



# **CREATING LARGE TEST POOLS IN BLACKBOARD**

**A Quick-Start Guide for Teaching and Learning**

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# Creating Large Test Pools in Blackboard

If you would prefer a video tutorial on creating assessments, click here:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=2&v=hms51SQtYzY&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=hms51SQtYzY&feature=emb_logo)

## Teaching and Learning Considerations

**Academic integrity** refers to the principles and policies students are expected to follow in the course of their education. These policies provide the guidelines to help students and faculty make responsible, ethical decisions related to all aspects of their association with the school. Every educational setting has a policy outlining these principles, and most have a very clearly defined official policy.

Academic integrity **is an issue in both face-to-face and online learning environments**, and at all levels of education. As educators, we will be challenged to find or develop effective practices for preventing academic dishonesty, and to inform our students about the consequences of compromising their integrity and ethics.

In addition, more and more instructors are teaching online or utilizing the online environment for assessment. It is recommended that faculty **be proactive** in maintaining the academic integrity of their assessments, and in particular, **creating and using large test pools of questions**. You will be able then to ensure no student gets the same exam/quiz. **Test-building and randomization become more efficient and effective** with large test pools.

## Best Practices

Maintaining the integrity of online assessments in Blackboard can be challenging, but here are a few suggestions to be proactive in your test and Bb set-up:

**Select Assessment Methods with Intention** – Use online testing, particularly objective test (i.e., multiple choice, multiple answer, true/false) for lower stakes assessment of student learning. In assessing student mastery of course goals and objectives, objective tests should be only one option considered among a spectrum of methods considered such as essay, project and/or presentation. Each type of assessment method may be designed to measure different indicators of student learning based on course goals and objectives.

**Mix Objective and Subjective Questions** – While online testing can include objective measures (multiple choice, multiple answer, true/false, fill in the blank, etc.), faculty can also include short answer or essay questions. This type of question is more subjective in nature and may demand a deeper understanding of the subject being tested. While mixing objective and

subjective type questions may not discourage or stop sharing of information, it increased the challenge for students to use external means to find answers.

**Randomize Questions** – When creating a test in Blackboard, one test option allows faculty to randomize the selection of test questions as well as the order in which they appear. The result is that students are not likely to get the same questions in the same sequence when taking a test. This strategy can address the issue of students who take a test at the same time in order to share answers. This is also relevant if faculty allow students to repeat the test. Each time this occurs, a test will be made up of questions that are randomly selected and ordered. You can also use “Question Sets” and “Random Blocks.”

**Limit Feedback Displayed** – Limit what types of feedback is displayed to students upon completion of a test. Available test options include test ‘Score’, ‘Submitted Answers’, ‘Correct Answers’, and ‘Feedback’. Providing test scores is important feedback that indicates how well students have performed and should be made available. However, through a process of elimination, students may be able to determine the correct answer for each test question if their submitted answers are identified as incorrect, or if the correct answer is provided. Students could lose the incentive to both prepare for testing or to seek out correct answers by reviewing lecture notes, assigned readings, or through group discussion after completing tests. Thus, faculty might reconsider whether to include ‘Submitted Answers’ as an option to be displayed to students. This is especially relevant if faculty have allowed students to repeat tests. Each time a test was taken, students could attempt a different answer for a test question that was previously graded as incorrect. Correct answers to all test questions could eventually be accumulated and passed on to other students, or to students of future classes.

**Set Time Limits** – Recognizing the fact that students taking an exam that is not proctored are free to use open book/notes, faculty may decide to use the ‘Set Timer’ feature in Blackboard. Students who adequately prepared for a test may be less likely to rely on open book/notes compared with students unprepared for testing. By setting a test with an expected completion time, unprepared students could have the most to lose as they spend time going over material, and risk not having sufficient time to respond to all the test questions.

**Display Questions One At A Time** – If a test has more than 5 questions, do not choose the ‘All at Once’ option for displaying all the questions on the same screen. It is quite easy for students to take a screen capture of the displayed questions and share them with other students. While students can still screen capture pages with single questions, or even type them into a document, it is more time consuming and unwieldy.

