# Online Examinations, Options and Observations

The options provided here represent those that are readily achievable with the learning technologies available at DMU. These include some consideration of use cases drawn from across faculties.

## Examination using Blackboard tools

### Blackboard tests as examinations

Blackboard tests allow you to manage the timing and delivery of the test process.

‘Display timing’ can be employed to define the time period for which the examination is live and available to students, for instance a 24 hour examination period.

The operation of the test within this live examination period can be managed via the ‘Set timer’ option. This can be used to give students a set number of minutes to complete and submit an examination once started.

There are additional options available that can be set for the operation of the exam:

* Force Completion: Students are required to complete the test in one sitting.

Multiple attempts and returning to a test are available options and these allow students to lose internet connection and return to the test (timer continues).

* Auto-Submit: The test will be saved and submitted when the ‘set timer’ period is complete (it is recommended that students use the save and submit functions themselves).

Note: Students with additional needs and disabilities who require more time can be catered for using the ‘test availability exception’ option.

[Advice and guidance for using the various Blackboard assessment tools and setting bespoke options for students with learning differences and disabilities are](https://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/blackboard/blackboard-how-do-i/blackboard-course-management/blackboard-assessment-tools/create-a-test/)

#### Blackboard tests - question options

There are a range of question types available for use in the Blackboard test tool:

Essay, Short answer, File response, Fill in multiple blanks, Fill in the blank, Hot spot, Jumbled sentence, Matching, Multiple answer, Multiple choice, Calculated formula, Calculated numeric, Opinion scale / Likert, Either / or, Ordering, Quiz bowl and True / False.

**Note:** Free text examination questions can be made available in Blackboard tests but completed by students (in Word or other format) and then uploaded into the Blackboard test – this uses the ‘File response’ question type.

The File response option will accept a range of file types. However, student video submissions should be used in conjunction with the DMU Replay Assignment Folder.

[Advice and guidance for setting up a File response examination in Blackboard tests can be found at this link.](https://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/anonymous-marking-for-eassessment-the-staff-guide/blackboard-tests-and-anonymous-marking/)

Examinations completed within the Blackboard tests tool can be marked anonymously through the Blackboard Grade Centre.

[Advice and guidance for using the Blackboard Grade Centre can be found at this link.](https://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/blackboard/blackboard-how-do-i/blackboard-course-management/blackboard-assessment-tools/evaluation/grade-centre/)

Test questions in Blackboard can be presented to students:

* All at Once - Where the entire test is presented on one screen.
* One at a Time - Where one question at a time is presented.
* Prohibit Backtracking - Where the student is prevented from changing the answer to a question that has already been submitted.
* Randomize Questions - Where the questions are randomised for each test attempt.

**Note:** Indicative assignment / examination marks in the Blackboard Grade Centre ‘Total’ column may be accessible to students (before results are formally released) who are using the Blackboard mobile application or have been given access to the tools feature in Blackboard.

[Guidance to support Blackboard Grade Centre use and hiding the Total column is available at this link.](https://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/blackboard/blackboard-how-do-i/blackboard-course-management/blackboard-assessment-tools/evaluation/grade-centre/)

### Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Synchronous virtual classrooms can be effectively used for examinations where a live audio and or video input is important, such as, language and viva voce examinations. These can be carried out in Collaborate breakout spaces or main rooms as required. At present, recordings can only be undertaken in the Main Collaborate room.

Recordings can be downloaded and uploaded into DMU Replay for safe storage.

## Examinations using Turnitin

If similarity checking is required, examinations accessed via the Blackboard tests tool can be completed in Microsoft Word and submitted via the Blackboard Turnitin link. However, if students are to be given a large time window (ie, 24hrs) to access the examination it will not be possible to then define a more limited time to complete any work (ie, 2hrs).

It is not recommended that students submit their work twice through both Turnitin for and the Blackboard tests tool.

### [Advice and guidance for setting up assignment submissions using Turnitin is available at this link.](https://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/setting-up-a-turnitin-submission-link-for-grademark/)

## Examinations using DMU Replay

Student submission folders can be set up within DMU Replay and used for students to submit examinable video and / or audio content.

[Advice and guidance for setting up DMU replay folders for student submission of video and / or audio is available at this link.](https://celt.our.dmu.ac.uk/?s=DMU+replay+students)

## Examinations using Microsoft Office applications

Microsoft applications in Office 365 do not appear to have the level of functionality required to provide a set examination access period and an additional managed completion time set within the access period. However, other Microsoft application functionality may be appropriate to different examination techniques.

### Teams meeting

Microsoft Teams meetings can be employed as a tool to enable synchronous examinations in much the same way as Blackboard Collaborate. At present, a DPIA is required prior to recording in Teams and breakout spaces are not available. However, Teams meetings can be effectively nested to enable a smooth(ish) transfer between spaces using Private Channels.

Prior to the 2021 exam period, it is anticipated that a recording policy and process will be in place for Teams meetings and breakout spaces will be released by Microsoft and will be fully operational.

### Forms

The Forms quiz and survey application can be setup for use as an examination by limiting its availability to a specified period. This tool does not have the level of functionality seen in Blackboard tests to give a completion time once started or the direct links to the Blackboard Grade Centre and anonymous marking.

Note: the Form must be submitted by the student prior to the finish time or it will not be saved or submitted. A separate Form will need to be generated with its own link for students who require a different examination time.

Short answer questions have a 4000 character limit. Long answers have no pre-set character limit.

### Teams assignments

Within a Class Team it is possible to set up student assignments but these do not include sufficient options to limit completion times beyond the access window. Turnitin can be integrated with the Teams tool – note that this represents a separate instance of Turnitin to that associated with Blackboard.

## Proctored examinations

Proctored examinations are being considered separately but we are confident that they can operate within the Blackboard test environment.

## Online exams – notes and issues.

* It is advisable to provide an opportunity for students to do a brief practice exam. It will help to develop familiarity with the processes, and will identify students who may have technical issues.
* It is inevitable that students will have questions (technical and otherwise) during the live examination period and will need some support / technical guidance (invigilation). There will need to be a clearly defined contact process available for students during the live (potentially 24 hour) examination period.
* Online tests in Blackboard cannot be used for closed book exams. It is not possible to lock down the browser so that students can only access the Blackboard test. This means they will be able to ‘Google’ their answers. However, the use of a timed exam can mitigate against a student spending too much time searching for answers, but it doesn't prevent this possibility.
* If exam start times are staggered or available within a 24 hr period, avoid setting up tests in a way that gives automatic feedback (such as showing all the correct answers) to students after submission.
* The use of Random question pools can be useful, particularly to discourage potential post-exam sharing of questions/answers to students yet to take the exam. Staff must ensure though that any randomised combination of questions will be the same level of difficulty for any student and that specific groupings of questions are not separated during randomisation.
* When giving certain students extra time on a timed exam, the total time allowed for each student must be entered. E.g. a 60 minute exam with three students being given an extra 15 mins. The timer for each of these students will be set at 75mins.

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