking students to write essays and other free-text responses at length this would be much more easily achieved by students who are able to build up a submission over time, fitting it into their other responsibilities, without needing constant internet connection.

Communicate with students as much as possible. It may not be possible within your current timeframe but could you work towards consulting and partnering with your student body in helping to devise your assessment response? Could you talk to the student reps or run a live Q&A for the whole cohort where you present your proposal and ask for their opinions? If you can get students onboard they will feel more engaged, and be more amenable to your suggestions, and feel more confident in coming forward if they know they will have a problem. Is this an opportunity for student partnership?

Follow the section entitled **Configuring Online Tests** for configuration of tests that avoid additional stress and problems with running tests.

Academic Integrity

The conditions in which students will complete online exams at home is very different from the invigilated exam rooms that we would normally use on-campus. In order to achieve consistency and fairness if possible we would need to take a pragmatic approach. Whatever you decide to do, do your best to support the audit trail of changes to the current assessment (Brown & Sambell 2020), so record what changes you made, what risks were introduced, how you mitigated or balanced these risks.

Open-book

Recognising that students will have more tools at their disposal at home, a natural move may be toward '*open-book*' exams. If you take this approach, then think about which resources you will advise that students should consult. If you have the facility to reshape free-text questions, consider adapting these to encourage context-rich, scenario specific responses in order to avoid off-the-shelf answers that students could easily just copy and paste from elsewhere (Brown & Sambell 2020). Bear in mind the weighting of the assessment. You may be limited in the changes you can make to assessment, please refer to your school admin team.

Collusion

Canvas can help with reducing the ease of collusion. There is the facility to *randomise* the ordering of questions presented to students. There is also the facility for bringing together randomly selected questions from a larger 'pool' of questions, thereby minimising the 'overlap' of the questions that each student will see.

Reuse of questions

If you are looking to reuse questions from elsewhere (for example from a past paper) students may have seen these questions. Students may also be able to record questions to share with next year's students. The only remedies are either using a quantity of fresh questions every year or using questions that require an individual response that maybe relies upon other student work or assessment.

Academic Judgement

Applying academic judgement. Can you use the data and what you know about a student to reveal possible academic malpractice? Can the results of an online test be triangulated against other forms of assessment to reveal or deter cheating (or identify students who have performed poorly). You could also require students to photograph workings out or include submission of a reflective element to the test.

Best practice for inclusion and mitigation of problems

Look to 'chunk up' exams

If possible, look to break the exam into smaller sections. There may be a natural distinction between the topics being tested upon. Can you split the larger single test into multiple smaller ones? This is a good approach for supporting students who may experience intermittent internet connection problems, and also give a break/rest time across the board for all students including those experiencing additional stress or caring responsibilities.

Make sure that you let your students know that you have thought about and acted upon this. In the past you may have offered multiple optional questions; you could accommodate these within separate tests with final grades aggregated within the grade centre.

Mock test

Provide students with a mock test that they can try out in advance. It could be used formatively within teaching weeks to help students prefer for final assessment, but at its core it is about familiarising students with the testing environment, features, and to ensure that their computer is set up correctly. They should be able to undertake the test multiple times, so that if for example they need to change computer, they can ensure that the new one will also work. If your assessment uses complex media such as videos, mathematical calculations or equations make sure these features within the mock test. Make sure that students know who to contact in case of problems. Contact CIE's Digital Education team if you would like help in setting one of these up (digitaled@liverpool.ac.uk).

Communicate with students

Be clear about the test conditions. This will refer to how you have configured the test (see **Configuring Online Tests** below) such as time limits and other affordances that you have put in place to try to mitigate problems and reduce stress. Advise students that they would need a stable PC/Mac laptop or desktop computer, with a reliable WIFI connection. Let them know about the mock test.

Let them know that if they feel that at the current time it is unfeasible for them to complete the test in its current format and may need an alternative means of assessment, tell them that you would welcome them to let you know and who to contact. Let the student cohort know who to contact if they experience a problem during the day and what students can do to help (such as take a photo of any error messages).

Test everything

Test your built test multiple times, and ideally get someone else to do this as well. If you are using media such as pictures or diagrams you are particularly looking to check that these work. If possible, test them using various browsers, platforms and even operating systems. You can preview Tests whilst they are still unavailable to students by clicking on the title within your module content.

Inform IT Services

During the usual assessment period the university's IT Services Department carry out more frequent checks of their systems to ensure reliability, however the Canvas support team would particularly welcome being informed of the date/time of high stakes assessment during the current time to co-ordinate support and resources. Please report your plans to the [service desk](#).

Further Support

If you require technical support please use the Canvas Support available through the Help icon in Canvas, or for wider curriculum or assessment advice please email us at cie@liverpool.ac.uk

Collated by Laura Blundell,
Centre for Innovation in Education

Version 1.2 25 April 2022



© 2022 by the University of Liverpool, Centre for Innovation in Education.

[Recommended Approach to Online Exams in Canvas](#) is made available under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](#).