And, of course, use **Large Question Pools** – Rather than using a fixed number of items that remain unchanged for each administration of the test, consider creating question pools. Questions can be grouped by any number of criteria, including topic, subject matter, question type or difficulty of question. A pool will generate an assessment with randomized questions selected by the faculty member. Pools can be created from new questions or questions in existing tests or pools. Pools are most effective when there are large numbers of questions in

one group. For example, one might have a pool of true/false questions, another of multiple choice and a third for fill in the blank. The faculty member could then create an assessment drawing a specific number of questions from each of the question-type pools. Faculty can also add new questions to pools each time the course is taught to expand the variability of questions. Conversely, older questions can be removed.

### Getting Started: Using Excel to Work Offline and Create Test Pools

It is possible to save a great deal of time when creating Blackboard assessments (either tests or surveys) by uploading the assessment questions from a single file. To do this, the test or survey questions must be saved in a text or tab-delimited file (filename\*.txt). Each question in the file must conform to the structure given below and may still require modification once uploaded.

#### Formatting the Text File

The question file can be easily created in **Microsoft Excel**, which provides an organized environment to create questions and answers for upload.

As seen in the screenshots below, the first two columns should always be question type (abbreviations given below) and question text, respectively. The following columns (answer fields) will vary in number and content based on the desired answer choices and the type of question asked. The main questions types will be described with examples below.

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	MC	Which of the following is not a Case color?	Blue	correct	Red	incorrect
2	MA	Choose the Case buildings:	The Q	incorrect	Nord Hall	correct
3	TF	Case is in Washington, D.C.	TRUE	incorrect	FALSE	correct

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Question Type
Question Text
Answer Fields

The following are the question types that will need to be entered in the first column of an Excel spreadsheet:

- MC** Multiple Choice
- MA** Multiple Answer
- TF** True or False
- ESS** Essay
- SR** Short Response
- FIB** Fill-in-the-Blank
- OP** Opinion (Survey)

**FIL** File Response/ Upload

**NUM** Numerical Response

**ORD** Ordering

**MAT** Matching

**FIB\_PLUS** Fill-in-the-Blank with Multiple Blanks

### Multiple Choice Questions (MC)

Starting in the third column, enter a possible solution followed by the word incorrect or correct in the next cell. *You may only have one correct answer with this type of question.* It is possible to add up to 20 different potential answers. The possible solutions will be displayed in the order they are inputted into the spreadsheet.

*Sample output:*

### Multiple Answer Questions (MA)

Starting in the third column, enter a possible solution followed by the word incorrect or correct in the next cell. You may have multiple correct answers with this type of question. It is possible to add up to 20 different potential answers. Note that the possible solutions will be in the order they are inputted into the spreadsheet.

1	MC	Which of the following is not a Case color?	Blue	correct	Red	incorrect	White	correct	Gray	Correct
<b>Question 1</b>										
Which of the following is not a Case color?										
<input type="radio"/> Blue										
<input type="radio"/> Red										
<input type="radio"/> White										
<input type="radio"/> Gray										
2	MA	Choose the Case buildings:	The Q	incorrect	Nord Hall	correct	Sears Hall	correct	Thwing	Correct

*Sample output:*

### True/False Questions (TF)

After inputting the question type and text, simply enter in "True" or "False" in the third column, then whether it is the correct answer or not.

*Sample output:*

### Essay Questions (ESS)

The text in the third column is optional; the instructor may add a sample essay or leave this

blank. **Note:** In order for students to receive a grade for essay questions, the instructor must manually grade their responses through the Gradebook.

### Question 2

Choose the Case buildings:

- The Q
- Nord Hall
- Sears Hall
- Thwing

3	TF	Case is in Washington, D.C.	TRUE	incorrect	FALSE	correct
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### Question 3

"Case is in Washington, D.C."

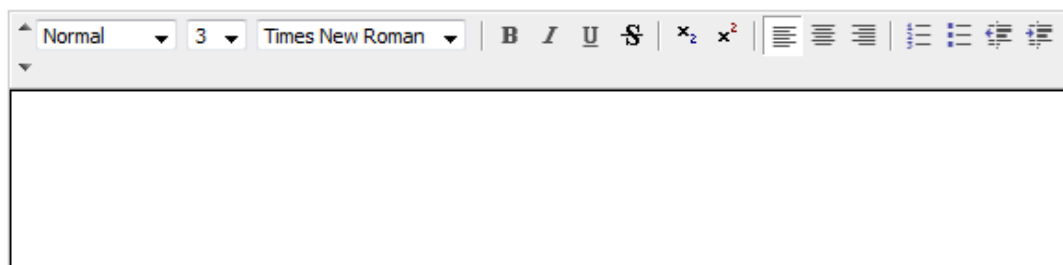
- True
- False

4	ESS	Tell me about your Case experience.	(Example) It's really been great so far!
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Sample output:

### Question 4

Tell me about your Case experience.



A rich text editor toolbar is shown with the following options: Normal (dropdown), 3 (dropdown), Times New Roman (dropdown), Bold (B), Italic (I), Underline (U), Strikethrough (ABC), Subscript (x<sub>2</sub>), Superscript (x<sup>2</sup>), Bulleted List, Numbered List, Indent Left, Indent Right, and Undo/Redo. Below the toolbar is a large empty text area for the student's response.

## Short Response Questions (SR)

Just like essay questions, text in the third column is optional; the instructor may add a sample short response or leave this blank. **Note:** In order for students to receive a grade for essay questions, the instructor must manually grade their responses through the Gradebook.

Sample output:

## Fill-in-the-Blank Questions (FIB)

You may create as many possible answers up to a maximum of 20. *Be certain to include all different variations/alternate spellings of your desired answer.*

*Sample output:*

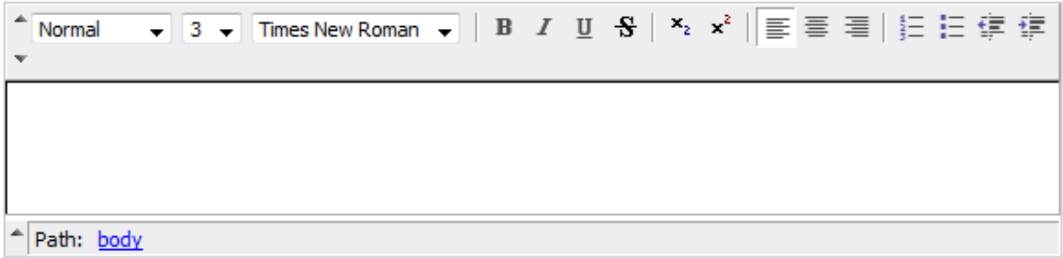
### Opinion Scale Questions (OP)

Opinion (Likert) Scale questions default to a standard 6-option scale that ranges from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. **Note:** *Any desired changes in the answer text must be inputted once the question is uploaded in the **Test Manager**.*

5	SR	What's your favorite event at Case?	
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**Question 5**

What's your favorite event at Case?



6	FIB	Case is a _____.	college	university
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**Question 6**

Case is a \_\_\_\_\_.

*Sample output:*

### File Response Questions (FIL)

File response questions allow students to upload a file from their computers. **Note:** *In order for students to receive a grade for essay questions, the instructor must manually grade their files through the Gradebook.*

*Sample output:*

### Numerical Response Questions (NUM)

In the third column, place the correct answer to your question. Optionally, a tolerance value

can be placed in the fourth column, so that any answer submitted within that range would be marked as correct. For example, any answer between 3.9 and 4.1 would be marked as correct in this example.

### Question 7

I enjoy attending Case.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
- Not Applicable

8 | FIL | Upload your picture of Case. | |

### Question 8

Upload your picture of Case.

Attach local file

9 | NUM | 2+2=? | 4 | 0.1 |

*Sample output:*

### Question 9

2+2=?

### Ordering Questions (ORD)

When formatting an ordering question, *be sure to input the answers in the correct order.* Blackboard will automatically randomize the displayed order once the question is uploaded.

*Sample output:*

### Matching Questions (MAT)

For matching questions, it is important to organize the questions and their respective answers in pairs, as shown above. Also, be certain to organize the fields based on which terms you want in each column. The first field in every pair will be in one column while the second field in every pair will be in another. Once uploaded, the ordering within each column will be randomized.

*Sample output:*



## Fill-in-the-Blank with Multiple Blanks (FIB\_PLUS)

When inputting a fill-in-the-blank question with multiple blanks, denote where the blanks should be in the question text by inserting a bracket variable (ex: [x], [y]). To input answers, first place the specified variable in a cell, followed by all your desired answers into the following cells. *Leave an empty cell before inputting the second variable and its respective answers.*

10 Order these Classes from 1st year to 4th year. Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

### Question 10

Order these Classes from 1st year to 4th year.

- Junior
- Senior
- Freshman
- Sophomore

11 MAT Match the abbreviation with the class. PSCL Psychology PHYS Physics

### Question 11

Match the abbreviation with the class.

- PSCL
- PHYS

A. Physics  
B. Psychology

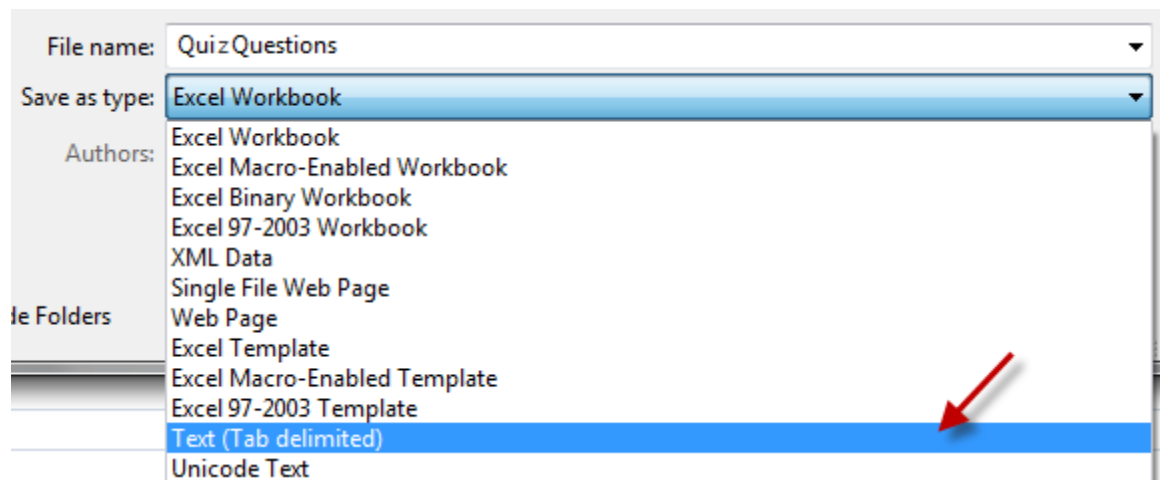
12 FIB\_PLUS Case is located in [x] and is a [y]. x Ohio Cleveland y university school

## Saving as a .txt File

Once you are finished editing your questions in an Excel spreadsheet, you must save your file as a tab-delimited file (\*.txt). To do this, click File or the Office Button, then select **Save As**. Then, choose **Text (Tab Delimited)** from the dropdown menu as the file type. This new \*.txt file can now be uploaded into Blackboard. Be sure to review the questions once they have been placed in Blackboard to ensure the display options and formats are what you intended.

### Question 12

Case is located in  and is a .



## Upload Your File!

From the Test Canvas page, go to the drop-down menu of question types. Select the **Upload Questions** option and click the **Go** button. Browse for the text file containing the questions, set the point value for each question, and submit. **Note:** *All questions added will have equal point values. If you would like to specify this value as something other than the default value (10 points), edit the **Points per question** field. You can edit the individual question values later on under the **Test Canvas** by selecting the **Modify** button next to the test you would like to modify.*

### 1 Upload Questions

Click **Browse** to locate a file to import.

**File containing questions to import**

Enter the points possible per question. The default value is assigned from Creation Set Settings.

**Points per question**